

Article – Future of the EU: harnessing globalisation

Globalisation offers great potential to create wealth and jobs, but it also has the capacity to disrupt. The EU has always tried to make the most of it, while mitigating its negative effects by setting rules and working together with other countries. As the European Commission publishes on 10 May a reflection paper on how the EU should deal with globalisation in the future, we take a look at what Parliament has already done recently.

What Parliament has done recently

The EU is the [largest player in global trade](#) and it uses its economic clout to impose high standards on products being imported as well as to promote its values abroad. MEPs are always keen to make use of this by insisting on adding amendments to EU agreements. In the recent [Ceta](#) negotiations pressure from the Parliament led to the controversial investor-state-dispute settlement being replaced by the investment court system to boost transparency and ensure government control over the choice of arbitrators.

MEPs favour measures to fight unfair competition from outside the EU, such as when they called for an EU strategy following a surge in low-cost EU imports of [rail supplies](#). To protect European jobs, the Parliament is pressing for a swift agreement on the modernisation of the EU's [trade defence instruments](#). As always it is about striking the right balance, such as in the case of [China](#)

In order to prevent the [minerals trade](#) from funding conflict and human rights violations, MEPs adopted a draft EU regulation in March to oblige near all EU imports of tin, tungsten, tantalum, gold to do checks on their suppliers, while large manufacturers will also have to disclose how they plan to monitor their sources to comply with the rules. Also because of Parliament revised EU rules to prevent trade in goods and services that may contribute to [torture or execution](#) include a ban on the marketing and transit of equipment used for cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of people outside the EU.

Parliament also often urges the Commission to prepare new legislation by adopting an own-initiative resolution. For example in April MEPs called for EU rules to [oblige textile and clothing suppliers to respect workers' rights](#). That same month MEPs also asked for a single certification scheme for palm oil entering the EU market to counter the impact of [unsustainable palm oil production](#), such as deforestation and habitat degradation.

MEPs are also mindful of how globalisation affects employment, for example supporting initiatives to [reinforce workers' rights](#). Parliament is currently

working to protect people in new forms of employment created by the [digital economy](#). Parliament also supports the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, which helps redundant workers find new jobs. For example on 11 May the budgets committee is expected to approve €2.6 million to help 821 former Nokia in Finland

These are just a few examples of what Parliament has done regarding globalisation in recent months, but they give an idea of the different ways MEPs are engaged in making it work for Europeans.

Debate on the future of European integration

The Commission is publishing five reflection papers until the end of June as a starting point for a debate on the future of European integration. Each paper is dedicated to a specific theme: Europe's social dimension, globalisation, the economic and monetary union, defence and finances. The papers contain ideas and scenarios for what Europe could be like in 2025, but no specific proposals. The initiative finishes in mid-September when Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivers his annual state of the union address.

.