



Spotlight

Last Week

European Parliament:

Conference on the Future of Europe: The European Citizens' Panels will soon start their deliberations with the first 200-citizen meeting between 17 and 19 September in Strasbourg. The first sessions of all four Panels will take place on Parliament's premises in Strasbourg and begin working on draft recommendations within each Panel's remit.

European Commission:

Brexit. On Monday the Commission issued a statement in response to the UK announcement regarding the operation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland. Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič visited Ireland during the week and delivered a speech at the Queen's University, Belfast, on Friday.

Independence of Polish Judges. On Tuesday, the Commission took decisions related to decisions of the Court of Justice and where the actions of the Polish authorities continue to undermine the functioning of the Polish justice system.

NextGenerationEU: Green Bond framework. This week the Commission adopted an independently evaluated Green Bond framework, thus taking a step forward towards the issuance of up to €250 billion green bonds, or 30% of NextGenerationEU's total issuance.

2021 Strategic Foresight Report. On Wednesday the Commission adopted its second annual Strategic Foresight Report.

European Citizens' Initiative. The Commission has decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'Ensuring Common Commercial Policy conformity with EU Treaties and compliance with international law'.

Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). Cyprus and Latvia have received pre-financing of their country's financial allocation under the RRF.

Eurobarometer: Attitudes towards the EU remain positive and broadly stable, according to the latest Standard Eurobarometer conducted in June-July 2021.

State aid: Commission concludes Italian loans worth €900 million to Alitalia are illegal aid

European Council and Council of the European Union:

There were informal meetings Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers, and Economic and Financial Affairs Ministers. The Eurogroup met on Wednesday.

Coming Week:

European Parliament:

Plenary session, Strasbourg. At 9.00 CET on Wednesday, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will deliver her State of the European Union address

The European Citizens' Panels start their discussions with the first 200-citizen meeting between Friday and Sunday in Strasbourg.

Commission:

College meeting on Tuesday

On Wednesday, President Ursula von der Leyen delivers the 2021 State of the Union address at the European Parliament plenary in Strasbourg.

European Council and Council of the European Union:

No meetings are scheduled.

European Parliament

Plenary and Committee – Coming Week Highlights

WEEK 37

Plenary session, Strasbourg

President's diary. On Tuesday, President Sassoli will meet Commissioner Johansson and on Wednesday, he will give a speech at the European Parliamentary Association in Strasbourg.

LGBTIQ rights. Parliament will vote on a resolution assessing the problems and discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ citizens and families in Europe. The resolution calls for the pan-European recognition of same-sex spouses and registered partners, who should enjoy the same rights across EU member states. MEPs also say that parents of rainbow families should be consistently recognised across the EU as the parents of their children. (vote Monday, results Tuesday)

Afghanistan. On Tuesday, MEPs will debate with EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell on the humanitarian and migration crisis in Afghanistan. They will discuss the EU's reaction to the unfolding situation, as well as how Europe can help vulnerable people and those in need of protection in Afghanistan - particularly women and children - and how to engage with the Taliban. A resolution will be put to the vote on Thursday.

State of the European Union address and debate. At 9.00 CET on Wednesday, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will deliver her [State of the European Union](#) address to the European Parliament. She is set to outline the impact of the Commission's work in the past year, particularly in tackling the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, and to share her vision for responding to the challenges facing the EU. The annual State of the Union debate is a chance for MEPs to present their own ideas, scrutinise the work and plans of the Commission, and help to set the EU's policy direction. Lead MEPs will brief journalists about their priorities ahead of the debate.

European Health Union. Parliament will vote on two proposals that are part of a new future-proof EU health security framework, aimed at improving the response to cross-border health crisis, and increase disease prevention and cross-border cooperation. (debate Monday, vote results Wednesday)

EU Blue Card for highly-skilled migrants. MEPs are set to give their final approval to the reform of the EU's Blue Card directive, to facilitate the employment of highly qualified third country nationals in Europe. (debate Tuesday, vote and results Wednesday)

Media Freedom and Rule of Law in Poland. MEPs will assess the continued attacks on media freedom and the rule of law. In particular, they will consider new broadcasting legislation which may threaten media pluralism, as well as the latest Polish challenge to the principles of the primacy of EU law and sincere cooperation between the EU and its member states. (debate Wednesday, resolution voted Thursday)

European Citizens' Panels/Conference of the Future of Europe. The European Citizens' Panels will kick off their discussions with the first 200-citizen meeting between Friday and Sunday in Strasbourg. It will focus on a stronger economy, social justice, jobs/education, youth, culture, and sport/digital transformation. The Panels will come up with ideas and recommendations that will feed into the overall Conference deliberations, in particular into the Conference Plenaries, and ultimately into the report on its final outcome. Further information [here](#)

Link to full plenary agenda [here](#)

European Commission

Coming Week Highlights

College meeting on Tuesday

On Wednesday, President Ursula von der Leyen delivers the 2021 State of the Union address at the European Parliament plenary in Strasbourg,

Link to Full Schedule of Commission events [here](#)

European Council – Council of the European Union

Coming Meetings

No meetings are scheduled for the coming week

Slovenian Presidency of Council of the European Union

Programme for Inter-Parliamentary Events

Activities organised by the the Slovenian Parliament and the European Parliament

| Date | Meeting | EP Committee | Location |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 27 September | Interparliamentary Committee Meeting "Turning the tide on cancer: the view of national parliaments on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan" | BECA | Brussels / Remote |
| 28 September | Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union (SECG) | BUDG EMPL ECON ENVI | Remote / Ljubljana |
| 25 –26 October | Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol | LIBE | EP Brussels / Remote |

Slovenian Presidency of Council of the European Union

Programme for Inter-Parliamentary Events

Activities organised by the the Slovenian Parliament and the European Parliament

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Date tbc (tentative: November) | High-Level Conference on Migration and Asylum in Europe . | | EP/Brussels |
| October (possibly week 41 or 43) | Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Artificial Intelligence policies and strategies at EU and national level | AIDA | Remote meeting/ EP Brussels |
| 9 Nov | Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the expectations of national Parliaments for the Conference on the Future of Europe | AFCO | Remote meeting/ EP Brussels |
| 18 Nov | Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the CAP reform | AGRI | Remote meeting/ EP Brussels |
| 30 Nov | Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on violence against women | FEMM | Remote meeting/ EP Brussels |
| TBC | 2nd Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Evaluation of Eurojust's activities | LIBE | Remote meeting/ EP Brussels |
| TBC | Interparliamentary Committee meeting on Rule of Law | LIBE | Remote meeting/ EP Brussels |
| TBC | Interparliamentary Committee meeting on actualities of the EU Foreign Policy | AFET | Remote meeting/ EP Brussels |
| 28 – 30 November | LXVI Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (LXVI COSAC) | | Ljubljana tbc |
| Date tbc (tentative: November) | Inter-parliamentary Committee meeting on the Evaluation of Eurojust's activities | | EP/Brussels |
| 2022 30 – 31 January tbc | Meeting of the Secretaries-General of the European Union Parliaments (EUSG) | | Ljubljana/National Assembly |
| 2022 4 - 5 April tbc | Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments (EUSC) | | Ljubljana |



Slovenian Presidency of Council of the European Union

Programme for Inter-Parliamentary Events

Activities organised by the the Slovenian Parliament and the European Parliament

Format: physical meetings or VC (video conference) – a decision will be taken approximately three months in advance



Highlights of Week 36. 6 -12 September

European Parliament.

Conference on the Future of Europe: European Citizens' Panels set to start

The European Citizens' Panels will kick off their deliberations with the first 200-citizen meeting between 17 and 19 September in Strasbourg.

The first sessions of all four Panels will take place on Parliament's premises in Strasbourg and begin working on draft recommendations within each Panel's remit. This first European Citizens' Panel will focus on a stronger economy, social justice, jobs/education, youth, culture, and sport/digital transformation, based on citizens' contributions collected from across Europe on the Multilingual Digital Platform, as well as support and presentations from prominent academics.

Each European Citizens' Panel will establish its working methods, select the 20 citizens per Panel who will participate in the Conference Plenary, and confirm the composition of its working groups. Citizens have been chosen randomly by specialist contractors on behalf of the EU institutions, using methodologies that ensure that they are representative of the EU's diversity in terms of geographic origin, gender, age, socioeconomic background and level of education. Young people between 16 and 25 make up one-third of each panel. These citizens will come up with ideas and recommendations that will feed into the overall Conference deliberations, in particular into the Conference Plenaries, and ultimately into the report on its final outcome.

Link to EP report [here](#)

European Commission

Statement by the European Commission following the UK announcement regarding the operation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland

On Monday the Commission issued a statement in response to the UK announcement regarding the operation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland.

The Commission said it takes note of the UK ministerial statement regarding the operation of the Protocol on the current basis, including the continuation of existing grace periods; that it regards the Withdrawal Agreement as an international agreement and its focus remains on identifying long-term, flexible and practical solutions to address issues related to the practical implementation of the Protocol that citizens and businesses in Northern Ireland are experiencing. However, it will not agree to a renegotiation of the Protocol. The Commission reserves its rights in respect of infringement proceedings. At present, the Commission is not moving to the next stage of the infringement procedure launched in March 2021, and is not opening any new infringements for now.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

Independence of Polish judges:

On Tuesday, the Commission took two separate decisions, both related to decisions of the Court of Justice and where the actions of the Polish authorities continue to undermine the functioning of the Polish justice system.



First, the Commission decided to request the Court of Justice to impose financial penalties on Poland to ensure compliance with the Court's interim measures order requested under Article 279 TFEU (of 14 July 2021). The order related to the functioning of the Disciplinary Chamber of the Polish Supreme Court and the suspension of further provisions of Polish law affecting judicial independence. The Commission is asking the Court to impose a daily penalty payment on Poland for as long as the measures imposed by the Court's order are not fully implemented.

Second, the Commission also decided to send a letter of formal notice under Article 260(2) TFEU to Poland, for not taking the necessary measures to comply fully with the judgment of the Court of Justice (of 15 July 2021) finding that Polish law on the disciplinary regime against judges is not compatible with EU law.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

NextGenerationEU: Green Bond framework,

This week the Commission adopted an independently evaluated Green Bond framework, thus taking a step forward towards the issuance of up to €250 billion green bonds, or 30% of NextGenerationEU's total issuance. The framework provides investors in these bonds with confidence that the funds mobilised will be allocated to green projects and that the Commission will report on its environmental impact.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

2021 Strategic Foresight Report:

On Wednesday the Commission adopted its second annual Strategic Foresight Report – “The EU's capacity and freedom to act”*. This Communication presents a forward-looking and multidisciplinary perspective on the EU's open strategic autonomy in an increasingly multipolar and contested global order. The Commission has identified four main global trends, affecting the EU's capacity and freedom to act: climate change and other environmental challenges; digital hyperconnectivity and technological transformation; pressure on democracy and values; and shifts in the global order and demography. It has also set out 10 key areas of action where the EU can seize opportunities for its global leadership and open strategic autonomy. Strategic foresight thereby continues to inform the Commission's Work Programmes and priority-setting.

Link to statement [here](#)

European Citizens' Initiative:

The Commission has decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'Ensuring Common Commercial Policy conformity with EU Treaties and compliance with international law'.

The organisers of the initiative call on the Commission to 'propose legal acts based on the Common Commercial Policy to prevent EU legal entities from both importing products originating in illegal settlements in occupied territories and exporting to such territories, in order to preserve the integrity of the internal market and to not aid or assist the maintenance of such unlawful situations.'

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

Cyprus. On Thursday, the Commission disbursed €157 million to Cyprus in pre-financing, equivalent to 13% of the grant and loan component of the country's financial allocation. The pre-financing payment under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) will help to kick-start the implementation of the crucial investment and reform measures outlined in [Cyprus' recovery and resilience plan](#).

Latvia. Latvia has received €237 million in pre-financing, equivalent to 13% of the country's financial contribution as established in the Council Implementing Decision. The Commission will authorise further disbursements based on the implementation of the investments and reforms included in [Latvia's recovery and](#)

[resilience plan](#). The country is set to receive €1.8 billion in total, fully consisting of grants, over the lifetime of its plan.

Eurobarometer: Optimism about the future of the EU at its highest since 2009

Attitudes towards the EU remain positive and broadly stable, according to the latest Standard Eurobarometer conducted in June-July 2021.

Optimism about the future of the EU has reached its highest level since 2009 and trust in the EU remains at its highest since 2008. Support for the euro remains stable at its highest since 2004. The survey also indicates a significant improvement in the perception of the state of national economies.

Link to Eurobarometer [here](#)

State aid: Commission concludes Italian loans worth €900 million to Alitalia are illegal aid

The European Commission has concluded that two State loans for an amount of €900 million, granted by Italy to Alitalia in 2017, are illegal under EU State aid rules. Italy must therefore recover the illegal State aid, plus interest, from Alitalia.

Alitalia is an Italian airline, providing domestic and international air transport services, maintenance, ground handling and cargo transportation. It has been loss-making since 2008. In early 2017, Alitalia was in urgent need of liquidity, but it had lost access to credit markets due to its deteriorated financial situation. In order to keep Alitalia operating, in May and October 2017, Italy granted the company two loans for the amount of €600 million and €300 million, respectively. At the same time, Alitalia was placed into special bankruptcy proceedings under Italian bankruptcy law.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

EU - UK Relations

Speech by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič at the Queen's University, Belfast

Link to statement [here](#)

European Council and Council of the European Union

Eurogroup, 10 September

Economic situation in the euro area

The director of the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC), Andrea Ammon, updated the Eurogroup on the COVID-19 epidemiological situation. Ministers followed up with a discussion on the economic situation and exchanged views with the chair of the European Parliament's committee on economic and monetary affairs, Irene Tinagli.

Euro area: managing the uneven impact of COVID-19

The Eurogroup discussed the lessons learned from the uneven impact of COVID-19 across economic sectors and regions. Ministers focused on the implications of the pandemic in the medium-term in terms of policy actions necessary to avoid divergences. The discussion was supported by a note prepared by the European Commission on the issue of convergence in the euro area.



Corporate solvency and adjustment capacity in the euro area in the recovery period

Following their agreement in previous meetings to monitor solvency and restructuring needs, ministers discussed the solvency situation of the corporate sector and potential measures to facilitate the corporate restructuring and economic adjustment in the euro area in the post-COVID recovery period.

Link to Council report [here](#)

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