

EESC discusses migration and education with Commissioner for Promoting European Way of Life

We are awaiting the New Pact on Migration and Asylum with great hope but also concern, the EESC tells Commissioner Schinas.

At its July plenary session, the **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** hosted a debate with Commission Vice-President, **Margaritis Schinas**, who presented several upcoming initiatives falling under his portfolio of "Promoting our European Way of Life", including the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Skills Agenda, the EU for Health Programme and the new Security Union Strategy.

In his welcoming remarks to **Commissioner Schinas**, the **EESC president, Luca Jahier**, said: *The values of solidarity, equality and fairness, which your portfolio is based on, are the three elements at the very core of the EESC's endeavours. In its opinions, the EESC has already dealt with some of the topics covered by these long-awaited initiatives, and we will continue do to so.*

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum

Migration policy and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum almost monopolised the EESC debate.

Mr Jahier said it is in the field of migration and integration that the values of solidarity, equality and fairness, or the lack of them, were especially visible.

The situation can no longer continue where Member States in Southern Europe, particularly Greece, but also Cyprus, Malta, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania, have to carry a disproportionate burden while some countries opt out from their obligations, refusing to show solidarity. I therefore await the New Pact on Migration and Asylum with great hope but also concern, and I hope that it will lead to substantial reform of the Dublin system, which has been a black hole in EU policy for all too long, said **Mr Jahier**.

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, announced as the number one priority of the Von der Leyen Commission and of which there are great expectations, had to be delayed due to the pandemic. It has now been postponed until after the negotiations on the strengthened EU long-term budget, taking place on 17 and 18 July.

Mr Schinas told the plenary that the Commission was now almost ready to present the New Pact, which will provide a holistic solution, as the current situation, where Europe does not have a proper single migration policy, cannot continue.

We only have a patchwork of regulatory solutions that provide unequal outcomes and some outdated legislation, and we have some money that we try to channel as best as we can. The fact that Europe does not have a single migration policy fit for the time we live in is not to its credit, he said.

The fundamental premise of the Pact will be that Europe continues to be an asylum destination for those who flee persecution, dictatorship and look to protect their lives.

But I also want to be very clear: those who are not under the protection of the EU and national asylum laws will simply have to go back – they will have to be returned. This is an important part of the equation: otherwise, we will not be able to construct a holistic EU asylum and migration policy, **Mr Schinas** said.

The new policy should have a strong external dimension in order to regulate the EU's relations with countries of origin and with immediate neighbours like Turkey and Libya. The EU would help those countries create more opportunities for their young citizens to stay so that they are less tempted to emigrate.

More robust management of external borders, with a reinforced European Border and Coast Guard Agency that includes a standing corps of 10 000 border guards, was also envisaged by the Pact, as was shared management of asylum applications, which would split the burden equally between all Member States, ensuring solidarity and lifting the pressure off the first-entry countries.

Mr Schinas said he hoped the Pact will be supported by all the Member States.

In the exchange of views with the Commissioner, EESC members pointed to the importance of full social and economic inclusion of migrants and to the need to emphasise their contribution to our societies and economies, which is key for changing the migration narrative and for fighting discrimination and racism.

The issue of migration is not only about borders: it is also a question of mind-set, of addressing the 'borders of the mind' which divide "us" from "them" and prevent learning and reconciliation. We have to change the mentality which sees migrants only as criminals, fuelling hatred, said the EESC president.

EU Health Programme

Mr Schinas announced a powerful EU Health Programme that dedicates 23 times more funding to health than the previous MFF. A "preparedness plan", which plans ahead for the second wave of COVID-19 infections, is also in the pipeline, as is a comprehensive vaccine coverage programme which will ensure that once the COVID-19 vaccine has been developed it is available to all Europeans.

EU Security Union Strategy

The new strategy, which aligns physical and digital protection, will be presented on 22 July. It will make sure that Europeans enjoy equal protection

from digital and physical threats

The Skills Agenda

The recent pandemic further accentuated the need for investment in inclusive education and training. Upskilling and reskilling should be a top priority, especially for those workers whose jobs become obsolete as a result of technological and environmental challenges.

Europe needs a skills revolution. We need to make sure that skills in Europe are not a bureaucratic box-ticking exercise. This skills revolution must leave no-one behind, said the Commissioner, stressing that the EU will need 250 000 digital workers in the coming years.

Education

The Commissioner announced a major flagship objective of creating the European education area by 2025, with greater mobility for teachers and students and a considerable increase in resources for the Erasmus+ programme.

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[Article – Sassoli: The decisions we will take will reshape the Union for decades](#)



The Parliament President was speaking at the start of an EU summit on 17 July dedicated to finding agreement among national governments on the EU's next long-term budget, which would also include measures to help Europe recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

"The discussions and decisions we will be called upon to take will be crucial in rebuilding our Union for the decades to come," said Sassoli. He said there was no going back following the Covid-19 crisis.

"The pandemic has given us new responsibilities and duties: the responsibility to make choices and the duty to do so in the interests of the many, not the few. If we take this as our brief, it becomes obvious where we should invest: in the green economy, health, education, and in digital, democratic and social rights."

Sassoli said the recovery plan must help to transform the economy and address widening inequalities: "The recovery plan must be commensurate with our ambitions."

He said Parliament backed the level of funding proposed by the European Commission and the proposed splits between grants and loans. The President also called for a basket of own resources to be introduced and an end to rebates for some member states, which he called "unfair and hard to justify".

Sassoli reminded EU leaders that Parliament's consent to the budget is crucial. "It is unthinkable that a Europe which has reached agreement on a joint response to the crisis should sideline Parliament."

The President said Parliament was “disappointed” with the Council proposal on the budget being presented at the summit: “If we are to bring about a recovery, we need steady, long-term funding. This is a prerequisite for Parliament’s consent.”

Sassoli stressed the importance of solidarity in the current crisis: “Europe has grown together based on common values. Let us not reduce the European Union to a continent-wide ATM.”

He added: “Parliament will give its consent to the [EU’s long-term budget] only if it meets the priorities I have mentioned today.”

[ESMA PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON WAIVERS FROM PRE-TRADE TRANSPARENCY](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), the EU’s securities markets regulator, published today an [opinion](#) providing guidance on pre-trade transparency waivers for equity and non-equity instruments. The document replaces the guidance of the Committee of European Securities Regulators and ESMA’s opinions on waivers from pre-trade transparency under the Market in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID) I.

The guidance published today provides stakeholders with information on ESMA’s assessment of features frequently encountered in the context of issuing opinions on waivers from pre-trade transparency over the last three years. The opinion aims to contribute to the consistent application of waivers from pre-trade transparency across the Union. The document will be updated should ESMA encounter further frequent issues in the context of assessing waiver notifications.

Background

MiFIR sets out pre-trade transparency requirements for trading venues for equity and non-equity instruments to ensure that an efficient price discovery process is not impaired by the fragmentation of liquidity. MiFIR recognises however that there may be circumstances where such pre-trade transparency obligations may be waived.

Before granting a waiver, National Competent Authorities (NCAs) should notify ESMA of the intended use of each individual waiver and provide an information regarding its functioning. ESMA is required to issue an opinion to the NCA assessing the compatibility of the waiver with the MiFIR requirements. These opinions are not made public.

Over the last three years, ESMA assessed more than 900 notifications for

waivers from pre-trade transparency for equity and non-equity instruments.

Intellectual Property: the European Commission would like to hear your views!

The European Commission invites the public and all interested stakeholders to voice their opinions on its roadmap aimed at upgrading the Intellectual Property protection system in the European Union.

The European Commission roadmap is open for feedback until 14 August 2020.

For more information and for participation, we invite you to consult the [dedicated webpage on the European Commission website](#).

Background

Intellectual property (IP) rights enable EU businesses to protect their inventions & creations to better compete around the world. The EU needs to better protect & manage IP if it is to assume leadership in key industrial areas & improve resilience to health & economic crises, while moving towards a greener, more digital economy. This initiative aims to upgrade the IP system, promote its smarter use, ensure better enforcement & promote fair play globally for IP.

Feedback will be taken into account for further development and fine tuning of the initiative. The Commission will summarise the input received in a synopsis report explaining how the input will be taken on board and, if applicable, why certain suggestions can't be taken up. Feedback received will be published on the [European Commission website](#).

Results of the Q3 2020 ECB Survey of Professional Forecasters



PRESS RELEASE

17 July 2020

- Ongoing impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic reflected in the macroeconomic expectations reported in the latest ECB Survey of Professional Forecasters
- HICP inflation expectations revised down for 2021 and 2022, and also for longer term
- Real GDP growth expectations revised towards sharper downturn in 2020 and slightly steeper recovery in subsequent years
- Expectations for peak in unemployment rate pushed back to 2021, but expectations of unemployment rate in the longer term remain unchanged

Respondents to the ECB Survey of Professional Forecasters (SPF) for the third quarter of 2020 reported point forecasts for annual HICP inflation averaging 0.4%, 1.0% and 1.3% for 2020, 2021 and 2022, respectively. These results represent downward revisions of 0.2 and 0.1 percentage points for 2021 and 2022. Average longer-term inflation expectations (which, like all other longer-term expectations in this round of the SPF, refer to 2025) edged down to 1.6%, from 1.7% in the previous round (which referred to 2024).

The expectations of SPF respondents for euro area real GDP growth averaged -8.3%, 5.7% and 2.4% for 2020, 2021 and 2022, respectively. These represent revisions from the previous round of -2.8 percentage points for 2020 and +1.4 and +0.7 percentage points for 2021 and 2022. At 1.4%, average longer-term expectations for real GDP growth were unchanged.

Average unemployment rate expectations stand at 9.1%, 9.3% and 8.5% for 2020, 2021 and 2022, respectively. These represent revisions of -0.3, +0.4 and +0.1 percentage points. Expectations for the unemployment rate in the longer term were unchanged at 7.7%.

Table: Results of the ECB Survey of Professional Forecasters for the third quarter of 2020

(annual percentage changes, unless otherwise indicated)

Survey horizon	2020	2021	2022	Longer term (1)
HICP inflation				
Q3 2020 SPF	0.4	1.0	1.3	1.6
<i>Previous SPF (Q2 2020)</i>	0.4	1.2	1.4	1.7
HICP inflation excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco				
Q3 2020 SPF	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.5
<i>Previous SPF (Q2 2020)</i>	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.6
Real GDP growth				
Q3 2020 SPF	-8.3	5.7	2.4	1.4
<i>Previous SPF (Q2 2020)</i>	-5.5	4.3	1.7	1.4
Unemployment rate (2)				
Q3 2020 SPF	9.1	9.3	8.5	7.7
<i>Previous SPF (Q2 2020)</i>	9.4	8.9	8.4	7.7

1) Longer-term expectations refer to 2025.

2) As a percentage of the labour force.

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Notes

- The SPF is conducted on a quarterly basis and gathers expectations for the rates of inflation, real GDP growth and unemployment in the euro area for several horizons, together with a quantitative assessment of the uncertainty surrounding them. The participants in the survey are experts affiliated with financial or non-financial institutions based within the European Union. The survey results do not represent the views of the ECB's decision-making bodies or its staff. The next Eurosystem staff macroeconomic projections will be published on 10 September 2020.
- Since 2015 the results of the SPF have been published on the ECB's website. For surveys prior to the first quarter of 2015, see the ECB's Monthly Bulletin (2002-2014: Q1 – February, Q2 – May, Q3 – August, Q4 – November).
- The survey was conducted between 30 June and 6 July 2020 with 59 responses received.
- The SPF report and data are available via the [SPF webpage](#) and via the ECB's [Statistical Data Warehouse](#).

Speaking engagements

[Media contacts](#)