

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

Permanent Structured Cooperation – PESCO

PESCO is a Treaty-based framework and process to deepen defence cooperation amongst EU Member States who are capable and willing to do so. The aim is to jointly develop defence capabilities and make them available for EU military operations. This will enhance the EU’s capacity as an international security partner, contribute to the protection of EU citizens and maximise the effectiveness of defence spending.

The difference between PESCO and other forms of cooperation is the binding nature of the commitments undertaken by participating Member States. However, participation remains voluntary, decision-making will remain in the hands of participating Member States and the specific character of the security and defence policy of all Member States is taken into account.

A total of 25 Member States have decided to participate in PESCO. The participating Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

On 6 March 2018 the Council formally adopted a first set of 17 different [projects](#) and their participants as well as a [Recommendation](#) which sets out a roadmap for the further implementation of PESCO.



Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Activities of the parliamentary committees

European Affairs Committee

28th session held on 2 March 2018

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

29th session held on 14 March 2018

Committee enacted new Work Programme for the Consideration of the Position of the Republic of Croatia for 2018 and discussed priorities of the Croatian Government during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

30 session held on 15 March 2018, together with the Finance and Central Budget Committee

Committee discussed [Euro Adoption Strategy](#).

31 session held on 22 March 2018, together with the Foreign Policy Committee

Committee discussed [enlargement perspective of the European Union](#).

The European Affairs Committee has forwarded 15 new [European documents](#) in the procedure for the consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for 2018.

Other committees

[Foreign Policy Committee and Defence Committee](#) held session on 14 March 2018 on PESCO.

[Finance and Central Budget Committee, Committee on Regional Development and European Union funds and Committee on Maritime Affairs, Transportation and Infrastructure](#) held session on 22 March 2018 discussing Synthesis Report on the Coordinated Audit on Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS).

Monitoring the work of the Government in the European Union institutions

European Council meetings

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 European Affairs Committee Position of the Republic of Croatia for the European Council meeting on 22 and 23 March 2018.



Council meetings

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

- 3601 Environment Council;
- 3602 Foreign Affairs Council – Defence;
- 3603 Justice and Home Affairs Council;
- 3604 Competition Council;
- 3605 Economic and Financial Affairs Council;
- 3606 Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Rights;
- 3607 Agriculture and Fisheries Council;
- 3608 Foreign Affairs Council;
- 3609 General Affairs Council;
- 3610 General Affairs Council (art. 50).

Application of EU law

In March 2018, the Croatian Parliament enacted [6 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 March 2018, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [58 documents](#): 27 draft laws, 31 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.

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

8 March – Zagreb – Joint Meeting of the European Affairs Committee and Finance and Central Budget Committee with Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources Günther Oettinger

European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources Günther Oettinger met on March 8 with the members of the European Affairs Committee and the Finance and Central Budget Committee to present the priorities of the European Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) post-2020.



Since the EU accession, Croatia has been participating for the first time in negotiations for the drafting of a seven-year MFF, and during the meeting with the European Commission, MPs had the opportunity to expose their views on priorities for the Union and Croatia, while also commenting on the Communication from the Commission, dated February 14, presenting options for the future European budget.

Oettinger stressed that the focus of the new European budget would remain on the Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy, with a special emphasis on migration and refugee issues and Brexit. He urged the deputies to actively engage in MFF negotiations, taking into account the development of Croatian cities and regions.

With regard to the EU's own funds system, parliamentarians have stressed that it is necessary to avoid creating additional tax burdens for EU citizens and to consider the possibility of taxing the digital platforms. They also believe that investment in the overall security of the Union is required, both internally and externally.

Commissioner Oettinger announced that the Commission will announce on May 2 a comprehensive proposal for a future MFF that should include proposals for a new generation of programs and new own resources.

18 – 19 March – Sofia – Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol

Chairman of the Domestic Policy and National Security Committee, Mr. Ranko Ostojić participated at the Second Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) founded pursuant to the Conclusions of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments in April 2017.

The Meeting was attended by more than 200 participants in order to exchange views on the past and future cooperation of Europol with the Western Balkans countries, Europol's Multi-annual objectives 2017-2019, Europol External Strategy 2017-2020, countering illegal content online and optimizing cybersecurity, Europol's contribution to the fight against terrorism and the prevention of organized crime. After the exchange of views, Rules of Procedure for the JPSG were adopted.

Chairman of the Domestic Policy and National Security Committee, Mr. Ostojić welcome the excellent and longstanding work performed by Mr. Rob Wainwright, Executive Director of Europol stressing his strong belief that Ms. Catherine De Bolle, appointed on 8 March 2018, by the European Council as the new Executive Director of Europol, would continue this excellent work. Reflecting on the proposal of Europol's Multi-annual objectives 2017-2019, he expressed the opinion that the European Union and Member States are reacting too slowly, not only in the area of information exchange, but also in terms of cooperation with the Western Balkans countries.

He reminded that the initiative to post Europol liaison officers to the Western Balkans states was launched ten years ago, and its implementation is only accessible right now. Taking into account the fact that seven per cent of the most serious criminals in the European Union come from the Western Balkans region, Ostojić believes that the accession period provides an extraordinary opportunity for the European Union to influence candidate countries and potential candidates from the Western Balkans region to implement the necessary reforms and realize progress in cooperation with Europol in the fight against serious and organized crime and terrorism.

As Croatia will hold the EU Council presidency in the first half of 2020, the Croatian Parliament, i.e. the relevant parliamentary Domestic Policy and National Security Committee, will host a meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol.



Inter-parliamentary activities in April 2018

23 – 24 April – Tallin – Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments

24 April – Brussels – Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the CAP after 2020: the Future of Food and Farming

28 – 29 April – Cairo, Egypt – 14th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for Mediterranean

