

Article – Coming up: EU spearheads efforts for recovery in 2021



Recovery plan and the EU's long-term budget

Late last year, the Parliament [reached a compromise](#) with the Council on the EU's budget for 2021-2027 and secured a deal on the [budget for 2021](#) to support recovery. However, disagreements among member states over the [mechanism devised to protect EU's values](#) slowed down the approval procedure.

MEPs will have to finalise the rules on the functioning of all programmes that are part of the EU's 2021-2027 budget and the recovery plan, which will support people and businesses across the EU.

Sustainable recovery

At the [heart of the EU's Covid-19 recovery plans](#), the Green Deal will lead to the development of many initiatives to promote sustainability this year. [Agriculture](#), the circular economy, [biodiversity](#), [forests](#), energy, emissions and the [Emissions Trading System](#) are among the topics MEPs will be working on.

Climate change

Making the EU's 2050 climate-neutrality goal legally binding remains one of Parliament's priorities, as the EU concludes negotiations on the [Climate law](#).

Parliament is advocating a [60% emission reduction target by 2030](#).

Digital services

2021 will be the year of regulating online platforms. At the end of 2020 the Commission proposed the Digital Services Act to set guidelines for the changing online landscape and ensure a better, safer digital environment for users and companies. Parliament [outlined its priorities for the legislation](#) in October 2020 ahead of the European Commission's proposal.

Artificial intelligence

In early 2021, the Commission will propose new [artificial intelligence](#) legislation aimed at dealing with the technological, ethical, legal and socio-economic aspects of AI and ensuring Europe is at the forefront of developments. Parliament wants to make sure legislation helps boost the economy, while considering the impact on people.

Migration

The European Parliament will examine legislation seeking to create a common EU [asylum and migration](#) policy. The new measures, proposed by the Commission, aim to change and improve current asylum procedures by ensuring shared responsibility and solidarity among member states, while protecting the EU's external borders.

Conference on the Future of Europe

The [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) is a new initiative looking at what changes could be introduced to better prepare the EU for the future, with direct involvement from citizens. The Covid-19 crisis [delayed the initiative's kick-off](#): however, the two-year, ongoing consultation process should begin in earnest in 2021.

Agriculture

The Parliament, Commission and Council are expected to conclude negotiations on reforms to the EU's [Common Agriculture Policy](#) for the period 2022-2027, including alignment with the European [Green Deal](#) and environmental objectives. The new Farm to Fork policy, which seeks to look at food more broadly, will also be scrutinised by MEPs.

EU4Health

The new year will see the launch of the [EU4Health programme](#), which aims to help EU countries to better cooperate and coordinate in times of crisis. The priorities are protecting people from serious cross-border health threats, improving the availability of medicines and creating stronger health systems. MEPs will vote in early 2021 on a [provisional deal with the Council](#) on the rules for the programme.

EU support for emergencies

Parliament wants to revamp the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) to improve the Union's crisis management and increase preparedness for large-scale emergencies such as Covid-19 and natural disasters. MEPs want to enable the EU to acquire emergency capacities autonomously and advocate more prevention. Parliament will negotiate with the Council on the upgraded system that should become operational in 2021.

Space programme

This year should see the adoption of the EU space programme for 2021-2027, including expanding the scope of the current European GNSS Agency ([GSA](#)), renaming it the European Union Agency for the Space Programme.

EU-UK relations

The first day of the new year marked the official end of the transition period between the UK and EU, ushering in the start of a complex relationship between them. The Parliament will be involved in forging new ties with the UK, including the conclusion of ad hoc agreements in key fields such as aviation.