

[Press release – Green Deal: measures to step up the fight against global deforestation](#)



In the non-binding resolution adopted on Tuesday with 543 votes to 47 and 109 abstentions, in response to a [Commission communication](#), MEPs call for more support to protect, restore and sustainably manage forests, protect biodiversity and carbon sinks, as well as to recognise forests' productivity and ecosystem services.

Binding targets and effective rules

The Plenary wants binding targets to protect and restore forest ecosystems, especially primary forests, consistent with the EU 2030 biodiversity strategy's proposals. MEPs call on the Commission to propose due diligence rules for financial institutions that would prevent EU financial entities or banks from being linked directly or indirectly to deforestation, forest degradation or degradation of natural ecosystems, which often causes indigenous residents to be subjected to human rights violations.

Supply chains and trade agreements free from deforestation

The Commission should propose measures to ensure sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains for products and commodities placed on the EU market, with a particular focus on tackling imported deforestation, says the text. Moreover, future trade and investment agreements must contain binding provisions to prevent deforestation, says the draft resolution. Finally, MEPs want the European Green Deal's external dimension to be strengthened through alliances and partnerships with third countries, to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

Protection of primary forests

Between 1990 and 2016, an area of 1.3 million square kilometres of the world's forests was lost, with a destructive effect on biodiversity, climate, people, and the economy.

Afforestation, where trees are planted in an area not previously forested, could under certain conditions, help the EU to reach climate neutrality by 2050, the MEPs said. However, newly planted forests cannot replace primary forests, which provide more carbon dioxide storage and more essential habitats than younger and newly planted ones.

[Press release – EP TODAY](#)



State of the European Union debate

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will give her first State of the European Union address at 9.15. She is expected to highlight the impact of the Commission's work in mitigating the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, and to outline her vision for economic recovery, fighting climate change, and the situation in Europe's neighbourhood.

Political group leaders will react to her speech, assess the Commission's work and set out their views on the 2021 priorities. The German Council Presidency will also take the floor.

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See separate [media advisory](#) for more details.

Watch the debate from 9.15 to 12.30 live on Parliament's [Multimedia Centre](#) and on [EbS+](#)

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Votes

Results from yesterday evenings' votes will be announced at 9.00, on, among other things,

- the EU's role in **protecting and restoring the world's forests**. In this resolution, MEPs outline how the EU can contribute to tackling worldwide deforestation and call for domestic policies to be revised to protect European forests.
- the **EU-African security cooperation** in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa .

The **first voting session** lasts from 13.00 to 14.15 with results announced at 16.45. During this voting session, MEPs will cast their final vote on, among other things,

- **Recovery Plan/Own Resources**, paving the way for the EU to borrow €750 billion for the "Next Generation EU" recovery plan. A press conference is scheduled at 14.30 on Wednesday;
- Enhancing the **EU Civil Protection capacity** so that the EU can better respond to large-scale emergencies such as COVID-19;
- The implementation of the **EU Association Agreement with Georgia**.

The **second voting session** lasts from 17.30 to 18.45 with results announced on Thursday morning at 8.30. During this voting session, MEPs will cast their final vote on, among other things,

- Setting up the **Just Transition Fund** to mitigate the social impact of greening the economy by supporting regions most affected by the energy transition;
- Revised testing rules to ensure that **cars respect EU limits on NOx emissions** under real driving conditions as of September 2022;
- **EU arms export rules**: In light of growing arms production in the EU, MEPs are set to call for tighter controls and greater transparency.

[**Remarks by President Charles Michel**](#)

after his visit to Moria Camp in Lesbos



I feel personally touched by this dramatic situation. It was important for me to come here and to express our European solidarity.

First of all, I would like to express our solidarity for the migrants, for the people of Lesbos, and for all the aid workers. And we want to support the efforts made by the Greek authorities.

This is a difficult and a very complex situation. But on behalf of the European Union, I would want to say that I refuse to paper over this migration challenge.

This is a common European challenge. By the end of the month, the European Commission intends to put new concrete proposals on the table. And we need to be more committed in order to be more efficient. I am convinced that, of course, we need to make more progress in order to improve our border controls.

We also need to have more partnerships with third countries. We need to make progress to have more convergence in the framework of our asylum policy. We will have difficult debates, but we need to be more efficient.

Je suis ici parce que je refuse que l'Union européenne baisse les yeux face aux défis de la migration.

C'est un défi commun. Tous les États européens doivent être mobilisés. Nous devons soutenir les pays comme la Grèce qui sont en première ligne. Nous devons assumer nos responsabilités. Ce débat est difficile sur le plan politique en Europe, nous le savons, mais c'est la dignité du projet européen d'être rassemblés pour être en mesure de progresser et de relever ce défi.

Je pense que l'on doit continuer à travailler pour améliorer le contrôle de nos frontières. Les frontières de la Grèce sont les frontières de l'Union européenne. Nous devons continuer à progresser pour être engagés sur le plan externe et développer des partenariats avec des pays extérieurs à l'Union européenne. On doit aussi continuer à progresser pour faire progresser plus de convergences, dont nos politiques migratoires.

Enfin, nous devons définir les modalités d'une solidarité effective afin que l'on soit tous mobilisés pour rendre notre approche sur cette question difficile de la migration plus efficace, et cela, conformément aux valeurs qui ont fondé ce projet européen unique dans l'histoire et qui rassemble 450 millions de citoyens européens avec l'ensemble des dirigeants qui conduisent les États membres.

[Press release – State of the European Union debate: EC president von der Leyen to address the House](#)



You can watch the plenary debate via [EP Live](#), and [EbS+](#).

Ursula von der Leyen is expected to outline the impact of the Commission's work in mitigating the COVID-19 sanitary and economic crisis, and to outline her vision for economic recovery, fighting climate change, and the situation in Europe's neighbourhood.

Political group leaders will assess the Commission's work and set out their views, as this annual State of the Union debate is a chance for MEPs to scrutinise the work and the plans of the European Commission and help set the future direction for the EU.

Today from 16.00 to 18.00,

Parliament will hold a [central live event](#), where lead MEPs will discuss the European Union's priorities and react to questions and ideas from citizens. You can follow the live streaming available [here](#).


Battlefield evidence increasingly used to prosecute foreign terrorist fighters in the EU

Battlefield evidence, such as photos depicting crimes committed against civilians, fingerprints on explosive devices and e-mails describing terrorist plots, is increasingly being used to prosecute suspects of terrorism and core international crimes, including returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters. The [2020 Memorandum on Battlefield Evidence](#), which was published today by Eurojust, the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, shows that while there are many challenges in obtaining such data and making sure it meets the criteria for admissible evidence, it has paved the way for bringing terrorist suspects to trial.

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Battlefield evidence can be considered as proof, similar to any other type of evidence, in criminal proceedings. Judicial authorities in ten EU countries report that, since 2018, they have increasingly received and used battlefield information in court proceedings – irrespective of whether the information came from national and/or foreign military forces, or from NGOs and UN entities. The evidence consists of both electronic data and physical items, such as mobile phone data, credit cards. Other examples are situational reports, letters describing potential terrorist plots, witness statements and administrative documents such as a payroll roster, a list of patients in a hospital, or a will.

To guarantee the right to a fair trial, general admissibility criteria for evidence must be strictly met. With experience, solutions have been found to overcome certain challenges in this respect, including declassification of raw data as a standard procedure, providing context for raw material by intelligence services and using standard procedures for international Mutual Legal Assistance requests. The report outlines a number of recommendations to further develop this practice, such as strengthening the operational relationships between judicial authorities and law enforcement counterparts and other authorities, which include border protection and military forces, both at national and international level.

 The [Memorandum](#) is the result of close cooperation between Eurojust, the Genocide Network, national authorities in the EU Member States and the Liaison Prosecutors at Eurojust. It was produced following a recommendation from the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator as part of the European Union's efforts to strengthen information exchange in the field of counterterrorism.

Background

What is battlefield evidence?

Definitions of 'battlefield evidence' and 'battlefield information' vary from country to country. This information may be of a general nature or very specific and linked to a particular situation. For the purposes of this report, the term 'battlefield evidence' and the more general term 'battlefield information' are used for materials that originate from a conflict area, and include materials collected by other actors, such as the military, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN entities, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other organisations. The terms 'battlefield evidence' and 'battlefield information' may refer to both personal and non-personal data.

Eurojust's support for judicial authorities in the fight against terrorism

Eurojust, the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, supports EU Member States and Third States in the coordination of cross-border judicial investigations and prosecutions of all forms of serious crime, including terrorism. Eurojust also facilitates exchanges of national experiences both in terrorism and in core international crime cases, sharing information from national correspondents for terrorism matters and within the Genocide Network. Since 2018, cooperation with the US authorities has also been developing in this area.

Eurojust will continue to monitor developments in this area by analysing its own casework and convictions of terrorist offences, and particularly cases in which battlefield evidence was used. Its close collaboration with the European Counter Terrorism Centre at Europol is also destined to continue. On another front, Eurojust will pursue its cooperation with the US authorities on battlefield information, in which joint efforts will be made to enhance searches of stored battlefield information and provide guidance on the categories of information that could prove useful for criminal proceedings.

Related content

[Factsheet: Supporting judicial authorities in the fight against core international crimes \(2020\)](#)

[Factsheet: Supporting judicial authorities in the fight against terrorism \(2019\)](#)