

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

Contributions to the European Defence

The Commission has put forward two initiatives in areas critical for defence and security within the European Union. These comprise a [Contribution](#) to European defence, covering the full range of challenges, from the conventional defence industry and equipment on land, sea and air, to cyber, hybrid and space threats, military mobility and the relevance of climate change; and a [roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence](#). These new initiatives are concrete steps towards a more integrated and competitive European defence market, particularly by enhancing cooperation within the EU, thereby building scale, mastering costs and enhancing operational effectiveness. This is Commission’s input in the run-up to the [EU Strategic Compass on Security and Defence](#).

By using all available means in an ever-evolving geopolitical and technological context, the Commission aims at strengthening the Union's ability to counter fast-changing multi-layered threats.

The Commission has, in particular, identified the following main new areas to further strengthen the competitiveness of the European defence market:

- explore how to further stimulate Member States investments in key strategic capabilities and critical enablers that are developed and/or procured in European Union cooperative frameworks;
- further incentivise the joint procurement of defence capabilities developed in a collaborative way within the EU;
- call upon Member States to continue moving towards streamlined and more convergent arms exports control practices, in particular for defence capabilities developed in an EU cooperative framework.

The Strategic Compass on Security and Defence

With the Strategic Compass, Member States will set out a common strategic vision for EU security and defence for the next 5-10 years. Building on a common assessment of the threats and challenges, the Compass will provide operational guidelines to enable the EU to become a stronger security provider and a more responsible and reliable partner, namely when it comes to responding to external crises, building the capacity of partners and protecting the Union and its citizens.



As proposed to Member States, the Strategic Compass will set policy orientations, specific goals and objectives in four work strands:

- **Act:** we need an EU able to act rapidly and robustly whenever a crisis erupts, with partners if possible and alone when necessary;
- **Secure:** we need to enhance our ability to anticipate threats, guarantee secure access to strategic domains and protect our citizens;
- **Invest:** we need to invest more and better in capabilities and innovative technologies, fill strategic gaps and reduce technological and industrial dependencies;
- **Partner:** we need to strengthen our cooperation with partners to address common threats and challenges.

These four strands are interconnected. The Strategic Compass is a guide for action. It puts forward concrete actions with timelines to measure our progress in the implementation.

The draft Strategic Compass is based on discussions amongst EU Member States over the past year, which were structured and facilitated by the EEAS and steered by the High Representative. The European Commission as well as European Defence Agency were closely associated throughout the process.

On 16 November 2021, the High Representative [presented](#) the first draft to Ministers. Based on their guidance, negotiations on the Compass will continue between Member States in view of adoption by the Council in March 2022.

Debate on the Strategic Compass in the Croatian Parliament

The Foreign Policy Committee, the European Affairs Committee and the Defence Committee, co-chaired by Gari Cappelli, Domagoj Hajduković and Ante Deur, held a joint session on 15 February 2022 to discuss the Croatian Government's Report on Foreign Affairs Council meeting in the format of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers held on 15 November 2021.

Opinions were exchanged on a number of current topics in the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union, primarily on the preparation of the Strategic Compass, which should become a key policy framework. Current issues within the framework of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the concept of coordinated maritime security, progress on military mobility, as well as other current defence topics were also discussed.

It was emphasized in the discussion that the Strategic Compass is undoubtedly the most important and ambitious project in the field of EU security and defence, and that the EU and its member states are in an increasingly complex international geopolitical and security environment.

Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Activities of the parliamentary committees

European Affairs Committee

32nd session held on 9 February 2022

The European Affairs Committee discussed current state of negotiations on the EU-Australia Trade Agreement. The interim charge d'affaires of Australia in Croatia, Andrea Carlo Biggi, also took part in the discussion, with whom the Committee members exchanged views on certain aspects of the negotiations, possible obstacles and doubts.



33rd session held on 15 February

The European Affairs Committee at the joint session with the Foreign Policy Committee and the Defence Committee discussed the Croatian Government's Report on Foreign Affairs Council meeting in the format of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers held on 15 November 2021.

34th and 35th session held on 18 and 24 February

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 2020 and 2021](#).

Agriculture Committee

At its 49th thematic session held on 9 February 2022, the Agriculture Committee discussed the state of the fish stock in the Republic of Croatia and the challenges facing the fisheries sector in the context of the Common Fisheries Policy. Sustainability of fisheries management, competitiveness of the fisheries sector and preservation of fisheries communities in the Adriatic in changing climatic conditions and in line with the objectives of the European Common Fisheries Policy is a challenge and opportunity for blue economy growth and improving socio-economic conditions for fishermen in Croatia.

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](#).

Monitoring the work of the Government in the European Union institutions

Council

The Croatian Government submitted to the relevant parliamentary committees its positions for 4 Council meetings held in February 2022.

Application of EU law

In February 2022, the Croatian Parliament enacted [4 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 February 2022, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [54 documents](#): 37 draft laws and 17 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.



1 February – Bruxelles, European Parliament – Second Annual Meeting on the Evaluation of Eurojust’s Activities

Chairman of the Judiciary Committee Mišel Jakšić participated at the Meeting. In accordance with the Eurojust Regulation, an annual joint evaluation of the activities of Eurojust by the European Parliament and National Parliaments should be undertaken in the framework of an Interparliamentary Committee Meeting organised by the European Parliament in Brussels, with the participation of members of the competent committees of the EP and of the National Parliaments.

Therefore, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament and the Legislative Dialogue Unit from the EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments co-organised the second annual Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on "The evaluation on the activities of Eurojust". The event was chaired by Mr Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR (LIBE Chair) and approximately 48 MPs from 20 Member States and 26 Chambers as well as some 20 MEPs have participated in the event..

The first session on Eurojust's current and future activities, especially in the current pandemic started with a presentation of the President of Eurojust, Mr Ladislav Hamran. He reported that in the past ten years, casework of Eurojust has increased tremendously. He noted three key areas for Eurojust's future activities: modernising the case management system, establishing secure communication channels between national authorities as well as continuing to reinforce the global network beyond the borders of the EU. His presentation was followed by a lively exchange of views involving national parliamentarians and MEPs.

The second session on the cooperation between Eurojust, the European Public Prosecutor's Office and national authorities was initiated by Mr José De La Mata, National Member for Spain at Eurojust and contact point for the European Public Prosecutor's Office. In his presentation, Mr De La Mata compared the different competences and roles of Eurojust and EPPO and presented the current state of cooperation of the two organs. The following speaker, Mr Frédéric BAAB, the French European Prosecutor, gave an overview of the working arrangement signed between Eurojust and EPPO. He elaborated that the two main points of this working arrangement are exchange of information and operational support that Eurojust will provide to EPPO. Mr Nils Behrndt, acting Deputy Director-General, DG for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission addressed the following issues with regard to Eurojust: digitalisation, proposal for additional staff and cooperation between Eurojust and EPPO.

24 and 25 February – Paris – Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee Gari Cappelli, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Defence Committee Franko Vidović and Ante Deur participated at the 20th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy

It brought together 144 Members of Parliaments from national Parliaments, the European Parliament, observer and candidate countries as well as 80 officials. This was the first physical IPC held after March 2020 in Zagreb, as in the last two years the three IPCs, which took place, could only be held remotely because of the Covid-19 pandemic situation. (Germany, Berlin, 4 September 2020 - Portugal, Lisbon, 3-4 March 2021- Slovenia, Ljubljana, 9 September 2021)

The agenda of the IPC was changed in the last minute on the first day of the IPC because of the Russian military attack and war on Ukraine. The Members had expressed their condemnation of this action, called for the withdrawal of forces and the restoration of peace as well as the strengthening of EU strategic autonomy. The IPC adopted a joint Declaration with consensus on the situation in Ukraine. The introduction of the Special Session on the situation in Ukraine, with the intervention of the Ukrainian Ambassador to France has placed the IPC as a relevant fora for shaping and contributing to the European foreign and security as well as the security and defence policies.



28 February – Paris – Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol

Chairman of the Domestic Policy and National Security Committee Siniša Hajdaš-Doničić and deputy chairman Mario Kapulica participated at the 10th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol (JPSG), hosted from the Assemblée nationale of France in Paris with remote participation only, due to the pandemic.

The agenda included interventions by Europol Executive Director, Ms Catherine De Bolle and keynote speeches by Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ms Ylva Johansson and Gérald Darmanin, French Minister of the Interior. The JPSG heard presentation from the European Data Protection Supervisor, Mr Wojciech Wiewiórowski. Two thematic debates with EU level and national authority experts covered the topics 'Europol's contribution in the fight against migrant smugglers', and, 'the Risks and opportunities of artificial intelligence for Europol'.

Inter-parliamentary activities in March 2022

2 March – Paris – Conference on digital and Space

3 March – Bruxelles/European Parliament - 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"

3 – 5 March – Paris – LXVII COSAC Plenary Meeting

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

13 – 14 March – Paris – Conference on strategic economic autonomy

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

16 – 17 March – Bruxelles/European Parliament – Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Corporate responsibility for serious human rights abuses in third countries

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)

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

28 – 29 March – Brdo pri Kranju – EU Speakers Conference

