

## Article – Sassoli: It is time to make agreement on EU budget final



Parliament and Council negotiators reached an agreement on the budget for 2021-27 earlier this year, but Poland and Hungary object to safeguards that would prevent EU money being used in member states that do not respect the rule of law. It is one of the topics that EU leaders are discussing during the summit in Brussels on 10-11 December.

Sassoli warned that any decisions by the Council would need to respect the spirit and letter of the compromise reached: “Parliament is not prepared to see the results we achieved called into question.”

The President called the current coronavirus crisis a “wake-up call”: “I strongly believe that multilateralism and coordinated efforts are the tools we need to take us out of the current crisis, increase the resilience of our health systems and improve pandemic preparedness and response.”

Speaking about the Green Deal, Sassoli stressed the importance of the strategy to create a sustainable Europe: “This is an historic opportunity and we have no time to lose. EU investment will be crucial in this regard, as EU citizens, towns and cities and companies are counting on us to take urgent action to combat the effects of the pandemic, generate a new form of well-being based on solidarity and create secure jobs.”

Turning to foreign policy, he said there was a need to send a credible signal to Turkey, including economic sanctions, to show that we stand by the territorial integrity of Cyprus: Turkey must realise that because of its actions the prospects of achieving a positive outcome are diminishing rapidly.”

Sassoli also touched on the ongoing talks between the EU and the UK: “An agreement would be a solid basis for our new partnership, but if none can be reached we will need to find new, albeit more limited, ways of working together.” He also said that if an agreement is reached, the Parliament would examine the text closely before voting on it.