

[Press release on meeting between President Charles Michel and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#)

The meeting between the President of the European Council Charles Michel, and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took place on Wednesday 4 March 2020 in Ankara. High Representative Josep Borrell took part in the discussion.

The meeting was frank and necessary. The migration situation on the EU's sea and land borders and the crisis in Syria were at the heart of the talks.

The President of the European Council reiterated his support to Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus. He also acknowledged Turkey's efforts in hosting millions of refugees. The EU-Turkey Statement remains the basis of our migration partnership. It was agreed in good faith and needs continued efforts from both sides.

Reducing the current migration tensions on the borders of Europe is essential. Europe is ready to speed up support to Syrians in Turkey and their host communities.

A sustainable cease-fire and a lasting political solution to the Syria crisis is urgently needed. All actors must respect international humanitarian law. Humanitarian access is essential and Europe is willing to provide additional assistance for those displaced in Idlib.

[Eurogroup statement on the situation with COVID-19](#)

The Eurogroup held a conference call today together with non-euro area members on the situation with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The Eurogroup, liaising with the Commission, the ECB and the Croatian Council Presidency, is closely monitoring economic developments and financial impacts of the spread of COVID-19.

We welcome the measures already taken by member states to ensure that health systems and civil protection systems are adequately provided for to contain the disease and to help firms and workers which are particularly affected. We also welcome the steps by the Commission to coordinate with member states to share information, assess the needs and ensure a coherent EU-wide response.

Given the potentially significant impact of COVID-19 on growth, including through the disruption of supply chains, we are committed to coordinate our responses and stand ready to use all appropriate policy tools to achieve strong, sustainable growth and to safeguard against the further materialisation of downside risks. We stand ready to take further coordinated policy action, including fiscal measures, where appropriate, to support growth. The SGP provides for flexibility to cater for unusual events outside the control of governments.

At our next meetings, in mid-March, we will reassess the situation and further steps, commensurate with the developments, as they unfold.

[Investment fraud in Netherlands and Spain halted](#)

□The Hague, 4 March 2020

The Dutch and Spanish authorities have arrested six suspects for defrauding at least forty victims for around EUR 6 million. The suspects contacted mainly Dutch investors, promising considerable profits. After obtaining their trust, victims started investing high amounts which subsequently led to high losses. The arrests, three of them in The Netherlands, three in Spain, took place with active judicial support of Eurojust.

During a coordinated action between The Netherlands and Spain eight places have been searched and several bank accounts were frozen. The suspects set up so-called boiler rooms, alleged investment companies which had a very professional outlook and online presence. Their representatives called victims, using professional sales techniques, and offered investments in shares without any real value. The arrested persons are suspected of fraud and malpractice.

Eurojust assisted by setting up a coordination centre, to ensure the judicial support and correct exchange of information and evidence. To prepare for the action, in September last year a coordination meeting was held in The Hague, bringing Dutch and Spanish authorities together. The action was successfully carried out by the Dutch Public Prosecutors Office (PPO) Oost-Nederland and Politie Oost-Nederland, in close cooperation with the Spanish Central Investigating Court and the Public Prosecutor at the National Court, and the Policia Nacional (UDEP unit).



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Cities and regions need to switch to a low-emission transport system



□The Green Deal and the role of cities and regions in the switch to cleaner transport was the focus of discussion in a joint meeting between the European Parliament's Committee for Transport and Tourism (TRAN) and the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) of the European Committee of the Regions.

The European Green Deal is the long-term plan of the European Commission to achieve full decarbonisation of the continent by 2050. A big part of it is the decarbonisation of the transport sector. While the objective of climate neutrality can only be achieved on a European level through new legislation and the adaptation of existing law, implementation will depend heavily on local and regional authorities who are in charge of public transport and infrastructure in their territories.

“Transport is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union and unlike other sectors these emissions are not decreasing. Making use of promising technological innovations is good but getting people out of their cars to use public transport is better. In both cases, local and regional authorities have a major role to play in finding the right solution for their territories. The EU’s strategy must be based on their experience and respond to their needs because the success or failure of the European Green deal will be decided in regions and cities”, said **Isabelle Boudineau** (PES/FR), chair of the European Committee of the Regions’ COTER commission.

“Local and regional authorities have competences to implement the European Green Deal in their territories. Public transport is part of the solution, but only with existing digital networks with hi-speed internet and a wide network of charging infrastructure for electric, hybrid and LPG fuel. Do not forget the importance and the added value of the tourism industry where tourism is linked to travel, and can help to diversify the activities of other industries to create sustainable jobs in rural areas. The dedicated budget line in the MFF gives the financial framework for this transition period. We MEPs and CoR Members urge the Commission to have direct funds for housing, transport and for green deal”, said **István Ujhelyi** (S&D/HU), vice-chair of the European Parliament’s TRAN committee.

The members of both institutions presented their recent legislative work in two panel sessions:

- The **first session** focused on the challenges and opportunities linked to the shift to low-emission mobility and profound change of the transport system by cutting emissions and introducing alternative fuels. While the change could bring significant economic, environmental and social benefits it also requires tough discussions and decisions on who will have to pay for the change, how to ensure territorial and social cohesion and how to deal with negative impacts on the current economic system where the least environmentally-friendly modes of transport are often favoured through legal and financial frameworks.
- The **second session** put the spotlight on local and regional authorities who are in charge of designing and implementing mobility policies agreed at the European level and providing public transport in their territories. Their role lies in shaping mobility services, adapting legal frameworks, introducing alternative modes of transport, raising awareness and guiding consumer choices based on jointly desired outcomes. Challenges and obstacles include general issues of public

procurement, conflicting needs of rural and urban areas and the inherent costs of providing transport services and infrastructure.

Background:

The joint TRAN-COTER meeting is an annual institutional discussion between members of the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions. The joint meetings started in 2016 with the “missing links initiative” in the transport infrastructure sector and led to a call for proposals dedicated to co-funding projects to remove missing links in transport infrastructure through the EU’s Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). This year’s meeting dealt with the Green Deal and how the decarbonisation of transport can contribute to it.

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