

Press release – ACP-EU Post-Cotonou: A Joint Parliamentary Assembly is non-negotiable



The negotiations on a new partnership agreement between the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are entering the final stages. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the new agreement should be people-focused and this requires a strengthened parliamentary dimension with the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) at its centre, say Tomas Tobé (EPP, SE), Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Development, and the two JPA Co-Presidents Carlos Zorrinho (S&D, PT) and Faumuina Liuga (Samoa).

They stress that both the ACP negotiating mandate and the European Parliament position on the future agreement underline the essential role to be played by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. The resolution adopted in November 2019 by the European Parliament stresses that the institutional framework should include an ACP-EU JPA and clearly states that that this is "non-negotiable in terms of the European Parliament giving its consent to the future agreement".

They underline that the relations between the ACP countries and the European Union are strong and play a fundamental role in the multilateral global system and in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A new partnership agreement must address common challenges and be inclusive. A government-only driven partnership would not represent the interests of the ACP and European peoples affected by the agreement. It would be a step backwards in the ACP-EU relations and lack essential parliamentary scrutiny. It would send the wrong message that parliaments do not have a say on the future of the citizens and governments can just ignore them putting at risk the democratic accountability of the agreement and therefore the future of

the ACP-EU partnership.

There are key global issues to be tackled in the new agreement, from climate change to migration, to promoting growth as well as human rights, peace and stability, some of which still require intense negotiations between the two parties. A strengthened involvement of the parliaments is crucial, as democratic oversight is more needed than ever in order to build a strong and balanced partnership.

[Article – Covid-19: digital surveillance, borders and human rights](#)



The [Covid-19 crisis](#) has put some of the fundamental principles of the EU to the test. During a Facebook Live, [Maria Arena](#), chair of Parliament's human rights subcommittee, talked about the human rights aspects of the EU response to the pandemic.

The EU has played an important role in enabling the free movement of goods and services, including medicines and equipment, to countries that needed them the most, Arena said, but it is "very important to come back to freedom of movement for citizens". Europe is not Europe without that, she said.

The EU is coordinating with member states to [relax Covid-induced border controls](#) to enable people to travel again, but measures to prevent the virus

spreading remain and some of them raise privacy concerns. They include Covid-19 tracing apps that the EU has recognised as a way to help opening the borders. “It is important to work with technology, including tracing people to prevent contamination, but we have to respect principles,” Arena said.

“The app must respect EU data protection legislation.” She noted that the Parliament had asked for a number of safeguards around tracing apps in a [resolution, adopted on 17 April](#).

Processed information must be dealt within existing data protection legislation, which provides a certain level of guarantee for protecting human rights and not under emergency legislation, Arena added.

Asked about balancing privacy with practices such as thermoscanning travellers and requesting them to present a medical certificate when travelling certain countries, she said: “I agree that in a normal situation it would not be normal to have this kind of monitoring. But it is not the case now. If we want to reopen the borders, if we want to monitor the pandemic situation, we need to have more information.”

[Watch our Facebook Live interview with Maria Arena](#).

Arena also touched on the deterioration of human rights in some countries during the pandemic. “Now we have to come back to normal and bring human rights back to the centre of the discussion.”

Solidarity is the most important aspect in tackling the crisis, the committee chair concluded: “Europe is just like a boat: you can’t save the front of a boat without saving the back.”

[Check out the timeline of EU measures against Covid-19](#).

[Response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU energy sector: Council adopts conclusions](#)



The Council today adopted conclusions on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU energy sector. Above all, the Council expresses its appreciation for staff in the energy sector for their dedicated and effective efforts to **ensure the continuous operation of the European energy system** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council highlights the **crucial role of the energy sector** in the EU’s economic recovery and notes that the **European economy needs to become**

greener, more circular and more digital while remaining competitive globally. The necessary economic transformation towards sustainable growth and climate neutrality, building on the European Green Deal, is a major opportunity to stimulate the member states' economies. It will also gradually reduce the use of fossil fuels and further promote European leadership in developing and deploying safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies in a cost-efficient manner while respecting the member state's right to choose their energy mix and appropriate technologies.

The Council further acknowledges the need for initiatives to support a **robust recovery plan**, towards an affordable, safe, competitive, secure and sustainable energy system. It considers important in the current circumstances to **streamline the state aid rules for environmental protection and energy** in order to facilitate support for investments necessary for the energy transition.

It also notes the need to further incentivise future decarbonisation investments, including through the improvement of the **EU carbon market** while developing a **carbon border adjustment mechanism** in a WTO compatible way.

In its conclusions, the Council calls on the Commission to continue its work, in cooperation with the member states, on initiatives planned in the framework of the European Green Deal and its investment plan, such as **the renovation wave, the EU strategy on energy system integration, the offshore renewable energy strategy, the review of the regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure (TEN-E) and the renewable energy financing mechanism.**

In addition, the Council calls on the Commission to present an **action plan and a roadmap for hydrogen** with emphasis on renewable hydrogen to contribute to the energy transition.

The Council adopted these conclusions by written procedure.

[Eurogroup presidency: three ministers put forward their candidacies](#)



Nadia Calviño, Paschal Donohoe and Pierre Gramegna

Three ministers have put forward their candidacy to become president of the Eurogroup:

- Nadia Calviño, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation of Spain – [Bio](#) – [Motivation letter](#);
- Paschal Donohoe, Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure & Reform of Ireland – [Bio](#) – [Motivation letter](#);

- Pierre Gramegna, Minister for Finance of Luxembourg – [Bio](#) – [Motivation letter](#).

The election of the new president will take place at the next Eurogroup, on 9 July. The President is elected by a simple majority (at least 10 votes) of the Eurogroup ministers, in line with the Treaty's Protocol 14 on the Eurogroup.

The winner will be announced to the ministers at the end of the vote and presented at the Eurogroup press conference at the end of the meeting.

If none of the candidates receives at least 10 of the 19 votes by the Eurogroup ministers at the end of the first voting round, each candidate will be informed individually of the number of votes that he/she has received. Candidates will then have the opportunity to withdraw their application. Voting will take place until a simple majority is reached on one of the candidates.

The new president will succeed Mário Centeno upon the expiry of his mandate, on 13 July 2020, for a period of 2,5 years.

The Eurogroup is an informal body where ministers of euro area member states discuss matters of common concern in relation to sharing the euro as the single currency. It focuses on the close coordination of economic policies. It usually meets once a month, on the eve of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council meeting.

The first Eurogroup meeting took place on 4 June 1998 in Luxembourg. The first president of the Eurogroup was Jean-Claude Juncker. He was succeeded by Jeroen Dijsselbloem and then by Mário Centeno in 2018.

[Aviation emissions: EU confirms its participation in the CORSIA voluntary phase from 2021 and chooses more ambitious option to calculate its offsetting requirements](#)

The EU will take part in the **Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)** from the start of its voluntary phase on **1 January 2021**. Today, the Council adopted a decision sealing this EU position, which member states will have to notify to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) by 30 June 2020.

Today's decision also lays down the EU position on the method to be used for calculating aeroplane operators' **offsetting requirements** during the CORSIA pilot phase 2021-2023. According to the EU position, the calculations should be based on the emissions during each of those years (2021, 2022 and 2023). This option is likely to lead to higher offsetting requirements and therefore be **better for the environment** than the other option available, which is to base the calculations on the 2020 emissions. Here again, ICAO members must notify the option chosen by the end of June 2020.



Today's decision confirms the EU's unwavering support for CORSIA as the worldwide scheme to curb aviation emissions and help address climate change. The environmental ambition of the Green Deal will not be achieved by Europe acting alone. Because the drivers of climate change are not limited by national borders, the EU will continue to lead by example in the ICAO in order to tackle this global challenge.

Oleg Butković, Croatian Minister for the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, President of the Council

The Council adopted the decision by written procedure.

CORSIA – background

CORSIA was agreed on by the ICAO in 2016 with the aim of limiting greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation at their 2020 levels. It complements a broader set of measures, including aircraft technology improvements, operational improvements and sustainable aviation fuels.

The CORSIA obligations have already started. The monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) requirements relating to CO₂ emissions from international flights apply as of 1 January 2019. These obligations have been implemented in EU law by means of secondary legislation.

The CORSIA offsetting requirements will apply from 1 January 2021. The CORSIA pilot phase (2021-2023) and first phase (2024-2026) are voluntary.

During these voluntary phases, ICAO member states that decide to participate in CORSIA may join the scheme from the start of a given year. They should notify the ICAO of their decision to join by 30 June in the preceding year.

A link to the Council decision will be added to this press release on our website.