

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)



On 10 December 2020, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2020/2033¹.

The Council renewed the existing restrictive measures for a further twelve months, until 12 December 2021, and amended the list of persons and entities subject to restrictive measures as set out in the Annex II to Decision 2010/788/CFSP.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania² and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this Council Decision.

They will ensure that their national policies conform to this Council Decision.

The European Union takes note of this commitment and welcomes it.

¹ Published on 11.12.2020 in the Official Journal of the European Union no. L 419/30

² The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[European Cooperation: Sofia and Plovdiv join the European Network of 'Authenticities'](#)

January 13, 2021 [EU Intellectual Property Network](#)

European Cooperation: Sofia and Plovdiv join the European Network of 'Authenticities'



On 18 November 2020 and 22 December 2020, under the framework of the European Cooperation Project (ECP8) 'European Network of Authenticities', the municipalities of **Sofia** and **Plovdiv** became the first certified Bulgarian '**Authenticities**'.

Following a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the **Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria** and both municipalities, and in cooperation with different stakeholders, a series of IP-related awareness-raising activities will take place locally over the next two years in the newly certified Authenticities.

This European Cooperation Project aims to raise awareness, among local policymakers, businesses and the European public, of both the value of IP and the damaging effects of counterfeiting in European cities.

Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria and its largest city. It is also the country's main administrative, cultural and educational centre. A sixth of Bulgaria's industrial production is concentrated in Sofia.

Plovdiv, European Capital of Culture in 2019, is the second largest city in Bulgaria. It's a city with over 8000 years of history. Plovdiv is fast becoming Southern Bulgaria's most dynamic and developed city and hub. Its economy is well-developed and diversified, which includes a mixture of industry, services, tourism and information technology.

Through this EUIPO project, the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, in cooperation with these two municipalities and several local stakeholders, will aim to combat counterfeiting and to simultaneously increase IP awareness on a local level. In that sense, it will also be joining the recent Authenticity of **Thessaloniki** in the task of further building a **European network of certified Authenticities**, where best practices can be shared and new synergies created.

[Press release – EU-UK future relations: MEPs to debate the agreement reached on 24 December](#)



The joint meeting of the lead committees will intensify the democratic parliamentary scrutiny process for the new EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement reached by EU and British negotiators on 24 December.

The two committees will in due course vote on the consent proposal prepared by the two standing rapporteurs [Christophe Hansen](#) (EPP, Luxembourg) and [Kati Piri](#) (S&D, The Netherlands), to allow for a plenary vote before the end of the provisional application of the agreement.

In addition to the plenary vote, Parliament will also vote on an accompanying resolution prepared by the political groups in the [UK Coordination Group](#) and the [Conference of Presidents](#).

The meeting

When: Thursday, 14 January, at 10.00 CET.

Where: Room 6Q2 in Parliament's Antall building in Brussels and remote participation.

You can follow it live [here](#). (10.00-12.00 CET).

Here is the [agenda](#).

Background

The new [Trade and Cooperation agreement](#) has been provisionally applied since 1 January 2021. For it to enter into force permanently, it requires the [consent of the Parliament](#).

MEPs on the International Trade Committee held a first meeting on the new EU-UK deal on Monday 11 January, during which they promised thorough scrutiny of the agreement. Read more [here](#).

[Press release – Public hearing on link between biodiversity loss and pandemics such as COVID-19](#)



Organised by the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the hearing will address the loss of biodiversity and the extent to which this increases the risk of pandemics due to change in land use, climate change and wildlife trade. The role that the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 could play in countering biodiversity loss and in increasing the EU's and the global commitment to biodiversity will be discussed.

Dr Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and Dr Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency, will open the public hearing.

The detailed programme is available [here](#).

You can follow the hearing live [here](#) from 9.00 on Thursday 14 January.

EU biodiversity strategy for 2030

On Thursday afternoon, Members will discuss the draft report by rapporteur [César Luena](#) (S&D, ES) which responds to the [Commission's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#) and welcomes the level of ambition in the strategy. The draft report underlines that all main direct drivers of change in nature must be addressed and expresses concern about soil degradation, the impact of climate change and the declining number of pollinators. It also addresses the issues of funding, mainstreaming and the governance framework for biodiversity, calls for a Green Erasmus programme focused on restoration and conservation, and emphasises the need for international action, including with regard to ocean governance.

You can follow the committee meeting live [here](#) from 13.15 on Thursday 14 January.

[France: EIB supports Eutelsat for the procurement and launch of the KONNECT VHTS satellite](#)



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- **Eight-year, €200 million EIB loan focused on the KONNECT VHTS programme, an advanced satellite providing unprecedented capacity for both fixed**

and mobile broadband services.

- **The project contributes to boosting high-speed broadband coverage on a pan-European level in line with the Gigabit Society targets of the European Commission.**

The European Investment Bank (EIB), the long-term lending institution of the European Union, and Eutelsat, one of the world's leading satellite operators, announced a €200 million financing agreement at the European Space Conference today. This eight-year loan will back investments related to the procurement and launch of the KONNECT VHTS satellite for the provision of advanced broadband services in Europe and neighbouring areas.

KONNECT VHTS is an advanced satellite providing unprecedented upload and download speed capacity for both fixed and mobile broadband services. With a weight of 6.3 tonnes and a Ka-band capacity of 500 Gbps, this next generation satellite will carry the most powerful on-board digital processor ever put into orbit, offering capacity, allocation flexibility, optimal spectrum use, and progressive ground network deployment. It will deliver cost-effective, competitive broadband connectivity allowing notably the provision of ubiquitous and affordable very high-speed fixed broadband access to European households, businesses and public administrations in remote areas that remain beyond the reach of terrestrial infrastructure.

Commenting on the agreement, Rodolphe Belmer, CEO of Eutelsat, said: *"This long-term financing with the EIB ensures that major players in the space sector like Eutelsat have access to diversified and compelling sources of funding. It is very positive that the European Union has an agenda in support of the space sector that places space connectivity at the centre of its priorities. This commitment also underlines the EU's belief in geostationary satellites as an indispensable complement to the provision of connectivity to unserved or poorly served regions significantly more quickly and cheaply than deploying terrestrial infrastructure in remote areas."*

"I am very pleased about this agreement with Eutelsat. It is an important step in the launch of a new generation satellite able to deliver accessible, cost-effective and competitive connectivity to all," said EIB Vice-President Ambroise Fayolle. *"Space is an important driver of innovation in Europe. This investment illustrates how the EU can support researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs in catalysing the development of advanced technologies to the benefit of end-users, customers, service providers and public authorities."*

The transaction follows the EU and EIB's commitment to strengthen their support for European space companies. It is in line with the Gigabit Society targets of the European Commission stating that all households in Europe will have access to at least 100 Mbps internet connectivity by 2025.

About [Eutelsat](#)

Founded in 1977, Eutelsat Communications is one of the world's leading satellite operators. With a global fleet of satellites and associated ground infrastructure, Eutelsat enables clients across video, data, government, fixed and mobile broadband markets to communicate effectively with their

customers, irrespective of their location. Over 6 600 television channels operated by leading media groups are broadcast by Eutelsat to 1 billion viewers equipped for DTH reception or connected to terrestrial networks. Headquartered in Paris with offices and teleports around the globe, Eutelsat assembles 1 000 men and women from 46 countries who are dedicated to delivering the highest quality of service.