

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 interparliamentary cooperation as well as with access to EU documents forwarded to national parliaments.

In Focus

Parliamentary dimension of the Croatian EU Council Presidency from 1 January to 30 June 2020

In presiding over the EU Council Member States rotate every six months on the basis of a predetermined schedule. After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Presidency of the Council is held by pre-established groups of three Member States for a period of 18 months, the so called “Trio”, with the aim to ensure the continuity and consistency in the work of the Council. Croatia will hold the Presidency of the EU Council for the first time in the first half of 2020, as the last Member of the Romania-Finland-Croatia Presidency Trio which will start on 1 January 2019.

The Presidency of the EU Council is carried out through two dimensions – governmental and parliamentary. The Croatian Parliament will be responsible for the preparation and implementation of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency which will be reflected through organising conferences and meetings in the context of the set interparliamentary cooperation in the EU.

As a first step in ensuring smooth cooperation within the Presidency Trio with regard to the preparation and fulfilment of its parliamentary dimension, the [Declaration of cooperation](#) among the parliaments of Croatia, Romania and Finland was signed on the margins of the EU Speakers Conference in Tallinn on 23 April 2018.

During the Croatian Presidency over the EU Council, the Croatian Parliament will hold five interparliamentary conferences and meetings:

- COSAC chairpersons meeting
- COSAC plenary meeting
- Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP)
- Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union
- Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny group on Europol.



Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Activities of the parliamentary committees

Parliamentary committees discussed [European documents](#) in accordance with the [Work Programme for the Consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for 2018](#).

Monitoring the work of the Government in the European Union institutions

Council

The Croatian Government submitted to the relevant parliamentary committees its positions for the April Council meetings:

- 3614 General Affairs Council;
- 3611 General Affairs Council (Cohesion);
- 3613 Foreign Affairs Council;
- 3612 Agriculture and Fisheries Council.

European Council

In accordance with the Act on Co-operation of the Croatian Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Croatia in European Affairs Prime Minister submitted to the Parliament [report](#) related to the European Council meeting on 22 and 23 March 2018.

Application of EU law

In April 2018, the Croatian Parliament enacted [4 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 April 2018, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [52 documents](#): 34 draft laws, 18 communications and other non-binding documents.



Interparliamentary Cooperation in the European Union

Interparliamentary 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.

In April 2018, the Croatian Parliament representatives participated in the following meetings:

13 April – Zagreb – Meeting with European Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King

Members of the European Affairs Committee and Domestic Policy and National Security Committee met with Julian King, European Commissioner for the Security Union.

European Commissioner Julian King stressed that better protection of citizens' security was one of the Union's legislative priorities, including cyber security, public space protection, security research and the fight against terrorism. With regard to migration, he stressed the importance of ensuring that Member States' authorities are aware who crosses the common external border of the EU, with the utmost importance for the establishment of interoperable EU information systems for security, border management and migration as well as strengthening of the instrument for combating terrorism and money laundering. He stressed the importance of implementing agreed legislative priorities at the EU level in national legislation and called for the full implementation of the EU Directive on the Use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) by May 25, 2018.

MPs welcomed the EU's efforts in the field of security and protection of EU citizens, pointing out that it was of great importance to Croatia to join the Schengen area as soon as possible. They also discussed the importance of EU enlargement to neighbouring countries, which could contribute to the stability of the area and weaken external influences and eventual radicalization in some countries of South East Europe. Reflecting on the challenge of external migration and the recent Croatian experience in dealing with the problem of a large number of refugees registered in Croatia in their transit to other EU countries, Croatian MPs stressed the need to amend the Dublin Regulation.

13 April – Zagreb – Meeting with European Commission Vice President responsible for jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness Jyrki Katainen

The European Commission Vice President responsible for jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness Jyrki Katainen met with the members of the European Affairs Committee, the Finance and Central Budget Committee, the Committee on the Economy and Defence Committee in the Croatian Parliament.

The focus of the discussion was on the contents of the EC Country Report for Croatia and on the opportunities for Croatia under the "Juncker" Investment Plan for Europe and the European Defence Fund.

With regard to Croatia being ranked thirteenth with respect to withdrawals from the European Funds for Strategic Investments (EFSI), Katainen referred to the simplicity of the procedure and the possibility of using EFSI funds at the local community level, stressing that the fund is a good tool for filling the gaps in the market.



The Vice President of the European Commission stressed the European Union's interest in stronger cooperation in the defence sector and the development of the military industry, where NATO plays a key role. - The European Commission, based on its analyses, notes several megatrends in the world, including the development of the circular economy and advanced technologies in the field of artificial intelligence and the protection of personal data, which we have to take into account in the future and pay special attention to education, said Katainen.

After exchanging opinions with the MPs, Katainen in conclusion recommended that structural reforms continue to be carried out with an emphasis on education, improvement of the business environment, justice, pension system and the harmonization of the public sector.

23 – 24 April – Tallin – Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Gordan Jandroković participated at the Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments

The Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments has brought together the speakers of the national parliaments of the European Union Member States and the President of the European Parliament. The Speakers' Conferences have been held since 1963.

The Tallinn gathering focused on the EU future and on the security and defence of the bloc. On the margins of the conference, Jandroković signed the declaration with his counterparts from Romania and Finland that will preside over the EU in the first and the second half of 2019 respectively, whereas Zagreb assumes the six-month rotating presidency in the first half of 2020.

While addressing the conference, Jandroković spoke about the readiness of Croatia, which joined the EU five years ago, for deeper integration notably through the next steps: admission to the Schengen zone and to the euro area. He recalled that his country had already entered Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which is the part of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy.

"PESCO should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen operational preparedness and as a contribution to one's own, national armed forces and promoting one's own defence industry through projects and, of its further development. That cooperation must be based on the principles of inclusiveness, solidarity and complementarity with NATO, without duplicating activities and with respect for the autonomy of member states in decision making," Jandroković said and added that PESCO will additionally strengthen security of the European continent to the benefit of all its citizens. Jandroković also reflected on issues that are important for Croatia such as strengthening internal security and the importance of protecting and efficiently managing the EU external border and to preserve the freedom of movement within the Union.

Interparliamentary activities in May 2018

13 – 14 May – Sofia – Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Energy Committees

15 May – Brussels – Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the Implementation of the Data Protection package at the eve of its application hosted by the European Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee (LIBE)

