

## Press release – MEPs call for concrete details and novel tools to address the economic crisis



Opening the discussion held within the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, Committee Chair Irene Tinagli (S&D, IT) underlined that although the measures agreed by the European Council were to be welcomed, more was needed, including fresh funds. “At stake is more than solidarity”, Ms Tinagli said, explaining that “the divergences that risk being created could lead to unprecedented pressure for the European Union”.

The divergences on the horizon were highlighted by both Mr Dombrovskis and Mr Gentiloni, who agreed that this was the primary reason that more measures were needed to help the hardest hit regions and countries.

### **The devil is in the detail**

Various MEPs asked for more details on the planned interplay between the EU’s long-term budget and the envisaged recovery fund. Many also wanted to find out more about how the recovery fund would function, especially regarding what proportion would consist of grants. Questions were also asked regarding the mechanism for allocating the fund’s money between the countries.

### **Finding the middle ground**

Some MEPs raised concerns that, however they were named, the measures being considered would invariably take the EU down the road of mutualising debt in one form or another. On the other hand, other MEPs argued that the ideas on the table did not seem credible or useful. Not credible because leveraging guarantees with funds from private investors would be very difficult in times of crisis and not useful because some countries could not afford to be saddled with further debt.

## No stone unturned

A few MEPs underlined the need, now more than ever, to ensure that the EU does all that it can to ensure that tax fraud and tax havens are tackled more effectively. This would ensure that more money would be available to deal with the fallout from COVID-19.

You can catch up with the debate [here](#).

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## [Press release – Stop cooperation with and funding to the Libyan coastguard, MEPs ask](#)



In a debate in the Civil Liberties Committee with representatives of the Commission, Frontex, UNHCR, the Council of Europe and NGOs, a majority of MEPs insisted that Libya is not a “safe country” for disembarkation of people rescued at sea and demanded that the cooperation with the Libyan coastguard stops.

Most of the speakers acknowledged the challenges faced by front line countries receiving most of the migrants and asylum-seekers fleeing Libya, namely Italy and Malta, and underlined that the European common asylum system needs to be reshuffled, with a focus on solidarity among member states and respect of international legislation. Others made clear that member states are entitled to protect their borders, especially in the middle of a health crisis such as the current one. Some instead criticised the closure of ports

due to the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed that letting people drown cannot be a solution.

## Background

According to UNHCR, the human rights situation inside Libya is extremely complicated, in the context of intensifying combat, the coronavirus crisis and the high number of economic migrants, refugees and internally displaced people needing material and humanitarian assistance. Around 1,500 people remain in detention centers in appalling conditions, arbitrary detentions continue to take place and resettlement schemes of the most vulnerable people to neighbouring countries have been suspended.

Since the beginning of the year, [3,277 persons have arrived in Italy by sea and 1,135 in Malta](#). On 1 April, the [EU naval Operation Irini](#) succeeded Operation Sophia, with a focus on enforcing the arms embargo to Libya, in an attempt to contribute to the pacification of the country.

You can [watch the debate again](#).

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## [Press release by President Michel on the EU-G5 Sahel video conference, 28 April 2020](#)



G5 Sahel

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, current Chair of the G5 Sahel, will co-chair an EU-G5 Sahel video conference tomorrow, 28 April 2020, with the United Nations and the African Union Commission.

The European Union is a major partner of the Sahel countries and is committed to working alongside them to address the challenges facing the region.

However, the situation remains of particular concern, as the recent attacks have demonstrated.

The fight against terrorism, support for the countries' defence and internal security capabilities, restoration of the presence of the State in fragile

areas, long-term development, and the humanitarian response are the EU's main areas of commitment in the Sahel.

This video conference is testament to the importance that the European Union attaches to its cooperation with the G5 Sahel, and will serve to strengthen the EU's and the G5 Sahel countries' collective commitment to their shared goals as regards security and stability in the Sahel.

The global COVID-19 pandemic cannot cause the European Union's collective efforts in support of the Sahel to stall.

Tomorrow, the European Union and the G5 Sahel will mark the renewal and strengthening of their joint commitment, through a set of political initiatives and frameworks such as the Coalition for the Sahel, the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel, and the G5 Sahel Integrated Strategic Framework.

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## [Article – Supporting the EU's cultural sector through Covid-19](#)



MEPs underlined the special nature of the creative sector and the difficulties faced by artists and called on the EU to provide support in a [resolution](#) adopted on 17 April.

The pandemic has affected everyone and many sectors of the economy are struggling, but the culture sector is one of the worst hit. Performances

across Europe have been cancelled, festivals, conferences and exhibitions postponed, cinemas, theatres and museums closed, television and film productions put on hold, so many artists cannot earn a living.

Many EU countries have introduced measures aimed specifically at helping culture sector workers and [Europe's culture ministers discussed support initiatives for the culture and creative sector](#) during the coronavirus crisis at a meeting on 8 April.

[The EU is stepping up to protect jobs](#), but the specificity of the cultural sector makes it harder for its workers to qualify for support. There are many individual artists, small businesses and charities. That is why Parliament's [culture committee](#) wants the EU to set up specific aid to help the sector survive the crisis.

MEPs have written a letter to Thierry Breton, Internal Market Commissioner; and Mariya Gabriel, Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Commissioner, in which they call for:

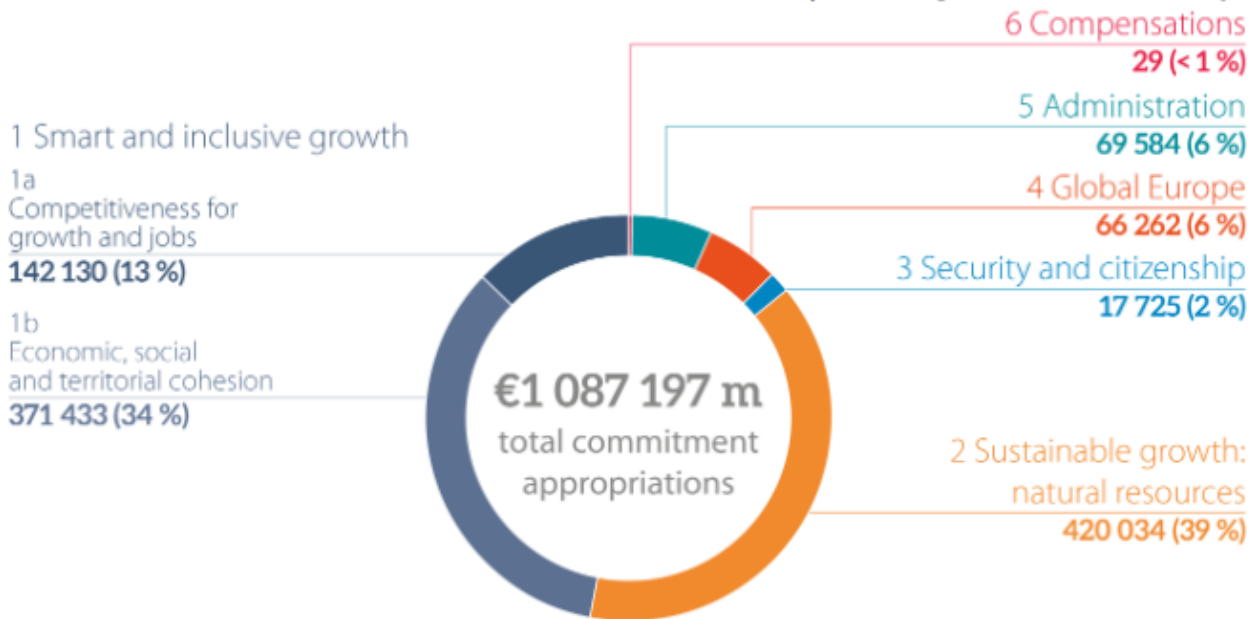
- Protecting artists who may not qualify for national support schemes through the [Creative Europe programme](#)
- Making sure EU funds reach the sector by increasing funding for Creative Europe
- Creating an ad hoc financial instrument under the European Investment Fund to channel funds to the sector

German EPP member Sabine Verheyen, chair of Parliament's culture committee, said more should be done at the EU level to provide tailored support for culture sector workers until things are back to normal.

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## [Press release – Q&A on the EU's long-term budget \(Multiannual Financial Framework, MFF\)](#)

## 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework by heading (€ million, current prices)



Data source: EPRS, based on European Commission.

The process to establish the next long-term budget of the EU for the period 2021-2027 has started. **It's about the future of Europe**, about whether the EU does less, the same or more for its citizens.

This Q&A reflects Parliament's position and the state of play before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The European Commission has since announced that it will update its original May 2018 proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to adapt it to the need for economic recovery, as the health crisis has hit member states' economies hard. This also reflects [what MEPs had asked for](#).

Since the beginning of the crisis, Parliament has approved a series of measures, [budgetary](#) and other, to tackle the consequences of the pandemic, and adopted a [resolution](#) in April, requesting a more robust and ambitious MFF. Once the details of the Commission's proposal are released, Parliament will further adjust its position.

The European Parliament wants a post-2020 budget reform which matches its political commitments and ambitions for the future of the EU and ensures the **continuity of the EU's main policies** like the regional and agricultural policies. This budget should also **address future challenges** for a stronger and more sustainable Europe. It should promote peace, democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality, boost welfare, economic growth, quality employment, solidarity between member states and citizens, and contribute to **fighting climate change**.

The **EU budget is primarily an investment budget** and cannot run a deficit, which makes it unique. Around 93% of the EU budget benefit citizens, regions, cities, farmers, universities and businesses. While the EU's administrative expenses account for less than 7% of the total EU budget. Membership of the Single Market brings further economic benefits, in particular for Member States that rely heavily on international trade.