

Media advisory – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of 14-15 June 2021



Indicative programme

All times are approximate and subject to change

Monday 14 June

Time to be confirmed

Arrivals ([live streaming](#))

+/- 08.00

Doorstep by Mariana Vieira da Silva, Minister of State for the Presidency of Portugal

+/- 08.15

Doorstep by Ana Mendes Godinho, Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal

+/- 09.00

Beginning of the meeting of ministers responsible for employment and social policy

- Adoption of the agenda
- Approval of “A” items
 - a) Non-legislative list
 - b) Legislative list

(+/- 09.15-13.00 [public session](#))

- Follow up of the Porto Social Summit: next steps and policy debate
- Ministers will discuss the proposed directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU
- Adoption of European Child Guarantee recommendation

(+/- 14.45-18.00 [public session](#))

- Policy debate on new challenges for social dialogue and collective bargaining
- Approval of conclusions on: telework; the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on gender equality; the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities

At the end of the meeting (+/- 18.15) press conference in [live streaming](#).

Tuesday 15 June

Time to be confirmed

Arrivals ([live streaming](#))

+/- 08.15

Doorstep by Marta Temido, Minister for Health of Portugal

+/- 09.30

Beginning of the meeting of ministers responsible for health

(+/- 12.00-13.20 [public session](#))

- A reinforced role of the European Medicines Agency: general approach
- Stock taking: revision of regulation establishing the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and proposal on serious cross-border health threats
- Approval of conclusions on access to medicines and medical devices for a stronger and resilient EU

(+/- 15.00-16.00 [public session](#))

- Information from the presidency on global health initiatives

At the end of the meeting (+/- 16.00) press conference in [live streaming](#).

Arrangements for the press conferences

Please note that there will be no physical press conferences. EU accredited journalists will be able to ask questions remotely using [this link](#).

Journalists who already registered for previous Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council press conferences do not need to register again.

– Deadline: Monday, 14 June 2021, 17.15

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Videos and photos from the event](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Local and regional authorities major contributors to EU Green Week 2021



Regarding the launch of the platform, the Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, **Virginijus Sinkevičius**, said: “Cities and regions are at the forefront of implementing policies related to pollution, and are major drivers in the green transition. Many are already finding innovative solutions to clean their air, water and soil, and encourage more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. I am delighted to partner with the European Committee of the Regions to create this new platform to share these good ideas, and support zero pollution objectives on the ground.”

The President of the European Committee of the Regions and Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia in Greece, **Apostolos Tzitzikostas**, welcomed the platform stating: “We all have a responsibility to act to protect our environment, leaving the safe and healthy future our children and planet deserve. Governments, businesses and stakeholders must all come together to stop the pollution of our water, air and land. It needs local leadership which is why the European Committee of the Regions is delighted to launch the Zero Pollution Stakeholders Platform with the European Commission.”

Vasco Alves Cordeiro, First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions and Member of the Azores Regional Parliament, took part in the launch event of the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform, saying: “Local and regional governments are responsible for delivering 70% of EU policies, 70% of climate mitigation measures and up to 90% of climate adaptation measures. The Zero Pollution Action Plan is essential to save lives and create a more sustainable future. Its platform will help translate European goals into local and regional realities, as regions and cities are in a better position to assess the effectiveness of measures and the fulfilment of goals. To be a success, this will need to be an open and inclusive process, mobilising citizens, SMEs, businesses, social movements, and research institutions. Exploring synergies and ensuring territorial cohesion is essential.”

Tjisse Stelpstra (NL/ECR), Member of the Council of the Province of Drenthe, was one of the jury members of the **European Week for Waste Reduction (EWR) Awards**. The ceremony, held on 1 June, awarded the most outstanding awareness-raising actions on waste reduction implemented during the 2020 EWR. Stelpstra declared: “There is no waste! We need a mind shift in how to look at resources. Too often in our linear economy, materials are simply discarded and tossed away. But materials we no longer use, are the resources of our future. Governments at all levels have to lead in regulating and stimulating to make a fair transition to a circular economy possible. The Action Plan of the European Commission says good things on re-use and the right to repair. We can prevent a lot of waste if products are designed accordingly. Many people have excellent ideas, but more than that, there is a lot of activity. So this award ceremony is for me also a ceremony of hope and confidence.”

On 3 June, [János Ádám Karácsony](#) (HU/EPP), member of the Local Government of Tahitótfalu and CoR rapporteur on the [EU Clean Air policy](#), engaged in the session [LIFE for clean air– EU funding in pollution hotspots](#), which focused on the zero pollution projects that are being carried out through LIFE funding, and remarked: “The revision of the Ambient Air Quality directives in connection with the new World Health Organization guidelines is one of the proposals of greatest importance of the Zero Pollution Action Plan. The Ambient Air quality directives have a clear territorial dimension with the definition of zones and agglomeration and local and regional communities have a fundamental role in improving air quality in their areas. However, pollution does not stop at local, regional, national or European borders. To reduce pollution, we need cooperation and funding. The implementation of air quality programmes will only succeed if enough financial resources are allocated. EU funding opportunities, including LIFE, are crucial to achieve climate objectives.”

[Emmanuel Disabato](#) (BE/Greens), member of the Parliament of Wallonia, participated in the high-level session [Achieving zero-pollution cities through regional policy and the Green City Accord](#) on 4 June and stated: “The Zero Pollution Action Plan is fundamental if we truly want to obtain a green recovery and to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal. Cities and regions will play a crucial role in its implementation and in ensuring that there are no gaps between what is proposed in Brussels and the reality on the ground. Thus, a new ‘Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform’ to bring together stakeholders and experts from different policy areas will be established in order to assess the effectiveness of policies and share concerns. The CoR is willing to contribute to meeting the zero-pollution ambition and for this reason will continue to support the Green City Accord and its developments.”

The session presented the Green City Accord and showed how this initiative can support the delivery of the zero-pollution ambition at local level. [Niina Ratilainen](#) (FI/Greens), member of the Turku City Council presented the case of her city: “The City of Turku is committed to a climate-neutral and resource-wise future with zero emissions, zero waste, and a low ecological impact by the year 2040. Our goals are ambitious, but when we look at the scale and complexity of the ecological crises, no city can strive for less ambition. The next steps we are about to take include finalising a circular economy roadmap, establishing a local biodiversity plan and starting to operate the first large-scale end-of-life textile refinement plant of the Nordic countries.”

On 11 June, [Arno Kompatscher](#) (IT/EPP), President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, participated in the Green Week partner event co-organized by the CoR. The event was called [Rural and urban challenges in developing regional zero-pollution plans](#) and aimed to reflect on the potential solutions that cross-border EU regions should be aware of and how the CoR could support the process towards zero-pollution cross-border regions. Kompatscher stated: “Zero pollution is the vision which determines our goals: whatever we do, there will always be a certain degree of pollution noise, light, etc. However, we have to take the right track. Let’s push our efforts to reach close to zero, safeguarding our enterprises, consumers and territories. Rural

vs urban, cross-border, multilevel: those should be our milestones when transforming the vision and challenge of today into the reality and opportunity of tomorrow.”

During the previous weeks, [Mark Weinmeister](#) (DE/EPP), Secretary of State for European Affairs of the Land of Hesse, participated in the event [A BLUE NEW DEAL: Water's role in a sustainable and fair future](#) , where participants discussed the importance of the protection of water resources as a part of the climate adaptation strategy, and [Tjisse Stelpstra](#) (NL/ECR) took part in a seminar on [The role of the circular economy in zero pollution strategies for healthier people and planet](#) .

The 2021 edition of EU Green Week took place from 31 May to 4 June 2021, with Partner Events taking place between 3 May and 13 June.

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[Nicaragua: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the deteriorating political situation](#)



The EU firmly condemns the actions of the Nicaraguan authorities against opposition parties, media, journalists and other media workers, human rights defenders and civil society, including the systematic detention and arrest of potential presidential candidates and opposition leaders. The political use of the judicial system, the exclusion of candidates from the elections and the arbitrary delisting of opposition parties are contrary to basic democratic principles and constitute a serious violation of the rights of the Nicaraguan people under the Nicaraguan Constitution and under International Law. These actions further undermine the credibility of an electoral process, already hampered by an electoral reform which fell short of the recommendations of the OAS and EU Electoral Observation Missions, and which was not the result of the dialogue between the government and the opposition. The EU also urges the Nicaraguan authorities to repeal restrictive laws, including the law on the regulation of foreign agents.

The EU calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the potential

presidential candidates Cristiana Chamorro, Arturo Cruz, Félix Maradiaga and Juan Sebastián Chamorro, opposition leaders José Adán Aguerrí, José Pallais and Violeta Granera and all other political prisoners, as well as ensuring the respect for their human rights and civil and political rights. Only the Nicaraguan people have the right to choose their representatives through a credible, inclusive and transparent electoral process, without interference from the authorities.

The EU reiterates its call for the restoration of inclusive dialogue and democracy as the only way out of the political, economic and social crisis in Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan authorities must put an end to the crackdown on political opponents, independent media, civil society and human rights defenders, and must fully guarantee the respect of human rights and civil and political rights in the country. International human rights bodies must be authorised to return to Nicaragua, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

The EU will continue to monitor the situation in Nicaragua and stands ready to use all instruments, including additional restrictive measures, and will work with the international community to defend dialogue and democracy as an essential step to restore trust in public institutions and to promote the respect of the rule of law and human rights in Nicaragua. The EU calls on the Nicaraguan government to abide by its own commitments, by Nicaragua's Constitution and by international human rights laws and standards.

[Podcast episode 3: Explaining internal models](#)

Internal models are an important part of insurance supervision. In this episode of the EIOPA Podcast, Íñigo Liberal Gorostiaga and Christoph Hamer explain more about the role that internal models play in insurance supervision.

The views expressed are those of the speakers and not necessarily those of the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority.

Published on 10 June 2021 and recorded on 21 May 2021.

Show notes

Here are some of the publications referred to in our podcast.

MCRCS (Market and Credit Risk Comparative Study):

NLCS (Non-Life Underwriting Risk Comparative Study): [NLCS Homepage](#)

Diversification Study: [Diversification Homepage](#)

[ESAs publish amended technical standards on the mapping of ECAIs](#)

The amendments reflect:

- the recognition of two new credit rating agencies (CRAs);
- the outcome of a monitoring exercise on the adequacy of existing mappings; and
- the deregistration of a number of CRAs.

The ITS are part of the EU Single Rulebook for banking and insurance aimed at creating a safe and sound regulatory framework consistently applicable across the European Union (EU).

Since the adoption in 2019 of the ITS on the mapping of credit assessments of ECAIs, two additional CRAs have been recognised and a number of CRAs have been de-registered. The ITS have therefore, been amended to reflect the allocation of appropriate risk weights to the newly established ECAIs, and to remove the reference to the de-registered ECAIs. Furthermore, the amendments reflect the outcome of a monitoring exercise on the adequacy of the existing mappings, based on the additional quantitative and qualitative information collected after the original Implementing Regulation entered into force. In particular, the ESAs propose to change the Credit Quality Step (CQS) allocation for two ECAIs, and to introduce new credit rating scales for nine ECAIs.

The ESAs also published [individual draft mapping reports](#) illustrating how the methodology was applied to produce the amended mappings, in line with the mandate from the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR).

Legal Basis and background

The proposed revised draft ITSs have been developed according to Article 136 (1) and (3) of Regulation 575/2013 (CRR) and of Article 109 (a) of Directive 2009/138/EC (Solvency II Directive), which state that revised draft ITS shall be submitted by the ESAs, where necessary.

The ITS, developed by the ESAs and adopted by the European Commission on 7 and 11 October 2016, aim at ensuring that only credit ratings issued by External Credit Assessment Institutions (ECAIs) – those credit rating agencies (CRAs) registered under Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 or central banks issuing credit ratings exempt from the application of the same regulation – can be used for calculating capital requirements of financial

institutions and insurance undertakings. To this aim, the three ESAs have specified an approach that establishes the correspondence -or mapping- between credit assessments and the credit quality steps defined in the EU prudential regulation for banking (Capital Requirements Regulation – CRR) and EU insurance regulation (Solvency II Directive).