



Spotlight

Last Week

European Parliament:

Digital Markets Act: On Tuesday, the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee adopted its position on the Digital Markets Act (DMA) proposal, which sets rules on what companies with “gatekeeper” status will be allowed to do and not to do in the EU.

Common Agricultural Policy Reform: Parliament has given the green light to the new EU Farm Policy. This reformed version aims to be greener, fairer, more flexible and transparent.

Health Union: On Wednesday, MEPs put forward proposals to make medicines more available and affordable, boost transparency on prices and promote joint EU public procurement. The report, which constitutes Parliament’s contribution to the Commission’s plan to update EU pharmaceutical legislation in 2022, was adopted with 527 votes in favour, 92 against and 70 abstentions.

Slovenia: On Wednesday, MEPs debated the state of EU values in Slovenia, focusing on whether the rule of law and media freedom are under threat.

Digital Europe: MEPs call for quick introduction of EU social security pass. In a resolution adopted on Thursday, MEPs urge the European Commission to accelerate its plans for a digital European social security pass (ESSP) to facilitate the portability of social security entitlements for mobile workers.

Legislative initiative report on legal labour migration: MEPs adopted a legislative initiative report on legal labour migration on Thursday. In it, they support the creation of an EU talent pool to match non-EU applicants with prospective EU-based employers, to ease workforce shortages in member states and based on the existing EURES portal.

Resolutions assessing human rights violations committed by the Wagner Group: On Thursday, Parliament adopted three resolutions assessing human rights violations committed by the Wagner Group, atrocities in Somalia and the situation in Cameroon.

Conference on the Future of Europe: The fourth European Citizens’ Panel, focusing on the EU’s role and place in the world, and on migration issues, met online on 26-28 November.

Address by leader of the Belarusian democratic forces, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya: In an address to MEPs on Wednesday, the leader of the Belarusian democratic forces, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, urged Europe to amplify the Belarusian peoples’ voice. In her speech, Ms Tsikhanouskaya began by looking back at the Belarusian regime’s appalling crackdown on demonstrators and dissenting voices following the fraudulent presidential elections in August last year. She talked about all those who have been imprisoned, targeted or even killed by Belarusian security forces, such as human rights activist Ales Bialiatski, blogger Raman Pratasevich, political activist Maria Kalesnikava, art teacher Raman Bandarenka, journalists Daria Tshultsova and Katsiaryna Andreeva, Olympic athlete Krystsina Tsimanouskaya and many more, while also addressing the latest crisis involving migrants on the EU-Belarus borders.

European Commission:

Blacklisting of transport operators involved in facilitating the smuggling or trafficking of people:

As part of the European Union's united response to state-sponsored instrumentalisation of people at the EU's external border with Belarus, the Commission and High Representative propose measures to prevent and restrict the activities of transport operators that engage in or facilitate smuggling or trafficking of people into the EU.

State Aid: The Commission has approved under EU State aid rules [Croatia's map for granting regional aid](#) from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2027 within the framework of the revised Regional aid Guidelines ('RAG').

Coronavirus External Travel: The Commission has proposed an updated framework for travel from outside the EU, prioritising vaccinated travellers, with strong safeguards

Coronavirus: Commission proposes to strengthen coordination of safe travel in the EU. The

Commission has proposed to update the rules on coordination of safe and free movement in the EU, which were put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

€11 billion REACT-EU funds allocation now available for 2022. The Commission has published the allocation of REACT-EU resources for the year 2022. Around €11 billion (in current prices) are now available for programming under Cohesion policy in all 27 Member States. These funds come in addition to the almost €40 billion made available in 2021. Member States will be able to continue implementing recovery measures by increasing resilience of healthcare, business and support to the most vulnerable groups, while also contributing to the green and digital priorities for a smart, sustainable and cohesive recovery.

European Semester Autumn Package: The Commission has launched the 2022 European Semester cycle of economic policy coordination. The European Semester Autumn Package includes the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey, Opinions on euro area Draft Budgetary Plans (DBPs) for 2022, policy recommendations for the euro area and the Commission's proposal for a Joint Employment Report.

Capital Markets: On Thursday, the Commission adopted a package of measures to improve the ability of companies to raise capital across the EU and ensure that Europeans get the best deals for their savings and investments. One year on from the 2020 Capital Markets Union Action Plan, the Commission is delivering on its commitments, proposing measures to boost European capital markets.

European Council and Council of the European Union:

General Affairs Council, 23. November. Ministers discussed the coming European Council on 16-17 December ;Conclusions on resilience and crisis response; Enlargement and stabilisation and association process; Rule of law dialogue; EU-UK relations.

Competitiveness Council (Internal market and industry), 25. November. Ministers reached agreements and exchanged views on a wide range of topics including inter alia: Digital Markets Act; Digital Services Act; Recovery plan for Europe; and Competition policy.

European Court of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has published [special report 26/2021](#) "Regularity of spending in EU Cohesion policy: Commission discloses annually a minimum estimated level of error that is not final".

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) published [review 5/2021](#) "The EU framework for large transport infrastructure projects: an international comparison".

Coming Week:

European Parliament:

This is a Committee's week in Brussels.

The LXVI Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) will be held remotely on Monday and Tuesday. An Inter-parliamentary Committee Meeting (ICM) on violence against women will be held remotely on Tuesday, and the. Union for the Mediterranean., 16th Plenary Session takes place, remotely, on Friday and Saturday.

Commission:

College meeting on Wednesday.

European Council and Council of the European Union:

Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) 29 November

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, 29-30 November

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council 3 December

European Parliament

Committee Meetings– Coming Week Highlights

President's diary. Parliament President David Sassoli will meet the Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament Igor Grosu and Italy's Education Minister Patrizio Bianchi, on Monday. On Tuesday, the President will meet Italy's Culture Minister Dario Franceschini and deliver a video message at the opening of the inter-parliamentary meeting on eliminating violence against women. He will meet the Speaker of Albania's Parliament Lindita Nikolla on Wednesday. On Thursday in Strasbourg, President Sassoli will meet France's President Emmanuel Macron.

EU trade interests. The International Trade Committee will vote on the creation of an international procurement instrument to encourage the EU's trading partners to give each other reciprocal market access for public procurement.

Pegasus spyware. The Civil Liberties Committee will debate the Pegasus spyware scandal with Laurent Richard (Forbidden Stories, winner of the 2021 Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize), Etienne Maynier (Amnesty International's Security Lab), and the European Data Protection Supervisor Wojciech Wiewiórowski (Monday).

European Medicines Agency. The Executive Director of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) Emer Cooke will debate with the Environment and Public Health Committee the latest developments in the COVID-19 vaccination campaign (including reviews, authorisations for paediatric use and boosters), as well as recent developments around COVID-19 therapeutics and the general epidemiological situation (Tuesday).

Screening of asylum-seekers/EU's response to migration crisis. The Civil Liberties Committee will begin legislative work on two asylum and migration proposals. One will cover new procedures to make a quick determination at the EU's external borders whether an asylum-seeker should be refused entry, returned, or referred to the EU's asylum system. The second file is about a new instrument to tackle migration crises in one or more EU countries. A press conference on the crisis instrument proposal will take place at 12:15 (Tuesday).

Gender-based violence. The Women's Rights and the Civil Liberties committees will adopt a legislative initiative calling for a directive to establish the minimum rules concerning the definition of the crime of gender-based cyber-violence and related sanctions, new measures to promote the prevention of this crime, and to ensure justice and support for victims (Tuesday).

Common charger. The Internal Market Committee will have its first exchange of views on the proposal for a common charger for electronic devices, long requested by Parliament. The proposal requires that mobile phones and similar devices, such as tablets, digital cameras, headphones and headsets, handheld videogame consoles and portable speakers, that are recharged via a wired cable, be equipped with a USB Type-C port, regardless of the device brand (Wednesday).

Giscard d'Estaing. President Sassoli will open the tribute, from Parliament's Strasbourg hemicycle, to President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France, Chair of the European Convention and former MEP (Thursday).

Animal welfare during transport. The Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport concludes the work it started in June 2020. It will adopt its main findings on alleged violations in the application of EU rules on the protection of animals during transport, within and outside the EU. It will also vote on draft recommendations to improve current rules (Thursday). A press conference is scheduled for 10:00 on Friday (TBC).

Union for the Mediterranean. The 16th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), bringing together MEPs and parliamentarians from the Mediterranean countries, will kick off with remarks by Parliament's President Sassoli. EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell and Jordan's Foreign Affairs Minister H.E. Ayman Al Safadi should also take the floor (TBC), among several other speakers (Friday and Saturday).



European Parliament

Committee Meetings– Coming Week Highlights

Link to all committee meetings [here](#)

European Commission

Coming Week Highlights

College Meeting Wednesday. Link to Commission Calendar [here](#)

European Council – Council of the European Union

Coming Meetings

Foreign Affairs Council (Trade), 29 November

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

EU trade ministers will hold a special meeting in Geneva from 29 November to 3 December 2021 in the margins of the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

They will endorse two texts with conclusions, one for the start and one for the conclusion of the Ministerial Conference. They are also expected to adopt a Council decision on the EU position for the WTO Ministerial Conference.

Link to full agenda [here](#)

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, 29-30 November

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

EU ministers responsible for education, youth, culture, audiovisual media and sport will meet in Brussels for consultation. The agenda includes blended learning, digital education and digital skills, civil society spaces for young people that enable them to participate genuinely, the availability and competitiveness of European audiovisual and media content, and a European sports model.

Link to full agenda [here](#)

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, 2 December

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Link to full agenda [here](#)



Highlights of Week 40. 22 to 28 November 2021

European Parliament. Highlights Week 47.

Digital Markets Act:

On Tuesday, the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee adopted its position on the Digital Markets Act (DMA) proposal, which sets rules on what companies with “gatekeeper” status will be allowed to do and not to do in the EU.

The proposed regulation will apply to the major companies providing so-called “core platform services” most prone to unfair practices. These include online intermediation services, social networks, search engines, operating systems, online advertising services, cloud computing, and video-sharing services, which meet the relevant criteria to be designated as “gatekeepers”. MEPs also included in the scope of the DMA web browsers, virtual assistants and connected TV.

MEPs also tweaked the Commission’s proposal to increase the quantitative thresholds for a company to fall under the scope of the DMA to €8 billion in annual turnover in the European Economic Area (EEA) and a market capitalisation of €80 billion.

To qualify as a gatekeeper, companies would also need to provide a core platform service in at least three EU countries and have at least 45 million monthly end users, as well as more than 10 000 business users (MEPs clarified in an annex how these indicators should be measured). These thresholds do not prevent the Commission itself from designating other companies as gatekeepers when they meet certain conditions.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Common Agricultural Policy Reform

Parliament has given the green light to the new EU Farm Policy. This reformed version aims to be greener, fairer, more flexible and transparent.

During the negotiations on the legislative reform package, MEPs insisted that strengthening biodiversity and adhering to the EU’s environmental and climate laws and commitments will be key to the implementation of the reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), taking effect in 2023. While the Commission will assess whether national CAP strategic plans are in line with these commitments, farmers will have to comply with climate- and environmentally-friendly practices. Member states will be obliged to ensure that at least 35% of the rural development budget and at least 25% of direct payments will be dedicated to environmental and climate measures.

MEPs ensured that a minimum of 10% of direct payments will be used to support small and medium-sized farms and at least 3% of the CAP budget will go to young farmers. They also insisted that a crisis reserve with an annual budget of €450 million (in current prices) will be permanently ready to help farmers with price or market instability.

Link to EP report [here](#)

MEPs discuss EU summit results

In a debate assessing the outcome of the 21-22 October European Council with Presidents Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen, the leaders of most political groups said not enough was being done to address the attacks on the rule of law. Manfred Weber (EPP, DE) called it disappointing that Article 7 procedures had not been continued. Iratxe García Pérez (S&D, ES) and Stéphane Séjourné (Renew Europe, FR) insisted that these countries should have their COVID-19 recovery plans rejected. On the COVID-19 pandemic, other MEPs



including Ska Keller (Greens/EFA, DE) highlighted the need for a greater rollout of vaccinations, including outside the EU. The need for more solidarity and better coordination between member states was also raised, while Marco Zanni (ID, IT) said that the violent protests taking place in various EU cities show EU institutions must do more.

On Belarus, some leaders stressed the EU must not compromise with the Belarusian dictator-president. Most speakers called for solidarity with Poland, Latvia and Lithuania and help for migrants, while disagreeing on the way this assistance should be given. Several MEPs called for a new migration policy to prevent “an evil autocrat from instrumentalising refugees,” said Martin Schirdewan (The Left, DE).

Link to EP report [here](#) Link to President von der Leyen [here](#)

Health Union:

On Wednesday, MEPs put forward proposals to make medicines more available and affordable, boost transparency on prices and promote joint EU public procurement. The report, which constitutes Parliament’s contribution to the Commission’s plan to update EU pharmaceutical legislation in 2022, was adopted with 527 votes in favour, 92 against and 70 abstentions.

Key recommendations include addressing the root causes of medicines shortages, ensuring patients have access to safe, affordable and effective pharmaceutical treatments, increasing transparency on prices and public R&D funding, and strengthening EU manufacturing and supply resilience. More details on specific aspects covered in the report are available [here](#).

Next steps

The Commission is expected to propose an update of EU pharmaceutical legislation towards the end of 2022.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Address by leader of the Belarusian democratic forces, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya,

In an address to MEPs on Wednesday, the leader of the Belarusian democratic forces, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, urged Europe to amplify the Belarusian peoples’ voice.

In his opening remarks, EP President David Sassoli said: “Sviatlana is a symbol of the struggle for democracy and freedom, and a voice for many political prisoners currently incarcerated in Belarus. (...) The regime did not hesitate to use men, women, and children who were in need of protection (...) for the sole purpose of destabilising the EU. This Parliament calls on the other institutions to stand up for the defence of fundamental rights”, he concluded.

In her speech, Ms Tsikhanouskaya began by looking back at the Belarusian regime’s appalling crackdown on demonstrators and dissenting voices following the fraudulent presidential elections in August last year. She talked about all those who have been imprisoned, targeted or even killed by Belarusian security forces, such as human rights activist Ales Bialiatski, blogger Raman Pratasevich, political activist Maria Kalesnikava, art teacher Raman Bandarenka, journalists Daria Tshultsova and Katsiaryna Andreeva, Olympic athlete Krystsina Tsimanouskaya and many more, while also addressing the latest crisis involving migrants on the EU-Belarus borders.

When doing so, she posed a stark question to MEPs: “Supposing this abuse of migrants is somehow stopped, do you really assume the regime’s abuses and threats beyond its borders will end there?”, she asked, warning of an increase in smuggled drugs and other contraband, military provocations and even nuclear disasters on the EU’s external borders.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Slovenia:

On Wednesday, MEPs debated the state of EU values in Slovenia, focusing on whether the rule of law and media freedom are under threat.



During the debate, many MEPs highlighted that important threats to democracy remain in Slovenia, despite positive developments. Pointing to media defunding, online harassment, legal actions (SLAPPs), and threats against critical voices in Slovenia's highly polarised political environment, MEPs said government officials (including the Prime Minister) are responsible for efforts to silence perceived critics.

Several MEPs also pointed to political reasons deliberately delaying the appointment of the prosecutors to the EPPO. They also highlighted corruption and the impact of the delayed appointments of state prosecutors to relevant investigations, as well as the threat the Union faces from the proliferation of illiberal political movements in member states.

However, a large number of MEPs stated that most of the issues at the heart of this debate are either resolved or are politically motivated. The appointment of prosecutors to the EPPO was finalised earlier today, they say, recalling also the solution found recently for the funding of the national news agency STA. As a result, many MEPs claimed that respect for European values is not a problem in Slovenia.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Digital Europe: MEPs call for quick introduction of EU social security pass

In a resolution adopted on Thursday, MEPs urge the European Commission to accelerate its plans for a digital European social security pass (ESSP) to facilitate the portability of social security entitlements for mobile workers. The ESSP will enable real-time verification of the data of mobile workers by the national authorities of the member state they intend to work in. It will help combat social fraud and undeclared work, but would also make it easier for workers to track and claim their rights and social security contributions.

MEPs say the ESSP initiative should bring clear benefits for all involved stakeholders: mobile workers, businesses, employers, trade unions and national authorities. It should protect workers' rights and make administrative procedures less complicated and more time-efficient. At the same time, an ESSP should respect the diversity of national social security systems and not become a requirement for freedom of movement.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Legislative initiative report on legal labour migration

MEPs adopted a legislative initiative report on legal labour migration on Thursday, with 497 votes to 160 and 38 abstentions. In it, they support the creation of an EU talent pool to match non-EU applicants with prospective EU-based employers, to ease workforce shortages in member states and based on the existing EURES portal.

Parliament calls for an ambitious admission scheme for low- and medium-skilled third country workers, as well as a framework for recognition of their skills and qualifications. Legal migration into the EU by entrepreneurs should be facilitated with an EU-wide admission scheme for entry and residence for people wanting to establish businesses and start-ups, and for highly mobile workers such as artists and cultural professionals. MEPs want the Commission to create a five-year multiple-entry visa allowing for visits of up to 90 days annually.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Resolutions assessing human rights violations committed by the Wagner Group

On Thursday, Parliament adopted three resolutions assessing human rights violations committed by the Wagner Group, atrocities in Somalia and the situation in Cameroon.

MEPs condemn in the strongest terms the heinous crimes committed by the Russian paramilitary organisation the Wagner Group and related private military entities in various conflict areas. The Russian state appears to bear responsibility for the funding, training, management and operational command of these paramilitary groups, MEPs say, while pointing out that the Wagner Group's activities correspond with the spread of Russia's influence in conflict zones. The Wagner Group, and other Russian-led security contractors, should be treated

as proxy organisations of the Russian state, MEPs insist.

The resolution notes that the Wagner Group is present in many conflicts around the world, notably in Ukraine, Syria, Sudan, Mozambique, Libya, the Central African Republic and Venezuela. Given their track record of violations, MEPs welcome the statement made by EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell on the imminent adoption of targeted EU sanctions against “relevant individuals and entities affiliated with the Wagner Group”, as well as individuals and entities working with them. They call for these sanctions to include travel bans and assets freezes on Wagner operatives.

Link to EP Report [here](#)

Conference on the Future of Europe:

The fourth European Citizens’ Panel, focusing on the EU’s role and place in the world, and on migration issues, met online on 26-28 November.

Following a first round of sessions in the European Parliament in Strasbourg in September and October, the European Citizens’ Panels continue their work online throughout November. The recommendations they make will be written up, endorsed by the panellists, and then presented and discussed in the Conference on the Future of Europe Plenary meetings in December and January.

Link to EP report [here](#)

European Commission. Highlights Week 47.

Blacklisting of transport operators involved in facilitating the smuggling or trafficking of people

As part of the European Union's united response to state-sponsored instrumentalisation of people at the EU's external border with Belarus, the Commission and High Representative propose measures to prevent and restrict the activities of transport operators that engage in or facilitate smuggling or trafficking of people into the EU. This will add a new instrument to the EU's toolbox for supporting Member States affected by such hybrid attacks. Other forms of support notably humanitarian assistance should accompany any measures taken under this instrument.

Recent events at the EU's border with Belarus could not have taken place without certain transport operators knowingly or unknowingly contributing to the exploitation of people, with a vast humanitarian toll and at a high cost to security at the EU's external borders and stability in the region.

To ensure that the EU has the appropriate tools in place to combat the instrumentalisation of people for political purposes, the Commission is proposing a new legal framework allowing the EU to adopt targeted measures against transport operators of any mode of transport (land, air, inland waterways and sea), that engage in or facilitate smuggling or trafficking of people into the European Union. Measures would be proportionate and determined on a case-by-case basis. The type of measures could include the limitation of operations in the Union market, the suspension of licenses or authorisations, the suspension of the rights to refuel or carry out maintenance within the EU, and the prohibition to transit or fly over the EU, make technical stops or call into EU ports.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

State Aid

Croatia. The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules [Croatia's map for granting regional aid](#) from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2027 within the framework of the revised Regional aid Guidelines ('RAG'). Croatia's regional map defines the Croatian regions eligible for regional investment aid. The map also

establishes the maximum aid intensities in the eligible regions. The aid intensity is the maximum amount of State aid that can be granted per beneficiary, expressed as a percentage of eligible investment costs.

Greece. The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a €2.27 billion [Greek scheme for the production of electricity from renewable sources](#) and high efficiency combined heat and power (CHP). The measure will help Greece reach its renewable energy targets, without unduly distorting competition, and will contribute to the new European objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

Lithuania. The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules [Lithuania's map for granting regional aid](#) from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2027, within the framework of the revised Regional aid Guidelines ('RAG').

€11 billion REACT-EU funds allocation now available for 2022

The Commission has published the allocation of REACT-EU resources for the year 2022. Around €11 billion (in current prices) are now available for programming under Cohesion policy in all 27 Member States. These funds come in addition to the almost €40 billion made available in 2021. Member States will be able to continue implementing recovery measures by increasing resilience of healthcare, business and support to the most vulnerable groups, while also contributing to the green and digital priorities for a smart, sustainable and cohesive recovery.

The REACT-EU resources are released in two tranches in order to capture thoroughly the evolving social and economic impact of the pandemic. Allocations are based on the countries' GDP, unemployment and youth unemployment. Additionally, the breakdown takes into account the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Member States' economies according to statistic data from 19 October 2021.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

European Semester Autumn Package:

The European Commission has launched the 2022 European Semester cycle of economic policy coordination. The European Semester Autumn Package includes the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey, Opinions on euro area Draft Budgetary Plans (DBPs) for 2022, policy recommendations for the euro area and the Commission's proposal for a Joint Employment Report.

The package draws upon the Autumn 2021 Economic Forecast which noted that the European economy is moving from recovery to expansion but is now facing new headwinds.

This year's Annual Sustainable Growth Survey (ASGS) puts forward an ambitious agenda for 2022 that steers the EU away from crisis management towards a sustainable and fair recovery that strengthens the EU economy's resilience. It also sets out how the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the centrepiece of NextGenerationEU - will be more deeply integrated into the new European Semester cycle. This will ensure synergies between these processes and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens for Member States. Moreover, the ASGS lays down how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be further integrated into the European Semester to provide a fully updated and consistent SDG reporting across Member States.

The Recovery and Resilience Facility, with a budget of €723.8 billion in grants and loans, will have a central role in building a resilient economy that puts fairness at its heart. With the EU's priorities embedded in the RRF, the European Semester will now better guide Member States in making a success of the green and digital transitions, and building a more resilient EU economy.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

Capital Markets

On Thursday, the Commission adopted a package of measures to improve the ability of companies to raise capital across the EU and ensure that Europeans get the best deals for their savings and investments. One year on from the 2020 Capital Markets Union Action Plan, the Commission is delivering on its commitments, proposing measures to boost European capital markets. This will help Europe's economic recovery from the



COVID-19 crisis, as well as the digital and green transitions. In addition, the Commission has put forward a Communication setting out the actions it will take next year to spur the market.

The proposals will ensure that investors have better access to company and trading data. The measures will also encourage long-term investment and make it easier and safer for investment funds to be sold cross-border. Overall, today's proposals will better connect EU companies with investors, improving companies' access to funding, broadening investment opportunities for retail investors, and further integrating EU capital markets.

Link to the legislative proposals [here](#)

[Remarks by Commissioner McGuinness at the press conference on the 2021 Capital Markets Union package](#)

Coronavirus: Commission proposes an updated framework for travel from outside the EU, prioritising vaccinated travellers, with strong safeguards

The Commission is proposing to update the Council recommendation on non-essential travel from outside the EU to simplify the framework and reflect recent developments. Priority will be given to vaccinated travellers. Member States should reopen systematically to those vaccinated with vaccines having completed the WHO emergency use listing process, in addition to reopening to those vaccinated with EU-approved vaccines as is the case today. As an essential safeguard, proof of a negative PCR test will always be required for all travellers who have been vaccinated with a WHO approved vaccine which is not approved by the European Medicines Agency, and for recovered travellers. The updates also introduce a time limit of 9 months for the acceptance of vaccination certificates after the primary vaccination series. This takes into account the guidance of ECDC regarding the administration of booster doses as of 6 months after completion of the primary vaccination series and provides for an additional period of 3 months to ensure that national vaccination campaigns can adjust and people can have access to the administration of boosters. The updates also include acceptance of vaccination certificates issued after an additional ("booster") dose. In addition, considering the increasing vaccination uptake worldwide, the Commission proposes to discontinue the list of countries from where all travellers are allowed regardless of vaccination status, as of 1 March next year. This proposal will now be considered by the Council.

In parallel, the Commission is also proposing today updates to the Council recommendation on free movement within the EU.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

Coronavirus: Commission proposes to strengthen coordination of safe travel in the EU

The Commission has proposed to update the rules on coordination of safe and free movement in the EU, which were put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the summer, vaccine uptake has increased significantly and the EU Digital COVID Certificate has been rolled out successfully, with more than 650 million certificates issued to date. At the same time, the epidemiological situation in the EU continues to develop with some Member States taking additional public health measures, including administering booster vaccines. Taking into account all those factors, the Commission is proposing a stronger focus on a 'person-based' approach to travel measures and a standard acceptance period for vaccination certificates of 9 months since the primary vaccination series. The 9 month period takes into account the guidance of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) on the administration of booster doses as of 6 months, and provides for an additional period of 3 months to ensure that national vaccination campaigns can adjust and citizens can have access to boosters.

The Commission is also proposing updates to the EU traffic light map; as well as a simplified 'emergency brake' procedure.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

European Council and Council of the European Union Highlights Week 40.

General Affairs Council, 23. November

European Council on 16-17 December

Ministers held a first exchange of views on the European Council on 16-17 December, when leaders will come back to the coordination of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and take stock of work done in the Council on enhancing our collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises.

The European Council will also look again at the developments in energy prices as agreed in October.

Conclusions on resilience and crisis response.

Ministers approved conclusions on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises.

Enlargement and stabilisation and association process

Ministers took stock of the state of play and held an exchange of views on the enlargement and stabilisation and association process. The presidency underlined the importance of furthering the enlargement and stabilisation and association process.

Rule of law dialogue

Ministers held a country-specific discussion in the framework of the annual rule of law dialogue with a focus on the situation in Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, and Lithuania. This was the third round of country-specific discussions after the ones in November 2020 and April 2021.

EU-UK relations

European affairs ministers held a discussion on EU-UK relations. They focused in particular on the ongoing talks with the UK regarding practical solutions within the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to address the difficulties that people in Northern Ireland have been experiencing.

European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič updated ministers on the latest developments, including his meeting with David Frost on 19 November, and ministers reiterated their support to the European Commission's approach.

The EU highlights the need to shift into a result-oriented mode and to deliver on the issues raised by Northern Irish stakeholders. It is essential that the recent change in tone now leads to joint tangible solutions in the framework of the Protocol. The presidency also stressed that the unity among member states remains a cornerstone of the EU relations and negotiations with the UK.

Link to Council report [here](#)

Competitiveness Council (Internal market and industry), 25. November

Main Results

Digital Markets Act: The Council unanimously agreed on a general approach on the proposal for a Digital Markets Act (DMA), which aims to create a digital level playing field, with clear rights and obligations for large online platforms.

Ministers emphasised the importance of the DMA, and pointed to the need to regulate large online platforms and to the need for a proposal that ensures legal certainty and is futureproof.

Digital Services Act: The Council agreed on a general approach on the proposal for a Digital Services Act (DSA). The main aim of the DSA is to keep users safe from illegal goods, content and services, and to

protect their fundamental rights online. The proposal also modernises part of the e-commerce directive from 2000.

Recovery plan for Europe: Ministers held a policy debate on the recovery plan for Europe. They discussed the state of play of member states' implementation of national recovery and resilience plans, as well as approaches to the preparation of the plans. Ministers explained the challenges they foresee in the implementation of the plans, such as the current supply shortages in the field of semiconductors and raw materials, as well as the current labour market shortage. Many member states welcomed the European Commission's upcoming Chips Act and the proposal for a second IPCEI on microelectronics.

Competition policy: The European Commission updated ministers on a communication on a competition policy that should be fit for new challenges. This competition policy review was adopted by the European Commission on 18 November. It outlines the contribution of competition policy and of its review to green and digital transition and to a resilient single market.

Link to Council report [here](#)

European Court of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has published [special report 26/2021](#) "Regularity of spending in EU Cohesion policy: Commission discloses annually a minimum estimated level of error that is not final".

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) published [review 5/2021](#) "The EU framework for large transport infrastructure projects: an international comparison".

Slovenian Presidency of Council of the European Union

Programme for Inter-Parliamentary Events

Activities organised by the Slovenian Parliament and the European Parliament

Date	Meeting	EP Committee	Location
Postponed until 2022	2nd Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Evaluation of Eurojust's activities	LIBE	Remote meeting/
30 Nov	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on violence against women	FEMM	Remote meeting/ EP Brussels
TBC	Interparliamentary Committee meeting on actualities of the EU Foreign Policy	AFET	Remote meeting/ EP Brussels
29 – 30 November	LXVI Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (LXVI COSAC)	COSAC	Ljubljana Remote
9 Dec	Interparliamentary Committee meeting on Rule of Law	LIBE	Remote meeting/



10 Dec	High-Level Conference on Migration and Asylum in Europe.	EP/Brussels
23- 24 January 2022	Meeting of the Secretaries-General of the European Union Parliaments (EUSG)	Ljubljana/National Assembly
28 -29 Mar	Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments (EUSC)	Ljubljana

Sources: Websites of : European Parliament European Commission, European Council and Council of the European Union Council, European Court of Auditors and European Ombudsman.