[Strategic Plan 2025 of EUIPO approved by Management Board]

November 20, 2019 *About the EUIPO*

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On 20 November 2019 the new Strategic Plan 2025 (SP2025) of EUIPO was approved by the Management Board of the Office with the unanimous support of the member states and the Commission and will therefore begin its implementation period on 1 July 2020.

The SP2025 has as its core the delivery of 'IP value for businesses and citizens in Europe' through three Strategic Drivers that unite the Office and its stakeholders around a common purpose.

The three Strategic Drivers (SD) are to:

- further develop an interconnected, efficient and reliable IP System for the Internal Market (SD1);
- focus on more customer-centric services (SD2);
- and move the Office towards a more innovative workplace while developing the organisational skillsets required to do so (SD3).

Within these Strategic Drivers, the EUIPO will also launch new projects to be rolled out through the Office's subsequent Annual Work Programmes, which implement the Strategic Plan. A new set of European Cooperation projects (ECPs) have also been approved to run alongside the SP2025.

SP2025 underwent two consultations. The first consultation, which aimed at collecting feedback and ideas from stakeholders, ran from December 2018 to February 2019. The second consultation was launched on 25 June 2019 and ran for a period of 12 weeks. The European Commission was consulted on the

SP2025, and it was also presented to **the JURI committee of the European Parliament**.

The SP2025 represents a new phase in the Office's work, and further highlights the dedication and efforts of all involved.

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the latest developments in Nicaragua

The detention of more than 13 Nicaraguans on 14-15 November in connection with their support to hunger strikers gathered at the Church of San Miguel in the city of Masaya, as well as the siege of the church by police forces, represent an infringement against the fundamental rights of Nicaraguan citizens. This is a serious setback to the political process that conveys a negative signal about the willingness of the government to work towards a peaceful and democratic way out of the crisis.

The European Union calls on the government of Nicaragua and law enforcement bodies to release the detainees and drop the charges, lift the siege of the church and ensure the full respect of the constitutional rights of all Nicaraguans, including freedom of expression, assembly, religion and peaceful protest, as it had committed to under the March agreements concluded with the Civic Alliance.

Only the full implementation of the March agreements, a credible and inclusive dialogue as well as political and electoral reforms according to international standards can resolve the on-going crisis in the country and lead to a peaceful and democratic way out. The EU calls on all parties to resume their efforts and to take genuine and constructive measures to that end, as stated in the latest Council Conclusions of October 14.

The EU reaffirms its determination to continue to use all its instruments to support justice and democracy in Nicaragua and to react to the ongoing deterioration of human rights and the rule of law. Those who undermine democracy and the rule of law in Nicaragua shall be held accountable.

Press release – Vote on Commission: press conference by President Sassoli on outcome of hearings

After an exchange of views with the Commission's three executive Vice Presidents-designate Frans Timmermans, Margrethe Vestager and Valdis Dombrovskis, Parliament's Conference of Presidents (President Sassoli and political group leaders) will conduct their final assessment of the hearings of all 26 Commissioners-designate on Thursday.

Right after this meeting, President Sassoli will announce the outcome to the media.

Public hearings of the Commissioners-designate took place in parliamentary committees from 30 September to 8 October and on 14 November. If the Conference of Presidents decides to declare the hearings closed, the vote in plenary on the investiture of the Commission can take place during the November session, on 27 November.

WHERE: Anna Politkovskaya room, Spaak building, PHS0A050.

WHEN: Thursday 21 November at 12:30.

You can watch it live on EP Live, EbS as well as on the Facebook page and Twitter account of the President

[Press release – Rule of Law in Hungary: Council to update the Civil Liberties Committee]

This is the first substantial discussion on the subject in the current legislative term. The Finnish Presidency of the Council will report to the Civil Liberties Committee on how the first hearing in the General Affairs Council of 16 September went.

MEPs will take stock of the latest developments in Hungary and assess the progress made by EU member states in examining [Parliament's September 2018 request]. This debate comes two days after the most recent discussion in the General Affairs Council on 19 November, which focussed on enhancing respect for the rule of law in the EU and the evaluation of the Council's annual rule of law dialogue.

You can watch the debate live [here].

When: Thursday, 21 November, at 16.30

Where: European Parliament in Brussels, Antall building, room 2Q2

Background

The Article 7(1) process launched by Parliament aims to determine whether Hungary is at risk of breaching the EU's founding values. Judicial independence, freedom of expression, corruption, rights of minorities, and the situation of migrants and refugees are Parliament's key concerns. EU member states may decide, by a majority of four fifths, to launch the procedure laid down in Article 7 of the EU Treaty, which may eventually lead to sanctions, such as the suspension of the country's voting rights in the Council.

Euro area financial stability environment remains challenging

PRESS RELEASE

20 November 2019

- Low interest rates support economic activity, but there can be side effects
- Signs of excessive risk-taking in some sectors require monitoring and targeted macroprudential action in some countries
- Banks have further increased resilience, but have made limited progress in improving profitability

Downside risks to global and euro area economic growth have increased and continue to create financial stability challenges, according to the November 2019 Financial Stability Review (FSR) of the European Central Bank (ECB). Low interest rates should support economic activity in the euro area, but may also encourage excessive risk-taking by some non-bank financial institutions and highly leveraged non-financial corporations, and in some real estate markets.

“While the low interest rate environment supports the overall economy, we also note an increase in risk-taking which warrants continuous and close monitoring”, said Luis de Guindos, Vice-President of the ECB. “Authorities should use available tools to address the build-up of vulnerabilities where possible.”

Non-banks, such as investment funds, insurance companies and pension funds, which play an increasingly important role in the financing of the real economy, have continued to take on more risk and have increased their exposure to riskier segments of the corporate and sovereign sectors. In the event of a sudden repricing of financial assets, growing credit and liquidity risk in some parts of the euro area non-bank financial sector – coupled with higher leverage in investment funds – may lead non-banks to respond in ways that cause stress to spread to the wider financial system.

Pockets of vulnerability also remain in the non-financial corporate sector and some property markets. Low funding costs appear to be encouraging more borrowing by riskier firms. At the same time, property markets in a number of euro area countries have continued to see rising prices. Authorities are using, and should continue to use, targeted macroprudential measures, where available, to address the associated risks to financial stability.

Euro area banks’ profitability prospects have deteriorated further, despite expectations of a modest but continued increase in net interest, fee and commission income. Return on equity of euro area banks is expected to face further pressure from both a weaker economic outlook and persistent cost inefficiencies and overcapacity. Even so, the banking sectors’ solvency position remains robust with a Common Equity Tier 1 ratio of over 14%. And even under an adverse stress scenario, the aggregate solvency ratio is expected to remain above 11%.

This issue of the FSR contains two special features, including one that examines how and where consolidation could help banks to improve their profitability. It also includes eight boxes, including one which looks at the impact of cross-border transactions on real estate markets and one which considers the implications of misconduct costs for banks.

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Further information

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