

# Press release – Parliament requests further action to save EU tourism



The resolution on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond was adopted on Friday by 587 votes in favour, 32 against and 46 abstentions. It identifies areas where actions taken so far remain insufficient to support a sector that employs 22.6 million people (11.2% of the total EU employment) and that contributed 9.5% to EU GDP in 2019.

## **Giving tourism businesses a chance of survival**

- **Short-term financing to avoid businesses going bankrupt and to support workers, including self-employed workers, in the transport, culture and tourism sector.**
- **Support long-term recovery and modernise the sector:** Parliament asks the Commission to issue guidance to ensure available funding can be accessed swiftly. MEPs call for a dedicated budget line for sustainable tourism in the 2021-2027 long-term EU budget.

## **Guarantee safety and fairness by**

- establishing common standards and detailed protocols for hygiene and health screening measures;
- developing an early alert system that warns tourists about any potential health threat at their destination;
- creating an EU safety certificate for establishments and operators that

meet the highest hygiene and safety standards;

- launching a dedicated information campaign on travel and tourism, aiming at promoting intra-EU travel, re-establishing confidence in travel and tourism during COVID-19, and educating tourists on the health and safety measures in place;
- ensuring safe transit and country-to-country movement is not hampered by unilateral measures and agreements between individual member states.

### **Learning from the COVID-19 crisis**

The Parliament encourages the Commission to explore the idea of a crisis-management mechanism for EU tourism, in order to respond adequately and swiftly to any future challenge of similar magnitude.

MEPs see the crisis also as an historic opportunity to modernise tourism in the EU and make it more sustainable, e.g. local and rural tourism initiatives, or out-of-season travel. The EU should promote and certify environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically sound travel and tourism.

The Parliament wants EU support to serve as a tool to guide infrastructure and transport development and tourism towards more sustainable, innovative, resilient and high-quality products and services. The Parliament supports the concept of 'safe and smart destinations' to ensure the development of sustainable, responsible and accessible tourism.

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**[Press release – MEPs call on EU to consider lawsuit against China over Hong Kong](#)**



In a resolution adopted on Friday by 565 votes to 34, with 62 abstentions, the European Parliament voted in favour of bringing China before the International Court of Justice over its decision to adopt a new national security law for semi-autonomous Hong-Kong.

In the text, MEPs “call on the EU and its Member States to consider, in the event the new security law is applied, filing a case before the [International Court of Justice](#) alleging that China’s decision to impose national security legislation on Hong Kong violates the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR).”

They also strongly condemn the new law as an assault on the city’s autonomy, as well as China’s constant and increasing interference in Hong Kong’s internal affairs. MEPs call for the jailed pro-democracy activists and peaceful demonstrators to be released and for charges against them to be dropped. They want to see a UN Special Envoy appointed to deal specifically with the situation in Hong Kong.

The European Parliament is greatly concerned by the steady deterioration of civil and political rights, and press freedom in Hong Kong and calls for an independent and impartial investigation into the police’s use of force against pro-democracy protesters.

It finally strongly urges EU member states in the Council and the EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell to address the issue of the national security law for Hong Kong as a top priority at the upcoming EU-China Summit on Monday, 22 June, (via video conference) and at the planned EU-China Leaders meeting, as well as other human rights issues, such as the situation of the Uyghurs.

The resolution as adopted will be available in full [here](#) (19.06.2020).

## **Background**

Residents of Hong Kong have recently taken to the streets to protest against a new controversial national security law for the city, which was approved by

mainland China's legislature in May. Many observers fear the Chinese Communist Party's new measures will effectively suffocate all the remaining freedoms and autonomy enjoyed by the special administrative region under the so-called "one country, two systems" principle.

The former British colony has been rocked by demonstrations, followed by a massive wave of street protests and violent clashes since last year, ever since the Hong Kong Executive put forward a new law in the spring of 2019 that would have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China, plunging the city into its worst political crisis in modern history.

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## [EASO holds virtual Management Board meeting](#)

On 18 June 2020, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) held its first Management Board meeting of 2020 via video conference. The 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Agency's governing body, which was initially scheduled for March, was rescheduled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board was informed about the latest developments of asylum in the EU and the Agency's operations in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta. Most notably, the meeting – the first to be held online – discussed how the Agency and the EU have adapted asylum practices as a result of the COVID-19 emergency.

Over the past few months, EASO has collaborated with the European Commission to provide guidance to Member States on how they can continue asylum procedures within the context of the restrictive measures put in place to contain the virus. Within this context, EASO has also issued practical [recommendations](#) on how Member States carry out remote interviews for asylum applicants.

Similarly, in early June EASO published a [report](#) which outlined how national asylum authorities had reacted to the pandemic. The report found that while they were initially limited by the emergency measures, authorities largely made strong efforts to resume services wherever possible, often within weeks. At the same time, the report cautioned that Member States should be prepared for a possible 'second wave', while lessons learnt during the pandemic may end up contributing to more effective asylum procedures in the longer term.

During the meeting, the Management Board adopted EASO's Final Accounts for 2019 and the Agency's Asylum Report 2020, which will be launched on 25 June 2020.

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## Barbados: EIB backs improved water supply and sanitation



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- **European Investment Bank to invest USD 12 million to modernise water supply infrastructure and waste water treatment equipment in Barbados;**
- **The project backed by the European Union, will improve access to water for communities across the island;**
- **The water project builds on EIB climate action objectives in the Caribbean.**

The European Investment Bank has agreed to support priority water investment across Barbados, to improve water supply across the country. The USD 12 million loan to the Ministry of Finance will allow the Barbados Water Authority (BWA) to rehabilitate the island's drinking water distribution network by improving efficiency, service quality and resilience to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. The investments will also lead to improvements to the deteriorated wastewater treatment facilities in the water-scarce country.

The USD 12m EIB loan will allow for the modernization of water supply and sewerage systems on the island, leading to substantial energy savings, reducing water losses in networks and an improvement in wastewater treatment operations. The investment will focus on the rehabilitation of aged and deteriorated leaking infrastructure, pipes and reservoirs. The new investment

will better protect water supply in Barbados from climate change and more frequent extreme weather.

**EIB Vice-President, Emma Navarro** said: “The EIB is delivering to ensure secure supply of clean water and ensure that water infrastructure is protected from a changing climate. As the largest international lender to the water sector worldwide, the EIB is pleased to be financing and providing its expertise to this project. This project will help to increase access to more efficient and reliable water supply in Barbados and build on our strong track record of supporting high-impact investment on the island and across the Caribbean”.

**Minister for Energy and Water Resources, Hon. Wilfred Abrahams MP** said: “We are facing very acute challenges with water and the water sector in Barbados. Climate change is real and the Small Island Developing states of which Barbados is one are on the frontline of the battle and taking a disproportionate share of the climate change casualties. While we are in the grips of the worst drought in the living memory of most Barbadians our problems are compounded by the wastage of the very scarce supplies of water we do have through our aging infrastructure and delivery systems many of which were developed when Britain was still an empire. We have to be creative in our solutions and our relationships with our Financing Partners need to be nimble enough to provide practical and sustainable solutions in a timely manner. Barbados thanks the EIB for its continued assistance and partnership as we fight this battle together. Real partners, real solutions, real progress.”

**EU Ambassador, H.E. Daniela Tramacere** said: “Our Team Europe approach to support the water sector in Barbados has allowed the EIB to offer concessional financing conditions to the government. This will make the investments in resilient water infrastructure more affordable and helps reduce the government’s debt burden. The grant component for the EIB loan, made possible by European Development Fund resources, underlines how the EU is prioritising support for climate action around the world. The EU is proud to be part of such a transformative project for the Barbados water sector.”

**Chair of the Barbados Water Authority, Leodean Worrell** said: “The Board, management and staff of the BWA sincerely thank the EIB for their relentless support. There is so much rehabilitation work to be done on our aging infrastructure. Without assistance such as what he have received from the EIB then there is only so far that the determination of our team can go. We wish in particular to thank Mr Floris Vermeulen whose enthusiasm was unwavering as was his belief in the New BWA. Without the assistance as partnerships such as what we share with the EIB we would be so much further away in fulfilling our mandate to Barbadians – to be the most efficient, reliable, cost-effective and customer oriented utility contributing to the social and economic development of Barbados. As we move forward with this project we do so embracing our new mantra “Water is transparent and so are we”! Thank you EIB! Thank you and we look forward to many more projects such as these. On behalf of the people of Barbados, the BWA and its Board we say thank you for standing by us all.”

**CAF Executive President Luis Carranza**, said: “CAF’s financing to Barbados Water Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project is aligned with our regional strategy and water sector agenda, which helped 3 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean obtain better water services in 2019. This intervention reflects CAF’s commitment with infrastructure and sustainable development, particularly relevant at this point in time in Barbados, where we hope to contribute to strengthening planning capabilities and reducing access costs in the short term.”

### **Impact of the water project in Barbados**

In concrete terms, the EIB investment will finance the replacement of about 16 km of aged pipes and the repair of water reservoirs and pumping stations will contribute to preserving the limited water sources in the island in a climate change adverse environment. It will improve the resilience of the water supply system to drought conditions and reduce energy consumption in the water supply network. A flexible component for urgent sewage treatment equipment purchases has been included in the loan. It is a long term investment in the country’s resilience to pandemics such as Covid-19, as it provides steady access to clean drinking water, critical for effective crisis mitigation.

The loan is supported by an interest rate subsidy from the European Union to reduce Barbados’ debt burden and help the country’s efforts to develop investments that lead to climate resilience and with high social and environmental impact.

### **International cooperation and development goals**

The project is in line with objectives set in the “Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy”, and with those set in the “Economic Partnership Agreement” between the Caribbean States and the European Community and its Member States.

It is also fully aligned with EIB’s priority areas of intervention under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, namely sustainable development of water resources, sustainable management of natural resources, and climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience. In addition, it is expected to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 13 (Clean Water and Sanitation and Climate Action, respectively).

### **EIB in the Caribbean**

The EIB is the largest multilateral public bank in the world and financed around EUR 8 billion in investments outside of the European Union last year. The EIB has supported development and economic activity in the Caribbean with loans and equity investment worth EUR 1.6 billion since its first operation in the region. In Barbados, the EIB has provided a total of EUR 110 million to projects in the energy, transport, water, and private sector development (SMEs) sectors.

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## [Press release – Protection of transported animals: Parliament establishes inquiry committee](#)



The new inquiry committee, established by 605 votes in favour to 53 against, with 31 abstentions, should investigate alleged violations in the application of [European Union law on the protection of animals during transport and related operations](#) within and outside the EU, including by air, road, rail and sea. It will focus on how EU rules are being implemented by member states and whether the EU Commission is enforcing them properly, says the [adopted decision](#).

The committee will look into the EU Commission's alleged failure to act upon the evidence that EU rules on moving live animals across the EU and to third countries are being seriously and systematically infringed. It will investigate a suspected lack of implementation and enforcement of EU provisions on space allowance and headroom for transported animals, on their watering, feeding and bedding, and on temperature and ventilation system during transport.

Future members of the committee could examine how the Commission and member states ensure compliance with EU rules on handling of transported animals, on long distance journeys, on preventing delays, and on transport of unfit animals and animals that have not yet been weaned. They can also inquire into the alleged failure of the EU's executive and national authorities to enforce EU rules on welfare of transported animals also outside the Union, when moving live animals from EU to non-EU countries.

### **Composition and duration**



The inquiry committee should consist of 30 MEPs. Their names will be communicated by political groups at a later stage and announced in plenary.

The committee must submit its final report within 12 months from the moment of being established.

## **Background**

The new inquiry committee was established upon request presented by 183 MEPs to the Conference of Presidents (EP President and leaders of political groups in the House). The aim was to look into alleged violations in the application of European Union law governing live animal transport both within and outside the Union.