

BULLETIN

European Affairs in the Croatian Parliament



Bulletin No 30

March 2020

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

Inter-parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy

Zagreb, 2 – 4 March 2020

The meeting, which brought together 160 members of national parliaments of EU Member States and the European Parliament, members of parliaments of European NATO member countries, candidate countries for EU membership and members of parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina as special guests, focused on the following topics: global challenges for a resilient and influential Europe, a credible European perspective for the Western Balkan countries and strengthening European defence cooperation and industry.

Introductory remarks

The Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Croatian Parliament Miro Kovač opened the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union by highlighting Croatia as an active advocate of a common approach of the Member States to the challenges of 21st century by using the framework and power of the European Union.

He presented the topics that will be discussed at the Conference, with a focus on the priorities of the Croatian Presidency of the Council which are reflected in the strategic documents of the European Union in the new legislative cycle.

Kovač announced that the Croatian Presidency will contribute to the Conference by introducing a new debate model to respond to current events, so the debate on the security situation in EU's Southern Neighbourhood has been included in the Conference agenda. He stressed the Croatian initiative to reintroduce the adoption of the Conference Conclusions.

In conclusion, he stressed the need to strengthen the role and visibility of national parliaments and to bring European topics and the role of parliaments in EU's decision-making process closer to the citizens.

The Chair of the Croatian Parliament Defence Committee Igor Dragovan also addressed the participants and said that the common proactive approach of all Member States to the development of defence capabilities and instruments could reinforce EU's leading role. In addition, he pointed out that defence capability development should be clearly separated from the arms race, because every arms race also implies potential risk of conflict escalation.

In his introductory remarks, the Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs David McAllister welcomed the Croatian Parliament's contribution to the Conference by introducing new elements aimed at promoting further strengthening of its potentials.



He stressed the importance of the topics that will be discussed during the Conference and the participation of and exchange of views with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the priorities of Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Welcome address by Croatian Parliament Speaker Gordan Jandroković

In his welcome address, Croatian Parliament Speaker Gordan Jandroković pointed out the challenges facing the European Union, including the conflicts in the Middle East, terrorist threats, organised crime, climate and demographic changes, weakening multilateralism and disrespect of international law and sovereignty of other countries, as well as technological progress, with one of its consequences being hybrid threats also through the spread of fake news and disinformation.

Speaker Jandroković also addressed the current challenge of the corona virus which requires a fast, efficient and coordinated response in order to prevent its further spreading, and in particular the new migrant crisis. He stressed that the newly developed situation confirmed the need for the European Union to finally assume a coherent response to the migrant crisis and to adopt a policy that will be concrete, consistent, sustainable and based on solidarity and responsibility with respect to protecting the external borders. He pointed out that Croatia is fully engaged – the Croatian police is fully operational in protecting the Croatian border, which is at the same time EU's border. In case of escalation, Croatia will consider other options as well, said Jandroković.

Croatian Parliament Speaker also stressed that it was EU's responsibility to protect its essence, namely the fundamental values and the principles underpinning the security of its territory and citizens. At the same time it is the EU's responsibility to reassume the role of leader in international relations and global partner. In order for that leading role to be credible, it must reflect unity and determination in positions, more active engagement and partnership.

With regard to the European defence cooperation, Croatian Parliament Speaker emphasized that the European Union should provide security with its strategic approach to defence, by conflict prevention and crises management and by strengthening its defence capabilities and defence industry. He welcomed the initiative of Permanent Structured Cooperation which is aimed at strengthening cooperation by developing joint defence capability, investing in joint projects and developing joint operational readiness.

He stressed that EU's credibility in international relations is also reflected through responsible approach to its own neighbourhood, both eastern and southern, including the immediate southeast of Europe. Against this background, he reiterated that Croatia is committed to continued effective and credible enlargement policy, being the guarantee of stability, security, further economic development and consolidation of EU's territory. Ahead of the Zagreb Summit, it is important to intensify the activities and talks on the enlargement policy at various levels, said Jandroković and stressed that he believed in the positive outcome of the forthcoming decisions that would confirm Europe's credibility. He concluded by saying that Croatia expects the same credibility from the southeast European countries when it comes to them embracing all European values, meeting the criteria and stipulated reforms for further democratic strengthening and creating an area of stability and security.

Session I: Global challenges for a resilient and influential Europe

At the beginning, the envoy of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Gordan Grlić Radman presented the priorities of the Croatian Presidency of the EU Council, and then stressed that with a proactive common foreign and security, and economic policy the European Union can become more visible and influential on the global stage. Speaking about the enlargement policy, the Minister announced the EU-Western Balkans summit in Zagreb in May 2020 and called on the Member States to start negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia.



In the debate, members of parliament addressed many challenging issues in the field of EU's foreign policy, such as the future cooperation with the United Kingdom, the EU's foreign policy in Africa and relations with Russia and China. With regard to the current problem of external border protection, the Italian MPs called for solidarity among the participants and institutions in finding a solution to the issues of migration and protection of EU borders.

The participants of the debate agreed on the importance of the Common Foreign and Security Policy as a means to meet the challenges of a complex and unpredictable global environment. Some MPs called for understanding of those Member States that create their own migration policies, while others asked what the alternative to a common migration policy was. It was emphasized that Member States should jointly engage in addressing all threats at the Union's external borders.

Session II: Credible European perspective for the Western Balkan countries

Member of the European Parliament Tonino Picula stressed the importance of enlargement as a mutually beneficial process for both the candidate countries and the European Union. He emphasised the need for consistent application of the rules and criteria set by the European Union, and noted that the implementation of a new, improved Commission's enlargement methodology would contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of full membership in the European Union. Democracy and the rule of law should be a priority for the enlargement process and candidate countries should be assessed on their individual merit. He referred to the financial dimension of a credible enlargement policy and underlined the importance of keeping the appropriate level of funding for the IPA III Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

MEP Željana Zovko stressed the importance of the Zagreb Summit with a view to giving a stronger impetus to the enlargement process and reiterated the need for joint action by the Member States towards the Western Balkans. She also highlighted that enlargement is in the interest of maintaining peace and stability in the region. She urged for the opening of negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia.

The Director for the Western Balkans in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Genoveva Ruiz Calavera presented the main points of the Communication on a credible European perspective for the Western Balkans, seeking to give fresh impetus to the overall accession process, increase credibility and trust on both sides and achieve better results in the field.

In the discussion, the participants of the Conference expressed their support to the opening of the accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia and emphasized that any further delay in opening the negotiations would compromise the overall reform process in these two countries.

Session III: Strengthening European defence cooperation and industry

Croatian Minister of Defence, Damir Krstičević addressed the participants, outlining the priorities of the Croatian Presidency in the field of security and defence, emphasizing that they were in line with EU strategic documents. In his presentation, he referred to the implementation of European defence initiatives and noted that Croatia has been involved in these projects within the framework of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). He stressed that EU-NATO cooperation should be complementary in order to avoid overlaps. He also stressed the need to strengthen the Union's efforts to achieve the security and stability of Southeast Europe. He stressed the need to further develop the European defence industry and outlined Croatia's achievements in that area. He concluded by emphasizing that it was necessary for the European defence industry to be financially competitive under the new Multiannual Financial Framework.

European Commission's Director-General for Defence Industry and Space, Timo Pesonen, agreed that it was necessary to continue developing strategic partnerships and transatlantic cooperation, but also to work on the strategic autonomy of the European Union.



He also stressed the importance of investing in SMEs that would bring innovation and necessity to ensure their cross-border cooperation and further investment in developing programs that would enable progress in that area.

Acting Deputy Secretary General for Common Security and Defense Policy and crisis response of the European External Action Service, Pawel Herczynski stressed the need to achieve coherence in the field of defence systems in the European Union, noting that a strategic review of PESCO to be carried out this year should give a clearer vision of its future development. In conclusion, he noted that the 21st century defence has been a complex issue that involves strategic thinking and connection of defence with other areas and strategic innovations.

Urgency debate

In the continuation of the Conference, summary conclusions of the workshops were presented and an ad hoc topic was discussed.

Ad hoc discussion was included in the Conference Agenda for the first time in order to increase the dynamics of the debate and provide added value to the Conference, at the same time allowing the delegations to have greater influence on the agenda, focusing on recent global developments.

The proposals for discussion on an ad hoc topic submitted by national parliaments focused on the situation in two countries in the southeast of the Mediterranean - Libya and Syria. The discussion highlighted that the long-running conflicts and the humanitarian situation in the two countries pose a threat to peace in the region and affect the security and stability of the European Union. Furthermore, instability in the European neighbourhood poses challenges for the European Union's efforts to improve its effectiveness and visibility as a leading global player.

Adoption of conclusions

The Conference ended with the adoption of [Conclusions](#), which will be addressed to the Speakers of the EU parliaments, the President of the European Parliament, the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Activities of the parliamentary committees

European Affairs Committee held 57th session on 14 February 2020, together with the Agriculture Committee, in order to discuss the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on 27 January 2020 and respective Croatian Presidency priorities with Minister for agriculture Marija Vučković.

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 February Council meetings:

- 3747 Foreign affairs Council.



Application of EU law

In February 2020, Croatian Parliament enacted 3 laws in the process of implementation of European 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 February 2020, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [34 documents](#): 12 draft laws, 22 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 February 2020 the Croatian Parliament representatives participated at the following meetings:

13 February – Bratislava – Meeting of national parliament speakers of the Slavkov group

Parliament Speaker Gordan Jandroković attended a meeting of national parliament speakers of the Slavkov group, which consists of Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as a representative of a country holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union. The meeting on EU enlargement was also attended by parliament speakers of Montenegro and Serbia.

In his opening address, Jandroković underscored that through the priorities of its presidency of the Council of the EU Croatia wants to contribute to strengthening Europe as it confronts numerous internal and external challenges.

He also reported on the four focal topics – the Multiannual Financial Framework, the Conference on the Future of Europe, new relations with the United Kingdom and the continuation of the enlargement policy. Regarding enlargement, Jandroković underscored that the interest of the EU is a stable, peaceful, democratic, prosperous and European-oriented neighbourhood. Further enlargement has to be a priority in political, security and economic terms. Therefore Croatia will continue working on reaching a consensus on the continuation of the enlargement policy among member states before the Summit in Zagreb in May, he said.

Jandroković underscored that Croatia would discuss how to make the negotiations more effective with other member states and how to encourage reforms and membership preparations, following the proposal by the European Commission for a new methodology for the EU accession process. He welcomed the proposal as a step in the further development of the negotiation process, which equally takes into account the interests of member states and candidate countries.

Jandroković outlined the principles underlying the new negotiation process – a more credible process, stronger political management, a more dynamic process and a more predictable process. The principles should enable the continuation of the enlargement process and faster reforms and they should enable candidate countries to meet set political and economic criteria.



He underscored the importance of regional cooperation, which includes resolving issues with dialogue and good neighbourly relations. Croatia is ready to continue helping South-eastern European countries on their European path because it is in its interest to have a peaceful, stable, safe and prosperous neighbourhood, Jandroković said.

18 – 19 February – Brussels – European Parliamentary Week 2020

As part of the parliamentary dimension of the Croatian EU Council Presidency, the Croatian Parliament, together with the European Parliament, co-organises this year's European Parliamentary Week, consisting of the European Semester Conference and the Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union and inter-parliamentary meetings of committees responsible for economic and fiscal affairs, finances, employment and social affairs.

European Semester Conference

Building on the political objective of the new Commission to complete the Economic and Monetary Union, the focus of the debate of this year's European Semester Conference was on widening and deepening of EMU governance.

– The Croatian Presidency of the Council comes at a crucial moment for choosing the further path for the European Union, and Croatia has the opportunity to give Europe its contribution and a new impetus, said the Chair of the Croatian Parliament Committee on Finance and Central Budget Grozdana Perić, who co-chaired the conference, adding that the Eurozone has undoubtedly been strengthened during the last decade, thanks in large part to the strengthening of the economic governance framework, but more work needs to be done to strengthen it further.

Presenting the priorities of the institutions' activities in the upcoming period, ECOFIN Chair and Croatian Deputy Prime Minister Zdravko Marić said that improved rules-based coordination is crucial for sound national policies. He stressed that Croatia is committed to the project of deepening the Economic and Monetary Union. – Not only as Presidency of the EU Council and because of our wish and intention to join the euro area soon, but because we are convinced that a well-functioning Economic and Monetary Union is in the interest of all EU Member States, Marić said.

Eurogroup President Mário Centeno stressed that parliamentary scrutiny improves policy-making, and that common institutions that have been put in place after the economic crisis have brought euro area governance up to a new level. Today, we see the least dispersion of national fiscal positions ever recorded, Centeno noted.

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission Valdis Dombrovskis and Commissioner for the Economy Paolo Gentiloni outlined the Commission's priorities. Paolo Gentiloni stressed that the conference is taking place at an important moment in which the European Parliament has a growing role in the European institutions and when the review of the EU's economic governance process is launched. Institutions face major challenges such as the European Green Deal, digital transition and the demographic challenge.

Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank Fabio Panetta addressed the monetary policy outlook in the upcoming period. He stressed that from the start the EMU project has been accompanied by two central debates – the first about the question whether political convergence should come before monetary union or would economic integration spur political integration, and the second about whether new members should be incorporated in the euro area before deepening its institutional underpinnings. Two priorities need to be discussed – first, as the euro area widens, the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union needs to be made fit for purpose, and second, in the interests of both new and existing euro area members, it is necessary to collectively ensure that accession is fully prepared.



Member of Croatian Parliament Žarko Tušek said the EMU must aim for some form of fiscal union. In the EMU, there is no fiscal transfer system for regions or countries facing asymmetric macroeconomic shocks. This weakness manifested itself during the recent crisis, when several of the countries that were hit hardest went through deep recession without the possibility of transfers from the common budget, Tušek concluded.

After welcoming the efforts made towards the completion of the Banking Union, Member of Croatian Parliament Boris Lalovac stressed that it needs to be completed through a European Deposit Insurance Scheme, a common backstop and further risk mitigation measures.

National ownership of the necessary reforms is crucial for the successful participation of Member States in European coordination mechanisms, said Member of Croatian Parliament Darinko Kosor, referring to Croatia's efforts to reduce macroeconomic imbalances and the steps taken in the process of joining the second European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM II).

– The Banking Union is not completed yet and it needs to be completed through a single deposit insurance scheme, backstop mechanisms and further risk mitigation measures. The responsibility for bank supervision and the deposit insurance scheme, as well as for the fiscal backstop, should be ensured at EU level, said Grozdana Perić and concluded by saying that comprehensive consideration of all the risks is the precondition for strengthening the confidence in the financial system of the EU as a whole.

Inter-parliamentary Committee Meetings

Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee Meeting was dedicated to the possibility of introducing a new international tax system. As one of the keynote speakers, chairwoman of the Finance and State Budget Committee Grozdana Perić said that harmonizing tax policies in the area of direct taxes at EU level would significantly underpin EU's broader goals for smart, sustainable and inclusive development.

When speaking about taxation of digital services, Darinko Kosor stressed that this was a complex international issue. – A global approach is called upon for addressing this taxation challenge, in order to avoid unilateral measures and the risk of double taxation, said Kosor.

The discussion on the objectives in the segment of financial services was centred around how to address the risk to the sustainability of financial markets and how parliaments can contribute to the debate on sustainable financing with the private financial sector, especially on facilitating the financing of green transition.

Addressing the topic of transparency and sustainability, Boris Lalovac said that awareness-raising is required on the importance of environmental and social aspects and their risks in the process of making decisions on investments. Božica Makar stated that additional efforts are required to avoid double taxation and to increase the efficiency of judiciary bodies.

The meeting of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, co-chaired by chairman of the Labour, Retirement system and Social partnership Committee Gordan Maras, addressed the European Child Guarantee as a tool to fight poverty.

Commission Vice-President Dubravka Šuica made her introductory remarks on social security of children and emphasized that all children are entitled to free health care, education and nutrition. Gordan Maras emphasized that the population throughout the European Union is ageing and Europe is facing negative natural population growth; investing in children is therefore our primary task. - Attention needs to be given to improving social conditions such as skills development, gender equality and measures aimed at people with disabilities, Gordan Maras added.

The meeting of the Committee on Budgets was co-chaired by Johan Van Overtveldt, Chair of the Committee on Budgets, and Damir Mateljan, Deputy Chair of the Croatian Parliament's Committee on Regional Development and Funds of the European Union. MPs discussed how to make the EU budget under the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 fit to address global challenges.



Chairman of the European Affairs Committee Domagoj Ivan Milošević stressed that the EU budget positively impacts all Member States and that Cohesion Funds, if used wisely, contribute, both directly and indirectly, to the economies of all Member States. Cohesion Funds are extremely important for achieving real convergence, especially in those Member States which are, on top of ageing population, confronted with massive outflow of young, educated and ambitious young people towards more competitive Member States. In conclusion, he said that in all discussions both eyes must be kept on the economic backbone of the EU and its Member States – the small and medium-sized enterprises. We must ensure that in the next decade the European SMEs become stronger, more innovative, more creative and more technologically advanced, and as a result more competitive.

Recapitulating the debate, Damir Mateljan stressed the importance of combining “old” and “new” policies and how this will be adequately reflected in the Multiannual Financial Framework. – It is necessary to uphold the existing levels of financing for the Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy, funds that will continue to support convergence of less developed regions, concluded Mateljan.

Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union

Session: Becoming a global leader in combating climate change: What role for EU economic, budgetary and social policies?

In his address, Deputy Speaker Željko Reiner stressed that climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face today and that the European Union, with 10% of global CO₂ emissions, has a responsibility to lead the fight against climate change through energy transition. With the European Green Deal, the European Union is launching a new cycle of major changes that will stimulate economic growth, new business models and markets, greater employment, technological development and future-oriented innovations. He also noted that not all Member States have the same starting point in the transition to a low-carbon economy. And therefore, a fair and socially balanced transition is important in order to level the playing field for everyone. He welcomed the Just Transition Mechanism, which should mobilize 100 billion euros for the citizens and regions that will be affected the most by the transition to low-carbon energy.

Croatian Parliament Deputy Speaker Željko Reiner stressed that Croatia recognizes the importance of the goals set in the Green Deal, many of which have already been integrated in the Croatian Energy Development Strategy until 2030 with a view to 2050 and the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2030.

He also noted that Croatia is above the EU average in terms of the share of renewable energy sources, ranking among the countries with lowest CO₂ emissions per capita. With 28%, Croatia is currently ranked first in the EU in terms of meeting energy needs from renewable sources, thereby exceeding the 20% target by 2020 by as much as 40%.

He concluded that in its plans Croatia also took into account the economic and social aspects, including what concerns the citizens most, namely the costs. In this regard, he stressed that a special programme with measures tailored for households in energy poverty will be drawn up aimed at permanently reducing their costs and improving their living conditions.

Speaking on the global perspective, Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance of the United Nations Mark Carney said it was necessary to build a system that needed to do more to harness the full potential of the fight against climate change. – A global perspective on a just transition to 'green jobs' is impossible without a just transition, said Director-General of the International Labour Office (ILO) Guy Ryder. – Ensuring a credible plan that will lead us into a new future is the task of both the EU and the International Labour Office. We have a good foundation for deepening historical cooperation, he concluded.



Vice President of the European Investment Bank Emma Navarro highlighted the key role of the EP and national parliaments in the transition to a climate-neutral economy. – There must be a fair and equitable climate transition that will leave no one behind. Funding is key to climate change, she concluded, adding that sustainability must be at the heart of how we invest.

– Croatia welcomes the European Green Deal as a document that covers all economic sectors and which, in addition to the plan on climate neutrality, must also be seen as a plan for transforming the European economy, said Žarko Tušek, adding that the ecological transition was an opportunity for new economic momentum, the development of industry through increased investment in eco-innovation, the development of green technologies and products, and the adaptation of businesses to the increasingly EU green market. All actors, from the public to the private sector, need to include green benchmarks in their operations, for example in public procurement procedures, to ensure sustainable consumption and production and sustainable jobs, with a more energy efficient economy. A major challenge on the path to climate neutrality is also securing sufficient energy. Croatia, as a small country, sees its opportunity in terms of energy potential, as it has an optimal position for maximum utilization of solar energy, as the cheapest energy product at EU level. Each country should prioritize the potentials that it has the most.

The Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Croatian Parliament, Domagoj Ivan Milošević, who co-chaired the plenary session, in his final remarks noted that this topic was close to everyone, regardless of political choices. Climate change affects a wide range of areas, from quality of life, economy to migration. At the moment, the European Union has the opportunity and responsibility to become a global leader in the fight against climate change. This, he stressed, should not be carried out at the expense of the competitiveness and cost of doing business of small and medium-sized enterprises. – It is necessary to get together with other international partners and get as wide support as possible, he said.

Executive Vice-President of the Commission Valdis Dombrovskis presented the “Sustainable Europe Investment Plan”.

Session: Skills and jobs for inclusive growth: What can we learn from each other's experiences?

Chair of the Labour, Retirement System and Social Partnership Committee of the Croatian Parliament Gordan Maras together with Dita Charanzová, the Vice-President of the European Parliament, co-chaired this plenary session.

The European Commission's priorities in this area were presented by the Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit. National experiences were exchanged by Merja Kyllönen, Grand Committee, Parliament of Finland, Claudia Müller Member of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy of the German Bundestag and Ante Babić, Member of the Labour, Retirement System and Social Partnership Committee, Croatian Parliament.

– Dynamic technological development, globalization, demographic change and an aging population are changing many social aspects, including the world of work. The new age also implies new technologies and new trends, such as robotics, virtual reality or artificial intelligence. This fundamentally changes the world and the way we cooperate, it changes our work environment, social relations, and the public and private sector, MP Babić said in his intervention, adding that the process in Europe, and in Croatia, was reflected in the growing demand for skilled workers in all sectors of the economy. In addition to formal education, the modern world of work seeks additional skills, ranging from general skills, to digital literacy and specific professional expertise. Only an innovative and competitive workforce can drive productivity and economic growth today, he noted. Referring to the demographic crisis facing Europe, Member of the Committee on the Economy of the Croatian Parliament, Žarko Tušek, said during the debate that, with the measures implemented by the states, we certainly needed to sensitize economic operators, employers, to the importance of a pro-natal policy for the continued sustainability of the system.



He also stressed that employers should place emphasis on taking some of the responsibility for this area, such as developing and introducing family-friendly measures in their businesses, such as autonomous rescheduling of working hours, work from home, exercise of leave entitlements, etc.

Member of the Finance and Central Budget Committee of the Croatian Parliament Božica Makar spoke about the educational purposes in the field of Digital Single Market. She stressed that the lack of digital skills has already been hampering the innovation and economic growth of the European Union and that more need to be invested in targeted education for the unemployed and the less employable. She particularly highlighted the traineeship, apprenticeship and short-term training courses. – In addition, awareness of the importance of digital skills for employment and competitiveness is needed in all sections of society, she said.

In his closing remarks, Maras said he was sure that was not the last discussion on the subject. The debate will continue, and most importantly, we are helping each other to create a better quality labour market in the European Union, which all our citizens will benefit from, he stressed.

