

Press release – EP Today



Key debate ahead of decisive EU summit

At 9.00, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will open a debate on the main topics on the agenda of the European Council meeting on 10-11 December. These include the distribution of vaccines to stop the pandemic, the long-term budget to kick-start recovery, binding carbon reduction targets, combatting terrorism and relations with Turkey.

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End violence against women

President Sassoli, Commissioner Dalli and political groups will make statements to mark the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) and assess the current situation. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the Istanbul Convention, was signed by the EU in 2017 and has been ratified by all but six of its member states.

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In brief

Abortion rights in Poland. MEPs will discuss the recent move by Poland's Constitutional Tribunal to effectively ban abortion that sparked ongoing protests, in a debate with Commissioner Dalli at around 16.00. A resolution will be put to the vote on Thursday.

Votes

Voting will take place between 13.00 and 14.15; first results will be announced at 16.45. The second voting session starts at 20.00 and lasts until 21.15, with results announced on Thursday morning at 8.30.

MEPs will have final votes, among other things, on:

- strengthening media freedom in the EU;
- ideas for more sustainable consumer policies;
- a new industrial strategy for Europe;
- product safety in the single market;
- stocktake of the 2019 European elections; and
- three objections (rule 112) tabled by the Environment Committee.

[ESMA sets out its final view on the derivatives trading obligation \(DTO\)](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), the EU's securities markets regulator, has released a [public statement](#) that clarifies the application of the European Union's (EU) trading obligation for derivatives (DTO) following the end of the UK's transition from the EU on 31 December 2020.

The statement clarifies that the DTO will continue applying without changes after the end of the transition period. ESMA considers that the continued application of the DTO would not create risks to the stability of the financial system. The statement confirms the approach outlined in ESMA's previous [statement](#) in March 2019.

ESMA acknowledges that this approach creates challenges for some EU counterparties particularly UK branches of EU investment firms. However, ESMA considers that EU counterparties can meet their obligations under the DTO by trading on EU trading venues or eligible trading venues in third countries, and this situation is primarily a consequence of the way the UK has chosen to implement the DTO.

Based on the current legal framework, and in the absence of an equivalence decision by the European Commission, ESMA does not see room for providing different guidance.

ESMA will continue to closely monitor the situation to assess whether markets would be sufficiently liquid for the purpose of the DTO after the end of the transition period.

[Pandemic underlines why domestic violence requires urgent action](#)



During the lockdown of the first COVID-19 wave, police, women's shelters and non-governmental organisations reported a surge in domestic violence, especially targeting women. The second wave and associated lockdown are likely to see similar patterns with women at increased risk of domestic violence.

Even as people emerge from lockdowns, challenges remain. Loss of earnings and jobs are likely to provoke further harassment and violence.

Economic dependency may lead some women to remain trapped in abusive relationships, unable to leave.

FRA's [EU-wide survey on violence against women](#) shows that nearly 1 in 3 women who find it difficult to make ends meet experienced intimate partner violence. This compares with almost 1 in 5 women who do not struggle to make ends meet.

Throughout the pandemic, many EU countries were quick to act. They established counselling support and sheltered victims in hotel rooms. At the same time, they launched awareness campaigns promoting hotline numbers.

While this was welcomed, it also highlighted inadequacies that remain.

The Council of Europe's landmark [Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) is already in its sixth year. The EU said it will accede to it and 21 EU Member States have signed it. The others should follow suit.

The Convention provides a clear roadmap on what the EU and its Member States need to do. It is a launchpad for further action to end this widespread human rights abuse.

The European Commission's proposal to add violence against women on the list of EU crimes adds further weight to the drive to end such violence.

It is now high time for governments to act. The police, justice and health sectors need to work together to prevent violence and support victims.

This requires adequate resources and relevant training. It requires urgent action if we are to bolster measures to end violence against women.

[We urge the European Commission to develop a new EU climate adaptation strategy](#)



□Climate change is having wide-ranging impacts on ecosystems, economic sectors, human health and well-being in Europe. From 1980 to 2016, the total reported economic losses caused by weather and other climate-related extremes in Europe amounted to over EUR 436 billion, [according to the European Commission](#). In this interview, [Markku Markkula \(FI/EPP\)](#) answers four questions on climate adaptation. The Chair of Espoo City Board and President of the Helsinki Region is the rapporteur of a [draft opinion on climate adaptation](#) to be adopted at the [next plenary session](#) of the European Committee of the Regions on 8, 9 and 10 December 2020.

Does Europe need a more ambitious EU Adaptation Strategy to tackle current and future challenges? What are some key areas where we need to raise the bar for adaptation?

□Activities related to tackling climate adaptation and mitigation need to be integrated. Not either or, but both. Political leadership should treat

climate change as an emergency that needs to be tackled collectively with joint standardised innovative measures; and also globally, by breaking down silos and barriers. Europe should be the global leader and forerunner in creating and using innovative measures to combat and adapt to global warming. This means raising the climate ambition bar much higher than the EU is discussing today.

Specifically on adaptation, we certainly welcome the [blueprint](#) for a new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change. However, we now urge the European Commission to develop a more ambitious EU Adaptation Strategy in line with the principles of active subsidiarity and proportionality, recognising the crucial role that cities and regions play in climate adaptation and providing them with the tools necessary to develop territory-based solutions. We certainly need to act on specific key areas, starting with integrating climate adaptation as a crosscutting priority in territorial planning and management. Other priority areas to improve are the emissions trading system ([ETS](#)), the effort-sharing decision ([ESD](#)) on emissions reduction, and land use, land-use change and forestry ([LULUCF](#)). In addition, we need to substantially increase financing tools for climate adaptation and mitigation projects, step up cross-border cooperation and exchanges of experience and best practices, and enhance resilience and adaptation capacities, nature-based solutions and opportunities for innovation.

The COVID pandemic has shown the level of vulnerability of our societies to infectious diseases, and some scientists have highlighted the potential links between pandemics, nature protection and climate change. Do you think that adaptation to climate change can be more closely related to health protection?

Health in the EU member states has never been better than now, but climate change threatens the achievements of past decades. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the EU and all levels of governance must do much more, and that there is a pressing need to act fast and to act together. I invite you to have a look at the newly published [report](#) on urban adaptation by the European Environment Agency. Let me take a small example from that: assuming current levels of vulnerability and no additional climate adaptation measures, annual fatalities from extreme heat could rise from 2,700 deaths/year now to approximately 30,000 or 50,000 by 2050, with 1.5 °C or 2 °C global warming, respectively. This is a real threat, and we need to do everything to avoid it.

Where can Europe's regions and cities most contribute to adaptation to climate change?

No adaptation policy will work unless it takes into account the needs, views and expertise of regions and cities. Local and regional governments are responsible for more than 70% of climate mitigation, and that percentage goes up to 90% when considering climate adaptation actions. Cities are already showing frontrunner commitment and leadership. It is [estimated](#) that around 40% of European cities with more than 150,000 inhabitants have already adopted climate adaptation plans. At the European Committee of the Regions, we are committed to continue that path and we expect the European Green Deal

to accelerate action and demonstrate what is required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 or, at least, well before 2050. In my region, Helsinki, we have recently approved a new [roadmap to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035](#). Our ambition is high, but, as the roadmap shows, our targets are achievable.

Everywhere in Europe, we should focus on capturing the full potential of collaborative resilience-building and make sure that sub-national levels have the capacity to react fast. Emergency and rescue services are the most important when operating at the front line. We therefore need more knowledge, improved capabilities and adequate financial resources at the local and regional level if we are to adapt effectively to climate change.

What is the role of adaptation action in the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals?

Adaptation policies should play a fundamental role in the localisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainability should be the 'new normal' for all communities, businesses and individuals including budgeting processes. A good way to proceed, also in climate adaptation, would be to prepare Voluntary Local Review (VLR) reports on how cities and regions are implementing the SDGs. These are excellent instruments for use in learning and increasing effectiveness on the ground through collaboration and the exchange of best practices. An excellent example is the one coming from my city, Espoo, which delivered a [comprehensive VLR report](#) to the UN that demonstrated in practical terms how to accelerate sustainable policies on the ground, through working together and while leaving no one behind.

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[Cities and regions to adopt a zero tolerance policy for violence against women and girls](#)



On International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, local and regional leaders call for legislative measures and adequate resources to prevent and combat violence against women

Wednesday 25 November is [the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#). On this occasion, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has reiterated its call to adopt legislative measures at EU level to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls. According to the United Nation database by September 2020, 48 countries had

integrated prevention and response to violence against women and girls into their COVID-19 response plans, and 121 countries had adopted measures to strengthen services for women survivors of violence during the global crisis.

In her opening statement to the members of the CoR's SEDEC Commission, SEDEC Chair Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) said: "Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations across the world. On this very special day, may I invite you all, in your role as local and regional politicians, to remain very vigilant, bearing in mind that violence against women remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it. The only way forward is to adopt a zero tolerance policy for violence against women and girls."

One in 3 women and girls experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, daily 137 women are killed by a member of their family, 1 in 10 women in the European Union report having experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15 and 71% of all human trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines have shown that all types of violence against women and girls have intensified. Anne Karjalainen underlines: "25 years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, we see women's rights still coming under attack everywhere in the world, but also within the European Union, from sexual and reproductive rights to work-life balance and from the right to protest to economic and political empowerment. As European Committee of the Regions, we strongly condemn these violations of women's rights and we will work together with local and regional authorities to ensure that these rights are protected and strengthened everywhere in the EU."□

□While COVID-19 and lockdown measures stop the spread of the coronavirus, they have intensified violence against women, especially domestic violence – in some countries, calls to helplines have increased five-fold. The [CoR's Regional and Local Barometer 2020](#) – presented on 12 October – highlights a rise in the number of reported cases of domestic violence during the lockdown, though no comparable EU-wide data set is yet available. Some countries, such as Lithuania, observed 20% more domestic violence over a three-week lockdown period. In Spain, the emergency number for domestic violence received 18% more calls in the first two weeks of lockdown. Regional authorities in Spain shared an [action guide for women suffering gender violence while staying at home](#). The city of Amsterdam in coordination with the national government set up a system in which victims of domestic violence were able to reach out to their pharmacy by using the code words 'mask 19'.□

Concha Andreu (ES/PES), President of La Rioja Region and CoR rapporteur on the EU's [Gender Equality Strategy](#), said: "This year's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is bleaker since we are confronted with aggravated cases of gender-based violence due to the lockdowns resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. Local and regional authorities urgently need to be endowed with adequate resources to effectively assist victims through

appropriate support services. What is more, they must be involved in a structured way in the EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence that will be launched as part of the Gender Equality Strategy.”

“The [CoR opinion](#) on the Gender Equality Strategy invites the Commission to adopt legislative measures aimed at preventing and combating violence against women that are consistent and complementary to international and Member State legislation, and that address all forms of violence, including online violence and violence related to honour issues. It urges the European Commission to include all forms of violence against women and girls in the ‘Eurocrimes’ set out in Article 83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,” added Andreu.

Background:

The United Nations General Assembly has designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Resolution 54/134). The premise of the day is to raise awareness of the fact that women around the world are subject to rape, domestic violence and other forms of violence. For 2014, the official Theme framed by the UN Secretary-General’s campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women, is Orange your Neighbourhood. For 2018, the official theme is “Orange the World: #HearMeToo” and for 2019 it is “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape”. This year’s theme for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is [“Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!”](#). Like in previous years, this year’s International Day will mark the launch of [16 days of activism](#) that will conclude on 10 December 2020, which is International Human Rights Day.

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