

## Article – Sassoli: “To earn trust, unity and transparency are needed”



During the online meeting, Parliament’s President said that democracy depends on trust: “Democracy is a system of institutions and laws, which relies on citizens’ trust. As politicians, our role is to do whatever it takes to maintain that trust. This is even more true in times of crisis. Europe, like the rest of the world, is in the throes of a pandemic with grave social and economic implications.” He added: “Granted, our system and our institutions must be improved. But trust is earned by means of unity and transparency, by adopting a clear and consistent stance.”

Sassoli also addressed the ongoing vaccine roll-out: “We need to step up vaccine production; speed up the distribution and administration of vaccines both inside and outside the European Union. But we cannot afford to be naïve. It is time to apply the principles of reciprocity and proportionality before giving the green light to exports from the EU.”

Speaking about China’s recent sanctions against MEPs and different EU bodies, the President said: “I am concerned about the growing trend towards authoritarianism and the many moves to destabilise democracy. These are developments we must take seriously. Attempts are being made to steer our recovery plan in certain directions, in a clear bid to undermine our independence.”

Sassoli also referred to the EU-China investment agreement Parliament will soon be discussing: "As always, Parliament will take great care to ensure that the imperatives of free trade do not outweigh human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Cooperation with the US following the election of Joe Biden has also created new opportunities for the EU, Sassoli said. "Renewed cooperation between the EU and the new administration in Washington will help lend impetus to our global leadership. We recognise how necessary this is, in the interests of our society."