

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

The Strategic Compass

In March 2022 the European Union **has formally** approved the Strategic Compass.

The Compass gives the European Union an **ambitious plan of action for strengthening the EU's security and defence policy** by 2030.

The more hostile security environment requires us to **make a quantum leap forward** and increase our capacity and willingness to act, strengthen our resilience, and invest more and better in our defence capabilities. The strength of our Union lies in unity, solidarity and determination. The objective of the Strategic Compass is to make the **EU a stronger and more capable security provider**. The EU needs to be able to protect its citizens and to contribute to international peace and security. This is all the more important at a time when war has returned to Europe, following the unjustified and unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine, as well as of major geopolitical shifts. This Strategic Compass will enhance the EU's strategic autonomy and its ability to work with partners to safeguard its values and interests.

A **stronger and more capable EU in security and defence** will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members. It will also intensify support for the global rules-based order, with the United Nations at its core.

The Strategic Compass is a guide for action. It sets out an ambitious way forward for our security and defence policy for the next decade. It will help us face our security responsibilities, in front of our citizens and the rest of the world.

The Strategic Compass provides a shared assessment of the **strategic environment** in which the EU is operating and of the **threats and challenges** the Union faces. The document makes concrete and actionable proposals, with a very precise timetable for implementation, in order to **improve the EU's ability to act decisively** in crises and to defend its security and its citizens.

The Compass covers all the aspects of the security and defence policy and is structured around four pillars: **act, invest, partner** and **secure**.

Act

In order to be able to act rapidly and robustly whenever a crisis erupts, with partners if possible and alone when necessary, the EU will:

- establish a strong **EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5000 troops** for different types of crises,
- be ready to deploy **200 fully equipped CSDP mission experts** within 30 days, including in complex environments,



- conduct regular **live exercises on land and at sea**,
- enhance **military mobility**,
- reinforce the EU's **civilian and military CSDP** (Common Defence and Security Policy) **missions and operations** by promoting a rapid and more flexible decision-making process, acting in a more robust way and ensuring greater financial solidarity,
- make full use of the **European Peace Facility** to support partners.

Secure

In order to strengthen its ability to anticipate, deter and respond to current and fast-emerging threats and challenges, and safeguard the EU's security interest, the EU will:

- boost its **intelligence** analysis capacities,
- develop **Hybrid Toolbox and Response Teams** bringing together different instruments to detect and respond to a broad range of hybrid threats,
- further develop the **Cyber Diplomatic Toolbox and set up an EU Cyber Defence Policy** to be better prepared for and respond to cyberattacks,
- develop a **Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox**,
- develop an **EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence**,
- strengthen the EU's role as a **maritime security actor**.

Invest

Member states have committed to **substantially enhance their defence expenditures** to match our collective ambition to reduce critical military and civilian capability gaps and **strengthen our European Defence Technological and Industrial Base**. The EU will:

- exchange on national **objectives on increased and improved defence spending** to match our security needs,
- provide further incentives for member states to engage in collaborative capability development and jointly invest in **strategic enablers** and **next generation capabilities** to operate on land, at sea, in the air, in the cyber domain and in outer space,
- **boost defence technological innovation** to fill strategic gaps and **reduce technological and industrial dependencies**.

Partner

In order to address common threats and challenges, the EU will:

- strengthen cooperation with strategic partners such as **NATO**, the **UN** and **regional partners**, including the OSCE, AU and ASEAN,
- develop more tailored **bilateral partnerships with like-minded countries** and strategic partners, such as the US, Canada, Norway, the UK, Japan and others,
- develop **tailored partnerships** in the Western Balkans, our eastern and southern neighbourhood, Africa, Asia and Latin America, including through enhancing dialogue and cooperation, promoting **participation in CSDP missions and operations and supporting capacity- building**.



Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Activities of the parliamentary committees

European Affairs Committee

36th session held on 9 March 2022

- Marking the tenth anniversary of the ratification of the Treaty of Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union in the Croatian Parliament
- The Committee issued the [Work Program](#) for Considering the Position of the Republic of Croatia for 2022.

37th session held on 25 March 2022

The European Affairs Committee discussed [European documents](#) in accordance with the [Work Programme for the Consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for 2021](#).

Other committees

Other parliamentary committees discussed [European documents](#) in accordance with the [Work Programme for the Consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for 2021 and 2022](#).

Monitoring the work of the Government in the European Union institutions

Council

The Croatian Government submitted to the relevant parliamentary committees its positions for 8 Council meetings held in March 2022.

Application of EU law

In March 2022, the Croatian Parliament enacted [5 laws](#) in the process of harmonization with European Union law.

EU documents Forwarded Directly to the Croatian Parliament

According to the Protocol (no 1) on the Role of the National Parliaments in the European Union, all draft laws and communications shall be forwarded directly to the national parliaments.

The Croatian Parliament publishes on a daily basis the EU documents received, along with the information on: document number, adoption procedure, transmission date and subsidiarity deadline.

In March 2022, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [50 documents](#): 29 draft laws and 21 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.

2 March – Paris, videoconference – Conference on Digital and Space

Chairman of the European Affairs Committee participated at the Conference.

An opening debate in the morning gave participants an opportunity to discuss the support that Europe and each Member State can offer Europe's cultural and creative industries. A second debate, in the afternoon, discussed the competitiveness of Europe's space industry faced with the growing New Space Economy and with defence issues.

The scope of application of the space economy now ranges far beyond the traditional space race between major powers and could ultimately extend to cover the majority of human activities: energy management through monitoring of climate warming, developing new means of transport thanks to vehicle and ship positioning aids, the digitisation of the economy through the use of connected objects, etc. Such possibilities are attracting new players, mostly from the private sector, forming what is coming to be known as the New Space economy; in the future, the traditional State agencies will be called upon to cooperate more closely with these new entrants.

3 March – Bruxelles/European Parliament, videoconference - Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on "An ambitious future for Europe's women after COVID-19: mental load, gender equality in teleworking and unpaid care work after the pandemic"

Chairwoman of the Gender Equality Committee Marija Selak Raspudić participated at the Meeting.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for gender equality and women's economic empowerment in order to build resilient societies, boost rules of employment, social security and pensions for all women, especially in female dominated sectors, including unpaid care work.

At the same time, the necessity was confirmed of equal representation of women and men in leadership and the decision-making process when enacting and lifting measures in crises, as well as in all stages of the design, adoption and implementation of recovery plans. This ICM provided a global forum for an exchange of best practices and knowledge sharing. At the same time, it allowed to gain insights into the recent developments in advancing women's empowerment during crises triggered by COVID-19.

3 – 5 March – Paris – LXVII COSAC Plenary Meeting

After two years of remotely held COSAC meetings, this was the first fully in-presence organised meeting at the premises of the French National Assembly.

The European Affairs Committee Delegation comprised of Chairman Domagoj Hajduković, Deputy Chairman Bojan Glavašević and members Marijana Balić i Davor Ivo Stier participated at the Conference.

On the first day of the Conference, Prime Minister Jean Castex focused on the united EU response to the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the impact this war would have on strengthening European defence and European strategic independence in the economic and energy fields.

On the second session of the day dedicated to the recovery plan for Europe, First Vice-President of the European Parliament Mr Othmar Karas underlined that Next Generation EU and the RRF facility to respond to the pandemic crisis should be implemented in every detail, but would not be sufficient under these new circumstances.



The climate change and energy transition, was debated in light of the Russian invasion in Ukraine. The session was introduced by speeches from Mr Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, Mr Pierre Gattaz, President of Business Europe, and Mr Christian Gollier, Director General of Toulouse School of Economics and visiting Professor at the Collège de France. During the debate Ms Dolors Montsserat emphasised the importance of a fair energy transition that would leave nobody behind and the need to strengthen Europe's energy autonomy in a context of multiple crises aggravated by soaring energy prices.

On the second day of the Conference, after a video message from Ms Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, the two co-chairs of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE), MEP Mr Guy Verhofstadt and Commissioner Ms Dubravka Šuica, informed parliamentarians about the latest developments.

Under a short information point on the agenda, Mr Jean-Francois Rapin and Ms Sabine Thillaye reported briefly on the works of the two COSAC working groups created at the COSAC Chairperson's Meeting of 14 January 2022 upon initiative of the French Presidency (one on the role of national Parliaments in the EU; and another on the place of European Values at the heart of belonging to the EU).

During the final session on Ukraine unanimously all the parliamentary delegations condemned the Russian aggression and expressed their solidarity with the democratically-elected authorities of Ukraine and with the Ukrainian people.

The Conference adopted on 5 March a Statement in support of Ukraine attacked by the Russian Federation, also welcoming the European Parliament's Resolution of 1 March 2022 (see the text in [IPEX](#)).

11 – 12 March – Strasbourg/European Parliament, videoconference – 4th Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Chairman of the Committee on Regional Development and European Union Funds Marko Pavić participated at the Conference.

The Conference Plenary took stock of 88 recommendations made by the European Citizens' Panels on 'EU in the world / migration' and on 'a stronger economy, social justice and jobs / education, culture, youth and sport / digital transformation', as well as related recommendations from the national Citizens' Panels. Putin's invasion of Ukraine and the EU's reaction to it featured prominently in the topical debates of this weekend.

Representatives of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine, Parliamentarians from the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and representatives of the association PromoUkraina, took the floor to share their views during the conversation on 'EU in the world'. Representatives from the Western Balkans were also participating.

13 – 14 March – Paris – Conference on Strategic Economic Autonomy

A conference was held in Paris, in the framework of the French Presidency of the EU Council parliamentary dimension, with the participation of the Commissioner for the Internal Market Thierry Breton as keynote speaker.

The Committee on Economy Delegation comprised of Chairman Žarko Tušek and member Željko Pavić and Member of the Agriculture Committee Siniša Jenkač participated at the Conference.



15 – 16 March – Bruxelles/European Parliament, videoconference – European Parliamentary Week 2022: European Semester Conference and the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union

Chairwoman of Finance and Central Budget Committee Grozdana Perić participated at the Meeting.

The European Parliamentary Week brought together Parliamentarians from the European Union, candidate and observer countries to discuss economic, budgetary, employment and social matters. Again, this year the conference was dominated by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on EU economies, its recovery and next steps. The parliamentarians debated on the implementation of the national recovery and resilience plans, as well as on the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact and the new own-resources.

The European Parliamentary Week consists of the European Semester Conference and the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union.

The programme of this year edition included addresses, among others, of the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, Antonio Costa, Prime Minister of Portugal and Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of Greece.

20 – 21 March – Val Del Loire - Chairpersons' conference on European policies on behalf of citizens (CAP, regional funds, and sustainable tourism in the new context of the Green Deal)

Chair and Deputy Chair of Agriculture Committee Marijana Petir and Ružica Vukovac participated at the Conference.

The third thematic conference of the parliamentary component of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union was dedicated to European policies on behalf of citizens: the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Green Deal and the regional funds. The conference was held in the Loire Valley, a local territory particularly appropriate to these themes.

An initial debate addressed the CAP and food quality, a question at the heart of public debate and EU citizens' concerns. The theme provided a forum for discussing the role that food-related issues play in the CAP, at a time when growing numbers are calling for the CAP to become a common agricultural *and food* policy (CAFP). It has explored the fundamental role of quality labels that offer a guarantee of product quality to consumers and provide essential legal protection for producers: the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) labels. Lastly, it will highlight the importance of organic farming – and, more broadly, of a reduction in the use of pesticides – in improving food quality.

A second debate focused on the role of the regional funds in territorial energy transition. The European Green Deal calls for energy transition to be accelerated across EU territory, in particular as regards low-emission transport, energy renovation of buildings and the development of renewable energies. The legislative package on the Cohesion policy of 1 July 2021 makes an addition to the existing funds (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion), in the form of the Just Transition Fund (JTF), specifically designed to reduce the socio-economic costs of a transition to a climate-neutral economy for those territories and sectors worst affected.



A third debate tackled an issue that has thus far received little media attention, that of sustainable tourism in the new context created by the Green Deal and European climate commitments. As the world's most popular tourist destination, the European Union needs to preserve a major economic activity whilst simultaneously confronting the environmental challenges this activity is increasingly raising (transport emissions, from air travel in particular, waste, site pollution and air pollution), given that tourism accounts for up to 8% of greenhouse gas emissions.

25 – 26 March – Bruxelles/European Parliament – Conference on the Future of Europe Plenary

The Plenary and the nine Working Groups started working on the Conference's final proposals at a meeting held on 25-26 March in the European Parliament in Strasbourg with some participating online.

Preliminary drafts, prepared by the Chairs and citizens' spokespersons and assisted by the Common Secretariat, were discussed by all members of the Plenary: citizens, MEPs, national parliamentarians, representatives of the Council, the Commission, social partners, civil society and representatives of local and regional authorities. These drafts were mainly based on recommendations from the European Citizens' Panels and national panels, ideas gathered through the Multilingual Digital Platform, as well as input from the debates in Plenary and Working Group sessions.

Presenting the work of the European Parliament Working Groups, MEPs stressed that even the most ambitious citizens' proposals must be taken seriously and pledged to defend the valuable work done by European citizens within the Conference process. In line with the citizens' recommendations, many MEPs called for stronger European policies in areas such as health, foreign policy, youth, education and culture. Europe must become more ambitious and take the lead in digital connectivity, according to some, and should support its SMEs, according to others.

28 – 29 March – Brdo pri Kranju – EU Speakers Conference (EUSC)

Croatian Parliament Speaker Gordan Jandroković participated at the Conference.

We are living in the most challenging times after World War II, and parliaments should have the role of guardians of democracy and the rule of law, Croatian Parliament Speaker Gordan Jandroković said at the Conference of the Speakers of EU Parliaments in Brdo Pri Kranju.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine, which is a threat to European and global security, significantly contributed to that, and societies must adapt to the new situation, he stressed. According to him, the government should have a key role, and parliaments as guardians of democracy should ensure compliance with the rule of law and respect for human rights. The parliament has to take on that role while supporting the government in taking quick and difficult decisions, said Jandroković.

On the sidelines of the conference, Jandroković met with his Slovenian counterpart Igor Zorčič. Later in the day, he met with Estonian Parliament Speaker Jüri Ratas and President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic Markéta Pekarová Adamová and Spanish President of the Congress of Deputies Meritxell Batet Lamana.

In addition to participants from EU member states, the event was attended by representatives from EU candidate countries from North Macedonia and Turkey, as well as special guest representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. Altogether, the delegations include over 300 guests. The conference was attended by a delegation from the European Parliament, led by EP President Roberta Metsola.



Inter-parliamentary activities in April 2022

8 – 9 April – Strasbourg – 6th Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe

21 April – Bruxelles/European Parliament - Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on 'Corporate responsibility for serious human rights abuses in third countries' jointly organised with the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) and the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) of the European Parliament

25 April – Bruxelles/European Parliament – Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on subsidiarity mechanism organised by Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) of the European Parliament

29 – 30 April – Strasbourg – 7th Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe

