



# ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2020 OF THE EPP GROUP IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT









## Table of Contents

Foreword by the Chairman, Manfred Weber ..... 9

### **01 The EPP Group 12**

1.	The EPP Group Structure .....	13
2.	How the EPP Group works .....	13
3.	Description .....	14
	• The Four EPP Group Standing Working Groups .....	15
	• The EPP Group Presidency .....	17
	• Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations .....	19
	• EPP Group Members of the EP Bureau .....	20
	• EPP Group Chairs of the Parliamentary Committees of the EP .....	22
	• EPP Group Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees of the EP .....	23
	• EPP Group Chairs of the EU Joint Parliamentary Assemblies, Joint Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Parliamentary Delegations of the EP .....	24
4.	EPP Members of the European Commission .....	26
5.	Members of the EPP Group – Full Listing .....	28
6.	Senior Management of the EPP Group Secretariat .....	31

<b>02</b>	<b>Directorate Parliamentary Work</b>	<b>32</b>
>	General Activities .....	33
>	Legislative Coordination and Whip Office .....	35
>	Standing Working Group 'Economy and Environment' .....	38
>	Standing Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies' .....	47
>	Standing Working Group 'Legal and Home Affairs' .....	52
<b>03</b>	<b>Directorate Presidency and Chairman's Cabinet</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>Directorate External Policies</b>	<b>65</b>
>	Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET).....	67
>	Committee on Development (DEVE).....	70
>	Committee on International Trade (INTA) .....	71
>	Special Committee on Interference and Disinformation (INGE).....	72
>	External Policies - Interparliamentary Delegations and Parliamentary Assemblies Unit .....	73
<b>05</b>	<b>Directorate Outreach</b>	<b>79</b>
>	Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit .....	83
<b>06</b>	<b>Directorate Campaigns</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Directorate Press</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>The European People's Party (EPP)</b>	<b>97</b>







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## Foreword by the Chairman, Manfred Weber

All over Europe, the Coronavirus pandemic has deeply affected our countries, turned our lives upside down, hit our economies hard and transformed our societies. While Europe is still battling the human and economic consequences of the virus, our thoughts are with the victims, their families and friends. We are forever thankful to our doctors, nurses and other carers, the millions of anonymous heroes who are on the frontline during this pandemic.

The crisis has also shown us once again that in today's world, membership of the European Union is our greatest protection. By funding medical research, the EU has made the development of vaccines against the Coronavirus possible. By acting collectively, we avoided creating first and second class Europeans. By following the experts' advice and the procedure of the European Medicines Agency to assess the efficiency of the vaccines, we were able to guarantee to our citizens that these vaccines are safe.

The EPP Group was the first to call for a European response to the outbreak, and has since spearheaded innovative proposals.

The most urgent task right now is to ensure the best vaccine supply and the quickest and most effective rollout to all European citizens. The keywords for the European approach must be "whatever it takes": we must become faster and think bigger.

This is why the EPP Group has proposed a EUR 10 billion vaccination investment offensive to identify and set up additional production capacities in Europe. We need a Europe-wide pharmaceutical alliance to increase

production capacities in Europe. We also need more transparency and a cooperative engagement with industry. We welcome the European Commission's decision to set up an export monitoring mechanism to monitor all vaccine exports.

The health crisis we are currently going through will end, but the economic crisis will linger on. Getting people back to work is our main priority for 2021. We should invest in the opportunities of young people in particular; they have sacrificed a lot during the pandemic. This is why in the coming years, our main focus should be on creating jobs, jobs, jobs for the future! We need to strengthen and deepen our common market in the digital sector, but also in the fields of energy and transport. The way Member States make use of the Recovery Plan of EUR 750 billion to respond to the pandemic is crucial. This money must be entirely forward-looking: let's use this money to adapt infrastructures to 5G, to promote digital innovations and boost medical research! Let's put these funds at the service of the future and jobs, of ambitious and visionary projects!

Despite everything, the pandemic should not overshadow other key topics for Europe's future. We are proud that our EPP priorities are a crucial part of the European Commission's agenda for the years to come. We welcome the EU Beating Cancer Plan put forward by the Commission, which is one of the EPP Group's campaign promises. The pandemic has shown that health is a major issue where Europe can make a difference for its citizens. This is why we want to go further and build a real Health Union.

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We want a European Border and Coast Guard with at least 10.000 officers, a European FBI, and to work towards real strategic autonomy in key industrial sectors so as to never again be dependent on supply from third countries.

We want a climate change policy based on innovation, not a punitive approach at the expense of our farmers and industry. We want to promote and protect the European Way of Life so that everything that constitutes our common European identity is a source of pride for our citizens, and a point of reference in the world.

We must also show our citizens that the 2019 elections really changed something in Europe. Our societies are under pressure. People are looking for stability and identity. This is why in the next five years we also need to determine the geographical limits of the European Union. With Brexit in mind, the need to reform Europe and make it attractive again for future generations is more urgent than ever.

Last but not least, we need to continue the fight for a more democratic Europe. I deeply believe that people will really only trust Europe if their vote counts and people can make a difference. Europeans will only feel like they belong to Europe, care about Europe, and engage with Europe if they know they are being heard.

**Manfred Weber MEP**  
**Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament**





## 01 The EPP Group

In the aftermath of the Second World War, **Europe's Founding Fathers** – French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Italian Prime Minister Alcide de Gasperi – wanted to rebuild a peaceful Europe. They worked together to take the first crucial step in creating a united Europe, forming the European Coal and Steel Community. The EPP Group, the then Christian-Democratic Group, was founded on 23 June 1953 as a political faction in the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community.

The following generation set its sights on the European integration needed for Europe's economy to develop into **a single, large marketplace**. Europe's Institutes grew alongside integration, with the European Parliament (EP) holding its first elections in 1979. Following the elections, the EPP Group changed its name to the **Group of the European People's Party**.

Inspired by the idea of reunification following the fall of the Berlin Wall and demise of Communism, the EPP offered its full support to the emerging pluralist democracies. Centre-right non-Communist parties won the support of the people, with the EPP Group becoming, and remaining, the **largest in the European Parliament** after the European elections of July 1999. The EPP Group holds 187 seats from 27 Member States.

Over the years, the EPP Group has adjusted its political philosophy to take stock of the changing electorate and has welcomed moderate and Conservative political groups from Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe. Between 1999 and 2009, the Group changed its name to the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats, reverting to the **Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)** in June 2009.

## 1. The EPP Group Structure

The **Chairman** of the EPP Group is Manfred Weber MEP. He chairs its governing bodies **and speaks for the EPP Group in keynote debates in the European Parliament.**

He is supported by **Vice-Chairs, Coordinators** on each EP Committee and by **Heads of the National Delegations** represented in the EPP Group.

The operational needs of the EPP Group are serviced by a Secretariat, providing policy and organisational support.

### EPP Group Academy

The **EPP Group Academy** is an internal Think Tank of the EPP Group under the leadership of Mr Arnaud Danjean, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group responsible for Relations with Universities, Think Tanks, and Foundations.

The Academy aims to bring together renowned experts, Think Tanks, and academia to give us food for thought on key policy future challenges to the Members of the EPP Group. The Academy is continuing with the excellent work that started with the European Ideas Network (EIN).

## 2. How the EPP Group works

The EPP Group has always played a key role in the construction of Europe. It brings together Centre and Centre-right pro-European political forces from the Member States of the EU. Most of the parties represented in the EPP Group also belong to the **European People's Party (EPP)**. The EPP was the first ever transnational political party to be formed at European-level, and has the strongest representation in the European Council of Ministers. EPP parties came together to advance the goal of a more competitive and democratic Europe closer to all its citizens, based on a Social Market Economy.

As the largest Political Group in a Parliament where non-Socialist parties now enjoy a majority, the EPP Group is in a stronger position than any other to set that body's political agenda and to win its most critical votes. This strength is reflected in the fact that, since 1999, the EPP Group has been on the winning side of more votes than any other Political Group in the EP monthly Plenary sessions.

Strength in numbers ensures that the EPP Group Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) hold a range of key positions within the EP, including 5 out of 14 Vice-Presidencies, chairing 8 out of 22 Parliamentary Committees and 2 of its 5 Quaestorships, in charge of administrative and financial matters directly concerning MEPs. Within the EP Committees, EPP Group MEPs are best placed to secure the right to author the EP position on key pieces of draft legislation and other major reports: the EPP Group gets more of these "Rapporteurships" on more important subjects than any other Political Group.






















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### 3. Description

With **187** MEPs the EPP Group is the largest Political Group in the European Parliament.

#### Its Membership is made up of:

-  29 Members from **Germany**
-  17 Members from **Poland**
-  14 Members from **Romania**
-  13 Members from **Hungary**
-  13 Members from **Spain**
-  8 Members from **France**
-  8 Members from **Greece**
-  8 Members from **Italy**
-  7 Members from **Austria**
-  7 Members from **Bulgaria**
-  7 Members from **Portugal**
-  6 Members from **The Netherlands**
-  6 Members from **Sweden**
-  5 Members from **Czech Republic**
-  5 Members from **Slovakia**
-  5 Members from **Ireland**
-  4 Members from **Belgium**
-  4 Members from **Croatia**
-  4 Members from **Lithuania**
-  4 Members from **Slovenia**
-  3 Members from **Finland**

-  2 Members from **Cyprus**
-  2 Members from **Latvia**
-  2 Members from **Luxembourg**
-  \* 2 Members from **Malta**
-  1 Member from **Denmark**
-  1 Member from **Estonia**

#### 3.1 The EPP Group Presidency

The Presidency consists of the **EPP Group Chairman and Vice-Chairs**. The Members of the Presidency agree among themselves on the allocation of tasks, including Group Treasurer and the Chairs of the Standing Working Groups.

#### 3.2 The EPP Group Bureau

The Bureau, the EPP Group political organ, consists of:

- > The EPP Group Presidency
- > The Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations
- > The President and Vice-Presidents of the EP belonging to the EPP Group
- > The Chairs of the Parliamentary Committees belonging to the EPP Group
- > The Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees belonging to the EPP Group
- > The Chairman and the Secretary-General of the European People's Party (If they are Members of the EP)
- > One co-opted Member for every 10 Members of a National Delegation

### 3.3 The Four EPP Group Standing Working Groups

EPP Group political strategy is formulated in the framework of four Working Groups which coordinate MEPs' Parliamentary work in the 22 Committees and Subcommittees.

#### Working Group 'External Policies'

- > Committee on Foreign Affairs (**AFET**)
- > Subcommittee on Security and Defence (**SEDE**)
- > Subcommittee on Human Rights (**DROI**)
- > Committee on Development (**DEVE**)
- > Committee on International Trade (**INTA**)
- > Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the EU (**INGE**)

**Chair: Sandra Kalniete**

#### Working Group 'Legal and Home Affairs'

- > Committee on Legal Affairs (**JURI**)
- > Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (**LIBE**)
- > Committee on Constitutional Affairs (**AFCO**)
- > Committee on Petitions (**PETI**)
- > Committee on Culture and Education (**CULT**)
- > Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (**FEMM**)
- > Special Committees on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age (**AIDA**)

**Chair: Esteban González Pons**

#### Working Group 'Economy and Environment'

- > Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (**ECON**)
- > Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (**ENVI**)
- > Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (**IMCO**)
- > Committee on Transport and Tourism (**TRAN**)
- > Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (**EMPL**)
- > Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (**ITRE**)
- > Subcommittee on Tax Matters (**FISC**)
- > Special Committee on Beating Cancer (**BECA**)

**Chair: Esther de Lange**

#### Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies'

- > Committee on Budgets (**BUDG**)
- > Committee on Budgetary Control (**CONT**)
- > Committee on Regional Development (**REGI**)
- > Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (**AGRI**)
- > Committee on Fisheries (**PECH**)
- > Committee of Inquiry on Animal Transport (**ANIT**)

**Chair: Siegfried Mureşan**

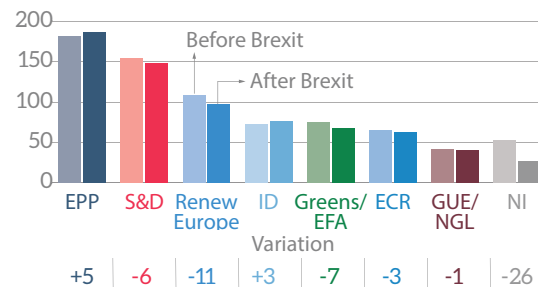
## Size of Political Groups in the EP by Member State

	EPP	S&D	Renew Europe renew europe.	ID	Greens/ EFA	ECR	GUE/ NGL	NI	Total
DE	29	16	7	11	25	1	5	2	96
FR	8	6	23	23	13		6		79
IT	8	18	1	29		6		14	76
ES	13	21	9		2	4	6	3	* 58
PL	17	8				27			52
RO	14	11	8						33
NL	6	6	7	1	3	4	1	1	29
BE	4	3	4	3	3	3	1		21
CZ	5		6	2	3	4	1		21
EL	8	2				1	6	4	21
HU	13	5	2					1	21
PT	7	9			1		4		21
SE	6	5	3		3	3	1		21
AT	7	5	1	3	3				19
BG	7	5	3			2			17
DK	1	3	6	1	2		1		14
FI	3	2	3	2	3		1		14
SK	5	3	2			2		2	14
IE	5		2		2		4		13
HR	4	4	1			1		2	12
LT	4	2	2		2	1			11
LV	2	2	1		1	2			8
SI	4	2	2						8
EE	1	2	3	1					7
CY	2	2					2		6
LU	2	1	2		1				6
MT	2	4							6*
	187	147	98	76	67	61	39	29	704
	EPP	S&D	Renew Europe	ID	Greens/ EFA	ECR	GUE/ NGL	NI	Total
	26.6 %	20.9 %	13.9 %	10.8 %	9.5 %	8.7 %	5.5 %	4.1 %	100 %

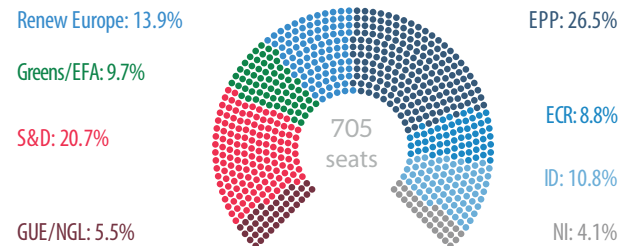
Data supplied by Members' Administration Unit.

\* One seat from Spain is currently vacant.

## Size of political groups before and after Brexit



## MEPs by political group



Source: European Parliamentary Research Service (13.02.2020)

Source: European Parliamentary Research Service



### 3.4 The EPP Group Presidency

**Manfred WEBER** (Germany)

Chairman of the EPP Group in the EP

**Esteban GONZÁLEZ PONS** (Spain)

Vice-Chair, Responsible for the EPP Group 'Legal and Home Affairs' Working Group

**Siegfried MUREȘAN** (Romania)

Vice-Chair, Responsible for the EPP Group 'Budget and Structural Policies' Working Group

**Mairead McGUINNESS** (Ireland)

(until October 2020)

**Esther de LANGE** (The Netherlands)

Vice-Chair, Responsible for the EPP Group 'Economy and Environment' Working Group

**Arnaud DANJEAN** (France)

Vice-Chair, Responsible for Relations with Universities, Think Tanks and Foundations

**Andrey KOVATCHEV** (Bulgaria)

Vice-Chair, Responsible for Enlargement, Western Balkans, Southern Neighbourhood, Euromed

**Vangelis MEIMARAKIS** (Greece)

Vice-Chair, Responsible for Relations with National Parliaments

**Paulo RANGEL** (Portugal)

Vice-Chair, Responsible for the Future of Europe, EPP Group Treasurer

**Sandra KALNIETE** (Latvia)

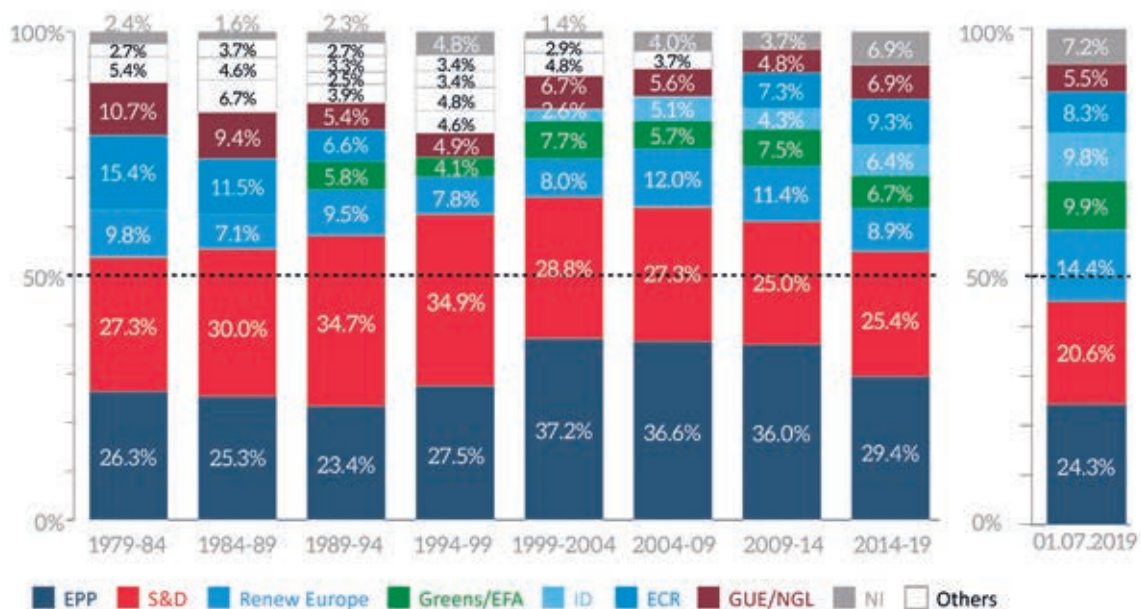
Vice-Chair, Responsible for the EPP Group 'External Policies' Working Group

**Jan OLBRYCHT** (Poland)

Vice-Chair, Chief Whip, Responsible for Intercultural Dialogue

## Strength of the Political Groups in Each Parliamentary Term

Strengths of the political groups in each parliamentary term



The relative size of the Political Groups in the EP is shown for each of the eight Parliamentary terms since the first direct elections in 1979.

The data, in percentages of total seats, refer to the consistent session (in July) at the beginning of each Parliamentary term.

The last column on the right shows the composition of the Parliament as of 1 July 2019.

The colours used to denote Political Groups in the current Parliamentary term are also used in previous terms, so that the History of today's Groups can be traced back.

However, it should be understood that the names and constitutions of Political Groups, and indeed their membership, can change frequently.

So, whilst we can often identify substantial continuity between the current Groups and their predecessors, they cannot in all cases be regarded as the same Group with an unbroken history. The category 'others' includes a number of Groups, which no longer exist.

**Source: European Parliamentary Research Service**

### 3.5 Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations (2020)

#### Germany (29 Members)

Daniel Caspary  
Angelika Niebler

#### Poland (17 Members)

Andrzej Halicki  
Krzysztof Hetman

#### Romania (14 Members)

Rares Bogdan

#### Hungary (13 Members)

Tamás Deutsch  
József Szájer

#### Spain (13 Members)

Dolors Montserrat

#### France (8 Members)

François-Xavier Bellamy

#### Greece (8 Members)

Vangelis Meimarakis

#### Italy (8 Members)

Antonio Tajani  
Herbert Dorfmann

#### Austria (7 Members)

Angelika Winzig

#### Bulgaria (7 Members)

Andrey Kovatchev

#### Portugal (7 Members)

Paulo Rangel  
Nuno Melo

#### The Netherlands (6 Members)

Esther de Lange

#### Sweden (6 Members)

Tomas Tobé

#### Czech Republic (5 Members)

Luděk Niedermayer

#### Slovakia (5 Members)

Ivan Štefanec

#### Ireland (5 Members)

Seán Kelly

#### Belgium (4 Members)

Kris Peeters

#### Croatia (4 Members)

*tbc*

#### Lithuania (4 Members)

Andrius Kubilius

#### Slovenia (4 Members)

Romana Tomc

#### Finland (3 Members)

Sirpa Pietikäinen

#### Cyprus (2 Members)

Lefteris Christoforou

#### Latvia (2 Members)

Sandra Kalniete

#### Luxembourg (2 Members)

Christophe Hansen

#### Malta (2 Members) <sup>\*</sup>

Roberta Metsola

#### Denmark (1 Member)

Pernille Weiss

#### Estonia (1 Member)

Riho Terras

### 3.6 EPP Group Members of the EP Bureau (2020)

**Roberta Metsola** (Malta)  
First Vice-President of the EP\*

**Rainer Wieland** (Germany)  
Vice-President of the EP

**Othmar Karas** (Austria)  
Vice-President of the EP

**Ewa Kopacz** (Poland)  
Vice-President of the EP

**Livia Járóka** (Hungary)  
Vice-President of the EP

**Anne Sander** (France)  
Quaestor of the EP

**David Casa** (Malta)  
Quaestor of the EP

## How the EP is Elected

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HOW TO ELECT...

#### THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**ELECTION PROCEDURE**

The candidate who obtains an absolute majority of the votes cast in a secret ballot is elected president. If an absolute majority cannot be obtained after three ballots, the fourth ballot will be confined to the two members who obtained the highest number of votes in the third ballot.

**DUTIES**

The President directs Parliament's activities, chairs plenary sittings and declares the budget finally adopted. The President represents Parliament in the outside world and in its relations with the other EU institutions.

**1 President**

A renewable term of two and a half years

#### VICE-PRESIDENTS

There are 14 in total, elected on a single ballot.

**DUTIES**

When the president is absent, they can replace him or her in the EP. The president can also delegate duties to them, such as representing the Parliament at specific ceremonies or acts.





**14 Vice-Presidents**

\* from 12.10.2020 replacing Mrs Mairead McGuinness, European Commission Member

Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

## Main Governing Bodies in the EP Bureau

### Governing bodies of the EP

David Maria SASSOLI	President	S&D	
Roberta METSOLA	Vice-President	EPP	
Pedro SILVA PEREIRA	Vice-President	S&D	
Rainer WIELAND	Vice-President	EPP	
Katarina BARLEY	Vice-President	S&D	
Othmar KARAS	Vice-President	EPP	
Ewa KOPACZ	Vice-President	EPP	
Klára DOBREV	Vice-President	S&D	
Dita CHARANZOVÁ	Vice-President	Renew Europe	
Nicola BEER	Vice-President	Renew Europe	
Livia JÁRÓKA	Vice-President	EPP	
Heidi HAUTALA	Vice-President	Greens/EFA	
Marcel KOLAJA	Vice-President	Greens/EFA	
Dimitrios PAPADIMOULIS	Vice-President	GUE/NGL	
Fabio Massimo CASTALDO	Vice-President	NI	
Anne SANDER	Quaestor	EPP	
Monika BEŇOVÁ	Quaestor	S&D	
David CASA	Quaestor	EPP	
Gilles BOYER	Quaestor	Renew Europe	
Karol KARSKI	Quaestor	ECR	

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

1  
President

14  
Vice-Presidents

5  
Quaestors  
(non-voting)

**The Bureau** is the body responsible for financial, organisational and administrative matters within the Parliament. It is composed of the President and the 14 Vice-Presidents, elected by an absolute majority of the votes in Plenary, with the order in which they attained that majority determining their individual order of precedence. The five Quaestors, elected in Plenary to manage administrative and financial matters directly concerning Members, also attend the Bureau in an advisory capacity, but cannot vote.

**Source: European Parliamentary Research Service (October 2020)**

### 3.7 EPP Group Chairs of the Parliamentary Committees of the European Parliament

#### About Committees

Committees are responsible for drafting EP positions on new legislative proposals. EP legislative work is carried out by 20 Standing Committees and three Subcommittees, each of which elects a Chair and up to four Vice-Chairs.

**David McAllister** (Germany)  
Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

**Antonio Tajani** (Italy)  
Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)

**Norbert Lins** (Germany)  
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

**Monika Hohlmeier** (Germany)  
Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT)

**Sabine Verheyen** (Germany)  
Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)

**Tomas Tobé** (Sweden)  
Committee on Development (DEVE)

**Cristian-Silviu Buşoi** (Romania)  
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)

**Dolors Montserrat** (Spain)  
Committee on Petitions (PETI)

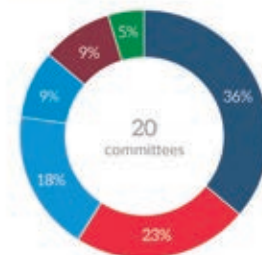
**Bartosz Arłukowicz** (Poland)  
Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA)

### Main Governing Bodies in the EP Committees

#### Parliamentary committees

	Number of MEPs	Name of Chair	
Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	76	Pascal CANFIN	Renew Europe
Industry, Research and Energy	72	Adina-Ioana VALEAN	EPP
Foreign Affairs	71	David McALLISTER	EPP
Human Rights	30	Maria ARENA	S&D
Security and Defence	30	Nathalie LOISEAU	Renew Europe
Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	68	Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR	S&D
Economic and Monetary Affairs	60	Irene TINAGLI	S&D
Employment and Social Affairs	55	Lucia DURÍŠ NICHOLSONOVÁ	ECR
Transport and Tourism	49	Karima DELLI	Greens/EFA
Agriculture and Rural Development	48	Norbert LINS	EPP
Internal Market and Consumer Protection	45	Petra DE SUTTER	Greens/EFA
Regional Development	43	Younous OMARJEE	GUE/NGL
International Trade	41	Bernd LANGE	S&D
Budgets	41	Johan VAN OVERTVELDT	ECR
Women's Rights and Gender Equality	35	Evelyn REGNER	S&D
Petitions	35	Dolors MONTSERRAT	EPP
Culture and Education	31	Sabine VERHEYEN	EPP
Budgetary Control	30	Monika HOHLMEIER	EPP
Fisheries	28	Chris DAVIES	Renew Europe
Constitutional Affairs	28	Antonio TAJANI	EPP
Development	26	Tomas TOBÉ	EPP
Legal Affairs	25	Lucy NETHSINGHA	Renew Europe

Share of committee chairs by political group



EPRC | European Parliamentary Research Service

Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

### 3.8 EPP Group Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees of the EP

#### Role of Coordinators

The EPP Group appoints a Coordinator in every Committee to act as the main spokesperson in that Committee and together with the other Coordinators prepare decisions to be taken by the Committee, especially on the procedure and the appointment of Rapporteurs. They can also mobilise EPP Group MEPs during important votes and can appoint Shadow Rapporteurs.

**Danuta Hübner** (Poland)

Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)

**Michael Gahler** (Germany)

Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

**Herbert Dorfmann** (Italy)

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

**José Manuel Fernandes** (Portugal)

Committee on Budgets (BUDG)

**Tomáš Zdechovský** (Czech Republic)

Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT)

**Michaela Šojdrová** (Czech Republic)

Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)

**György Hölvényi** (Hungary)

Committee on Development (DEVE)

**Isabel Wiseler-Lima** (Luxembourg)

Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI)

**Markus Ferber** (Germany)

Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON)

**Dennis Radtke** (Germany)

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)

**Peter Liese** (Germany)

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

**Frances Fitzgerald** (Ireland)

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)

**Andreas Schwab** (Germany)

Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)

**Christophe Hansen** (Luxembourg)

Committee on International Trade (INTA)

**Christian Ehler** (Germany)

Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)

**Axel Voss** (Germany)

Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI)

**Jeroen Lenaers** (the Netherlands)

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)

**Gabriel Mato** (Spain)

Committee on Fisheries (PECH)

**Peter Jahr** (Germany)

Committee on Petitions (PETI)

**Andrey Novakov** (Bulgaria)

Committee on Regional Development (REGI)

**Arnaud Danjean** (France)

Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE)

**Marian Jean Marinescu** (Romania)

Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN)

### 3.9 EPP Group Chairs of the EU Joint Parliamentary Assemblies, Joint Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Parliamentary Delegations of the European Parliament

#### About Delegations

The EP Delegations maintain relations and exchange information with parliaments in non-EU countries. Through its Delegations, the EP helps to represent the EU externally and to promote in third countries the values on which the EU is founded, namely the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law.

##### **Manolis Kefalogiannis** (EL)

Delegation to the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee 

##### **José Manuel Fernandes** (PT)

Delegation for relations with the Federative Republic of Brazil 

##### **Antonio López-Istúriz White** (ES)

Delegation for relations with Israel 

##### **Sara Skytvedal** (SE)

Delegation for relations with Iraq 

##### **Siegfried Mureşan** (RO)


Delegation to the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee



##### **Vladimír Bilčík** (SK)

Delegation to the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee 

##### **Radosław Sikorski** (PO)

Delegation for relations with the United States 

##### **Magdalena Adamowicz** (PO)

Delegation for relations with South Africa 

##### **Pilar del Castillo Vera** (ES)

Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community



##### **Daniel Caspary** (DE)

Delegation for relations Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)



##### **Fulvio Martusciello** (IT)

Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU-Tajikistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and for relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia



##### **Andreas Schwab** (DE)

Delegation for Northern cooperation and for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee





**Andrius Kubilius (LT)**

Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly



**Lukas Mandl (AT)**

Delegation for relations with the Korean Peninsula



**Tom Vandenkendelaere (BE)**

Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly



**The EU as a Global Player**



Source: European External Action Service

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## 4. EPP Members of the European Commission

### President

#### **Ursula von der LEYEN**

President of the European Commission  
Germany (CDU)

### Vice-Presidents

#### **Valdis DOMBROVSKIS**

An Economy that Works for People  
Latvia (Unity)

#### **Margaritas SCHINAS**

Promoting a European Way of Life  
Greece (ND)

#### **Dubravka ŠUJICA**

Democracy and Demography  
Croatia (HDZ)

### European Commissioners

#### **Mariya GABRIEL**

Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth  
Bulgaria (GERB)

#### **Johannes HAHN**

Budget and Administration  
Austria (ÖVP)

#### **Mairead McGUINNESS**

Financial Services, financial stability and Capital Markets Union  
Ireland (Fine Gael)

#### **Stella KYRIAKIDES**

Health and Food Safety  
Cyprus (DISY)

#### **Adina VĂLEAN**

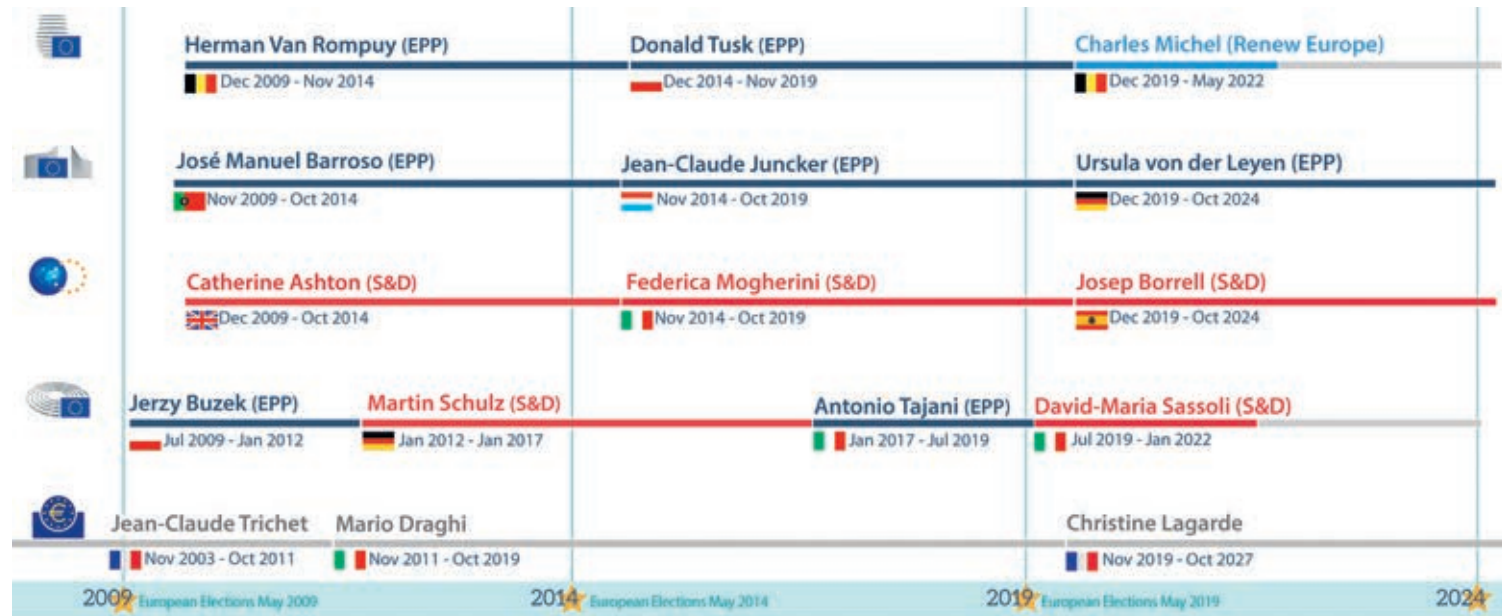
Transport  
Romania (PNL)

#### **Olivér VÁRHELYI**

Neighbourhood and Enlargement  
Hungary (Fidesz)

\* Following the resignation of Phil Hogan, Ireland (Trade Commissioner), he was replaced by Mairead McGuinness, former EP Vice-President and MEP in October 2020.

## Overview of High-level Office-holders since the 2009 EP Elections



Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

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## 5. Members of the EPP Group – Full Listing (December 2020)

### **GERMANY (29 Members)**

BENTELE Hildegard  
BERGER Stefan  
CASPARY Daniel  
DOLESCHAL Christian  
DÜPONT Lena  
EHLER Christian  
FERBER Markus  
GAHLER Michael  
GIESEKE Jens  
HERBST Niclas  
HOHLMEIER Monika  
JAHR Peter  
LIESE Peter  
LINS Norbert  
McALLISTER David  
MORTLER Marlene  
NIEBLER Angelika  
PIEPER Markus  
RADTKE Dennis  
SCHNEIDER Christine  
SCHULZE Sven  
SCHWAB Andreas  
SEEKATZ Ralf  
SIMON Sven  
VERHEYEN Sabine  
VOSS Axel  
WALSMANN Marion  
WEBER Manfred  
WIELAND Rainer

### **POLAND (17 Members)**

ADAMOWICZ Magdalena  
ARŁUKOWICZ Bartosz  
BUZEK Jerzy  
DUDA Jarosław  
FRANKOWSKI Tomasz  
HALICKI Andrzej  
HETMAN Krzysztof  
HÜBNER Danuta Maria  
JARUBAS Adam  
KALINOWSKI Jarosław  
KOPACZ Ewa  
LEWANDOWSKI Janusz  
OCHOJSKA Janina  
OLBRYCHT Jan  
SIKORSKI Radosław  
THUN UND HOHENSTEIN Róza  
ŁUKACIJEWSKA Elżbieta Katarzyna

### **ROMANIA (14 Members)**

BĂSESCU Traian  
BLAGA Vasile  
BOGDAN IOAN-RAREȘ  
BUDA Daniel  
BUȘOI Cristian-Silviu  
FALCĂ Gheorghe  
HAVA Mircea-Gheorghe  
MARINESCU Marian-Jean  
MOTREANU Dan-Ștefan  
MUREȘAN Siegfried  
NISTOR Gheorghe-Vlad  
TOMAC Eugen

VINCZE Loránt  
WINKLER Iuliu

### **HUNGARY (13 Members)**

BOCSKOR Andrea  
DELI Andor  
DEUTSCH Tamás  
GÁL Kinga  
GYŐRI Enikő  
GYÜRK András  
HIDVÉGGHI Balázs  
HÖLVÉNYI György  
JÁRÓKA Lívía  
KÓSA Ádám  
SZÁJER József  
TÓTH Edina  
TRÓCSÁNYI László

### **SPAIN (13 Members)**

ARIAS ECHEVERRÍA Pablo  
BENJUMEA Isabel  
DEL CASTILLO VERA Pilar  
ESTARÀS FERRAGUT Rosa  
GARCÍA-MARGALLO Y MARFIL José Manuel  
GONZÁLEZ PONS Esteban  
LÓPEZ GIL Leopoldo  
LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE Antonio  
MATO Gabriel  
MILLÁN MON Francisco José  
MONTSERRAT Dolors  
ZARZALEJOS Javier  
ZOIDO ÁLVAREZ Juan Ignacio

**FRANCE (8 Members)**

BELLAMY François-Xavier  
COLIN-OESTERLÉ Nathalie  
DANJEAN Arnaud  
DIDIER Geoffroy  
EVREN Agnès  
HORTEFEUX Brice  
MORANO Nadine  
SANDER Anne

**GREECE (8 Members)**

ASIMAKOPOULOU Anna-Michelle  
KEFALOGIANNIS Manolis  
KYMPOUROPOULOS Stelios  
KYRTSOS Georgios  
MEIMARAKIS Vangelis  
SPYRAKI Maria  
VOZEMBERG-VRIONIDI Elissavet  
ZAGORAKIS Theodoros

**ITALY (8 Members)**

BERLUSCONI Silvio  
DE MEO Salvatore  
DORFMANN Herbert  
MARTUSCIELLO Fulvio  
MILAZZO Giuseppe  
PATRICIELLO Aldo  
SALINI Massimiliano  
TAJANI Antonio

**AUSTRIA (7 Members)**

BERNHUBER Alexander  
SAGARTZ Christian  
KARAS Othmar  
MANDL Lukas  
SCHMIEDTBAUER Simone  
THALER Barbara  
WINZIG Angelika

**PORTUGAL (7 Members)**

AMARO Álvaro  
CARVALHO Maria de Graça  
FERNANDES José Manuel  
MONTEIRO DE AGUIAR Cláudia  
MELO Nuno  
PEREIRA Lídia  
RANGEL Paulo

**BULGARIA (7 Members)**

ADEMOV Asim  
ALEXANDROV YORDANOV Alexander  
KANEV Radan  
KOVATCHEV Andrey  
MAYDELL Eva  
NOVAKOV Andrey  
RADEV Emil

**THE NETHERLANDS (6 Members)**

BERENDSEN Tom  
De LANGE Esther  
LENAERS Jeroen  
MANDERS Antonius  
SCHREIJER - PIERIK Annie  
VAN DALEN Peter

**SWEDEN (6 Members)**

KOKALARI Arba  
LEGA David  
POLFJÄRD Jessica  
SKYTTE DAL Sara  
TOBÉ Tomas  
WARBORN Jörgen

**CZECH REPUBLIC (5 Members)**

NIEDERMAYER Luděk  
POLČÁK Stanislav  
ŠOJDROVÁ Michaela  
POSPÍŠIL Jiří  
ZDECHOVSKÝ Tomáš

**SLOVAKIA (5 Members)**

BILČÍK Vladimír  
LEXMANN Miriam  
POLLÁK Peter  
ŠTEFANEC Ivan  
WIEZIK Michal

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**IRELAND (5 Members)**

CLUNE Deirdre  
FITZGERALD Frances  
KELLY Seán  
MARKEY Colm  
WALSH Maria

**CROATIA (4 Members)**

GLAVAK Sunčana  
RESSLER Karlo  
SOKOL Tomislav  
ZOVKO Željana

**SLOVENIA (4 Members)**

TOMC Romana  
BOGOVIČ Franc  
NOVAK Ljudmila  
ZVER Milan

**BELGIUM (4 Members)**

ARIMONT Pascal  
FRANSEN Cindy  
LUTGEN Benoît  
VANDENKENDELAERE Tom

**LITHUANIA (4 Members)**

JUKNEVICIENE Rasa  
KUBILIUS Andrius  
MACYLIS Liudas  
MALDEIKIENE Ausra

**FINLAND (3 Members)**

PIETIKÄINEN Sirpa  
SARVAMAA Petri  
VIRKKUNEN Henna

**CYPRUS (2 Members)**

CHRISTOFOROU Lefteris  
FOURLAS Loucas

**LATVIA (2 Members)**

KALNIETE Sandra  
VAIDERE Inese

**LUXEMBOURG (2 Members)**

HANSEN Christophe  
WISELER-LIMA Isabel

**MALTA (2 Members)**

METSOLA Roberta  
CASA David

**DENMARK (1 Member)**

WEISS Pernille

**ESTONIA (1 Member)**

TERRAS Riho

## 6. Senior Management of the EPP Group Secretariat

### **Simon Busuttil**

Secretary-General

### **Natacha Scriban-Cuvelier**

Deputy Secretary-General  
Director for Parliamentary Work

### **Juan Salafranca**

Deputy Secretary-General  
Director for External Policies

### **Harald Kandolf**

Director for Internal Organisation

### **Ouarda Bensouag**

Director for Presidency & Chairman's Cabinet

### **Pedro López de Pablo**

Director for Press

### **Marek Evison**

Director for Campaigns

### **Andrea Laskavá**

Director for Outreach



## 02 Directorate Parliamentary Work

**The Directorate for Parliamentary Work** assists EPP Group MEPs in carrying out their duty in the Parliamentary Committees and in Plenary. It is composed of five units:

- The **Legislative Coordination and Whip Office Unit**, under the responsibility of Jan Olbrycht (PL), Chief Whip, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament
- The **Standing Working Group 'Economy and Environment'**, under the responsibility of Esther de Lange (NL), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament
- The **Standing Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies'**, under the responsibility of Siegfried Mureşan (RO), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament
- The **Standing Working Group 'Legal and Home Affairs'**, under the responsibility of Esteban González Pons (ES), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament



## General Activities

### A. Major Votes in Plenary

- Vote on Discharge 2018 (52 reports) (13-14/5)
- Approval of the appointment of Mairead McGuinness as member of the European Commission (7/10)
- Fernandes/Hayer report (A9-0146/2020) on the Proposal for a Council decision on the system of own resources of the European Union (16/9)
- Election of the EP Vice-President Roberta Metsola (11/11)
- Olbrycht/Marques report on Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 (A9-0260/2020) (16/12)
- González Pons report on the Inter-Institutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of the new own resources (A9-0261/2020) (16/12)
- Sarvamaa/Gardiazabal Rubial report on Regulation on the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States (A9-0262/2020) (16/12)
- Larrouturou/Chastel report (A9-0267/2020) - New General Budget of the European Union for 2021 - all sections - joint text (18/12)

### B. Sitzings

#### Formal sittings

- King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (15/1)
- Award of the Sakharov Prize 2020 (16/12)

#### Other personalities attending the Sitzings

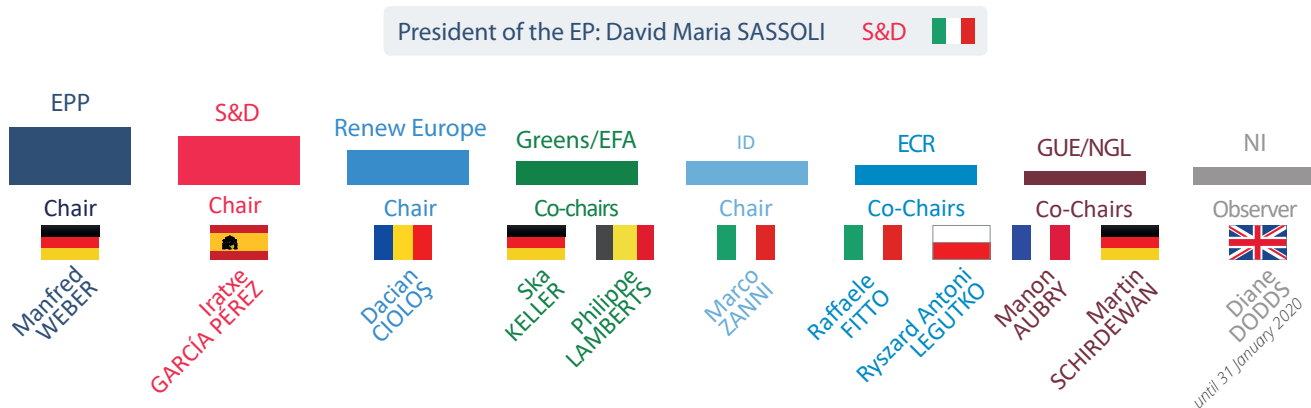
- Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission (14/1, 16/4, 13/05, 27/5, 17/6, 8/7, 23/7, 16/9, 16/12)
- Charles Michel, President of the European Council (10/3, 16/4, 13/5, 8/7, 23/7, 6/10, 21/10, 16/12)
- Michel Barnier, Head of the Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom (14/1, 17/6, 21/10)
- Andrej Plenković, President-in-Office of the Council (14/1)
- Emily O'Reilly, European Ombudsman (15/1)
- Nikolina Brnjac, President-in-Office of the Council (14/1, 15/1, 14/5, 27/5, 17/6, 18/6)
- Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, President-in-Office of the Council (8/7)
- Michael Roth, President-in-Office of the Council (8/7, 9/7, 14/9, 15/9, 16/9, 5/10, 7/10, 19/10, 20/10)
- Bettina Hagedorn (President-in-Office of the Council (5/10)

## C. Meetings/Activities

- Follow-up of the Secretaries-General meetings and of the Conference of Presidents (CoP), in order to establish the Plenary agenda
- Regular meetings with the EPP Group Chairman, in order to follow-up on Parliamentary work and the policy strategy of the EPP Group
- Plenary session organisation: management of speaking time and follow-up of the votes
- EPP Group meetings
- Management of the Parliamentary Work Directorate

## European Parliament Governing Bodies

**The Conference of Presidents (CoP)** - composed of the Parliament's President and the chairs of its seven political groups - sets the agenda of the plenary and determines the general political orientations of the institution. The table below shows the current members of the CoP, ordered by size of the groups, in terms of their seats in the Parliament. Three groups have co-chairs. The non-attached (NI) Members are represented by a non-voting observer.



Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

## Legislative Coordination and Whip Office

### A. EPP Group Meetings

#### Personalities attending EPP Group meetings

- Ludovic Orban, Prime Minister of Romania **(8/1)**
- Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia **(13/1)**
- Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights **(14/1)**
- Donald Tusk, President of the European People's Party **(29/1, 15/4, 9/9)**
- Maia Sandu, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova **(5/2)**
- Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission **(29/4, 9/6)**
- Michel Barnier, EU-UK negotiator on the future relationship and EPP Group strategy on the negotiations **(27/5)**
- Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany **(8/7)**
- Mairead McGuinness, Commissioner for Financial services, financial stability and Capital Markets Union **(7/10)**
- Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission **(7/10)**
- Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety **(21/10)**
- Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission **(21/10)**
- Sebastian Kurz, Chancellor of the Republic of Austria **(11/11)**
- Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market **(25/11)**
- Leo Varadkar, Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment in Ireland **(9/12)**

#### Agenda and calendar of EPP Group meetings, Chairman's notes and Early Briefings

- Chairman's notes and files for the EPP Group Presidency and Heads of National Delegations
- Internal briefings related to all items (reports, resolutions, and other points), which will be submitted to a Plenary vote ahead each EPP Group meeting in Brussels and Strasbourg
- Specific and detailed briefings related to all items treated at EPP Group meetings
- EPP Group Members' presence list, minutes, and documents to be distributed at Group meetings

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## B. Whip Office

The Whip Office is in charge of the follow-up of EPP Group Members' attendance and participation regarding votes at Plenary and Committee level, and of the evaluation of the votes in accordance with the agreed EPP Group line.

It has entirely been rationalised and reorganised with the view of improving its efficiency in:

- Reviewing EPP Group Members' presence and participation during votes in Committees and Plenary sessions
- Monitoring the unity of the EPP Group in Plenary votes

The EPP Group Chairman, the EPP Group Presidency, the EPP Group Heads of National Delegations, the EPP Group Coordinators and EPP Group Members are regularly informed about their participation and presence rates during votes at Plenary and Committee level.

## C. Legislative Coordination Unit - Meetings and Activities

Under the leadership of the Chief Whip, Jan Olbrycht (PL), the EPP Group has defined its 2021 legislative priorities based on the internal consultation of the EPP Coordinators and Standing Working Groups.

In December 2020, the Presidents of the three Institutions agreed on

- A Joint declaration,
- Joint Conclusions of the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on Policy Objectives and Priorities for 2020-2024. In line with the EPP Group wishes, this is the first time that the Better Law Making agreement of April 2016 applied, in accordance with the article 17.1 of the Treaty on the European Union. It foresees that the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council should jointly define a multiannual programming aimed to facilitate the longer-term planning.

### Hearings of European Commissioners-designate

In order to achieve the best possible result for the EPP Group, the process regarding **Mairead McGuinness'** appointment as European Commissioner and the change of portfolio of the European Commission Vice-President **Valdis Dombrovskis** was closely coordinated.



The EPP Group Presidency and the EPP Group Heads of National Delegations as well as the concerned Coordinators were consistently informed.

### **Conference of the Committee Chairmen (CCC)**

The Legislative Coordination Unit prepares and follows the Conference of the Committee Chairs and pays special attention to avoid internal and time-consuming conflicts between Committees in the attribution of reports and competences.

Under Antonio Tajani's leadership, as Chair of the CCC, specific EPP Group preparatory meetings are organised monthly in order to inform all EPP Group stakeholders about the issues to be treated at CCC level.

In 2020, the CCC gave specific attention to the delegated acts and implementing measures used during the negotiation process on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)-related legislative proposals.

In close cooperation with the EPP Group Coordinators, an internal early warning system was established, aimed at identifying possible conflicts of competences before they officially arise, especially between Committees where Chairmanship belongs to the EPP Group.

### **Rapporteurship and EPP Group line in Plenary votes**

The aim of the EPP Group Presidency is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the EPP Group in Parliamentary Work, both at Committee and Plenary level. Newly appointed EPP Group Rapporteurs in all Parliamentary Committees are regularly submitted to the attention of the Presidency and the Heads of National Delegations.

### **Elections of EPP Group Coordinators**

In order to fill the positions of EPP Coordinators and Deputy-Coordinators in the five new Committees, elections were organised remotely on the 9 September:

- AIDA (Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age)
- ANIT (Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport)
- BECA (Special Committee on Beating Cancer)
- FISC (Subcommittee on Tax Matters)
- INGE (Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation).

### **EPP Group Coordination meetings**

The Unit organised regular Coordination meetings to deal with horizontal Parliamentary issues. These meetings were enlarged to EPP Group Committees Chairs, with a view to reinforce the cohesion of the EPP Group and prevent conflicts of competences.

In 2020, special attention was given to the post-Brexit strategy, the MFF and related files and the way to improve remote working conditions.

### **Cooperation with the other Political Groups and Institutions**

As regards the inter-Institutional negotiations on legislative files, the Legislative Coordination Unit in order to give a clear overview regularly provided the Chief-Whip and the Presidency with progress reports on inter-Institutional negotiations both at Committee level and Plenary level.

This ensured that the conclusion of the first reading or early second reading agreements were properly announced to EPP Group Members and communicated as political achievements and successes.

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## Standing Working Group 'Economy and Environment'

### Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON)

The year posed a tremendous challenge and ultimate test to the economic resilience and architecture of the Union and the Member States alike. The EPP Group was the driving force establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the facility with a firepower of 672.5 billion EUR. The Union's unprecedented response to the fallout of the pandemic, thanks to the efforts of the EPP Group, was significantly improved and strengthened, particularly regarding the governance structure and much needed democratic oversight by the European Parliament. The RRF will serve as a strong basis for job creation and a tool to enable EU economies to rebound, while delivering on EU policy priorities, like climate mainstreaming and digital transition.

More broadly, in the area of economic governance, the EPP Group was active in promoting the fact that the activation of the General Escape Clause is tangible proof of the prudent design of the Union's fiscal rules by providing and allowing the needed flexibility to tackle a massive external symmetric economic shock generated by the pandemic.

In the area of financial services, ECON work has also focused on the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Two important legislative packages have been completed in record time. First, the banking package, including targeted amendments to the Capital Requirements Regulation that will help banks to support citizens and companies during the pandemic by providing funding. Second, the Capital Market Recovery Package aimed to make it easier for capital market to support European businesses to recover from the crisis.

It includes changes to the prospectuses regulation, and targeted amendments to MiFID (Markets in Financial Instruments Directive) and to the securitisation rules. EPP Group Members have played a leading role in all these files allowing the quick adoption of these pieces of legislation in good cooperation with the German Presidency during the trilogue negotiations.

### Subcommittee on Tax Matters (FISC)

To continue the work of the European Parliament in the area of taxation, a Subcommittee to ECON on Tax Matters (FISC) was established for the 9th legislature.

FISC has 58 Members of whom 15 represent the EPP Group including two of the Committee Vice-Chairs.

The FISC Committee held three public hearings in 2020 covering topics of reforming the international tax system, the role of tax policies in the context of the economic recovery and the impact of harmful tax practices on the single market. The FISC Committee also organised an exchange of views with Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni to discuss the European Commission's priorities for the tax area.

Only one vote was taken in 2020 in ECON/FISC, on a resolution to reform the EU list of third-country tax havens.

The main part of the work in FISC will start in 2021. Coordinators decided on the FISC work programme for the first part of this mandate. The EPP Group will have the Rapporteurship for two reports produced in the first half of the legislature, on digital taxation and fair and simpler taxation supporting the recovery strategy.

## Capital Markets Union



Source: European Commission

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## Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)

In the first part of 2020, the EMPL Committee successfully concluded the negotiations on the network of the Public Employment Services (PES), which was extended until at least 2027 and plays an important role for integrating jobseekers into the labour market within the EU. Member States are encouraged to support PES with the necessary resources to address the new challenges like digitalisation and changing of work patterns.

The EPP Group was active on MFF-related files, in particular the European Social Fund + (ESF +) where our Group leads the negotiations with the Council for the total financial envelope of 88 billion EUR for the period 2021-2027. As of January 2021, the ESF+ will be the EU's main financial tool to strengthen the social dimension of the Union. The Fund aims at supporting Member States to tackle the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, achieve high employment levels, fair social protection and a skilled and resilient workforce ready for the transition to a green and digital economy. The active participation of the EPP Group in the negotiations on the European Globalisation and Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF) led to an agreement with the Council, thus ensuring assistance to displaced workers in case of major restructuring events. The overall funding for the EGF for the agreed period will be 1.467 billion EUR. The level of investments for self - employment is set to 22.000 million EUR which is a success for the EPP as our Group requested increased funding for this category of displaced workers.

The EPP Group played a decisive role in securing a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions, a shared EPP Group and S&D Group strategic initiative report proposing a core social agenda to be adopted during the Social Summit in Porto next year (Porto agenda 2030) and setting key initiatives for a stronger social Europe.

During the year, the EPP Group was at the forefront of preparations of several COVID-19 related files such as the Fund for the Most Deprived (FEAD).



## Work-life Balance: New Leave Rules for Family Care

# European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

## What is new?



Dedicated funding to address child poverty



More resources to support youth employment



Focus on a greener and digital economy



New crisis response mechanism



Health strand goes to the new EU4Health Programme

#EUBudget #StrongerTogether #NextGenerationEU



Source: European Commission

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## Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

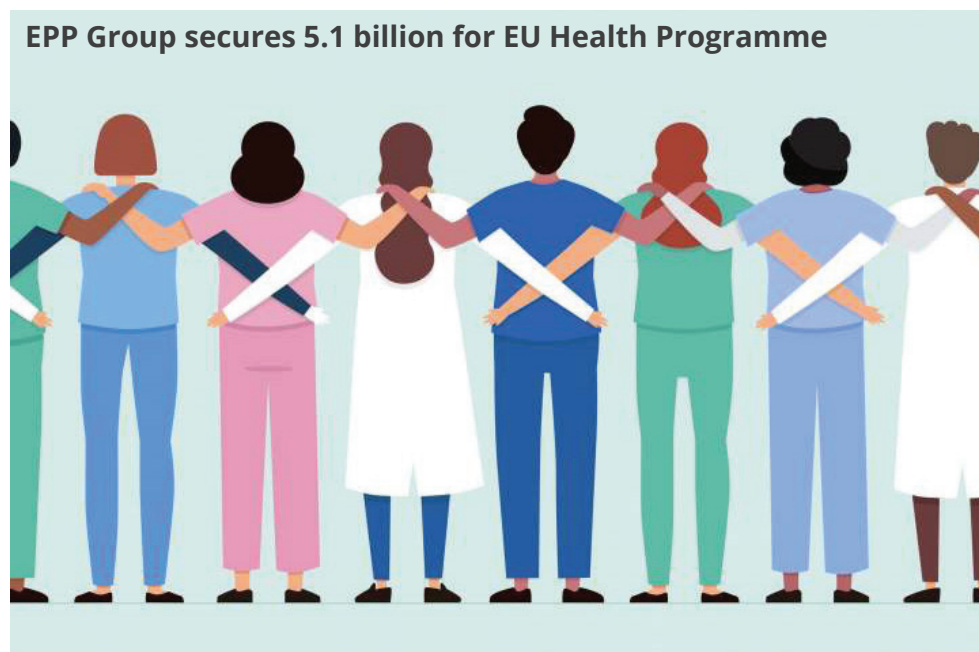
With healthcare and the European Green Deal ranking top on the public agenda, the ENVI Committee was once again in the position to provide quick and reliable responses to the main concerns of EU citizens.

COVID-19 has demonstrated that health must be put at the core of European politics. The EPP Group was quick to act in calling for a European Health Union, and also adopted a position paper outlining our views.

One of the weaknesses revealed during the COVID-19 crisis is the EU's dependency on the supply of medicines. Therefore, the EPP Group called for addressing the shortage of medicines by way of increasing the production of medicines in Europe. The EPP Group led the negotiations on a full-fledged 5.1 billion EUR EU4Health Programme that will upgrade the health systems of the Member States, tackle health inequalities, support digitalisation, finance a master plan against cancer and support the stockpile of important medicines. The EPP Group championed the idea of the future Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA) to tackle cross-border health threats.

Improving human health, protecting the environment and ensuring livelihoods go hand in hand for the EPP Group. One such example where we have taken the lead are the new rules on the quality of tap and bottled water in Europe, which secure higher water quality and innovative rules to make our drinking water even safer, more and

better information for consumers, improved access to affordable tap water, especially for vulnerable people, and conversely less plastic bottle waste. Another example where the Group played a decisive role are the first-ever European minimum requirements for water reuse.



## Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)

In 2020, the ITRE Committee has worked on a number of own-initiative reports, including:

- A comprehensive European approach to energy storage
- Maximising the energy efficiency potential of the EU building stock
- A New Industrial Strategy for Europe
- A new strategy for European SMEs

Worked continued on the EU regulation on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027 of the EIT.

In the first half of the year, we finalised the work on the regulation amending rules concerning Labelling of tyres.

In the last weeks of the year, we managed to find political agreements on most of the programs and funds included in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for which ITRE is responsible:

- Horizon Europe - Framework Programme
- Specific programme implementing Horizon Europe framework programme for research and innovation 2021–2027.
- Space Programme
- Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) 2021-2027, ITRE is responsible for telecom and energy parts
- European Defence Fund
- Digital Europe Programme
- European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and Network of National Coordination Centres.

## European Defence Fund



Source: European Commission

## Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)

A well-functioning competitive Single Market, where consumers' and entrepreneurs' interests are ensured and balanced, remains the priority for the EPP Group.

In 2020, the EPP Group identified crucial areas for deepening and completing the Internal Market by proposing to focus on the three important areas: digital transformation, addressing products safety circulating on the single market and the unhindered free movement of services.

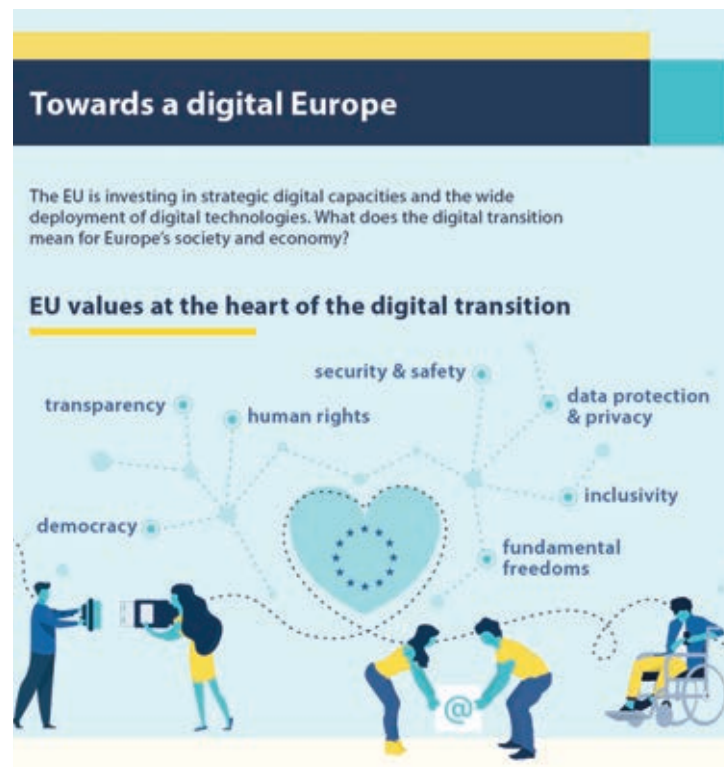
Moreover, the EPP Group was successful in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the Internal Market by proposing a Plenary resolution, which stressed the need to coordinate national health measures in order to protect the integrity of Schengen, of the internal market, and ultimately of the EU as a whole.

As a follow up, the EPP Group organised a hearing on COVID-19 tracing applications, as it was clear that Member States use different technological approaches to develop those applications leading to the fragmentation of the internal market, which would also raise questions about data sharing and data protection. Additionally, a hearing on public procurement was organised. It focused on how to organise the public procurement framework in emergency situations.

In the area of digital, the EPP Group was successful in ensuring that its main priorities - creating a level playing field for all information society services while guaranteeing consumer protection rights online - were well reflected in the Digital Services Act (DSA): the functioning of the Single Market own-initiative legislative report. Removing unjustified and disproportionate barriers and restrictions to the provision of digital services were also addressed in that report.

The EPP Group adopted also a DSA working paper which enlists Group's priorities for the future legislation in the e-Commerce area.

## Main Benefits of the Single Market



Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

Under the lead of the EPP Group, the report on Addressing Product Safety in the Single Market was adopted by the Parliament with an overwhelming majority. The report focused in particular on emerging technologies (Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, 3D-printing, blockchain) and underlined that robust enforcement of EU rules were essential for the protection of consumers and fair competition among businesses. Moreover, it stressed that compliance with product safety rules should be ensured also through enhanced marketplaces responsibilities.

The EPP Group was also successful in ensuring that the report on Strengthening the Single Market: the future of free movement of services reflects its priorities. Thanks to the EPP Group, the report focuses on the necessity of an effective and coherent implementation of existing legislation, improving cross-border procurement for SMEs, importance of regulated professions, cross-border health-care services and improving functionality of the Points of Single Contact.

### **Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN)**

The EPP Group played a key role in reinforcing a European sustainable, safe, climate friendly and innovative legislation in all modes of transport. This is reflected in the updated rules for the passengers on railway as well as in the streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the TEN-T Network. The EPP Group was in the forefront for safe, clean, connected and automated mobility (E-Freight), infrastructure management (Revision of the TEN-T Network guidelines), TEN-T deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, as well as in Transport and Tourism within the EU recovery Plan, MFF and related EU programmes and on civil-military dual use of infrastructure (TEN-T and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)). The EPP Group took the lead in Establishing an EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism.

EPP Group TRAN remains committed to prioritize the main pillars on which the EU is built: the free movement of people, goods and services within the EU's internal market, and the economic, social and cultural benefits of a

Single European Transport Area (SETA). EPP Group fully backed all new measures relieving administrative burden from the Transport and Tourism sector during the COVID-19 crisis, with particular focus on passengers and industry.

At the EPP Group initiative, high-level representatives in all transport fields came to speak in TRAN (Commissioner Thierry Breton on Tourism, Commissioner Frans Timmermans on the Green Deal, Henrik Hololei, Director-General DG MOVE, etc). The TRAN Committee released a Group Position Paper on Mobility and Transport until 2030 and beyond and organised a series of Hearings with stakeholders in all fields of transport (Road, Rail, Inland Waterways, Maritime, Urban mobility) in a bid to develop sectoral regulatory 'roadmaps' for the coming years.

The TRAN Committee demands maximum flexibility among the financial instruments available for transport; it took the lead in ensuring better funding and is committed to making our European transport system affordable, reliable, digital and sustainable.

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## Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA)

This year saw a major EPP Group success, with other political Groups finally agreeing on setting up a Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA). The temporary Committee will be a major contribution to fighting cancer at EU level. It was established on 23 September 2020 with its mandate ending on 23 September 2021.

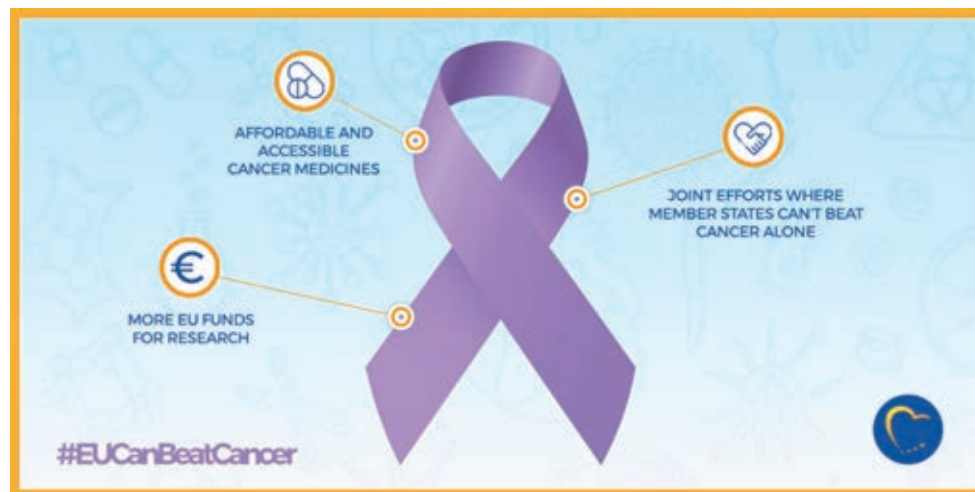
The BECA Committee consists of 65 Members including 18 from the EPP Group including the Chair of the Committee and one of the Vice-Chairs.

In 2020, the BECA Committee held three public hearings covering the topics of research, including the Mission on Cancer within the Horizon Europe Framework Programme, as well as lifestyle and environmental factors in the context of cancer prevention.

The BECA Committee also organised an exchange of views with Commissioner Stella Kyriakides on the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and published a Working Document as input for the Commission.

As EPP Group, we put people first. Our focus is on the patients, caregivers and survivors and how to improve their lives. We believe in a science-based approach to formulate new policy answers in the fight against cancer, and with the establishment of BECA the EPP Group has taken the lead also within parliament on this important topic, which impacts all Europeans.

## Connecting Europe Facility



Source: EPP Group in the European Parliament

## Standing Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies'

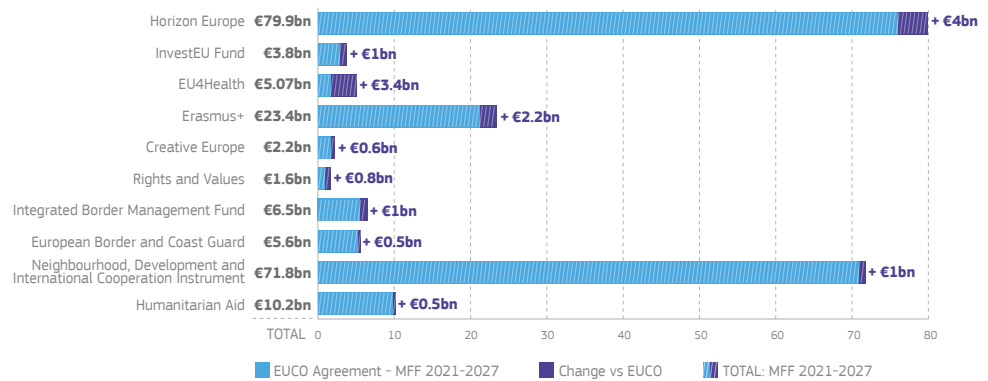
### The Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies' coordinates the following Committees:

#### Committee on Budgets (BUDG) 2021-2027 MFF, Own Resources and EU Recovery Instrument

On 10 November 2020, a political agreement was reached between Parliament and Council on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, the EU own resources and the EU Recovery Instrument. It is allowing for the adoption of an unprecedented EUR 1.8 trillion package consisting of the MFF 2021-2027 (EUR 1074 moving progressively to EUR 1085 bn), coupled with the EU Recovery Instrument (EUR 750 bn). The EPP took the lead in these negotiations on the MFF, as well as on own resources.

#### SMEs in the EU

Within the long-term budget 2021-2027, **ten programmes received top-ups** compared to the European Council agreement from 21 July 2020.



All amounts in EUR billion, 2018 prices.  
Source: European Commission.

Source: European Commission

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Parliament managed to secure several of its demands; notably a 16 billion EUR top-up for EU flagship programmes; a legally binding roadmap to introduce new own resources, which should cover the future repayment costs of the EU Recovery Instrument; an enhanced role for Parliament as budgetary authority in the Recovery Instrument and the establishment of future crisis mechanisms; new climate and biodiversity targets and tracking methodologies.

### **InvestEU programme**

On 7 December 2020, an agreement was reached between Council and Parliament on the Regulation establishing the new InvestEU programme. InvestEU will provide long-term funding for a sustainable recovery, crowding in private investments and supporting a more resilient, green and digital European economy. It is backed by an EU budgetary guarantee of EUR 26.2 billion. Following the negotiations, with EPP Group as Co-Rapporteur, strategic investments to respond to the crisis and solvency support to SMEs are now possible under the four windows, while Member States may implement part of their plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility via the InvestEU programme.

### **Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT)**

The EPP Group continued to safeguard the EU Budget, ensuring that taxpayers' money is used transparently, responsibly and for the positive impact for the EU citizens. The year started with the Discharge to the EU Institutions. The CONT Committee demanded more fairness and transparency in the distribution of the EU subsidies, as they must benefit EU citizens and not oligarchs.

In February 2020, the CONT Committee, including EPP Group Members, went on a fact-finding mission to the Czech Republic to get a better understanding of the management of EU funds after alerts on the possible conflict of interest of Prime Minister Andrej Babiš. The delegation discovered worrying irregularities, which led to an EP Resolution.

The second half of the year was marked by the adoption of the Rule of law conditionality mechanism. The EPP Group Co-Rapporteur emphasised that the conditionality regime would enable Parliament to scrutinise dubious plans to apply EU funds against the EU's values.

Other important files adopted by the end of the year concern the revision of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) regulation and cooperation with European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). The regulation will lead to a stronger anti-fraud policy at EU-level, ensuring smooth cooperation between OLAF and EPPO, and further enhancing OLAF's investigative powers. Furthermore, the negotiations on the EU Anti-Fraud Programme were successfully concluded. The agreement aims to protect the financial interests of the EU and ensure the correct application of the law on customs.



## Committee on Regional Development (REGI)

Five regulations on the cohesion policy (European Structural and Investment Funds - ESIF) in 2021-2027 have been agreed after a long negotiation process, agreed at political level in December 2020 between the Council and the European Parliament. EPP Group kept the leading role in their adoption.

These regulations provide for the important part of economic growth and job creation that will come through the regions of the EU:

- Common Provisions Regulation. This 'umbrella' regulation of seven funds provides for a framework focusing investments on innovation, competitiveness, digital transformation and industrial adaptation, as well as on promoting a low carbon, circular economy and fighting against climate change.
- Additional resources for fostering crisis repair in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing a green, digital and resilient recovery of the economy (REACT-EU). Part of the Recovery Package, it addresses the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, through an amendment of the current CPR.

There are three ESIF funds and regulations where the EPP Group played an instrumental role:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund Regulation
- Specific provisions for European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) Regulation
- Just Transition Fund (JTF).

All of these allow for greater attention for depopulation processes; broadened support for enterprises, in particular towards research and development co-operation with SMEs, as well as urban development. Investments in natural gas replacing other fossil fuels have been allowed to a narrow extent under ERDF. This has been an issue of crucial importance for the EPP Group.

Another two regulations have been adopted in the early stages of the pandemic: Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) mobilising available cash reserves under the ESIF from the unspent pre-financing, followed in April by the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+).

## Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

Despite the unprecedented challenges of 2020, the EPP Group made decisive contributions in support of EU agriculture and forestry. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the strategic nature of European farming and we stepped in immediately to aid the worst affected sectors, notably by offering greater flexibility in the application of certain rules and by increasing support rates. We moved swiftly to ensure that the CAP would continue to be in place in 2021 through the adoption of a two-year Transitional Regulation, incorporating 8 billion EUR in front-loaded EU Recovery Instrument funding. We successfully led very difficult negotiations with the other political groups to lay the foundations for the future

CAP by securing a compromise within Parliament that promotes an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable agricultural policy for the period after 2022. The EPP Group Rapporteurs lead the negotiations with the Council and are making every effort to reach a deal in spring 2021, so that the Member States have time to prepare their Strategic Plans – the major innovation of the future CAP.

Moreover, the AGRI-Committee sent a clear message to the Commission regarding our expectations for the next EU Forestry Strategy: sustainable forestry has an integral role to play in meeting climate and environmental goals.

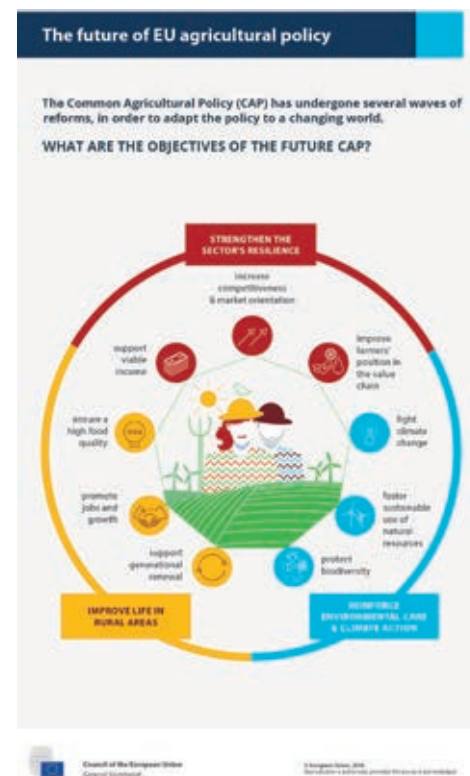
## Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT)

Healthy, well-treated animals are the core of European food security that the EPP Group is protecting. On 19 June 2020, the European Parliament decided to set up the ANIT Temporary Committee of Inquiry to investigate alleged violations in the application of European Union law on the protection of animals during transport. The EPP Group fully support this work and thus defend the interests of

livestock farmers by protecting their entrepreneurships and guaranteeing high European standards of animal protection during transport within and outside our borders.

The EPP Group continues and intensifies its efforts to deliver results that serve the interests of our farmers and all EU citizens.

## The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)



Source: Council of the European Union

## Committee on Fisheries (PECH)

Brexit and COVID-19 pandemic deeply affected the European fishing and aquaculture sector in 2020. Under the lead of the EPP Group, paramount agreements were concluded, in order to secure continuity and a clear future for our fishing communities without undermining EU sustainability commitments.

The PECH Committee also intensively negotiated successfully:

- a balanced and fair agreement on The New European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) 2021-2027. The fund enables the EU fleet to fish and farm better and allows the sector to invest in worker's safety and wellbeing, on environmentally efficient engines and vessels and on generational renewal.
- the new measures to help the fishing sector and coastal communities in the Baltic Sea, in order to support Baltic Sea fishers enabling them to cope with the socio-economic effects of the severe fishing restrictions targeting Eastern and Western Baltic cod and herring.
- a crucial PECH Brexit opinion to the AFET/INTA resolutions on the new partnership agreement with UK.

## Tackling Illegal Fishing



Source: Council of the European Union

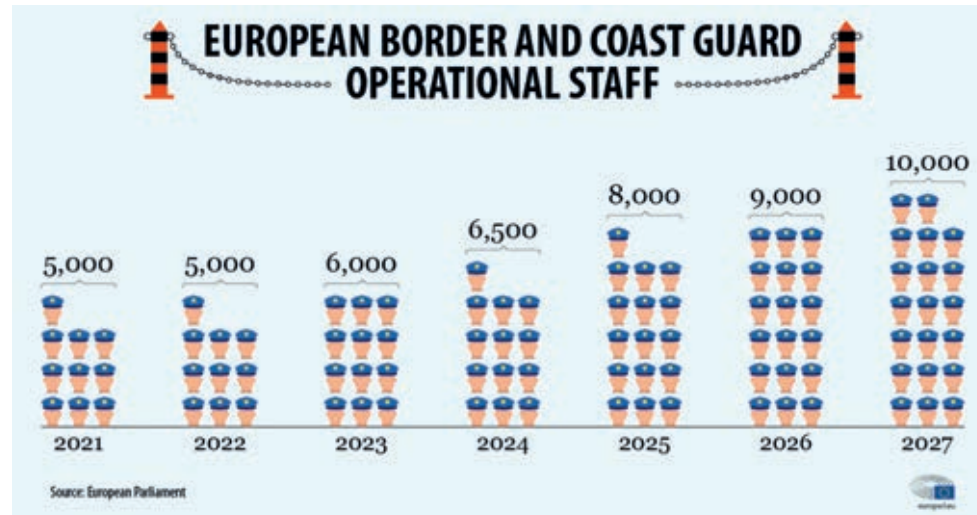
## Standing Working Group 'Legal and Home Affairs'

2020 has been a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the traditional delivery of the work of the EPP Group WG Legal & Home Affairs. Consequently, many files were negatively impacted with more lengthy procedures and negotiations. Moreover, COVID-19 also influenced the political agenda with the adoption of many non-legislative files that assessed the consequences of the outbreak on almost every policy.

### Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)

The EPP Group priorities were endorsed with the adoption of the Regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online ('TCO Regulation'), helping to counter radicalisation online by ensuring the swift removal within one-hour of publicly available terrorist content from online services, both by means of removal orders issued by competent authorities and through specific measures applied by hosting service providers.

### European Border and Coast Guard



Source: European Parliament

With the adoption of the Visa Information System (VIS), the EPP Group succeeded to strengthen the mandatory security checks to detect applicants using multiple identities and identify anyone posing a risk and a better access to Europol and law enforcement authorities to VIS data to identify victims of crime and to better protect children and fight against missing children. The EPP Group contributed to ensuring that FRONTEX offers near real time assistance to Member States in the detection and identification of falsified documents which is crucial to better identify false documents and contributes to the better protection of the Union's external borders. FRONTEX became also responsible for the operation of the False and Authentic Documents Online system (FADO).

The Rule of Law was also an important topic for the EPP Group through 2020 with a call for establishment of an EU-wide rule of law mechanism that is fair and non-discriminatory to monitor all Member States. Media Freedom report and Roma report, with fights to defend the Rule of Law in Poland were EPP Group priorities.

The EPP Group moreover contributed to the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the five multiannual programmes for the period 2021-2027 in the Justice and Home Affairs area, namely the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF), the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI), the Internal Security Fund (ISF), the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV) and the Justice Programme (JP). Those programmes provide crucial funding in the EPP Group priority areas of border management, the fight against terrorism, serious and organised crime, and asylum and migration policy, including returns, as well as judicial training, violence against women and citizens participation.

## Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)

Ensuring that all citizens have equal opportunities to succeed, economically, socially and politically, is at the heart of the EPP Group's mission. In 2020, the EPP Group seeks to ensure that every woman has the opportunity to lead an ambitious and fulfilling life, by following up on the European Commissions EU Gender Equality Strategy and by adopting the EPP Group's Position Paper on Gender Equality that outlines key policy actions enhancing equal opportunities and treatment for women and men. The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period highlighted the importance of addressing the specific consequences for women with regard to healthcare, violence, the socio-economic impact, the intersectional and global perspectives and the recovery phase. With the report on Closing the Digital Gender Gap, women's participation in the digital economy aimed to address the root causes of the existing digital gender gap.

The EPP Group's strong commitment towards combatting violence against women was variously reflected in its activities, namely through the report on Combating Gender based Violence: Cyber Violence.

## Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)

Among the many areas affected by the COVID-19 pandemic were education and culture. The EPP Group realised the serious challenge for millions of children and teachers who were suddenly forced to adapt to distance learning. In October, the EPP Group published a Position Paper on Education in the Era of Digitalisation in which it offers a number of concrete proposals on how to turn a digital education into a success. The EPP Group Members were also the driving force behind EP resolutions on the Cultural Recovery of Europe.

The main core of activities in 2020 were trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council, under the chairmanship of Sabine Verheyen (DE), on the three programmes Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps. The EPP Group advocated an ambitious budget for the Erasmus+, which now officially incorporates the EPP Group flagship Initiative - DiscoverEU. The EPP Group backed Creative Europe, with 2,2 billion EUR to support cultural and creative sectors and enhance Europe's cultural diversity. The newest initiative, the European Solidarity Corps programme will mobilise young people to engage in activities that promote solidarity, responsibility and citizenship.

The EPP Group also adopted a Position Paper on the Roma Inclusion Process, in which the Group proposed measures addressing the Roma population, including access to education, sanitary services and better enforcement of existing anti-discrimination laws.



Erasmus+ has an estimated budget of **€26.2 billion**<sup>1</sup>, nearly doubling the funding compared to its predecessor programme (2014-2020), complemented by around

**€2.2 billion** from the EU external cooperation instrument<sup>2</sup>.

**70% of the budget will support mobility** opportunities for all, in a lifelong learning perspective.

<sup>1</sup> The Erasmus+ programme budget is made of €24.574 billion in current prices as part of the new MFF (2021-2027) and an additional top-up of €1.7 billion in 2018 prices.

<sup>2</sup> Neighbourhood, Development and Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA III)

Erasmus+ mobility has positive effects on educational, social, personal and professional development, in that it enhances knowledge, skills and attitudes, improves employability, helps confidence-building and independence, stimulates curiosity and innovation, fosters the understanding of other people, and builds a sense of European belonging.

**30% of the budget will be invested in cooperation projects and policy development activities**

where organisations gain experience in international cooperation, strengthen their capacities, produce innovative approaches, exchange good practices and network. Through these actions, Erasmus+ will play an important role in strengthening resilience and supporting recovery and innovation in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.

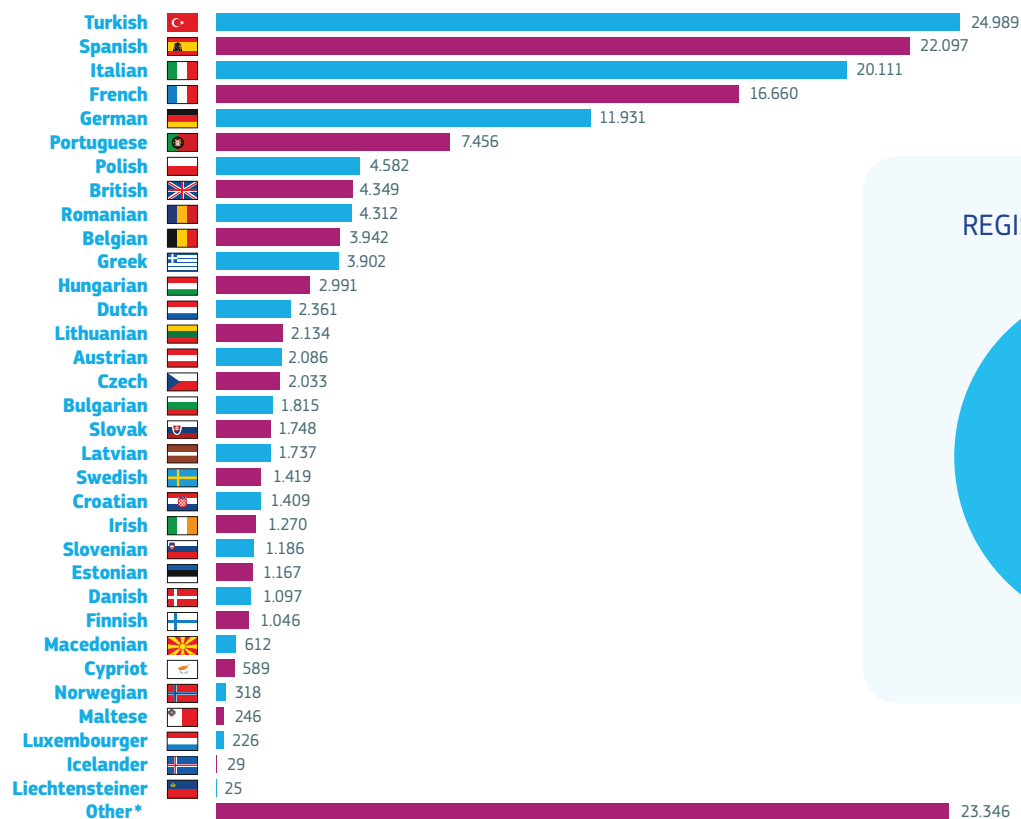
Erasmus+

Source: European Commission

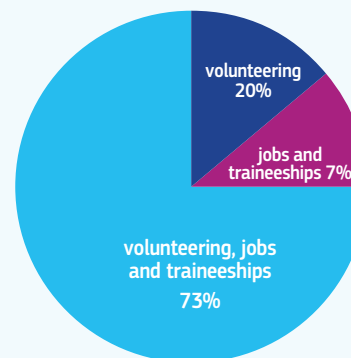
## European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

REGISTRATIONS - MORE THAN **175,000** YOUNG PERSONS REGISTERED

### EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPUS: REGISTRATIONS BY NATIONALITY



### REGISTRATIONS BY STRAND



Source: European Commission

## Committee on Petitions (PETI)

The EPP Group gave priority this year mainly to the petitions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many citizens were concerned about the closure of the EU internal borders, fundamental rights, the sanitary and economic situation or the limitation of information rights. As a result, some of the petitions lead to Plenary resolutions, supported by the EPP Group Members, such as the Schengen system and the measures during the COVID-19 crisis or the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in the COVID-19 crisis.

Another important topic in 2020 was homelessness, as four million homeless people live in the EU and more people are at risk due to the economic fallout caused by the pandemic. The EPP Group Members gave support to additional funding for biomedical research on the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS).

The EPP Group was also the driving force towards the adoption of the EP resolution on the European Citizens' Initiative on Minority Safepack promoting the linguistic minorities in Europe.

## European Ombudsman – Strategic Objectives



Source: European Ombudsman



## Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI)

The EPP Group was key at closing the negotiations on the Directive on Representative Actions, through which EU consumers can obtain compensation in mass harm cases, while at the same time providing for legal certainty for businesses and avoiding abusive litigation. Negotiations were also driven by the EPP Group on the Regulation on the cooperation between the courts of the Member States in the taking of evidence in civil or commercial matters as well as Regulation on the service in the Member States of judicial and extrajudicial documents in civil or commercial matters.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** in all its dimensions was also politically driven by the EPP Group, namely the Civil Liability Regime for AI to provide legal certainty for both consumers and businesses and, ultimately, to boost the uptake of AI. By striving for the adoption of a risk-based approach, the EPP Group shaped a good compromise on the ethical aspects of artificial intelligence, robotics and related technologies, ensuring that the future legal framework remains targeted and does not create a disproportionate burden, especially for SMEs. Similarly, the EPP Group was in the driving seat in the negotiations on Intellectual Property Rights for the development of artificial intelligence technologies. All these EPP Group positions on AI will help from the basis for the European Commission's legislative proposal, which is expected to be issued during 2021.

**Digital Services Act:** adapting commercial and civil law rules for commercial entities operating online was also a key EPP Group success by providing a legal framework building on the responsibility of platforms that is effective against illegal content but does not interfere with freedom of expression without creating disproportionate burdens for SMEs.



## Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)

Brexit remained a priority issue for the EPP Group in the AFCO Committee. After the approval of the withdrawal Agreement in a consent procedure, the EPP Group was chairing the Committee's monitoring group on the implementation of the Withdrawal agreement, focusing their work notably on the respect of citizens' rights and the provisions on the Irish protocol. Art.50 TEU, the Treaty article that allows Member States to leave the Union. The EPP Group contributed to the analysis of the way the provisions of Art. 50 were interpreted and applied.

The EPP Group was in the driving seat on amending the current Rules of Procedure of the EP to ensure business continuity in extraordinary circumstances so that the Parliament can

continue to fulfil its role as co-legislator and budgetary authority and maintain political control functions. The groundwork for the report was laid in a Working Group chaired by the EPP Group.

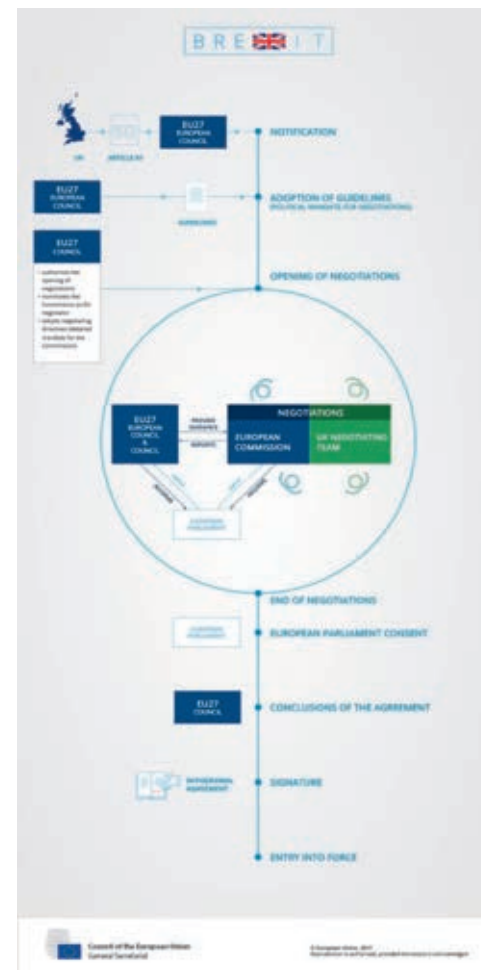
AFCO adopted in December 2019 an opinion on the Conference on the Future of Europe (CFoE) mentioning as high-level ideas the legislative initiative of the Parliament, the rule of law, lead candidate, economic governance and transparency. The resolution negotiated is a well-balanced text. The European Parliament adopted its resolution in January 2020 based on the conclusions of the Working Group on the Conference on the Future of Europe and the AFCO opinion.

## Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age (AIDA)

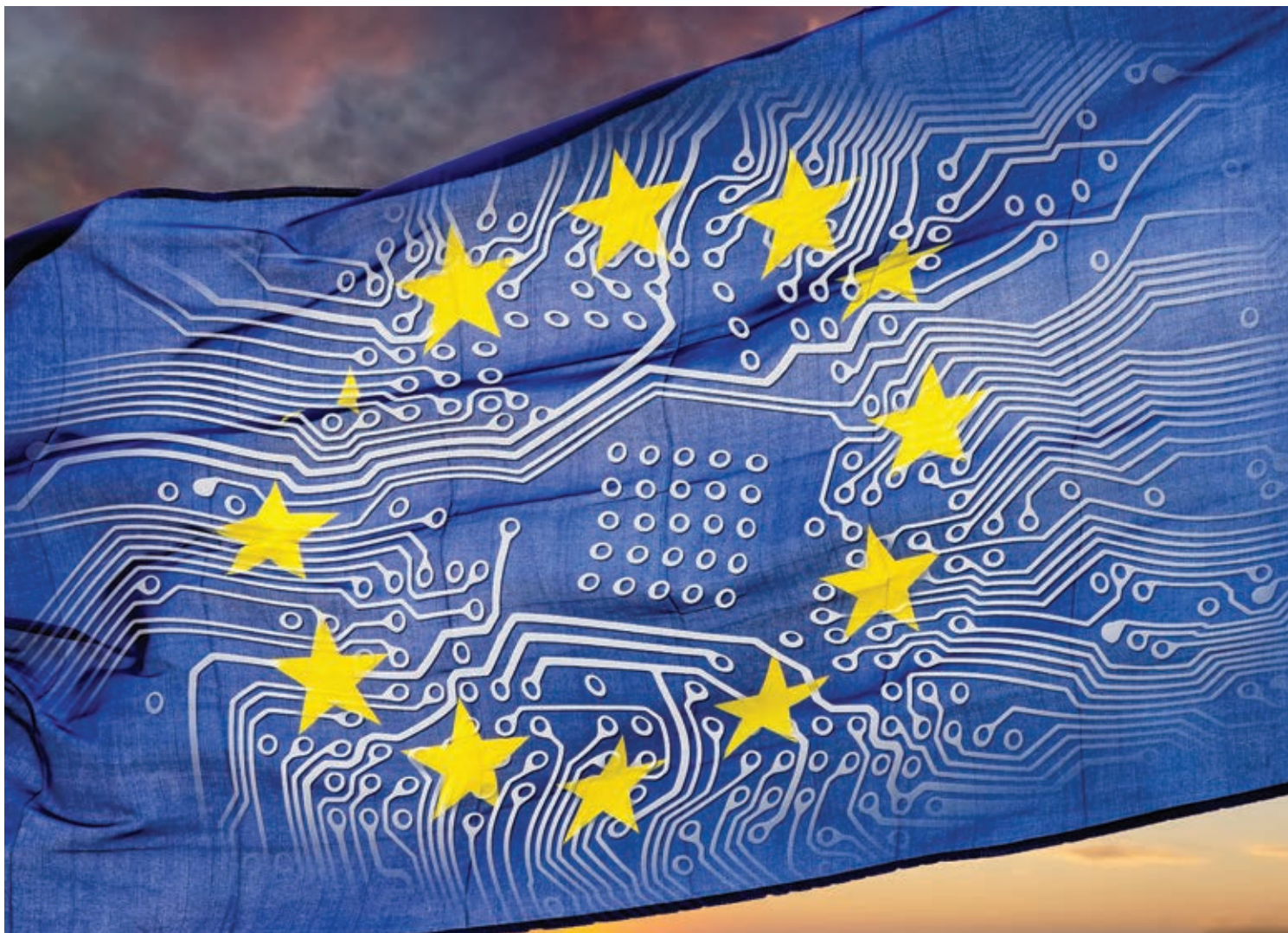
Set up in June 2020 with the goal of setting out a long-term EU roadmap on Artificial Intelligence (AI), the EPP Group has been

a fierce advocate of the AIDA temporary committee mandate to assess the future impact of AI on the EU economy.

## Brexit – Timeline



Source: Council of the European Union





### 03 Directorate Presidency and Chairman's Cabinet

While the close of 2019 had been action-packed for the Presidency and the Chairman's Cabinet, in particular with the formation of a new European Parliament and the College of Commissioners, last year has not been without its own challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the Directorate to temporarily rethink its operations with a transition to online meetings and events. The new organisational changes have implied a new distributions of tasks and a new management style - crucial issues such as post-Brexit negotiations and the new Recovery Fund have led us to reshape our political agenda.

Over the past 12 months, the Group as a whole faced unprecedented uncertainties. During this time and more than ever, it was important for the Group to rely on a strong, available and flexible Presidency and Cabinet Directorate. For all these complex developments, the Directorate was an asset to steer the Group with an approach to act politically and speak with one voice, seeking solutions and positions to the public's expectations. The Directorate's capacity to deliver on the objectives set by the leadership was facilitated by the active support of all the services eager to work together in the interest of the Group.

In this unsettled time, the Directorate has concentrated its activity in setting pragmatic and operational solutions for the leadership to continue to perform its coordination role, to shape the political agenda through new initiatives taken by the Chairman and the Group, and to steer the internal discussions at the Conference of Presidents and the Bureau for the European Parliament's new modalities of work in the best interest of the Members, while respecting the COVID-19 restrictions measures.

Below are some examples of the Directorate's main activities.

## 1. Presidency

The Presidency Directorate fulfilled its traditional responsibility of preparing the meetings of the governing bodies of the EPP Group, focusing - amongst others - on the following topics: the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, the Recovery Instrument, the Rule of Law, the strategy on how to keep jobs in the post COVID-19 economic downturn, the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement, the strategic media communication of EPP Group activities and the preparation of the Plenary sessions.

The EPP Group was a driving force in setting the political agenda within the Conference of Presidents, in particular with the setting up of the new Special Committee on Cancer - one of our key election campaign pledges, but also by shaping the strategy for EPP Group priorities to emerge in the MFF.

The Presidency Directorate was also pivotal in preparing the EPP Group positions of our team within the Bureau. With the spread of COVID-19, the Bureau focused its activities on developing new rules and innovative modalities to improve the functioning of the European Parliament under the pandemic.

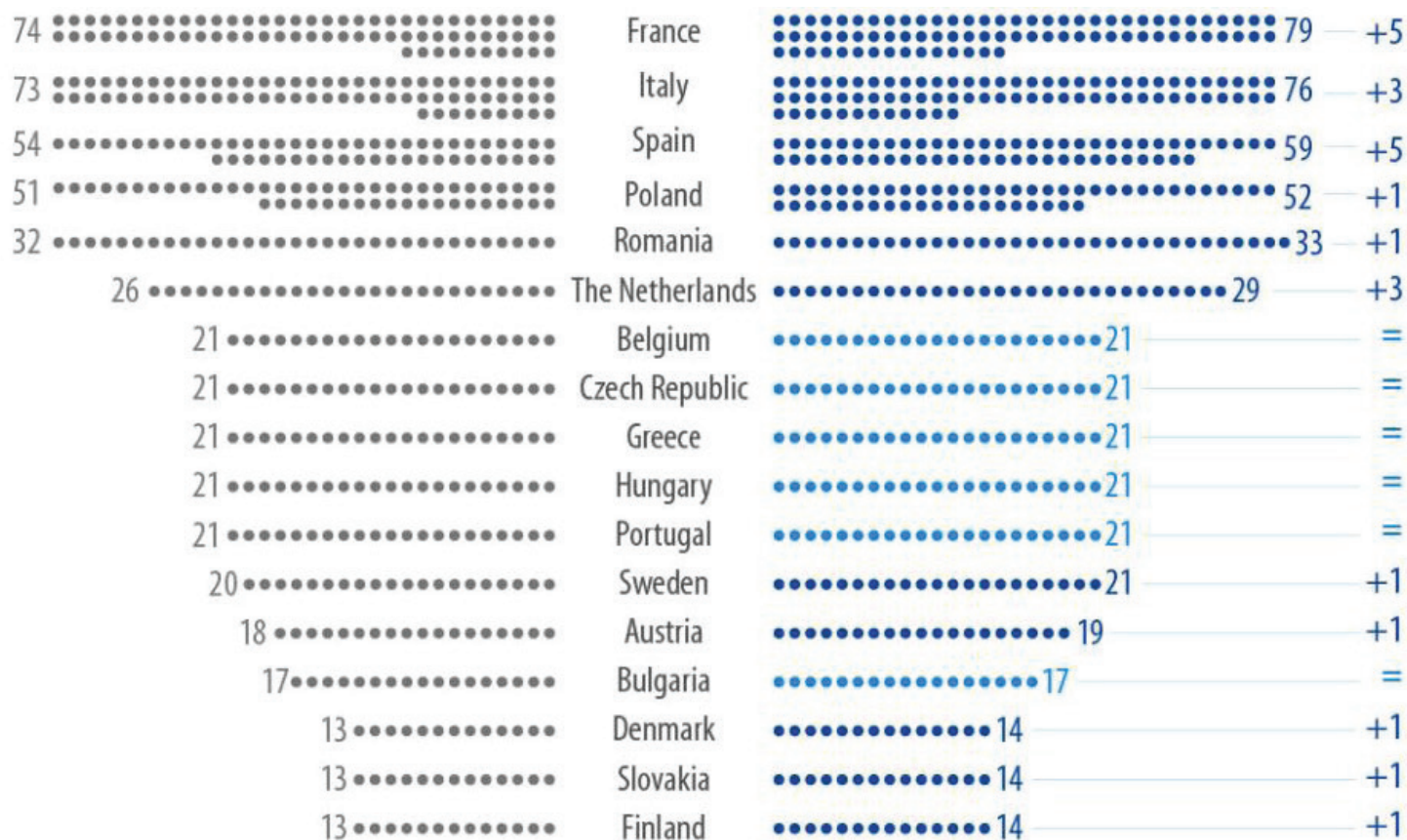
## 2. Chairman's Cabinet

The Cabinet has continued working relentlessly to ensure that the Group, through its Chairman, remains in the lead by anticipating the political challenges ahead, shaping the political agenda and imposing its key priorities at the core of the EU debate. The Chairman has driven the largest Group of the House at this time of uncertainty as an anchor in the inter-Institutional set up. The Cabinet made sure the Chair of the EPP Group remains the privileged interlocutor with the other institutions, national leaders and key actors of the EU.

## 3. Archives

The management of the archives of the EPP Group, the website, the library, including photo documentation, were progressing well also throughout 2020. The digitalisation of EPP Group documents kept at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) has continued.

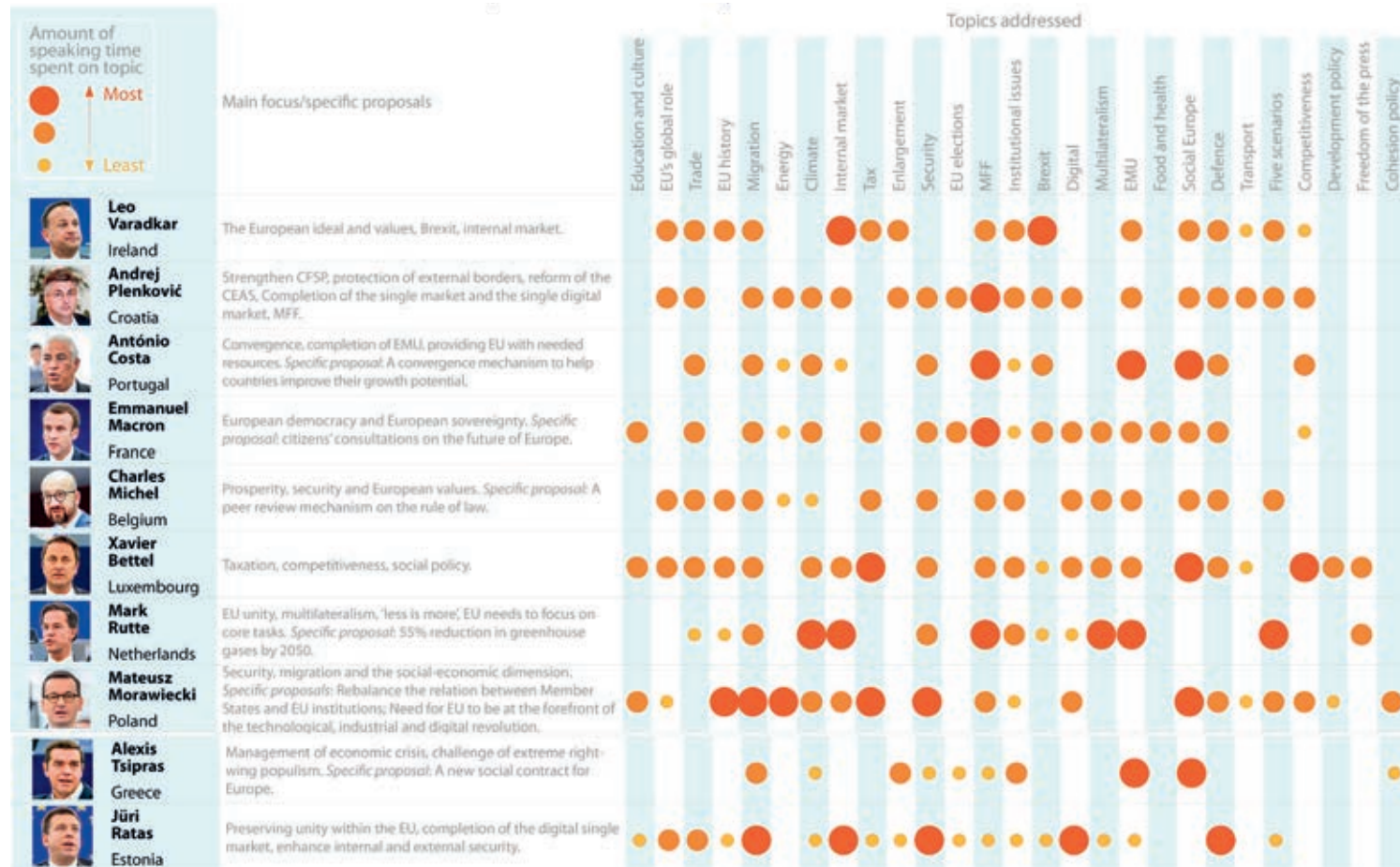
## The European Parliament After Brexit



Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

## Future of Europe Debates

### Overview of topics addressed by each Head of State or Government





Source: European Parliamentary Research Service





## 04 Directorate External Policies

### A. External Policies Directorate

**The External Policies Directorate** coordinates the following Committees/Subcommittees: AFET, DROI, SEDE, DEVE, INTA and INGE, which is a Special Committee. The is working closely with all the Services of the Group and especially with the other Parliamentary Working Groups belonging to the Parliamentary Work Directorate.

The main tasks of the service concern: the Parliamentary Committees, the preparation of the urgencies and the promotion of democracy, and following of the Election Observation Mission Group, which is in charge of coordinating, together with the European External Action Service, the sending of EP Delegations abroad. Due to the pandemic EU EOM were suspended due to the impossibility of travelling, but in January 2020 there was an EP Delegation to the legislative elections in Peru led by EPP Group MEP Pilar del Castillo and in late February an EU EOM was sent to Guayana for the March elections. 2020 was different in comparison to other years, due to COVID-19 outbreak, resulting in the European Parliament moving everything to remote mode and halting travel. Our staff quickly adjusted to the situation and the work carried on in a remote manner.

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## Staff

At staff level, the External Policies Directorate comprised for 2020 19 staff members. Eleven advisers, including the Deputy Secretary-General and 8 assistants (2 acting as advisers). Furthermore, in addition to the 19 staff members, there is the Head of Inter-Parliamentary Delegations and Parliamentary Assemblies Unit and her assistant who are fully working in the Service while some other colleagues fulfil their tasks in other services of the Group but are also part of our Service because they are responsible for Delegations. The Service has also a colleague responsible for the strategic dialogue with the USA (special adviser).

We have the opportunity to train and acquire support from some trainees twice a year in the different Committees, something which constitutes a very good experience and support for both the trainees and the Group staff. However, due to COVID-19, which resulted in the impossibility to physically attend meetings in the first period (from February to June), the trainees were given the opportunity to extend their traineeship for 5 additional months.

## Regular WG meetings

- a) Regular WG meetings were held ahead of every Plenary session. The WG meetings dealt with: preparation of the Plenary session, planning of Group hearings and initiatives for future part sessions, on-going important dossiers and dossiers to be followed.
- b) Usually, each Tuesday during the Plenary session in Strasbourg, a WG lunch would take place with the WG Chair, EPP Group Coordinators in Committees and EPP Group Chairs of the Committees to prepare the agendas and the priorities for the Group in the field of foreign policy. However, due to the outbreak, there have been no sessions in Strasbourg and are taking place in Brussels in a semi-remote mode.

## Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

### AFET (SEDE-DROI) contributions

**COVID-19:** Foreign policy consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak (EPP Shadow Rapporteur: Zeljana Zovko) analysed the influence of the novel COVID-19 pandemic on international relations and the EU's role in the world. It affirms that the pandemic is a game changer in the international environment, a risk multiplier and a catalyst of change in the global order. It is used as an excuse to limit human rights and undermine democratic standards. The pandemic has accelerated tensions and geopolitical competition in which the European Union still has to position itself. It is also an opportunity for a strong and more united EU possessing strategic autonomy backed up by sufficient and credible military capacities, as well as tools and mechanisms to support partners.



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**EU-Africa:** Deeper and closer relations with Africa are a priority for the EU as symbolically underlined by President von der Leyen's first trip outside the EU to Ethiopia, the headquarters of the African Union.

The new EU-Africa Strategy focuses on partnerships in five areas: green transition; digital transformation; sustainable growth and jobs; peace and governance; migration and mobility. In this spirit, the SEDE Committee adopted the Report on "EU-African security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa" (EPP Group Shadow Rapporteur: Zeljana Zovko). It expresses solidarity with countries deeply affected by terrorism (Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso) and calls upon the G5 Sahel to pursue domestic reforms and fully implement human rights, good governance, and democratic accountability. The report calls for support for the joint forces of the G5 Sahel to become operational and the need to develop a strong and credible police component. Interest in Africa in the European Parliament is aimed at building momentum ahead of the 6 EU-African Union Summit foreseen for 2021.

**Western Balkans:** In June 2020, MEPs adopted the Recommendation on the Western Balkans in the run-up to the May 2020 Summit (EPP shadow: Kinga Gál). The report builds on the Commission's renewed enlargement strategy, and it emphasized the importance of strengthening fundamental values and rule of law, the enforcement of the conditionality mechanism, and insists on the reversibility of the accession process. The report endorses the Commission's new methodology, which aims to make the enlargement process more dynamic and political with full-fledged EU membership being the ultimate goal. The report emphasizes the need to improve consistency, efficiency and visibility of Union financial assistance within the framework of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) as well as in coherence with the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).



**Eastern Partnership:** It featured high on the agenda of the European Parliament in 2020. In spring the Recommendation on the run-up to the EU-EaP Summit of June 2020 (EPP Group Shadow Rapporteur: Radek Sikorski) was adopted. The text of the recommendation focuses on the vision of future EaP development, underlines the strategic importance of the region for the EU and the need of full implementation of the AA/DCFTAs. The progress in reforms to date is appreciated; however more is expected in areas such as rule of law and judiciary and the application of the "more for more" principle.

**Belarus:** After the summer, the focus was on Belarus following the falsification of the presidential elections and unprecedented protests that followed. The European Parliament adopted a Recommendation on the situation in Belarus (EPP Group Shadow Rapporteur: Sandra Kalniete). It gives strong support to the non-recognition of the elections by the EU and the need to introduce personal sanctions against those involved in the falsifications and perpetrated violence. It calls for free and fair elections, recognition of the Coordination Council as legitimate representation, ending violence, releasing all those in prison and an inclusive political dialogue followed by a peaceful transfer of power. The engagement of the European Parliament in Belarus was concluded with awarding the Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought to the Belarusian opposition. This was an initiative spearheaded by the EPP Group.

**PESCO:** PESCO was a long awaited instrument for the EU defence toolbox. The European Parliament drafted a Recommendation on the implementation and governance of PESCO (Radek Sikorski was Rapporteur). The main finding is that PESCO needs to be effectively used as an instrument towards sustainable and efficient EU defence cooperation, improving defence capabilities of participating MS and interoperability, flexibility and deployability of forces in line with the ambition of greater EU strategic autonomy. It should focus on projects with a genuine European strategic dimension and the projects ought to be grouped into capability clusters hence creating additional synergies and effects of scale. At this stage these ambitions expected of PESCO have yet to be fulfilled.

**EU Magnitsky Act:** In the area of human rights, it is worth noting that finally the Council agreed on the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, the so-called European Magnitsky Act, which will allow the EU to target individuals and entities responsible, involved or associated with serious human rights violations and abuse worldwide. The EPP Group was one of the most vocal supporters of this instrument.



**Opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya won the EU's Sakharov Prize for human rights**

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## Committee on Development (DEVE)

In addition to its regular activities, during the 2020 legislative year, the DEVE Committee focused mainly on the EU-Africa Strategy report, the post-Cotonou negotiations, the trilogue talks on NDICI and ESC, as well as all areas affected by Covid-19.

Firstly, the EU-Africa Strategy Report argues that a new comprehensive strategy should be based on a clear understanding of mutual interests along with a clear statement of each side's responsibilities, with particular attention to the development of sustainable and inclusive growth models, improving the business environment and investment climate.

Throughout the year, negotiations were ongoing also for the new external financing instrument. EPP Group MEP Rasa Juknivičienė, one of two DEVE Rapporteurs for this joint file with AFET, played a key role during the talks. At the very end of the year, a political agreement was reached on the most difficult issues, such as governance and migration. Nonetheless, further technical meetings and a concluding trilogue will still be required before the file can be completely closed.

The EPP Group MEPs also took a leading role in the negotiations for the Post-Cotonou agreement. The DEVE Committee, being the leading committee in the negotiations, reiterated repeatedly the need for a people-focused partnership, in line with the SDGs. Against this background, the Committee advocated for a strengthened Parliamentary dimension through the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. In December 2020, a final agreement was reached and it tackled key global issues, from climate change to migration, sexual reproductive rights, growth as well as human rights, peace and stability.

At the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DEVE Committee promptly took action by analysing the impact of the virus on several issues and by discussing its possible solutions. The need to work in solidarity globally, led to the launch of the Team Europe strategy, through which over EUR 38.5 billion were mobilised.

The DEVE Committee also handled, together with the CULT Committee, the negotiations concerning the European Solidarity Corps, the EU's programme for promoting solidarity as a value through volunteering. Negotiations concluded after over a year and the most important breakthrough in the agreement was the age limit set to 35 years for the humanitarian aid strand.

## Committee on International Trade (INTA)

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an unprecedented disruption to the global economy and world trade, as production and consumption are scaled back across the globe causing wide disruption of global supply chains. At the same time, the WTO crisis and trade tensions between the US-China and the US-EU continued to persist. This led to a debate at EU level about developing the concept of **'Open Strategic Autonomy' (OSA)**, to reaffirm the EU global leadership ambitions across a range of areas, including trade and supply diversification, in line with the aims of a more geopolitical European Commission. Therefore, over the course of 2020, the EPP Group has pursued an ambitious EU trade policy agenda, since international trade is a powerful tool to secure jobs and growth and to stimulate competition and innovation, as part of the EU Economic Recovery Strategy.

Following the resignation of former Commissioner for International Trade, Phil Hogan, Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis from the EPP family was successfully and unanimously confirmed in an INTA Hearing in October 2020. He will take the lead to conduct a comprehensive **EU Trade Policy Review**, for which the European Parliament, led by the EPP Group Rapporteur Jörgen Warborn, has already laid the foundations through its adoption of the Common Commercial Policy and its resolution on the Trade Policy Review, led by EPP Group INTA Coordinator Christophe Hansen.

At multilateral level, the EPP Group continues to **advocate the WTO's leading role** at the heart of a multilateral rules-based world system and supports the current modernisation reform. Our Group welcomes the ongoing plurilateral negotiations on fisheries subsidies, E-Commerce, domestic regulations and investment facilitation, asks for a prompt functioning of the Dispute Settlement Body and strives for a successful 12th Ministerial Conference in 2021.

At **bilateral level**, a major achievement of the EPP Group Rapporteur Luliu Winkler was the adoption of the **EU-Vietnam Free Trade and Investment Agreements** supported by a large majority in Plenary in February 2020. The EU-Vietnam FTA and IPA are the most modern and comprehensive agreements ever concluded between the EU and a developing country and will lead to future region-to-region trade and investment agreements, confirming EU leadership worldwide. Moreover, the Parliament gave its broad consent to the **EU-China Agreement on Geographical Indications** under the EP Standing Rapporteurship of Luliu Winkler (EPP Group). Our Group saluted the political agreement in principle of the **EU-China Investment Agreement** on 30 December 2020 as an important pillar of the EU's policy to engage with China.

The EPP Group welcomed the major achievement of concluding the **EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement** on 24 December 2020, limiting the negative consequences of the UK's withdrawal and establishing a cooperation framework as the basis for a strong future partnership. The Parliament was closely involved during the negotiations in 2020 through the EP UK Coordination Group under the Chairmanship of David McAllister (EPP Group) and the joint lead Committees The INTA/AFET Committee (INTA Standing Rapporteur Christophe Hansen (EPP Group)), providing valuable input to the Commission through the adoption of two resolutions. INTA/AFET will be jointly responsible for the ratification of the Agreement until the end of February 2021.

In the same optic, the Group endeavors to ratify the **Association Agreements with Mercosur and Mexico** and hopes to conclude agreements with countries such as **Chile, Australia and New Zealand**. Thanks to the leadership of EPP Rapporteur Daniel Caspary, significant progress was made in the ongoing negotiations with Australia and New Zealand, ensuring better access for European companies and

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eliminating non-tariff barriers. In November, the European Parliament overwhelmingly approved the first elimination of customs duties between the US and the EU in 20 years (the so-called '**Lobster deal**'). Thanks to our EPP Group Rapporteur Danuta Hübner's strong engagement, this package of tariff reductions should pave the way towards further balanced, more ambitious and comprehensive sectorial negotiations with the US, in which the EPP Group can build positive transatlantic trade and an economic agenda in view of the new political opening in the US.

With regard to **trade legislation**, two important legislations were concluded under the German Presidency: A political agreement was reached on the **Enforcement Regulation** (EPP Group Rapporteur Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou), protecting the Union's interests under international trade agreements in situations when third countries adopt illegal measures and simultaneously block a dispute settlement process. Another major achievement after four years of negotiations was the conclusion of the recast of the **Dual Use Regulation** (EPP Group Rapporteur Sven Simon), making EU controls for the export of dual-use items, including cyber-surveillance items, more efficient and contributing to international peace, security and the respect of human rights. In addition, the ATMs Western Balkans (EPP Group Rapporteur Enikő Györi) were adopted under the German Presidency which aim to extend the autonomous trade measures to ensure consistency with the guidelines that were stipulated by the Commission and with the Sofia Declaration of 17th May 2018. At the same time, the EPP Group continues backing the Commission's efforts to strengthen the EU's toolbox of unilateral measures by an effective use of Trade Defense Instruments and Foreign Direct Investment Screening measures, by tackling Foreign Subsidies and advancing the Market Access Instrument (IPI).

## Special Committee on Foreign Interference and Disinformation (INGE)

The Special Committee commenced its work on 23 September following the adoption of its mandate in Plenary in June 2020. So far (as of 31 December 2020), the Special Committee has dedicated seven meetings and two webinars exchanges of view with 29 experts and two Vice-Presidents of the European Commission in order to diagnose different aspects of foreign interference and disinformation.

The Rapporteur (Sandra Kalniete, EPP Group) presented her first of several Working Documents in December highlighting, inter alia, the role of social media platforms, the financing of political actors, or the role of cyber security and critical infrastructure. The Special Committee is going to have its mandate prolonged, so the work will continue throughout 2021 and the final report is scheduled for adoption in Plenary in March 2022.



## B. External Policies - Inter-Parliamentary Delegations and Parliamentary Assemblies Unit

### 1. Introduction

As 2020 was shaped by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Inter-Parliamentary Delegations and Parliamentary Assemblies meetings and travel were the first items to be put on hold by the decision of the European Parliament President in March 2020.

The Delegation chairs, with the EPP Group ones being at the forefront of the process, quickly adapted and started to hold “informal” online meetings at first and remote meetings at a later stage with their Parliamentary peers in third countries. 208 physical and online meetings took place over the course of the entire year (Europe: 21; EaP: 45; MENA: 34; Americas: 50; Asia: 46; Africa: 12).

However, given the technological limitations, only a handful of official Delegation meetings could be organised this year. These remote meetings were authorised by the CDC Chair, based on their political importance, economic or social developments in certain countries. The consequences of the pandemic throughout the world were often on the agenda of these meetings. On a positive note, this scarcity, led to an increase in cooperation, especially with AFET-, SEDE- and DROI-Committee, to hold joint meetings between Committees and Delegations.

In addition, the Unit supported the work of Vice-President Andrey Kovatchev for his activities on the Western Balkans and Southern Neighbourhood (please see the detailed overview below). We also provided close support for EPP Group initiatives related to the Eastern Neighbourhood.

In general, and despite the challenging circumstances, all colleagues from the Unit delivered good quality work. They were prompt in providing regular news overviews to MEPs, stimulated solidarity actions of the

EPP Group Chairs towards their counterparts and contributed to the Unit's coordinated actions in support of our MEPs' work through content and organisational input. In order for EPP Group Members to stay on top of these developments, our staff provided reliable and factual information via daily EPP Group Western Balkan, Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood Press Reviews, and weekly briefings on the political and health situation in each of the countries of these regions. We held Unit coordination meetings online, at the EP premises and to keep our large Group safe, even in a park.

### 2. Western Balkans Group's initiatives

Despite the pandemic, 2020 was a very busy year for Western Balkans countries, notably with the long awaited and delayed European Council decision to open negotiations on EU membership with North Macedonia and Albania.

EPP Group Members were continuously working to assist our Western Balkans partners by showing solidarity, mobilising a substantial recovery package and involving the region in EU health programmes – measures made possible also thanks to strong EPP Group engagement. EPP Group Chairs of Delegations from the Western Balkans countries have undertaken initiatives such as sending letters to their counterparts, expressing solidarity in the context of the COVID-19 crisis or by holding informal meetings to get an update on the situation in the respective countries. They also conveyed strong messages of support ahead of the Balkans summit held on 6 May and the elections in Montenegro and Serbia. Our Group also strongly supported the 6 October announcement of the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, which aims to spur the long-term economic recovery of the region, support a green and digital transition, foster regional integration and convergence with the European Union.

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EPP Group Vice-Chair responsible for Enlargement, the Western Balkans and Mediterranean Policy Andrey Kovatchev, chaired the following on-line EPP Group events:

- **Exchange of views with Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi** on Wednesday 21 October **on the 2020 Enlargement Package and Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans**. It was a timely opportunity for our Members to discuss the response to the Enlargement Package and Investment plan after Commissioner visits to countries of the region. It was said that with this plan and strict conditions, the EU will increase its positive leverage in the region while supporting European and local companies. The plan will only work if regional partners provide the necessary absorption capacity in order to move quickly. This will be a challenge, as administrations in these countries have to have the right people in place to handle such large-scale projects.
- **Exchange of views on the accession process** of Montenegro and Serbia on Tuesday 17 November with **Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, Jadranka Joksimović** (Serbian Progressive Party, EPP sister party), Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Serbia, **Elvira Kovács** (Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, EPP sister party), Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, and **Jela Vuletić Manthou**, Minister Counsellor at the Mission of Montenegro to the EU.

### 3. Eastern Neighbourhood Group's initiatives

In spite of the pandemic, the Eastern Partnership was very dynamic in 2020. The attention of EPP Group Members focused on rapid and intense political developments, such as the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, on-going protests following fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus, presidential elections won by pro-European candidate Maia Sandu in Moldova, political crisis in the aftermath of Georgian Parliamentary

elections and the crisis in Ukraine resulting from the sentence of the Constitutional Court, which considered anti-corruption legislation unconstitutional. On top of that, the region has been hit hard by two waves of COVID-19, which further exacerbated chronically weak institutions and underinvested healthcare systems.

Moreover, our Unit prepared a webinar with EPP sister-parties from Georgia ahead of the Parliamentary elections held in October 2020. Prior to the summer, a similar event was organised for MEPs with our Moldovan sister parties. In addition, EPP Group Members regularly organised their own webinars on political developments in the Eastern Neighbourhood, providing a wide spectrum of speakers and variety of issues discussed.

Additionally, EPP Group Members were highly committed to keeping the Eastern Neighbourhood high on the agenda. In June, the Euronest PA Bureau, on initiative of the EPP Group, drafted a strong message for the Eastern Partnership Leaders Video-Teleconference pointing to the need for concrete long-term policy objectives for the Eastern Partnership over the next decade.

Our Members spearheaded the initiatives to award the Belarusian opposition the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought as well as tangible initiatives like the Fact Finding Mission for Belarus and the High Level Mission that was endorsed by the European Parliament Plenary. EPP Group Members were also at the centre of establishing the European Parliament position following the Nagorno-Karabakh war, focusing on the need to give diplomacy a genuine chance, protection of cultural heritage and the return of displaced civilians.

In December, EPP Group Members initiated an informal cross-party "Friends of Democratic Belarus Group", which took advantage of the physical presence of the leaders of the Belarusian opposition in the European Parliament in Brussels and exchanged views on the latest developments and the kind of support the opposition requires.

Moreover, our MEPs stayed in constant touch with their counterparts from the parliaments of the EaP countries as well as our sister parties. This was also illustrated by numerous Inter-Parliamentary delegation meetings. In fact, the first official meeting with MEPs and designated parliamentarians was conducted by the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee. Synergies between activities in Parliamentary Committees (AFET, DROI, SEDE) and all bilateral Inter-Parliamentary Delegations of the Eastern Neighbourhood, and in particular the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, at political and staff level allowed the EPP Group to act in a focused and effective manner keeping the region high on the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs agenda.

#### 4. Southern Neighbourhood Group's initiatives

The EPP Group Vice-Chair Andrey Kovatchev in charge of Southern Neighbourhood Policy has conducted following strategic/thematic meetings, in order to deepen our relationship with the Mediterranean partners:

- **In-camera exchange of views with Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace process (8 July).** Our Members received exclusive information on the so-called deal of the century, the US-led peace process and reactions in the region, the state of play of UN-sponsored peace talks and possible Parliamentary elections in Palestine.
- **EPP Group webinar on the Abraham Accords (10 November).** This exchange of views with leading experts in the region (with Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Emanuele Giaufret, Head of EU Delegation in Israel, Assaf Orion, International Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and Steven Höfner, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Palestine Director) gathered insights on the implications of the historical Normalisation Agreements between Israel and UAE, Bahrain

and Sudan (now also with Morocco) and discussed the current challenges in the broader Middle East.

- **EPP Group webinar on political situation in Lebanon (17 December)** with Presidents Samy Gemayel and Samir Geagea of Kataeb and Lebanese Forces, the EPP partner-parties in Lebanon. Due to the extreme situation the country is facing, with unprecedented economic, political and social challenges, which have been further aggravated by the Beirut port explosion on 4 August 2020, it was of the utmost importance to strengthen the EPP Group's relations with our partners. Discussions were frank, direct and showed the need and desire to continue deepening our ties.

Furthermore, our Members were active in Inter-Parliamentary delegations in the area of the Southern Neighborhood. On 30 November, the Parliament held the 44th European Parliament - Knesset Inter-Parliamentary Meeting, co-chaired by Antonio López-Istúriz White, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with Israel. The joint declaration of the meeting highlighted a number of priorities such as: the need to redouble efforts to hold an EU-Israel Association Council meeting in the near future, joint efforts to fight xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism and further cooperation between the EU and Israel in the area of security, health, climate change, environment, energy and trade.

## 5. List of 2020 meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Delegations and Parliamentary Assemblies

Delegation	Delegation Chair	Total number of meetings held in 2020 (official and unofficial)
Delegation for Northern cooperation and for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee (DEEA)	<b>SCHWAB Andreas</b> (EPP)	9
Delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (DSEE)	<b>FRANZ Romeo</b> (Greens/EFA)	1
Delegation to the EU Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (D-ME)	<b>BILČIK Vladimir</b> (EPP)	3
Delegation to the EU Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (D-AL)	<b>KEFALGIOANNIS Manolis</b> (EPP)	0
Delegation to the EU-North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-MK)	<b>SCHIEDER Andreas</b> (S&D)	1
Delegation to the EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (D-RS)	<b>FAJON Tanja</b> (S&D)	2
Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-TR)	<b>LAGODINSKY Sergey</b> (Greens/EFA)	5
Delegation for relations with Belarus (D-BY)	<b>BIEDROŃ Robert</b> (S&D)	7
Delegation to the EU Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee, the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and the EU Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee (DSCA)	<b>KALJURAND Marina</b> (S&D)	9
Delegation to the EU Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee (DMD)	<b>MUREȘAN Siegfried</b> (EPP)	6
Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (D-RU)	<b>CZARNECKI Ryszard</b> (ECR)	1
Delegation to the EU Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee (DUA)	<b>WASZCZYKOWSKI Witold Jan</b> (ECR)	14
Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly (DEPA)	<b>KUBILIUS Andrius</b> (EPP)	8
Delegation for relations with Iraq (D-IQ)	<b>SKYTTEDAL Sara</b> (EPP)	3
Delegation for relations with Israel (D-IL)	<b>LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE Antonio</b> (EPP)	6
Delegation for relations with Palestine (DPAL)	<b>PINEDA Manu</b> (GUE/NGL)	8

Delegation	Delegation Chair	Total number of meetings held in 2020 (official and unofficial)
Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula (DARP)	<b>NEUMANN Hannah</b> (Greens/EFA)	7
Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union, including the EU-Morocco, EU-Tunisia and EU-Algeria Joint Parliamentary Committees (DMAG)	<b>COZZOLINO Andrea</b> (S&D)	2
Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries (DMAS)	<b>SANTOS Isabel</b> (S&D)	7
Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (DMED)	<b>SASSOLI David</b> (S&D)	1
Delegation for relations with Canada (D-CA)	<b>YON-COURTIN Stéphanie</b> (Renew)	7
Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (DNAT)	<b>PEETERS Kris</b> (EPP)	10
Delegation for relations with the United States (D-US)	<b>SIKORSKI Radosław</b> (EPP)	14
Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America (DCAM)	<b>METZ Tilly</b> (Greens/EFA)	5
Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community (DAND)	<b>DEL CASTILLO VERA Pilar</b> (EPP)	1
Delegation to the EU-Chile Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-CL)	<b>RODRÍGUEZ-PIÑERO Inma</b> (S&D)	2
Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-MX)	<b>SMERIGLIO Massimiliano</b> (S&D)	3
Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (DLAT)	<b>LÓPEZ Javi</b> (S&D)	4
Delegation for relations with Mercosur (DMER)	<b>SÉJOURNÉ Stéphane</b> (Renew)	1
Delegation for relations with the Federal republic of Brazil (D-BR)	<b>FERNANDES José Manuel</b> (EPP)	1
Delegation to the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Parliamentary Committee (DCAR)	<b>BIJOUX Stéphane</b> (Renew)	2
Delegation for relations with Afghanistan (D-AF)	<b>AUŠTREVICIUS Petras</b> (Renew)	7
Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand (DANZ)	<b>MÜLLER Ulrike</b> (Renew)	3
Delegation for relations with India (D-IN)	<b>GADE Søren</b> (Renew)	4
Delegation for relations with Japan (D-JP)	No Chair (former UK MEP <b>GILL Neena</b> (S&D))	2
Delegation for relations with the Korean Peninsula (DKOR)	<b>MANDL Lukas</b> (EPP)	2

Delegation	Delegation Chair	Total number of meetings held in 2020 (official and unofficial)
Delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China (D-CN)	<b>BÜTIKOFER Reinhard</b> (Greens/EFA)	5
Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia (DSAS)	<b>PROCACCINI Nicola</b> (ECR)	5
Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (DASE)	<b>CASPARY Daniel</b> (EPP)	6
Delegation to the EU Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU Tajikistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and for relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia (DCAS)	<b>MARTUSCIELLO Fulvio</b> (EPP)	7
Delegation for relations with Iran (D-IR)	<b>ERNST Cornelia</b> (GUE/NGL)	5
Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (DACP)	<b>ZORRINHO Carlos</b> (S&D)	6
Delegation for relations with the Pan-African Parliament (DPAP)	<b>RODRÍGUEZ RAMOS Maria Soraya</b> (Renew)	5
Delegation for relations with South Africa (D-ZA)	<b>ADAMOWICZ Magdalena</b> (EPP)	1



## 05 Directorate Outreach

Following the structural changes in the EPP Group Secretariat as of September 2020, the **Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments** was transformed into the **Directorate Outreach**.

The idea behind the setting up of the new Directorate is to strengthen the capacity of the Group to reach out to the wider network of the EPP family and EPP like-minded entities across the EU, with particular attention to specific national contexts. It will facilitate the flow of information and expertise exchanges in both directions: from and to Brussels, from, and to the Member States.

The Directorate aims at tailoring the programme of its activities in view of the EPP Group's strategic political agenda and in view of the subject matters identified by the EPP Group as key projects.

Furthermore, the Directorates will continue to advise the EPP Group and its Members on institutional cooperation and legislative dialogue with national Parliaments (Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), Inter-Parliamentary Committee Meetings, and European Parliamentary Week).

The Directorate Outreach consists of two units:

- **EPP Group Network Unit**  
The EPP Group external offices have been transferred to Directorate Outreach upon the restructuring.
- **Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit**

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Key EPP Group Members for the Directorate's activities:

**Vangelis Meimarakis** - EPP Group Vice-Chair responsible for relations with national Parliaments.

**Jan Olbrycht**, EPP Group Vice-Chair and **György Hölvényi** - Co-Chairs of the EPP Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue.

**Eva Maydell**, Coordinator of the EPP Young Members Network, two Vice-Coordinators: **Maria Walsh** and **Karlo Ressler**.

**Roberta Metsola**, first Vice-President of the European Parliament, responsible for relations with national parliaments and Article 17 TFEU dialogue and **Antonio Tajani** AFCO Chair.

## 1. EPP Group Network Unit

The **activities in 2020** have been strongly impacted by **COVID-19** as its essence a people-to-people activity. Nevertheless, the Directorate managed to organise a wide range of virtual events. During the second half of 2020, the focus was on **building of the Outreach network database and setting up of the new working structures**.

- **31st Summit of Chairs of EPP Parliamentary Groups in the National Parliaments of the EU and the European Parliament**

During the 31st Summit of Chairmen of EPP Parliamentary Groups in the National Parliaments of the EU and the European Parliament, the EPP Group Members and the EU Commissioners, discussed the EU multi-year budget, the Recovery Plan and Brexit with their colleagues from the National Parliaments. The meeting was strategically organised one day before the EU Summit on the next EU multi-year budget and the Recovery Plan.

The Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Manfred Weber, listed the priorities of the Group. "The EU faces an enormous challenge to find a way to recover and the EU countries are all in the same boat, as no country can recover, if the EU as a whole does not recover." He highlighted the importance of protecting the traditional policies while investing in future ones like border protection and military cooperation. He also insisted on the application of the rule of law, a credible repayment plan to the Recovery Plan, and clear responsibility shouldered by the EU fund beneficiaries.

Vice-Chair Vangelis Meimarakis highlighted the important role that National Parliaments play in the course of the construction of the European project, and stressed their significant role in the ratification of the Recovery Plan. For her part, Vice-President of the European Parliament Mairead McGuinness touched upon the Conference on the Future of Europe and encouraged MPs to have a discussion among themselves about the future of Europe.

Mr Ivan Milosevic, Chair of the European Affairs Committee in the National Parliament of Croatia, representing the outgoing rotating EU Presidency, said the Recovery Fund is just the tool but without a clear and common vision based on respect of the common values it can hardly be effective. Mr Ralph Brinkhaus, Chair of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group, Bundestag, Germany representing the EU Presidency said the German Presidency is an opportunity to develop the EU project in difficult times and the role of the National Parliaments is important in creating the legitimacy that ensures that citizens support EU decisions. "In addition to the Coronavirus crisis and the EU multi-year budget, we should also focus on other policies like the common migration policy and climate change. It's important to invest together and find good solutions together."



- **Web-conference “The Ratification of the Own Resources Decision by National Parliaments: What’s at stake”**

The conference debated the National Parliaments’ ratification of new direct revenues for the EU budget. The underlying message was that for the first time in history, the EU will take up common debt to finance the 50 billion EUR Recovery Fund, but without reforming the EU’s decades-old revenue system, the burden will be enormous for the next generations. Therefore, Europe needs to find other sources of income. The Inter-Parliamentary meeting with the national parliaments was timely to discuss the reform of the revenue system, which once agreed in Brussels would need to be ratified by National Parliaments. The EU budget and the Recovery Fund are joint actions to alleviate Member States’ economies, which have been heavily affected by the pandemic.

Member States have different priorities and the principle of proportionality has to be taken into consideration with regard to taxes. MPs highlighted the huge difficulties and repercussions of the pandemic and that citizens expect support from EU to overcome the crisis. There is no time for wide-ranging debates, swift decisions are needed in order to avoid further division and help citizens and the economy. The event was a success, with a great number of participants and speakers from 12 Member States.

- **EPP Young Members Network (YMN)**

The EPP Group’s Young Members’ Network (YMN) consists of members of national Parliaments coming from the **EPP political family** and **EPP Group MEPs, up to the age of forty at the time of their election**. Over **350 members** from national Parliaments and **29 MEPs** in the EPP Group are part of this network.

On 4 March 2020, Members of the EPP YMN paid a visit to the **Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)** in Brussels. Young MEPs had a chance (as the last visitor group before European Parliament-like shut-

down at the ERCC) to listen to a presentation of ERCC activity in the COVID-19 context by Antoine Lemasson, ERCC Head of Unit and Julia Stewart David from ERCC. The presentation in the ERCC situation room gave a better understanding of the work of ERCC and the types of emergencies ERCC is called to respond to. Beyond revealing facts and figures, MEPs learned that joint action is key, an informed and coordinated response delivering the best results for our Union and citizens.

Faced with the uncertainty of the pandemic, our aim was to collect data driven insights and expert advice on how to navigate in a COVID-19 environment, to learn from what has already happened in other parts of the globe, to hear the concerns and inform the most appropriate policy responses. In order to approach systematically these areas of interest the EPP Group’s Young Members Network held a series of **exchanges with academic and business leaders** in the form of videoconference meetings during April and May 2020 with experts, leading academics and business leaders, in Europe and the United States. The focus of these talks was not only on fighting the COVID-19 virus but also on finding viable strategies on future social and economic challenges in a post-COVID-19 world. These exchanges led to critical knowledge and relevant findings having the potential to inform a principled and coordinated action to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

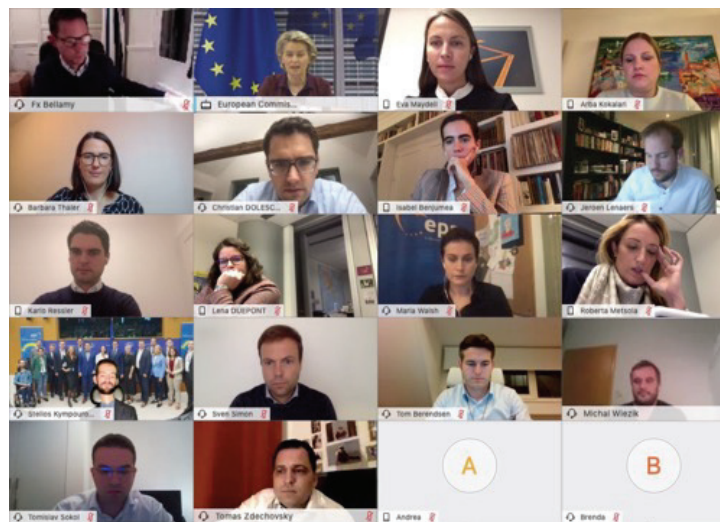
- **Post-COVID-19 recovery; a possible ‘to do list’ for policy-makers** (on 14 April 2020) with Tomas Pueyo, Medium.com journalist and VP of Silicon Valley unicorn Course Hero.
- **Economic recovery after COVID-19** (on 28 April 2020) with Olivier Blanchard, Emeritus Professor at MIT, Senior Fellow at the Petersen Institute for International Economics (PIIE) in Washington, D.C., and former Chief Economist at the IMF (and one of the most cited economists in the world).

- **Contact tracing technology** (on 7 May 2020) with experts from Apple and Google: Gary Davis, Global Director of Privacy & Law Enforcement Requests, Apple, Hendrik Bourgeois, Head of Government Affairs Europe and Russia, Apple and William Malcolm, Director, Privacy Legal, Google.
- **The effects of the COVID-19 crisis in Europe** (on 14 May 2020) with Ivan Krastev, renown political scientist, author of the books "After Europe", "Democracy disrupted" and others, fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. Mr Krastev is the Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia, contributor as opinion writer in The New York Times, the Financial Times, and the German Marshal Fund of the United States.
- In November, young Members met with **European Commission President Ursula von der LEYEN**. The main topic was the first year of the von der Leyen Commission, with particular regard to the fight against COVID-19, MFF and other issues raised by MEPs during a free exchange of views with with the Commission President. In order to summarise the outcome of the above meetings EPP YMN has created three **Project Groups** with the participation of young EPP MEPs. The aim of these **Project Groups** is to continue the exchanges and to provide input for EPP Group and EPP Party leadership on topics such as prospects for the economy, digitalisation, climate change, sustainability and communication strategy.
- The **13th Annual Meeting of EPP Group Young Members' Network** entitled "2021: The Great Reset?" took place on Tuesday, 8 December in online format with the participation of more than 30 MPs and MEPs. The agenda included an exchange of views with Mairead McGuinness, European Commissioner for Financial services, financial stability and Capital Markets Union on the current challenges in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis and address by Manfred Weber MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group in the European

Parliament on the current political situation and political priorities for 2021.

#### • **EPP Group Young MP Erasmus Programme**

Running since 2016, the EPP Young MP Erasmus Programme is a one-week exchange programme organised by the EPP Young Members Network (YMN). It is open to young MPs - below 40 years of age at the time of their election - who are members of an EPP sister-party from a national Parliament. It offers MPs the opportunity to discover the work of their young MEP colleagues in the European Parliament. Despite a number of participants being interested, in early 2020 - as a precautionary measure due to the pandemic situation, the EPP Young MP Erasmus Programme had to be suspended, registered participants will be rescheduled as soon as the pandemic situation will allow continuation of the Programme.



## 2. Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit

The EPP Group Intercultural and Religious Dialogue activities aim to promote mutual understanding and an active sense of European citizenship for peaceful living. 'Intercultural and Religious Dialogue' means listening to religious leaders and experts of religions, and exchanging views with representatives of governments, European Institutions, academia as well as civil society on issues of shared interest or concern which regards to religious affairs and intercultural relations.

- **The newsletter**

The newsletter "Intercultural and Religious Dialogue News from Europe and the World" was launched and it monitors new developments concerning religious issues, activities of Churches and faith-based organisations and State-Church relations in the EU as well as around the world.

- **Presentation of ACN Report: "Persecuted and Forgotten?" by Ms Marcela Szymanski, EU Liaison Officer of the Aid to the Church in Need**

As an organisation providing emergency and pastoral relief in nearly 140 countries around the world, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is committed to chronicling and assessing human rights violations against Christians around the world. "Persecuted and Forgotten?", a Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2017-19 summarises the findings of ACN's ongoing research, assessing recent patterns of hatred and discrimination.

- **Film screening: "Fierce Light" in cooperation with the 'HOPE' network** (Homes Of Presence and Encounter)

*Fierce Light: When Spirit Meets Action* is a 2008 documentary film written and directed by Velcrow Ripper that focuses on Spiritual Activism. Synopsis: Fuelled by the belief that "another world" is possible, Ripper explores the stories of people who have turned to spiritual activism as a means to cope with personal and global crises. The film contains interviews from Desmond Tutu, Daryl Hannah, Thich Nhat Hanh, Julia Butterfly Hill, Van Jones, Alice Walker, Joanna Macy, Noah Levine and John Lewis.

- **"World Day of Human Fraternity" breakfast meeting**

EPP Group Members and participants commemorated the first anniversary of the signature of the Document "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on 4 February 2019. The Document found a strong echo worldwide leading the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution on 21 December 2020 declaring 4 February as the International Day of Human Fraternity. The day is to be observed each year, beginning in 2021.

- **Working Group Meeting with Rev. Sören Lenz, Executive Secretary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in Strasbourg**

The Church representative gave a comprehensive overview of CEC's work in the field of bio-ethics, human rights and engagement with the Council of Europe and other European Institutions.

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- **Conference on “Creating a New Narrative of Tolerance: The case of religious diversity in the United Arab Emirates”**

The United Arab Emirates has a diverse mix of nationalities, religions and minorities. The aim of the event was to shed light on the religious and cultural diversity of the UAE, with the help of a special book released in 2019: *‘Celebrating Tolerance: Religious Diversity in the United Arab Emirates’*. 2019 has been the UAE’s “Year of Tolerance”. The UAE government initiative aimed to reject extremism and entrench values of tolerance, dialogue, coexistence and openness to different cultures. To celebrate the Year of Tolerance, a diverse group of faiths have collaborated in producing this book, which serves as a compendium of their experiences of coexisting peacefully in the country.

- **Webinar on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Churches - Churches’ Social Teachings in response to COVID**

Members of the EPP Group gathered remotely to learn more about the examples of the responsibility of religious communities at the time of the epidemic, mobilising serious human and institutional resources throughout Europe and helping those in need. Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen, Secretary General of CEC, stated that the epidemic put a huge strain on the community and the churches managed to convey hope and active assistance to those in need. An important experience of the epidemic is that the protection of human life must always precede economic considerations, according to Father Manuel Barrios Prieto, Secretary General of COMECE. For Rev. George Valcu, General Secretary of CROCEU, the impact of the pandemic is an important denominator to remove obstacles in parallel with the gradual resumption of economic life.

- **Webinar on Fighting the effects of COVID in the Developing World – The role of Religious communities**

The event represented an opportunity to offer first-hand information for participants on the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic reality and socio-religious practices in Africa. MEPs discussed with the Roman Catholic Archbishop Anthony Muheria of the Archdiocese of Nyeri, Kenya, and the Roman Catholic Bishop Alfred Agyenta of the Diocese of Navrongo–Bolgatanga, Ghana.

- **Follow-up Conference on “The next day in Syria”, organised in cooperation with COMECE, CEC, CROCEU**

The event was following up on last year’s EPP Group Intercultural and Religious Dialogue conference on Syria, held in cooperation with the Brussels based Churches organisations of COMECE (Catholic), CROCEU (Orthodox) and CEC (Protestant). The conference aimed to raise awareness of the impact of EU sanctions against Syria. It intended to identify the main obstacles that humanitarian actors are facing and to look for potential alternative solutions allowing a full implementation of humanitarian exceptions to EU sanctions. Experts representing the EU Institutions, Churches and NGO actors discussed possible solutions ensuring the delivery of aid to all civilians, as requested under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

- **Webinar about Lebanon after the Beirut sea port explosion**

The online event connected with two distinguished speakers from Lebanon who provided up-to-date information on the long-term humanitarian consequences of the seaport explosions on 4 August 2020 as well as the current political and economic landscape of the country. The Head of the EU Delegation to Lebanon, Ambassador Ralph Tarraf, explained how the European Union is helping Lebanon in coping with the complex crisis. The new Secretary-General of the Middle East Council of Churches, Mr Michel Abs, gave details on how the different Christian communities are attempting to tackle the many problems.

- **Working Group meeting “What does it mean to be a Christian politician today?” with Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich S.J.**

The President of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE) and Archbishop of Luxembourg, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich S.J., held a conversation with EPP Group Members on how to inspire and encourage Christians to get involved in politics and public life. The Cardinal reflected on how Christian politicians could play an active and responsible role in legislation and decision making processes in the EU. He recalled that Christianity not only provides for individual concerns, but for the ordering of a society with liberty and justice for all.

- **Working Group Meeting on Pope Francis' New Encyclical “All Brothers” (in Italian *Fratelli tutti*) with Mons. Marco Ganci, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Council of Europe**

The Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Council of Europe, Mons. Marco Ganci gave a comprehensive presentation of the Encyclical's structure and thematic focus. The Encyclical “All Brothers” was signed on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on the 3rd October 2020. With this document, Pope Francis offers a vision of society in which human dignity and the human rights of all are respected. Actions based on the common good must form the bedrock of politics and, politics need to become a vocation of service, charity and generosity.

- **Working Group Meeting with H.E. Mons. Archbishop Alain Paul Lebeaupin, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union**

At the end of his mandate, Archbishop Alain Paul Lebeaupin talked to EPP Group Members about his diplomatic actions, main accomplishments and the key challenges he was facing as the Apostolic Nuncio accredited to the European Union between 2012 and 2020.

- **The XX. International Krakow Conference on “Challenges for a new Europe”**

On 9 and 10 October 2020, the 20th International Conference on the “Role of the Catholic Church in the Process of European Integration” took place in Krakow. The event was organised by the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Robert Schuman Foundation in Luxembourg and the Publishing House “Around us”. The honorary chairperson of the organizing committee Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz personally opened the deliberations.

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The conference was divided into two thematic panel sessions: “Churches in the face of a pandemic” moderated by Mr Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the EPP Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue and “Europe in the face of a pandemic” moderated by Prof. Katarzyna Pisarska, Lecturer at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. These two sessions were followed by a third, solemn session entitled “John Paul II on Europe-Unification of Europe – Union of spirit” to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of St. John Paul II.

The speakers of the first session “Churches in the face of a pandemic” included Bishop Janusz Stepnowski of Lomza (KEP Delegate at COMECE), Dr. Jørgen Skov Sørensen, Secretary General of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and Fr. George Valcu, Secretary General of the Committee of Representatives of Orthodox Churches to the EU (CROCEU). In the second session, General Mieczysław Bieniek, former deputy NATO Commander, Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, President of the Polish People’s Party, Dr Peter Liese, Member of the European Parliament and Ewa Kopacz, Vice-President of the European Parliament, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland discussed the theme of “Europe in the face of a pandemic”.

The third session “John Paul II on Europe. Unification of Europe – Union of the Spirit” had among its speakers Valentina Alazraki, Journalist, TV Noticiero correspondent, Prof. Rocco Buttiglione, lecturer at the Institute of Philosophy of Edith Stein in Granada, Dr. Hans-Gert Poettering, former President of the European Parliament, Archbishop Prof. Grzegorz Ryś, Archbishop – Metropolitan of Łódź and Prof. Miloš Lichner SJ, President of the European Association of Catholic Theologians, Vice-Rector of the University of Trnava. A gala event of the Award of Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek “IN VERITATE” took place in the Gallery of Polish Art of the 19th century in Cloth Hall. This year’s winner was Prof. Rocco Buttiglione, and the laudatory speech was delivered by Hanna Suchocka, former Prime Minister and former Polish Ambassador to the Holy See.

- **The XXIII EPP Group Annual Intercultural Dialogue with Churches and Religious Institutions**

The XXIII Annual EPP Group Intercultural and Religious Dialogue with Churches and Religious Institutions was held on Wednesday, 9 December 2020 via video conference, entitled “The Future of Europe”. And the conference was divided into two sessions: “The position of Churches and Religious Communities concerning Europe’s future” and “What do Churches and Religious Communities think of citizens’ and faithfuls’ expectations on the future of Europe”.

The event brought politicians and religious representatives together to look at the medium to long-term future of Europe. In the broader institutional context, the conference was an opportunity for EPP Group Members to reflect with Church leaders and religious experts about finding new forms of collaboration among different sections of society and about identifying viable paths helping to strengthen social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Europe.

The following posters illustrate the work and the main activities of the EPP Group Working Group (WG) on Intercultural Activities and Interreligious Dialogue events for 2020:

**FILM SCREENING OF THE MOVIE**  
**FIERCE LIGHT**  
**WHEN SPIRIT MEETS ACTION**  
A FILM BY YELCROW RIFFER

MEETING OF MEMBERS MANFRED WEBER MEP AND JAN OLBRYCH MEP  
CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON INTERCULTURAL  
ACTIVITIES AND RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND PETER TIEBER  
MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**29 JANUARY 2020 FROM 16.30-18.30 HRS**  
ROOM JANIGQ, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, BRUSSELS

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EPP Group Intercultural and Religious Dialogue  
Conference

**Creating a New  
Narrative of Tolerance:  
The case of religious diversity  
in the United Arab Emirates**

Co-Chairmen of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue  
Manfred Weber MEP and Jan Olbrych MEP

Hosted by MEPs **Georgios Halkiopoulos** (Co-Chairman of the EPP Group) and **Georgios Karamanlis** (Co-Chairman of the EPP Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue)

Member of the Executive Board of the EPP Group  
**Manfred Weber** MEP

**Tuesday, 3 March 2020 from 10.00-19.00 hrs**  
Spaak 4300, European Parliament, Brussels

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**Webinar**

**> The impact of COVID-19  
pandemic on Churches  
> Churches' Social Teachings  
in response to COVID**

Wednesday 24 June 2020 from 15.45 - 17.00 hrs  
an online session details to be provided at a later stage

Keynote message and welcome message  
**Georgios Halkiopoulos** MEP and **Jan Olbrych** MEP  
Co-Chairmen of the WG on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

Keynote message  
**P. Manuel Barrios Prieto** General Secretary,  
Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE)  
**Dr Jürgen Schau-Saunders** General Secretary,  
Commission of European Churches (CEC)  
**Rev. George Mihai Gheorghiu** General Secretary, Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the Balkans (COMEB)

If you are interested to join this Webinar, please register by replying  
to this email and the details will be sent to you

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**Webinar**

**Fighting the effects of COVID  
in the Developing World  
The role of Religious communities**

Wednesday 9 September 2020 from 16.00 - 16.45 hrs  
an online session details to be provided at a later stage

Keynote message and welcome message  
**Georgios Halkiopoulos** MEP and **Jan Olbrych** MEP  
Co-Chairmen of the WG on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

Keynote message  
**His Eminence Archbishop Anthony Muhiye** Archbishop Emeritus,  
Bishop of Addis Ababa,  
Bosnia Catholic Church of Sarajevo-Banja Luka, China

If you are interested to join this Webinar, please register by replying  
to this email and the details will be sent to you

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**Webinar**

**All Brothers ("Fratelli Tutti"),  
the new Encyclical of Pope Francis**

Wednesday 13 October 2020 from 10.00 - 12.30 hrs  
an online session details to be provided at a later stage

Keynote message and welcome message  
**Georgios Halkiopoulos** MEP and **Jan Olbrych** MEP  
Co-Chairmen of the WG on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

Keynote message  
**Manfred Weber** MEP  
President, Chairman of the Policy Law to the Council of Europe

If you are interested to join this Webinar, please register by replying  
to this email and the details will be sent to you

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**Webinar**

**The next day in Syria:  
Humanitarian exceptions to EU sanctions  
against Syria: why they don't work out?**

Wednesday 11 November 2020 from 14.30-18.30 hrs

Hosted by MEPs **Georgios Halkiopoulos** and **Jan Olbrych**  
Co-Chairmen of the EPP Working Group  
on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

If you are interested to join this Conference, please register  
by sending an email to: [EPP-Interreligiousdialogue@ep.europa.eu](mailto:EPP-Interreligiousdialogue@ep.europa.eu)  
and the Webinar login details will be sent to you

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**Webinar**

**Lebanon after the  
Beirut seaport explosion**

Friday 20 November 2020 from 11.00-12.15 hrs  
via Webinar videoconference

Hosted by MEPs **Georgios Halkiopoulos** and **Jan Olbrych**  
Co-Chairmen of the EPP Working Group  
on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

Keynote message  
**His Excellency Ralph Tarnat**,  
Ambassador and Head of the EU Delegation to Lebanon  
**Dr. Michel Aho**,  
General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), Beirut

If you are interested to join this Conference, please register by sending an email to:  
[EPP-Interreligiousdialogue@ep.europa.eu](mailto:EPP-Interreligiousdialogue@ep.europa.eu) and the Webinar login details will be sent to you

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**Webinar**

**The Future of Europe**

Hosted by MEPs **Georgios Halkiopoulos** and **Jan Olbrych**  
Co-Chairmen of the EPP Working Group  
on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

Welcome message by  
**Manfred Weber** MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group  
**Roberto Maroni** MEP, First Vice-President  
of the EP, Responsible for the Parliament's dialogue with  
churches, religious and non-confessional organisations  
**Pablo Rangel** MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group  
and Chair of the Working Group on the Future of Europe

Video conference on Wednesday 9 December 2020  
from 18.00-17.30 hrs

Login details will be sent following registration  
by email to: [EPP-Interreligiousdialogue@ep.europa.eu](mailto:EPP-Interreligiousdialogue@ep.europa.eu)

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## 06 Campaigns Directorate

The newly established Campaigns Directorate was formally set up on 1 September 2020, by a decision of the Presidency and came into operation on 1 October 2020 with the publication of the new organigram of the EPP Group.

The aim of the new Directorate is to strengthen the capacity of the Group to amplify its political messages across the social media spectrum; to find new avenues of connecting with voters; and in close cooperation with the Press Directorate, the Strategy Unit and the Outreach Directorate, to reach out to stakeholders, influencers, policy experts, and the wider EPP family. The new Directorate is an amalgam of staff coming from the Press Directorate (the social media, the publications, and the internet & website teams) and from the Internal Organisation Directorate (the external events and the protocol teams).

The Directorate currently consists of two new units:

- **Social Media Unit:** coordinates the messaging of the Group on all social media platforms.
- **Events Unit:** manages events organised by the Group in collaboration with other Directorates and Units.



### Responsibilities of the Social Media Unit

The overall responsibility of the Social Media unit within the Campaigns Directorate is to ensure the EPP Group and its MEPs are well-represented online. This includes putting in place and maintaining the relevant infrastructure, daily communication online and running communications campaigns. Its tasks include:

- Contributing to the Group's overall communications strategy and ensuring online activities are consistent with offline projects
- Devising and implementing web projects, including ongoing developments on the Group's **website** and Content Management System
- Creating and feeding **social media channels** for the Group, including on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and YouTube (EPP TV)
- Via **EPP TV** filming and broadcasting news, events, interviews and documentaries from the European Parliament and providing **broadcast-quality stockshots**
- Coordinating the production, editing, translating and publishing of content online – checking all press releases before they are published, for example
- Taking, editing and publishing photos of all major Group events; creating **posters** for those events
- Advising MEPs and staff on all online communications issues, including running **training sessions** and 'Ideas Labs'
- Coordinating online communication activities with other organizations within the EPP family

### Responsibilities of the Events Unit

The overall responsibility of the Events Unit within the Campaigns Directorate is the creation and execution of unique events through which the EPP Group in the European Parliament communicates and delivers its key political messages to selected audiences. In order to do this, the Events Unit provides professional, operational and logistical advice and backup support to both the Group and its MEPs in the

organization and execution of many communication events and campaigns that are run to support the broadcasting of political messaging. The Unit's core work comprises a wide variety of complimentary activities, amongst which are:

- Contributing to the Group's overall **communications strategy by organising live, remote and hybrid events with external moderators. Liaising closely with the Social Media Unit** on these events that feed the Group's social media channels, as well as strengthening its political branding and image to gather voter support and recognisance.
- **Organising the logistical support for the Group's External Meetings**, 7/8 per year are held outside of the normal Brussels and Strasbourg workplaces, involving amongst other prominent invitees the Group's Presidency, the Bureau, and the Heads of National Delegations. This also includes providing **protocol, catering and technical advice** to all Group Directorates, including **informing interested stakeholders** of events and follow up.
- Organising and innovating **the cross Directorate 'Communications Programmes', the Members Visitors Programme, Meet your MEP (MYMEP), the Media Tools Budget+, the Communication Budget** which allow Members to promote the priorities of the Group in their respective Member States while ensuring a homogenised branding in the communication of EPP Group messaging, in public, print and on social media.
- Coordinating, supervising and ensuring various **up to date electronic and in print EPP Group publications**, the Group Position Papers, the Group Handbook, the Annual Activity Report and National Delegation leaflets.
- Designing and implementing a specific engagement strategy for the European Parliament **'Open Days'** through the organisation of a dedicated landing page with annual games and competitions.

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- Designing and assisting in the production of **video publications** as tools that further broadcast the Groups' political messaging.
  - Developing the design, ensuring production and delivery of large quantities of eco-friendly, made in Europe **promotional material, banners, flags and hashtags** for both targeted Group Campaigns, such as #EUCanBeatCancer and more general communication campaigns and promotional activities for Members and visitors.
  - Launching many Europe wide **tendering procedures** to select the best and most suited market options for the provision of quality products and services for the EPP Group and its Members.

## External Meetings and Events

- 1. Meetings of the EPP Group Bureau outside the three Working Seats of the European Parliament:** These meetings are organised by the Chairman's Office to elaborate EPP Group positions on selected issues and to deepen relations with Member States and to express support to an EPP member party.
- 2. Study Days:** These meetings are organised by the Chairman's Office in a different Member State each year, as understanding the different national realities allows a better grasp of the political themes that are important at a national level.
- 3. EPP Group Hearings, Conferences, Seminars and Events:** EPP Group MEPs organise, host and co-host, together with leading experts and citizens, a series of gatherings focusing on policy priorities.

### 1 EPP Group Study Days

#### Brussels, Belgium

#### EPP Group Study Days: 13 October 2020

Discussions focused on:

- Analysis of the Outcome of the European elections 2020
- Digital Campaign - Lessons Learnt from the European Elections 2020
- A Strong EPP Family for the Next Parliamentary Term
- Strategy for the Upcoming Legislative Period 2020-2024
- Building on Successes for the Future

## 2 EPP Group Hearings, Conferences, Seminars and Events

A selection of illustrations detailing EPP Group Hearings, Conferences, Seminars and Events that took place in 2020



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**November**  
**19.11.2020**




## 2020 Events Overview

Tuesday 18 February 2020 from 15.00-18.30 hrs  
Room JAN 6Q1, European Parliament, Brussels



Cyörgy HÖLVÉNYI MEP, Michaela ŠOJDROVÁ MEP, Lukáš MANDL MEP,  
Kinga GÁL MEP, Karlo RESSLER MEP,  
Katalin NOVAK, State Secretary for Family and Youth Affairs in Hungary  
Katalin KARDOSNÉ GYURKÓ, President of NOE  
Ignacio SOCÍAS, Director of International Relations of IFFD

The conference will be in English without translation





EPP Group Hearing

## LIBERAL PROFESSIONS IN EUROPE WHAT CHALLENGES LIE AHEAD

Professional independence of liberal professions  
in the interest of European citizens

Hosted by  
**Andreas Schwab** MEP, EPP IMCO Coordinator  
**Axel Voss** MEP, EPP JURI Coordinator

**Wednesday 8 January 2020 from 15.00-18.00 hrs**  
**Room PHS 4B1, European Parliament, Brussels**

Registration: In case you do NOT have a badge to access the European Parliament, please send an e-mail by 19 December 2019 at the latest to [app-imco@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:app-imco@europarl.europa.eu) including your full name, date of birth, nationality, type of ID document and number of ID document.

 **epp**  
group  
in the European Parliament

Interpretation:  
EN | FR | DE | ES | IT | PL

**Thursday 6 February 2020 from 08.00-09.30 hrs**  
**ASP O G Salon, European Parliament, Brussels**



Breakfast Conference

## Facial Recognition: Challenges & Opportunities

Hosted by **Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou**  
and **Stelios Kypouropoulos** MEPs

Speakers:  
**Eric Badiqué**, Adviser for Artificial Intelligence, DG Connect  
**Christian D' Cunha**, Head of the Private Office of the European Data Protection Supervisor  
**Quang-Minh Lepescheux**, Director of Government Affairs, Microsoft

 **epp**  
group  
in the European Parliament

Peter Jafer MEP (Rapporteur CAP Strategic Plans, EPP Group) and Bert-Jan Buisson MEP (Shadow Rapporteur CAP Strategic Plans, ECR Group) would like to kindly invite you to a **breakfast debate** on

## New fertilising solutions change agriculture and land use

Valéry Candelier, President of the European Parliament, will be joined by:
   
 Carlos Carrizosa, Director General for Agriculture and Rural Development
   
 Carlos Carrizosa, Director General for Agriculture and Rural Development
   
 Carlos Carrizosa, Director General for Agriculture and Rural Development
   
 Carlos Carrizosa, Director General for Agriculture and Rural Development

Wednesday 18 March 2020  
 From 09:45 to 09:50 hrs  
 Members' Saloons  
 of the European Parliament  
 Brussels

REGISTER NOW: 







 World Down Syndrome Day  
 www.worlddownsyndromeday.org


 European Parliament

I have the same need as you:  
 Health, Inclusion, Employment

**World Down Syndrome Day**

Under the patronage of David Maria Sassoli MEP,  
 President of the European Parliament

Thursday 20 March 2020 from 09:00-12:30 hrs  
 Room JAN 6Q-1, European Parliament, Brussels

**EU FOR TRISOMY 21**







## EPP Group High-Level Conference EU-WESTERN BALKANS A RENEWED SHARED COMMITMENT

Hosted by: **Andrey Kavachev** MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group  
**Manfred Weber** MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group  
**Donald Tusk**, President of the EPP  
**Olivier Verhulst**, Commissioner in charge of European Neighbourhood and Enlargement  
**Dubravka Šuica**, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Democracy and Demography and political leaders from Western Balkans close to EPP family

Tuesday 24 March 2020 from 16:30 to 19:30 hrs  
 Antai 402, European Parliament, Brussels


 Interpretation:  
 FR DE IT EN ES

High-level conference on  
 Nordic-Baltic cooperation

## STRONGER TOGETHER

A strategic and competitive vision  
 for the Nordic-Baltic region

Keynote speech by  
**Valdis Dombrovskis**  
 Executive Vice-President  
 of the European Commission  
 and  
**Manfred Weber**  
 Chairman of the EPP Group  
 in the European Parliament

Thursday 26 March 2020 from 09:00-11:30 hrs  
 Antai 6Q, European Parliament, Brussels





## GOVTECH ECOSYSTEMS: A NEW WAY TO PROMOTE THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF GOVERNMENTS IN EUROPE

Hosted by: **Isabel Benjumea Benjumea** MEP

Micaela de la Cruz, Managing Partner, PwC  
 Joseba Dierckx, Managing Director, PwC  
 Francisco Cuervo, CEO and founder of Digital  
 Cristian Talerico-Phillips, Head of PwC Spain and Director Web Services

Tuesday 17 February 2020 from 11:30 to 13:30 hrs  
 Room Antai 421, European Parliament, Brussels





EPP Group Intercultural and Religious Dialogue  
 Conference

## Creating a New Narrative of Tolerance: The case of religious diversity in the United Arab Emirates

Hosted by:  
**Evangelos Mitsotakis** MEP and **Jan Olyssens** MEP  
 Vice-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue  
 European Parliament, Intercultural Dialogue  
**H.R. Mohamed Alshamsi**, Head Ambassador of Bahrain  
 Embassy in Brussels and the European Union  
**Julian Aul**, Director of the European Council for International Cooperation  
 between Legislators while MEP, Member of the EU Parliament, Intercultural Dialogue

Tuesday 3 March 2020 from 16:00-17:00 hrs  
 Spaak 4000, European Parliament, Brussels



Tuesday 17 March 2020 from 10:30 to 14:00 hrs  
 Antai Building Room 6Q1, European Parliament, Brussels

## BORN ACCESSIBLE

Conference hosted by **Ádám Kósa** MEP  
 with **Roberto Rabbachin**, European Commission, DG CONNECT  
**Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**  
 a prominent research organization focusing on media access  
**Funka**, a leading consultancy and innovation company  
 specialized in web accessibility

The workshop will show the available  
 accessible multilingual technology in real time








Virtual conference on

## DISABILITY INTO THE NEW DECADE IN THE EU AND GREECE

Hosted by **Stelios Kympouropoulos** MEP

Thursday 17 December 2020 from 15:00-16:30 hrs (CET)

If you are interested to join this conference, please register by visiting  
 www.kympouropoulos.eu and the Event Page details will be sent to you

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## Europe Day

Europe Day held on 9 May every year celebrates peace and unity in Europe. The date marks the anniversary of the historical 'Schuman Declaration'. At a speech in Paris in 1950, Robert Schuman, the then French Foreign Minister, set out his idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, which would make war between Europe's nations unthinkable.

His vision was to create a European Institution that would pool and manage coal and steel production. A treaty creating such a body was signed just under a year later. Schuman's proposal is considered to be the beginning of what is now the European Union.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the usual 2020 Open Days of the European Institutions on 9 May, Europe Day, had to be postponed.





## EPP Group Publications 2020

In 2020, the Publications team produced, coordinated and distributed online publications to bring EPP Group policies and activities closer to European citizens.

### Where can you find EPP Group publications?

View and download all publications on the EPP Group website: [www.eppgroup.eu/publications](http://www.eppgroup.eu/publications)

View and download a selection of interactive eBook publications from the EPP Group shelf on the Issuu digital publishing platform: <https://issuu.com/eppgroup>

**epp**  
EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

EPP Group Position Paper on Health  
**A EUROPEAN UNION FOR HEALTH**  
July 2020

**epp**  
EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

EPP Group Position Paper  
**EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF DIGITALISATION**  
12 October 2020

1. Introduction 2. Challenges

For the EPP Group, **education** is an investment in our common future and a principal instrument for the development and self-realisation of each individual, a tool for unlocking everyone's potential, quality education boosts creativity and innovation and fosters knowledge-based societies, it is a pre-condition for economic growth, job creation and employment. Education is one of the fundamental pillars of our democratic society. Education strengthens "our" European identity and helps to generate commonly **shared values**. There is education, people can create themselves better in the world. Education allows citizens to develop opinions, rationalise, practice free and critical thinking, and assess their abilities and competences. It enables European citizens to shape our common future.

The EPP Group stands for **substantivity** in education. The content of learning and the organisation of education system is a national competence and is left to remain so. However, new challenges require the mobilisation of European bodies and supporting **Areas** within the **European Education Area**. The EPP Group must fulfil its priorities, monitor achievements (Europe Semester) and should champion and develop its aspirational model of digitalisation of education progress and re-structuring. Best practices and learning engagements that have to remain major tools for promoting the EU's **digital investment** level of national and EU level must create an **educational inclusive environment** in which every child is able to achieve maximal potential and be included within society.

As set forth in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.  
\*https://eppgroup.eu/en/publications/a-european-union-for-health

**epp**  
EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

EPP Group Position Paper on asylum and migration  
**ASYLUM AND MIGRATION**  
26 April 2020

**epp**  
EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

EPP Group Position Paper on  
**MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT UNTIL 2030 AND BEYOND**  
22 October 2020

Freedom of movement and the well-functioning European transport sector is the cornerstone of growth and employment in the EU, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic and the future European recovery.

We call for the application of one simple rule during similar crises open borders for the transport of goods.

The EPP Group is convinced that mobility is a right for all citizens. Hence the current COVID-19 pandemic not the necessary fight against climate change can be allowed to undermine the mobility of people and goods on our continent. Only by setting up a stronger, more resilient and sustainable transport network, will Europe be able to overcome future crises and major challenges.

Effective solutions are needed to manage the pressure put on the transport network and the environment without generating heavy costs and administrative burden for users. Transport must be fit to cope with new environmental, economic, technological developments as well as public health, requiring significant investments in new mobility models, digitalisation, research and innovation, alternative energy sources and energy efficiency.

Transport must contribute to reaching the EU emissions reduction targets in a technologically neutral way, while making sure that transport remains affordable. It can happily benefit from research and less developed regions of the Union. We in the EPP Group believe that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, that there are different solutions to deal with different situations.

employers and since it is undergoing major changes, we must make sure that these changes have positive effects on jobs. As future measurement and business-based and comprehensive impact assessments that take into account economic, environmental and social developments, the environmental performance of transport products and projects should be determined by measuring life-cycle emissions.

Transport must provide the best conditions for passengers. The EPP Group is calling for a full spectrum of passenger rights in modes of transport. The European Commission should provide a legislative framework for multimodal "door to door" ticketing, booking and payment services.

The fragmentation of the transport market cannot be overcome without the proper alignment of national infrastructure decisions with EU policy priorities and the implementation of existing European rules. European harmonisation and standardisation, together with market opening, are mandatory and urgent measures for an effective EU transport system.

The key challenge for the functioning of the transport market is to create conditions for fair competition and adequate social and environmental legislation. Our strategy should take into account the differences between Member States. We must propose solutions that reduce the backlog of transport projects and do not result in further disparities between the developed and less developed regions of the Union.

As set forth in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.  
\*https://eppgroup.eu/en/publications/mobility-and-transport-until-2030-and-beyond

**epp**  
EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

EPP Group Position Paper on Coronavirus  
**A EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY PACT AGAINST THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**  
7 April 2020

We are on the same boat, all of us. People are disappointed, but at the same time, important good needed all of us, called to row together. (Stéphane Franck, 27/3/2020)

**epp**  
EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

EPP Group Position Paper on  
**GENDER EQUALITY**  
17 December 2020

The European Union, since its inception, has been a project based on equality of opportunity, allowing all citizens to reach their full potential in a peaceful and prosperous continent. **Women are at the core of our vision** and creating women's equality is a goal that we must reach higher and go further has been a European ideal for decades.

**Equality is a core value for the EPP, meaning that all citizens have equal opportunities to succeed: economically, socially and politically. It is at the heart of the EPP's mission.** The EPP and its government have consistently sought to advance women's opportunities society and on the economy, including the labour market, and to promote the balance between work and family life. The EPP has been an uncompromising advocate of human rights. Currently 1 in 5 women in the EU aged 16 or over that experience violence of some kind in their lifetime. The EPP Group in the European Parliament aims to ensure that every woman has the opportunity to lead an ambitious and fulfilling life from a healthy birth to a fulfilling education from the decision to enter a job labour market, choosing to have family, full participation in society due to equality for women as they grow older. The EPP Group will ensure that every woman is empowered to reach their full potential. Our goal is to advance equal opportunities and equality for all. As a result of the EPP's work, the European Commission should be held accountable for its **commitments on the Future of Europe**. Women should be actively encouraged to participate in the Conference, and women's organisations should be involved in setting the agenda of the Conference. Their voices should be heard and included in the final recommendations.

Coupled to achieving gender equality is the collection of gender disaggregated data in all policy areas. The EPP Group therefore calls on Eurostat, ECDC, and Eurobarometer to intensify their efforts to collect gender and age disaggregated data in all areas through the Gender Equality Strategy.

**1. Addressing violence against women**

Combating violence in all its forms (physical, psychological, financial, cyber violence, as well as sexual harassment or female genital mutilation) and in all locations, including both inside and outside of the home, is an absolute priority for our political platform. Violence against women is not just a major obstacle to achieving gender equality, but an understandable violation of human rights. Currently 1 in 5 women in the EU aged 16 or over that experience violence of some kind in their lifetime. The EPP Group in the European Parliament aims to ensure that every woman has the opportunity to lead an ambitious and fulfilling life from a healthy birth to a fulfilling education from the decision to enter a job labour market, choosing to have family, full participation in society due to equality for women as they grow older. The EPP Group will ensure that every woman is empowered to reach their full potential. Our goal is to advance equal opportunities and equality for all. As a result of the EPP's work, the European Commission should be held accountable for its commitments on the Future of Europe. Women should be actively encouraged to participate in the Conference, and women's organisations should be involved in setting the agenda of the Conference. Their voices should be heard and included in the final recommendations.

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As set forth in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.  
\*https://eppgroup.eu/en/publications/gender-equality



## 07 Directorate Press

The Press Directorate ensures the dissemination to the media and the general public of the political priorities of the EPP Group using the most advanced communication techniques.

The Directorate includes a team of press officers and press assistants able to communicate in 24 official EU languages. They are divided in two units, European Press and National press. **The European Press Unit** organises the EPP Group communication strategy regarding all the Parliamentary activities, while the **National Press Unit** handles the media relations with the media of the different Member States.

The Directorate provides regular “media lines” for the use of MEPs if they face interviews with journalists on the most important Parliamentary activities, the Directorate monitors on a weekly basis the national political situation in the Member States and the activities of the other political Groups.



## 08 The European People's Party (EPP)

### About us

The European People's Party (EPP) is the **political family of the centre-right**, whose roots run deep in the history and civilisation of the European continent, and which has pioneered the European project from its inception. Tracing back its roots to Europe's Founding Fathers – **Robert Schuman, Alcide De Gasperi, and Konrad Adenauer** – the EPP is committed to a strong Europe that relies on the principle of Subsidiarity.

Founded in 1976, the EPP is a party of values, based on the Christian view of mankind and the Christian Democratic concept of society. The EPP strives for a democratic, transparent and efficient Europe that is close to its citizens. Through the promotion of the Social Market Economy, the EPP aspires to achieve a prosperous Europe. The EPP is the largest political party in Europe, currently with 83 member parties and partners from 43 countries, 16 Heads of State and Government (11 EU and 5 non-EU), European Commission President, 10 European Commissioners, and the largest Group in the European Parliament (EP) with 187 MEPs.

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## Structure

The European People's Party is horizontally engaged with all the main EU Institutions including the European Council, Council of the EU, European Commission and the EP. In addition to the EP, the EPP has Groups in the Committee of the Regions, in Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO and EuroNest. Internally, the EPP has three levels of decision making: the Presidency, Political Assembly and Congress.

## Presidency

The EPP is led by the Presidency, an executive body. It decides on the general political guidelines of the Party and presides over the Political Assembly. The Presidency is composed of:

- (i) The President of the EPP
- (ii) The President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council, the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and the President of the EP (if these persons are affiliated with the EPP)
- (iii) The Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament
- (iv) The Honorary President(s)
- (v) Ten Vice-Presidents
- (vi) The Treasurer
- (vii) The Secretary-General

The composition of the EPP Presidency as of 1 December 2019 is as follows:

## President

### Donald TUSK

Poland (Platforma Obywatelska – PO)

## Secretary-General

### Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE

Spain (PP)

## Ex Officio Vice-Presidents

### Ursula von der LEYEN

Germany (CDU)

### Manfred WEBER

Germany (CSU)

## Vice-Presidents (alphabetical order by surname)

### Mariya GABRIEL

Bulgaria (GERB)

### Johannes HAHN

Austria (ÖVP)

### Esther de LANGE

The Netherlands (CDA)

### David McALLISTER

Germany (CDU)

### Helen McENTEE

Ireland (Fine Gael)

### Siegfried MUREȘAN

Romania (PNL)

### Petteri ORPO

Finland (Kokoomus)

### Franck PROUST

France (Les Républicains)

### Paulo RANGEL

Portugal (PSD)

### Antonio TAJANI

Italy (Forza Italia)

## Treasurer

### Christian SCHMIDT

Germany (CSU)

## Honorary President

### Sauli NIINISTÖ

Finland (Kokoomus)



## Political Assembly

The Political Assembly defines the positions of the Party between each Congress, decides on membership applications and finalises political guidelines. The Political Assembly also decides on the budget and safeguards the political presence of the EPP between Congress meetings. The Political Assembly is composed of designated delegates from EPP member and associate member parties, member associations and groups, and guests of observer member parties. The number of delegates for each party is linked to the election result in the last European election so that parties are weighted according to their strength. This allows the taking of decisions by majority. The Political Assembly meets at least four times per year and defines the mandate of the Working Groups, which prepare the Party's policy documents and recommendations.

## Congress

The Congress is the highest decision-making body of the Party. It is composed of delegates from EPP member and associate member parties, member associations and Parliamentary groups, as well as representatives from observer member parties. The EPP Congress meets statutorily once every three years and elects the EPP Presidency. The Congress, attended by EPP Heads of State and Government and party leaders, decides on the main policy documents and electoral programmes.

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## EU Heads of State and Government of the EPP

(As of 1 December 2019, in alphabetical order by surname)

### President

**Nicos ANASTASIADES**

Cyprus (DISY)

### Prime Minister

**Boyko BORISSOV**

Bulgaria (GERB)

### President

**Klaus IOHANNIS**

Romania (PNL)

### Prime Minister

**Krišjānis KARIŅŠ**

Latvia (Unity)

### Chancellor

**Angela MERKEL**

Germany (CDU)

### Prime Minister

**Kyriakos MITSOTAKIS**

Greece (ND)

### Prime Minister

**Viktor ORBÁN**

Hungary (Fidesz)

### Prime Minister

**Andrej PLENKOVIĆ**

Croatia (HDZ)

### Taoiseach

**Leo VARADKAR**

Ireland (Fine Gael)



## Non-EU Heads of State and Government of the EPP

(As of 1 December 2019, in alphabetical order by surname)

### Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Šefik DŽAFEROVIĆ**

Bosnia and Herzegovina (SDA BiH)

### Prime Minister

**Erna SOLBERG**

Norway (Høyre)

### President

**Aleksandar VUČIĆ**

Serbia (SNS)

## Role of the European Council

Role of the European Council



Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

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## EPP Members of the European Commission

### President

**Ursula von der LEYEN**

President of the European Commission  
Germany (CDU)

### Vice-Presidents

**Valdis DOMBROVSKIS**

An Economy that Works for People  
Latvia (Unity)

**Margaritis SCHINAS**

Promoting our European Way of Life  
Greece (ND)

**Dubravka ŠUICA**

Democracy & Demography  
Croatia (HDZ)

### European Commissioners

**Mariya GABRIEL**

Innovation, Research, Culture, Education & Youth  
Bulgaria (GERB)

**Johannes HAHN**

Budget and Administration  
Austria (ÖVP)

**Stella KYRIAKIDES**

Health and Food Safety  
Cyprus (DISY)

**Mairead McGUINNESS**

Commissioner for Financial Services,  
Financial Stability and Capital Markets Union  
Ireland (Fine Gael)

**Adina VĂLEAN**

Transport  
Romania (PNL)

**Olivér VÁRHELYI**

Neighbourhood and Enlargement  
Hungary (Fidesz\*)

*\*member party under suspension as of March 2019*

## How the European Commission is Elected

# EUROPEAN COMMISSION HOW TO ELECT...

## THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Taking into account the results of the European elections, the president of the European Council consults with the EP on a possible candidate for the presidency of the Commission.



Following the consultation, the President of the European Council proposes a candidate to the European Council.



The European Council decides on its proposal for candidate by qualified majority.



Election of the Commission President by the European Parliament by a majority of its component members (at least 376)

### DUTIES

- Gives political guidance to the Commission
- Calls and chairs meetings of the college of the Commissioners
- Leads the Commission's work in implementing EU policies

Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

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## Summits

EPP Heads of State and Government, party leaders in coalition governments and/or in opposition, the EPP Presidency and the President of the European Commission meet for EPP Summits prior to the European Council meetings. These important closed-door sessions offer EPP leaders an informal setting to seek consensus within the EPP family in an effort to develop common positions at the European Council.

## Ministerial Meetings

In 2007, the EPP inaugurated a new political process with the first **EPP Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting** in order to discuss the foreign policy priorities on the EU Ministers' agenda. Following this successful model, the EPP then launched informal meetings with the EPP Ecofin Ministers in 2008, and again expanded the concept in 2010. The current list of meetings includes: Foreign Affairs, Economic and Financial Affairs, Defence, Agriculture, Trade, and General Affairs, Interior, Health and Justice.

## Working Groups

Working Groups are the backbone of the EPP's political work, where representatives from the EPP member parties develop common positions and strategies on major policy areas and submit specific recommendations to the Political Assembly for final approval.

### Working Group 1: European Policy

The European Policy Working Group has the task of preparing the EPP's most vital policy papers and Congress documents on European issues.

### Working Group 2: Economic Policy and Digital Europe

This Working Group is focused on responding to the current economic and financial challenges facing Europe, social and demographic issues, as well as research and development.

### Working Group 3: EPP Membership

This Working Group promotes and facilitates the accession of new ordinary EPP members, associate, observer member parties and partner parties. When a party from an EU country is accepted into the EPP, its elected representatives automatically join the EPP Group in the EP, and all other EPP Groups and organisations.

### Working Group 4: Foreign Policy

This new Working Group was established to deeper into EU foreign affairs, covering a wide array of topics such as EU-Turkey relations, transatlantic relations, challenges with China and Russia as well as opportunities in the Middle East.

The EPP also expands its work through Expert Groups and other meeting formats.

### Campaign Managers Meeting

This committee coordinates with member parties to plan campaigns. The exchange of experiences in past election campaigns, as well as the long-term preparation of European issues and the campaigns for the EP elections, brings added value to the member parties and to the EPP.

### EPP Ethics Committee

The EPP Ethics Committee set out a Code of Conduct for the EPP and its members to affirm the central principles of the party and to ensure the EPP takes a clear stance against corruption and conflicts of interest on all levels.

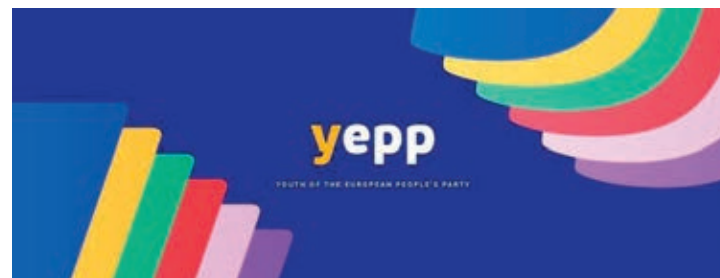
### Ad hoc Working and Expert Groups

On topics such as environment and climate change, agriculture, migration and integration, digital technologies, disinformation or budget, the EPP organises on an ad hoc basis meetings to bring experts, academics and representatives of our member parties together.

## Associations

### Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP)

YEPP, led by President **Lidia Pereira** MEP, is the EPP's official youth organisation. YEPP's members are national party-political youth organisations. The purpose of all 63 member organisations, as well as for YEPP, is to provide young people with a channel to influence the shaping of their societies with democratic means and centre-right, Christian Democratic and Conservative ideas. YEPP brings together more than one million young people in 39 countries of Europe, making it the largest party-political youth organisation in Europe.



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### European Democrat Students (EDS)

EDS is the official students' organisation of the EPP. Founded in 1961, EDS brings together students and young political leaders from all over Europe to promote a political pro-European exchange. Led by Chairman **Carlo Giacomo Angrisano Girauta**, EDS has 39 member organisations from 33 countries, representing over a million students and youngsters.



### European Seniors' Union (ESU)

Since 1995, the ESU is a growing network of seniors' associations from all over Europe. Today, it consists of 34 member organisations in 27 countries. Led by President **An Hermans**, the ESU is dedicated to the advancement of the rights of senior citizens and their engagement in society, and to respond to the challenges of demographic changes.

### European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW)

The EUCDW is the voice and official association of Christian Democratic workers in the EPP, with 24 member organisations. Led by **Elmar Brok**, EUCDW represents workers' interests in EU policy-making, promotes Christian-social principles and policies in the EPP and provides ground for training, discussion and cooperation to prepare European workers' organisations to build tomorrow's Europe.



### Small and Medium Entrepreneurs of Europe (SME Europe)

SME Europe, led by **Ivan Štefanec** MEP is the EPP organisation for small and medium entrepreneurs, shaping EU policies in a SME-friendly way. As a proactive organisation within the political networks of Christian Democrats and Conservatives, SME Europe brings a new spirit and a fresh entrepreneurial wind into the political debate.



### Women of the European People's Party (EPP Women)

EPP Women is an official association dedicated to the advancement of women in the European Union. The association consists of members of likeminded European parties and is led by its President, **Doris Pack**. EPP Women is composed of over 60 member organisations from EPP political parties which are members of the EPP in the European Union and non-EU countries. All member organisations are women's organisations from political parties.



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## Think Tanks, Foundations

### Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies



Founded in 2007 as the Centre for European Studies and renamed in 2014 in honour of the late EPP President, the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Martens Centre) is the official think tank of the EPP. Led by President **Mikuláš Dzurinda**, the Martens Centre serves as a common European framework for national foundations and think tanks recognised by EPP member parties. It is governed under the revised 2007 “EU Regulation on political parties at European level and rules regarding their funding.”

The core activities of the Martens Centre are its research and study projects, which are complemented and supported by conferences, seminars, workshops and publications, many of which are executed in conjunction with its member organisations. The aim of the foundation is to contribute both to the public awareness of European citizens on the development of European integration and to help decision-makers, such as EPP Heads of State and Government and EPP party leaders, to formulate new and effective policy options.

### Robert Schuman Institute

The “Union of the Robert Schuman Institute for Developing Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe” (RSI) has been operating as the European level training centre for politicians and parties of the EPP family since 1995 in Budapest. The RSI organises international courses for youth and women leaders, newly elected politicians, staff and officials of the EPP sister and co-operating parties of the developing democracies in the region. Since the 2004 EU Enlargement, the Institute has focused mostly on eastern and south-eastern European countries. **The President of RSI is Doris Pack.**











Follow us



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