

# Press release – Press conference on Recovery & Resilience Facility at 10.25 on Friday



**When: Friday, 12 February 10.25 CET**

**Where: EP Press room and via Interactio**

On Friday, Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa will visit the European Parliament for the formal signature of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). After the signing, EP President David Sassoli, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Prime Minister Costa will hold a press conference on measures to support the European social and economic recovery.

Adopted by the European Parliament on Wednesday, 9 February, the RRF is the biggest building block of the Next Generation EU recovery package. It comprises €672.5 billion in grants and loans and it will support key policy areas such as the green and digital transitions.

The signature will be live on [EbS+](#) from 10.15 CET.

You can follow the press conference live from 10.25 CET via Parliament's [webstreaming](#) and [EbS+](#).

Interpretation will be available in English, French, Italian and Portuguese.

Journalists wishing to actively participate and ask questions, please connect via Interactio by using the [link](#).

**Information for the media – Use Interactio to ask questions**

Interactio is only supported on iPad (with the Safari browser) and

Mac/Windows (with the Google Chrome browser).

When [connecting](#), enter your name and the media you are representing in the first name / last name fields.

For better sound quality, use headphones and a microphone. Interpretation is only possible for interventions with video.

Journalists are asked to connect a few minutes before the start of the press conference to perform a connection test. Technical assistance can be provided if necessary via the chat box.

For more details, check the [connection guidelines](#) and [recommendations for remote speakers](#).

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## [EU recovery package: Council adopts Recovery and Resilience Facility](#)

Member states are working to turn the €672.5 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility into concrete action

The EU is working to turn its €750 billion recovery package into action.

The Council today adopted a regulation establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which lies at the heart of the EU's recovery plan. It will make €672.5 billion in grants and loans available for public investment and reforms in the 27 member states to help them address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, to foster the green and digital transitions and to build resilient and inclusive societies.

Member states will receive support from the facility on the basis of their national recovery and resilience plans, which are currently under preparation.



With the Recovery and Resilience Facility in place, it is time to focus all efforts on the preparation and submission of ambitious national recovery and resilience plans. The new facility offers the EU member states the unprecedented possibility of supporting recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and of undertaking green and digital transitions in an inclusive way. We need to make the best use of this opportunity.

*João Leão, Portugal's Minister for Finance*

## Measures supported and main requirements

Under the new regulation, member states will need to set out in their national recovery and resilience plans a coherent package of reforms and investment projects, covering six policy areas of European relevance:

- the green transition
- digital transformation
- smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs
- social and territorial cohesion
- health and resilience
- policies for the next generation, children and youth, including education and skills

Support will be linked to country-specific recommendations under the European Semester, which identify central challenges for each member state to address to strengthen competitiveness as well as social and economic cohesion. It will also contribute to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Some of the key requirements concern the EU's green and digital objectives. At least 37% of each plan's allocation has to support the green transition and at least 20% the digital transformation. In addition, all measures included in member states' plans should respect the 'do no significant harm' principle, to protect the EU's environmental goals.

Importantly, member states will also need to ensure that adequate control systems are put in place to prevent, detect and correct corruption, fraud and conflicts of interest.

## Approval process and financing

Member states have until 30 April, as a rule, to submit their recovery and resilience plans to the Commission. Then, generally, the Commission will have up to two months to assess the plans and subsequently the Council will have four weeks to adopt its decision on the final approval of each plan.

For the plans approved in 2021, member states will be able to get pre-financing of up to 13% of the grants and loans provided for in their plan. The rest of the funds will be paid based on the achievement of the agreed milestones and targets.

For the money to start flowing, however, the EU's own resources decision needs to be ratified in all member states first, since the decision authorises the Commission to borrow on the capital markets to address the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

## Next steps

The regulation will be signed tomorrow. It is expected to be published in the Official Journal on 18 February and will enter into force the following day.

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## Press release – MEPs call for suspension of the launch of the Belarus nuclear plant in Ostrovets



In a resolution adopted with 642 votes to 29, with 21 abstentions, Parliament criticises the hasty commissioning of the Ostrovets nuclear plant and the continued lack of transparency and official communication regarding the frequent emergency shutdowns of the reactor and equipment failure.

Despite outstanding safety concerns, the plant started to generate electricity on 3 November 2020 without fully implementing recommendations made in the 2018 EU peer review and by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), MEPs say, expressing their discontent with the rush to start commercial operation of the plant in March 2021.

They call on the Commission to work closely with the Belarusian authorities to delay launching the plant until all EU stress test recommendations are fully implemented and all the necessary safety improvements are in place.

MEPs also urge Belarus to fully comply with international nuclear and environmental safety standards, and to cooperate with international authorities in a transparent manner.

### **Background**

The Ostrovets nuclear plant, built by the Russian group Rosatom, is located 50km from Vilnius (Lithuania) and in close proximity to other EU countries such as Poland, Latvia and Estonia.

Electricity stopped being traded between Belarus and the EU on 3 November

when the Ostrovets plant was connected to the electricity grid. This followed the August 2020 joint decision of the Baltic States to cease commercial exchanges of electricity with Belarus once the Ostrovets plant started operating. However, MEPs note that electricity from Belarus can still enter the EU market via the Russian grid.

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## [Press release – MEPs strongly condemn continuing violence in Yemen and military coup in Myanmar](#)



Parliament condemned in the strongest terms the ongoing violence in Yemen that has, since 2015, “degenerated into the worst humanitarian crisis in the world”. There can be no military solution to the conflict and the crisis can only be resolved sustainably through an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned negotiation process, stress MEPs in a resolution adopted on Thursday by 638 votes for, 12 against and 44 abstentions.

Calling on all parties to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief and other necessary goods to the population, MEPs point out that nearly 80 per cent of Yemenites— more than 24 million people – need humanitarian support, while 50 000 people are living in famine-like conditions. This figure is expected to triple by mid-2021.

All parties must urgently refrain from starving civilians as a method of warfare, MEPs stress, whilst pushing for targeted measures to be imposed against those taking part in acts that violate international humanitarian law.

Welcoming the EU's pledge to triple humanitarian help for Yemen in 2021, MEPs urge the European Commission and EU member states to lead international efforts to urgently scale up humanitarian aid.

**Myanmar: All those illegally arrested need to be unconditionally released**

In a resolution on the situation in Myanmar, MEPs strongly condemn the military coup of 1 February and call on the military (Tatmadaw) to immediately reinstate the civilian government, end the state of emergency, and unconditionally release all those illegally arrested. The result of the general elections of 8 November must be respected and power handed back to the elected civil authorities.

MEPs note in this regard that "[despite her failure](#) to adequately condemn the human rights violations against Burmese minorities, Aung San Suu Kyi continues to be the symbol of the Burmese people when it comes to democratic aspirations and ambitions for a more just and democratic future".

To guarantee the recognition and representation of all ethnic groups in Myanmar including the Rohingya, the new constitution must be drafted and implemented through a free and fair process, MEPs stress.

They welcome the extension of the 2018 EU sanctions against Tatmadaw military and officials responsible for human rights violations against the Rohingya population. and urge the Council to extend targeted sanctions to the entire leadership of Myanmar's military, including all those involved in the coup.

Finally, Parliament calls upon the EU and its member states to foster international coordination to prevent any unauthorised goods from being illegally exported from Myanmar, specifically benefitting the military economically.

The resolution was adopted by 667 votes for, one against and 27 abstentions.

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## **[Press release – Human rights breaches in Uganda, Rwanda and Kazakhstan](#)**



### **The political situation in Uganda**

Parliament deplores that the 14 January general elections in Uganda were neither democratic nor transparent. MEPs also condemn the excessive use of force by the police and armed forces during the election and their growing interference in political affairs.

The resolution condemns the violence, continued harassment and systematic crackdown faced by political opposition leaders in Uganda, as well as the suppression of civil society. All those arrested and detained for participating in peaceful political assemblies or for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association must be released immediately and unconditionally and have their charges dropped, says the text.

Finally, Parliament reiterates that sanctions against individuals and organisations responsible for human rights violations in Uganda must be adopted under the new EU human rights sanction mechanism, the so-called EU Magnitsky Act.

The text was approved by 632 votes in favour, 15 against and 48 abstentions. See the full resolution [here](#). (11.02.2021)

### **Rwanda: the case of Paul Rusesabagina**

MEPs condemn the enforced disappearance, illegal rendition and incommunicado detention of Rwandan human rights defender, government critic and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Paul Rusesabagina, whose story was recounted in the 2004 film *Hotel Rwanda*.

Mr Rusesabagina, who is a Belgian citizen and a US resident, was forcibly transferred from Dubai to Kigali under unclear circumstances on 27 August last year. He only reappeared on 31 August at the headquarters of the Rwandan Investigation Bureau. He was initially charged with 13 offences, including financing terrorism, armed robbery and attempted murder. Some charges were later dropped, with those that remained relating to events that took place in



the country's Nyaruguru and Nyamagabe regions in 2018.

Parliament calls for an international investigation into this matter and expresses its deep concern about the violation of Mr Rusesabagina's rights. MEPs urge the Rwandan authorities to allow him to undergo a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal applying international human rights standards, and grant him legal counsel of his choosing.

Given Mr Rusesabagina's medical condition, MEPs call on the Rwandan Government to guarantee, under all circumstances, his physical and psychological well-being and access to proper medication.

The text was approved by 659 votes in favour, 1 against and 35 abstentions. It will be available in full [here](#). (11.02.2021)

### **The human rights situation in Kazakhstan**

Parliament urges Kazakhstan's Government to act in accordance with its international obligations and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, as enshrined in its Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU.

MEPs note that Kazakhstan's parliamentary elections on 10 January this year were described by the European External Action Service as a "missed opportunity" to demonstrate that political reforms have been implemented since the last elections. They also call on the Kazakh government to drop politically-motivated charges and end all forms of arbitrary detention, reprisals and harassment of human rights activists, religious organisations, civil society organisations, trade unions, journalists and political opposition movements.

People must be able to express their political, religious and other views freely, the text says, with Parliament calling on the Kazakh Government to amend the new law on peaceful assembly in order to guarantee this freedom. MEPs also urge the country's authorities to immediately release and fully rehabilitate all political prisoners.

The text was approved by 598 votes in favour, 43 against and 52 abstentions. For additional information on the content, it will be available in full [here](#). (11.02.2021)