

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

European Commission 2021 Work Programme

The Commission adopted its [2021 work programme](#), designed to make Europe healthier, fairer and more prosperous, while accelerating its long-term transformation into a greener economy, fit for the digital age. It contains new legislative initiatives across all six headline ambitions of President **von der Leyen's** [Political Guidelines](#) and follows her first [State of the Union Speech](#). While delivering on the priorities set out in this work programme, the Commission will continue to put all its efforts into managing the crisis, and into making Europe's economies and societies more resilient.

Delivering on EU priorities

The 2021 Commission work programme sees a shift from strategy to delivery across all six political priorities. It confirms the Commission's resolve to lead the twin green and digital transition – an unparalleled opportunity to move out of the fragility of the crisis and create a new vitality for the Union.

A European Green Deal

To achieve a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, the Commission will table a **Fit for 55 package** to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030. This will cover wide-ranging policy areas – from renewables to energy efficiency first, energy performance of buildings, as well as land use, energy taxation, effort sharing and emissions trading. A **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism** will help reduce the risk of carbon leakage and ensure a level-playing field by encouraging EU partners to raise their climate ambition. In addition, the Commission will propose measures to implement Europe's **circular economy action plan**, the EU **biodiversity** strategy and the **farm to fork** strategy.

A Europe fit for the digital age

To make this Europe's digital decade, the Commission will put forward a roadmap of clearly defined **2030 digital targets**, related to connectivity, skills and digital public services. The focus will be on the right to privacy and connectivity, freedom of speech, free flow of data and cybersecurity. The Commission will legislate in areas covering safety, liability, fundamental rights and data aspects of **artificial intelligence**. In the same spirit, it will propose a **European e-ID**. Initiatives will also include an **update of the new industrial strategy for Europe**, to take into account the impacts of the coronavirus, as well as a legislative proposal to improve the working conditions of **platform workers**.



An economy that works for people

To ensure that the health and economic crisis does not turn into a social crisis, the Commission will put forward an ambitious **action plan to implement fully the European Pillar of Social Rights**, making sure that no one is left behind in Europe's recovery. The Commission will also come forward with a new European **child guarantee**, ensuring access to basic services like health and education for all children. To support our economies and strengthen the **Economic and Monetary Union**, it will revise the framework for handling EU bank failures, take measures to boost cross-border investment in the EU, and step up the fight against money laundering.

A stronger Europe in the world

The Commission will ensure that Europe plays its vital role in this fragile world, including by leading the global response to **secure a safe and accessible vaccine for all**. It will propose a Joint Communication on **strengthening the EU's contribution to a rules-based multilateralism**, a renewed partnership with our **Southern neighbourhood** and a Communication on **the Arctic**. A new strategic approach to support **disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants** will also be presented. A Communication on the **EU's humanitarian aid** will explore new ways of working with our partners and other donors.

Promoting our European way of life

In the face of COVID-19, the Commission will propose to build a stronger **European Health Union**, notably by strengthening the role of existing agencies and establishing a new **agency for biomedical advanced research and development**. To preserve and improve its functioning, a **new strategy for the future of Schengen** will be tabled. The new pact on migration and asylum will be followed up with a number of proposed measures on **legal migration**, including a 'talent and skills' package. Other elements include an action plan against migrant smuggling, as well as a sustainable voluntary return and reintegration strategy. The Commission will continue to strengthen the **Security Union**, addressing terrorism, organised crime and hybrid threats. It will also present a comprehensive strategy on **combating antisemitism**.

A new push for European democracy

To build a union of equality, the Commission will present new strategies on **rights of the child and for persons with disabilities**, as well as a proposal to **combat gender-based violence**. It will also propose to extend the list of euro-crimes to include all forms of hate crime and hate speech. The Commission will propose clearer rules on the **financing of European political parties** and take action to **protect journalists and civil society against abusive litigation**. A **long-term vision for rural areas** will propose actions to harness the full potential of these regions.

Given the long-term and transformative nature of the initiatives planned, it is more important than ever to legislate in the most impactful way and with the future in mind. The upcoming **Communication on Better Regulation** will renew this emphasis. It will focus on simplification and burden reduction, notably by introducing a 'one-in-one-out' approach. The Fit for Future Platform will support the Commission in this ambition, particularly needed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. To deliver on the ground, the Commission will also step up its outreach, with the **Conference on the Future of Europe** playing a central role.

A full list of the 44 new policy objectives under the six headline ambitions are set out in [Annex 1](#) of the 2021 work programme.



Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process

Activities of the parliamentary committees

European Affairs Committee

2nd session held on 1 October 2020

Committee amended Work Programme for the Consideration of the Position of the Republic of Croatia for 2020.

3rd session held on 15 October 2020

Head of the European Commission Representation in Zagreb Ognian Zlatev presented [Rule of law Report](#). ([video streaming](#))

The European Affairs Committee has forwarded 14 [European documents](#) in the procedure for the consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for 2020.

Other parliamentary committees discussed [European documents](#) in accordance with the [Work Programme for the Consideration of the Positions of the Republic of Croatia for 2020](#).

Monitoring the work of the Government in the European Union institutions

European Council

According to Article 11, paragraph 2 of the Law on Cooperation between the Croatian Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the European Affairs, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has submitted to the European Affairs Council its position for the European Council meeting held on October 15 and 16, 2020.

Council

The Croatian Government submitted to the relevant parliamentary committees its positions for October Council meetings:

- Economic and Financial Affairs Council
- 3775 General Affairs Council
- 3774 Foreign Affairs Council
- Justice and Home Affairs Council
- Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Protection Council
- 3776 Agriculture and Fisheries Council
- Environment Council

Application of EU law

In October 2020, the Croatian Parliament enacted [2 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 October 2020, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [57 documents](#): 31 draft laws and 26 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.

The Seventh Conference of the Danube Parliamentarians, Zagreb, 28 October 2020

In the framework of the Croatian Presidency of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), Croatian Parliament hosted the Seventh Conference of the Danube Parliamentarians, entitled "[Smart Solutions for Sustainable Development](#)". This event also marked the end of Croatia's Presidency of the Strategy, which is being taken over by Slovakia. The "helm of the Presidency" was handed over to the Slovak Ambassador to Croatia, Peter Susko, by the Minister of Regional Development and EU Funds, Nataša Tramišak, in the Croatian Parliament.

Opening the video conference, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of Regional Development and European Union Funds Marko Pavić communicated the message of the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Gordan Jandroković to the Conference participants, emphasizing that the Croatian Parliament remains committed to exchanging experiences and activities aimed at strengthening and developing the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. He commented on the work of the Conference of the Danube Parliamentarians and said that it had fulfilled its task since its first holding in 2014.

According to Pavić, the Conference's work program is aimed at encouraging innovative technologies to improve the sustainable development of the Danube Region, discussing the possibilities of increasing the number of high-tech companies and the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises in the region, considering ways to improve knowledge transfer between universities, the economy and local communities, as well as the creation of high value-added jobs to prevent the emigration of young people and encourage long-term regional development.

In the introductory part of the Conference, the participants were addressed by the Minister of Regional Development and European Union Funds Nataša Tramišak and the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Gordan Grlić Radman. Tramišak commented on everything that has been done in the last ten years in the implementation of the projects of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the Action Plan. She emphasized that a number of activities had been done, everything set out in the Strategy had been achieved, the Action Plan had been revised and a new set of priorities for development, sustainable development and environmental protection had been established throughout the Danube Region. Regarding the harmonious development of the Danube Region, she pointed out the importance of providing smart solutions and stressed that 14 participating countries should further address the implementation of the Strategy ideas both in practice and real life. Minister Grlić Radman pointed out that the Danube was an integration factor of the region because it connected over 100 million people. At the governmental level of the Danube Region participating countries, he said, it had been considered how to activate the full potential of the region and equalize and strengthen its sustainable development.



Therefore, full support was given to joint projects aimed at sustainable development, digitalization and innovation, but also those focusing on human health.

The plenary part of the Conference, moderated by the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee Domagoj Hajduković, was addressed by Zdravko Kačič, Rector of the University of Maribor, Tomislav Bolanča, Dean of the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology of the University of Zagreb and Mateo Ivanac, Head of Department of Innovation System, Croatian Chamber of Economy, who presented several practical examples of knowledge transfer between the university, the economy and the local community.

Rector of the University of Maribor Kačič pointed out that in these times when COVID had changed our lives in many aspects, it was important to properly evaluate knowledge because it was the basis of development. "The University of Maribor has been active in one of the pillars of the Danube Strategy called "Building Prosperity in the Danube Region", said Kačič. He emphasized the importance of cooperation between the universities of the Danube Region and joint work on the development of information and communication technologies, as well as cooperation with stakeholders in the economic sector. He said that current obstacles to the implementation of these goals were the lack of awareness of the importance of the Danube Strategy, not only among the general population, but also at the level of governments and administrations, as well as unfavourable legal frameworks in most Danube countries.

Dean of the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology of the University of Zagreb Tomislav Bolanča also spoke about connecting academic institutions and the economic sector in the context of providing "smart" solutions for sustainable development taking his Faculty as an example. Mateo Ivanac, Head of Department of Innovation System, Croatian Chamber of Economy presented the research work of the Croatian Chamber of Economy in the field of the development of innovation strategies for the Danube Region.

Participants in the discussion were: István Jakab (Hungary), Tobias Gotthardt (Germany), Josha Frey (Germany) Nikolaus Berlakovich (Austria), Carmen Jeitler-Cincelli (Austria), Elisabeth Götze (Austria), Guido Wolf (Germany), Marina Pendeš (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Christoph Matznetter (Austria) and Dragan Krapović (Montenegro).

In the final part of the Conference, the host Marko Pavić presented the [Joint Statement](#), welcoming the next Conference hosted by the Slovak National Council.

Inter-parliamentary activities in November 2020

9 November	Conference of Chairpersons of committees from national parliaments and the European Parliament "For social and Fair Europe" (Berlin, video conference)
10 November	European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on "The first Annual Rule of Law Report by the Commission and the role of national Parliaments" (Brussels, video conference)
19 November	High-level Interparliamentary Conference on Migration and Asylum (Brussels, video conference)
30 November – 1 December	Virtual COSAC meeting (Berlin, video conference)

