

BULLETIN

European Affairs in the Croatian Parliament



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The “European Affairs in the Croatian Parliament” bulletin is published monthly by the European Affairs Department. It provides the reader with an overview of parliamentary activities in the field of EU affairs and inter-parliamentary cooperation as well as with access to EU documents forwarded to national parliaments.

In Focus

Porto Social Summit, 7 – 8 May 2021

EU leaders, European institutions, social partners and civil society representatives met in Porto to reinforce their commitment to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

At the high-level conference organised by the Portuguese presidency in the context of the Porto Social Summit, they discussed how to set the European social policy agenda for the next decade and ensure that we face the challenges of the present and of the future leaving no one behind.

The discussions revolved around three main areas:

- work and employment
- skills and innovation

welfare state and social protection

At the end of the conference, EU institutions, European social partners and civil society representatives co-signed the [Porto Social Commitment](#).

In the joint commitment, signatories welcome the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) presented by the Commission in early March which sets out concrete actions to further Implement the 20 principles of the Pillar.

The action plan proposes a number of initiatives and sets three main targets to be achieved throughout Europe by 2030:

- an employment rate of at least 78% in the European Union
- at least 60% of adults attending training courses every year

reducing the number of people at risk of social exclusion or poverty by at least 15 million people, including 5 million children

It also proposes headline targets for employment, skills and social inclusion at EU-level to be achieved by 2030. The Action Plan will help Europe navigate the transformations brought about by new societal, technological and economic developments and by the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. It will help guarantee that no one is left behind in the twin digital and climate transitions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a far-reaching and profound socio-economic impact. So far, the collective response of Member States and the EU has helped to preserve jobs and livelihoods, as well as to contain many of the negative effects of the pandemic. However, unemployment and inequalities are likely to persist and increase. The participants of the high-level conference therefore call on EU leaders to channel resources where they are most needed.

Policymakers should focus their efforts on the recovery of employment and quality job creation, on investments into lifelong learning, enabling people to acquire new or additional skills they need to succeed in the green and digital transitions, and on reducing poverty and social exclusion by promoting equal opportunities for all.



In March 2021, the European Commission presented an action plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The action plan proposes a number of initiatives and sets three main targets to be achieved throughout Europe by 2030:

- an employment rate of at least 78% in the European Union
- at least 60% of adults attending training courses every year

reducing the number of people at risk of social exclusion or poverty by at least 15 million people, including 5 million children

Informal meeting of heads of state or government

On 7 May, following the high-level conference held by the Portuguese presidency, EU leaders discussed COVID-19 and international relations. On 8 May, social affairs were on the agenda. Leaders adopted the Porto declaration on social issues.

Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Activities of the parliamentary committees

European Affairs Committee

19th session held on 25 May 2021

Committee discussed [European documents](#) in accordance with the Work Programme for the Consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for [2020](#) and [2021](#).

Other committees

Other parliamentary committees discussed [European documents](#) in accordance with the Work Programme for the Consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for [2020](#) and [2021](#).

The Committee on Agriculture held its 25th session, on 5 May, at which the Committee discussed the report of the Ministry of Agriculture on Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting held on 26 April 2021.

Monitoring the work of the Government in the European Union institutions

Council

The Croatian Government submitted to the relevant parliamentary committees its positions for 7 Council meetings held in May 2021.

Application of EU law

In May 2021, the Croatian Parliament enacted [7 laws](#) in the process of harmonization with European Union law.



EU documents Forwarded Directly to the Croatian Parliament

According to the Protocol (no 1) on the Role of the National Parliaments in the European Union, all draft laws and communications shall be forwarded directly to the national parliaments.

The Croatian Parliament publishes on a daily basis the EU documents received, along with the information on: document number, adoption procedure, transmission date and subsidiarity deadline.

In May 2021, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [17 documents](#): 7 draft laws and 10 communications and other non-binding documents.

Inter-parliamentary Cooperation in the European Union

Inter-parliamentary cooperation in the European Union encompasses the cooperation between the European Parliament and the national parliaments and the cooperation among the national parliaments in the frame of the parliamentary dimension of the Council Presidency.

10 May – videoconference – Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments

Parliament Speaker Gordan Jandroković participated at a conference of EU parliament speakers, a regular meeting to discuss current issues regarding the role of the parliament, and to coordinate parliamentary activities in the EU.

The video conference was organised by the German Bundestag parliament and Bundesrat federal council.

This is a regular meeting of the speakers of EU national parliaments, with the speakers of aspirant countries for EU membership invited too.

Jandroković spoke about the organisation and work of the Croatian Sabor during the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of digital technology for the further development of democracy. He noted that the Croatian Sabor had adopted amendments to its Standing Orders so that lawmakers could have access to online voting and participate in parliamentary debates via video link. He underscored the virtual digital platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe as an example where digital technology provides a significant contribution to the further development of representative democracy.

Jandroković announced an event in which the Croatian Parliament will actively be included in marking the conference, which will be held on Tuesday, 11 May 2021 in Parliament House.

"Politicians need to be aware that even though technology contributes to developing participating democracy, at the same time it brings numerous risks like fake news, disinformation, and cyber attacks that affect the entire society. For that reason we need to find a way to use everything that is good in technology but also to point out the negative impact it could have in making up opinions particularly among the young, who often make up their opinions using digital tools," said Jandroković.

11 May – videoconference – "Conference on the Future of Europe - A Vision of Croatia" organised by Croatian Parliament

Croatia's parliamentary speaker Gordan Jandroković hosted the "Conference on the Future of Europe – Croatia's Vision", with the aim of informing and including citizens in a number of projects that have been started in the country.

The Conference on the Future of Europe started a year later than planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic, its purpose being to involve citizens in Europe's development. The conference consists of a digital, multilingual platform, a panel, and a plenary assembly where 108 places are reserved for citizens.



The Conference on the Future of Europe is a pan-European, democratic project during which citizens have an opportunity to decide on how the EU should develop. Citizens can participate in panel discussions, debates, and the plenary session, in which 108 seats are reserved for citizens. An equal number is allocated to representatives of national parliaments and MEPs. The plenary session will also include 54 Council representatives (two for each member state), three members of the European Commission, and representatives of the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Council, social partners, and civil society. The conference provides a digital platform where citizens can exchange ideas, connect, make recommendations, and launch initiatives. Several successful Croatian stories were then presented to the parliament, including a project by the Sisak-Moslavina County Development Agency (SIMORA) promoting the town of Novska as the centre of the gaming industry in Croatia.

SIMORA director Mario Čelan said that the gaming industry, particularly now during the pandemic, had surpassed the film and music industry with regard to the total revenue generated. He added that the project had already launched 49 start-ups and that a new, four-year study programme for gaming technicians had been developed as well as that the National Recovery and Resilience Plan envisaged a gaming industry campus. Dragan Schwarz spoke about Radiochirurgia, a special hospital for oncology patients in Zagreb. More than 45,000 patients have been examined in the five years since the hospital's establishment and more than 4,000 operations were performed, said Schwarz. "Our results put us at the very top of the global scene," he added.

Sven Lončarić spoke about the Artificial Intelligence Centre (CAI) of the Zagreb Faculty of Computing and Electrical Engineering (FER), which consists of 19 research laboratories, with FER currently implementing around 260 projects financed from national and international sources.

The Boranka project, implemented by the scouts' alliance, has been awarded the European Citizen's Prize by the European Parliament in 2020. Boranka is the largest reforestation project in all of Europe. To date, more than 7,000 volunteers have planted more than 85,000 new trees in fire-devastated areas of Dalmatia. The Toljanić family was named the European Family of the Year in 2020. The family has 12 children and has developed a successful winery and hospitality business. Participants in the second part of the conference agreed that it was necessary to invest in green and digital transformation. The event also included a video conference with ten Croatian university towns, with rectors and their deputies as well as students' representatives discussing sustainable tourism, the future of the IT industry, education, culture, media, entrepreneurship, work, and digital nomads, the Mediterranean and migrations, public health and green farming.

31 May – videoconference – LXV COSAC Meeting

The LXV Plenary Meeting of COSAC was held on 31 May, chaired by the Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Luís Capoulas Santos, and attended by the President of the Portuguese Parliament, Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, and the Prime Minister of Portugal, António Costa.

Chairman of the European Affairs Committee Domagoj Hajduković and member of the Committee Marko Pavić participated at the meeting.

The Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union was debated on the first day of the meeting with the participation of the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, and the Vice-President of the European Commission, Margaritis Schinas. Parliamentarians focused on the vaccination strategy and economic and social recovery programmes of the European Union, as well as the EU's position in the world and issues related to migration and freedom of movement. The second session of the day was dedicated to the topic of Social Europe, with the participation of the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, and the Portuguese Secretary of State for Social Security, Gabriel Bastos, which debated the triple economic, digital and climate transition, focusing on the Porto Social Summit and the European Pillar of Social Rights, its implementation and relationship with the economic and social recovery of Europe, as well as the situation of young people in this context. The participation of the social partners (European Trade Union Confederation and Business Europe) and the European Youth Forum in this debate was also highlighted.



On the second day of proceedings, the first discussion session was dedicated to the implementation of the national recovery and resilience plans, with the tripartite perspective of the European Commission, through Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni, the European Parliament, with the intervention of Vice-President Roberta Metsola, and the national parliaments, with the presence of the Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Slovenia, Marko Pogacnik. The discussion focused mainly on the involvement of national parliaments in the preparation of the plans and the future monitoring and scrutiny of their implementation, as well as the importance of the reforms, their implementation and their focus on the digital and ecological dimensions, and the importance of own resources.

In the last session of this plenary meeting, on the Conference on the Future of Europe, the co-chairs Guy Verhofstadt MEP and European Commissioner Dubravka Šuica referred to the organisation of the Conference and the steps taken so far, notably with regard to the composition of the plenary, working groups and citizens' panels. The Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs and also co-chair of this Conference, Ana Paula Zacarias, sent a video message on the work already developed and the future of this Conference. They highlighted the importance of holding a Conference of and for citizens, placing them at the centre of the discussions and dialogue, as well as achieving concrete results based on the conclusions of the debates to be held, both at national and European level.

The session was moderated by the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Portuguese Parliament and President-in-Office of COSAC, MP Luís Capoulas Santos, and by the Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, MEP Antonio Tajani, both of whom gave brief speeches on the work carried out within the scope of this Conference and its preparation.

The meeting was closed by the President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, through a video message.

Inter-parliamentary activities in June 2021

14 June 2021 – videoconference - Second High-level Interparliamentary Conference on Migration and Asylum in Europe

16 June 2021 – videoconference - Conference on Rural Development, Agriculture and Territorial Cohesion

22 June 2021 – videoconference - Conference on the role of Parliaments in deepening the EU-Africa relationship

22 June 2021 – videoconference - Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the European electoral law and the Parliament right to inquiry organised by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the EP (AFCO).

