

BULLETIN

European Affairs in the Croatian Parliament



Bulletin No 49

October 2021

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

State of the Union 2021

President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, delivered her [State of the Union address](#) in the European Parliament on 15 September 2021.

Within her address, the President outlined flagship initiatives which the Commission plans to undertake in the coming year. These, amongst others, include:

- Working on closing the climate finance gap, together with the EU’s global partners;
- Leading the digital transformation that will create jobs and drive competitiveness, while ensuring technical excellence and security of supply.

The address outlined the importance of “a Europe united in responsibility”. It reinforces the urgency of tackling the climate crisis and outlines that Europe is ready to do more, while calling on major economies to fulfil their responsibilities.

In addition, the President of the European Commission also sent a [Letter of Intent](#) on 15 September to David Sassoli, the President of the European Parliament, and Prime Minister Janez Janša, as the Presidency of the Council. The Letter details actions which the Commission intends to take in the following year by means of legislation and other initiatives.

Key new initiatives which are of particular relevance include legislative proposals for the ‘European Green Deal’ and ‘A Europe fit for the digital age’. The Letter outlines the intent to put forward a Legislative proposal on an EU framework for harmonised measurement of transport and logistics emissions. In addition, regarding the digital transformation, a legislative proposal on multimodal digital mobility services is included.



Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Monitoring the work of the Government in the European Union institutions

Council

The Croatian Government submitted to the relevant parliamentary committees its positions for 4 Council meetings held in September 2021.

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 September 2021, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [54 documents](#): 31 draft laws and 23 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.

9 September 2021 – Ljubljana, videoconference - Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/ CSDP)

Foreign Policy Committee Chairman Gari Cappelli and Defence Committee Vice President Ante Deur participated at the Conference.

The Conference was co-chaired by the Chair of the National Assembly Committee on Foreign Policy, Monika Gregorčič, the Chair of the National Assembly Committee on Defence, Samo Bevk, the Chair of the National Council Commission for International Relations and European Affairs, Bojan Kekec, as well as the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, David McAllister. In addition to the Chairs, the participants of the conference was welcomed by the President of the National Assembly, Igor Zorčič, the President of the National Council, Alojz Kovšca, and the keynote speaker, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor.

During the Priorities of the Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy panel discussion, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, presented the EU's positions and discussed the current foreign policy and security situation.



During the New Challenges, Old Patterns: Rethinking the EU's Foreign Policy Approaches in a Multipolar World, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Anže Logar, the European Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, and the Secretary-General of the EEAS, Stefano Sannino, pointed to the complexity of the geopolitical situation and global security threats, which require a rapid, coordinated, and thoughtful response from the EU. It is essential that the EU deepen and examine its political and economic strategic partnerships and actively help shape international policy, taking care to strengthen its resilience and promote and nurture its values and interests.

During the Enhancing Regional Partnership with Western Balkan Countries through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) panel discussion, the Minister of Defence, Matej Tonin, emphasised Slovenia's cooperation with Western Balkan countries on defence and security and focused on international operations and missions in the Western Balkans, particularly on operations carried out by the EU as part of the CSDP and involving the active participation of Slovenia.

As part of the conference, the National Council held a panel discussion titled Capability Development for the EU's Civil Protection and the Solidarity Clause: Integrating the Military. The participants noted the increasing number and severity of natural and other disasters, presenting possibilities for strengthening EU resilience, especially through the CSDP and the Solidarity Clause. They called for a revision of good practices at the national and EU-level and for the adoption of additional measures for increasing the resilience and preparedness of member states in this area.

27 September 2021 – European Parliament, Bruxelles, videoconference - Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Turning the tide on cancer: the view of national parliaments on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

The Chairwoman of the Health and Social Policy Committee Renata Sabljar-Dračevac participated at the Meeting.

This Interparliamentary Committee Meeting provided a good forum for a debate on the BECA draft report and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan between European and national parliamentarians. This Plan is one of the key pillars of the European Health Union project. But implementation of the Plan would imply important multi-level cooperation between all stakeholders: Institutions, Member States, all regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society organisations.

This discussion was an opportunity for an exchange of experiences and best practices on how national and EU actions can contribute to a better rate of cancer prevention, support excellence in research, improve existing and encourage new treatments, and ensure equal access to cancer care throughout the Union. Many interventions stressed the necessity to bridge the existing disparities in cancer prevention and access to cancer care between and within European countries. Addressing these inequalities could have a positive impact on cancer incidence rates, survival and mortality across the EU. Quite a few Members highlighted the necessity of more holistic approach in treating this illness by advertising and educating the society. Preventing rather than fixing attitude should prevail. It encompasses the healthy attitudes like sport, good quality nutriment, regular health checks and less dangerous substances like alcohol and cigarettes. The discussion offered as well the opportunity to address how the coronavirus pandemic affected cancer care and cancer patients, and how we could make cancer care more resilient in the future.



28 September 2021 - Ljubljana, videoconference - Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union

The Slovenian National Assembly hosted the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union (SECG). The event was held remotely. The conference was attended by representatives of national parliaments and the European Parliament who – together with representatives from the European Commission and the Eurogroup – discussed current financial and economic issues. The meeting was co-chaired by Robert Polnar, the Chair of the National Assembly Committee on Finance, and Mateja Udovč, Chair of the National Assembly Committee on the Economy.

The Chairwoman of the Committee on Finance and State Budget Grozdana Perić and the Chairman of the Committee on Regional Development and European Union Funds Marko Pavić participated at the Conference.

The participants were greeted by the President of the National Assembly Igor Zorčič who emphasised the importance of digitalisation, a central part of the new development strategy and the European Green Deal. He added that a successful transition to a sustainable, post-pandemic economy, while simultaneously managing to strengthen the rule of law and democracy, is only possible with the cooperation and solidarity of member states and by ensuring users understand, have knowledge of and confidence in the efficiency and security of digital technologies. At the start of the conference, the participants were also addressed by the Eurogroup President Paschal Donohoe. He noted the EU's awareness of the importance of financing for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, while cautioning that reconstruction and better efficiency of markets after the crisis require prudent decisions and a coordinated policy.

The first topic involved the presentation and exchange of views on financing the pandemic exit strategy, with an emphasis on new own resources and the digital services tax. The keynote speakers were the Minister of Finance, Andrej Šircelj, MEP and rapporteur José Manuel Fernandes, European Commissioner for Budget and Administration Johannes Hahn via video message, and the Chair of the National Assembly Committee on Finance Robert Polnar.

During the discussion, participants expressed support for the EU's efforts to establish new own resources for the EU budget, which would provide stable funding for the implementation of EU policies and objectives, including the NextGenerationEU instrument. They also called on the Commission to act as soon as possible and emphasised the importance of political will of the member states and the EU in deciding on new tax proposals. They stressed the importance of establishing a fair and efficient system of taxation for companies and multinationals in the digital age and of guaranteeing a fair distribution of financial resources between member states.

As part of the second conference topic, the keynote speakers discussed the challenges and opportunities of European economic recovery and renewal, namely effectively channelling funds into the implementation of the NextGenerationEU instrument.

The State Secretary from the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology Simon Zajc emphasised the importance of effectively implementing the already adopted recovery and resilience plans, drawing on funds from the NextGenerationEU instrument. He stressed the need for responsible and transparent management of European funds and transparent reporting by member states on the achieved objectives and milestones from their plans.

MEP and Chair of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee of the European Parliament Irene Tinagli emphasised the role of the European Parliament in overseeing the Commission's work on implementing the NextGenerationEU instrument. She highlighted the key role of structural reforms in achieving green and digital goals.



The European Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni expressed satisfaction with the EU's economic recovery and the positive outlook for the future. He also pointed out the potential risks, namely the spread of the delta virus, problems in supply chains, continued high unemployment, inflation, high energy prices and an uneven recovery. Talking about the NextGenerationEU instrument, he emphasised the Commission's role in monitoring the consistent implementation of member states' national plans and the rational use of their funds. He stressed the need to involve national parliaments and local and regional authorities in the effective implementation of national plans. He concluded by highlighting the key challenge of the European economy, a challenge shared by the NextGenerationEU instrument, i.e. a durable and more sustainable economy.

During the discussion, some representatives presented the content of their national plans and the further steps that the member states intend to take to implement them. They stressed that the NextGenerationEU instrument is a great opportunity to achieve those EU goals and policies that are aimed at the next generations. They also highlighted the contribution of this instrument to the realisation of the digital and green transition and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Inter-parliamentary activities in October 2021

25 October – European Parliament, Bruxelles, videoconference - Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Artificial Intelligence policies and strategies at EU and national level

25 – 26 October – European Parliament, Bruxelles, videoconference - 9th Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)

