

Media advisory – Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) of 6 May 2021



Indicative programme

from 08.15

Arrivals ([in live streaming](#))

10.00

Beginning of the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence)

Adoption of the agenda

Current Affairs

Conclusions on security and defence

Strategic Compass

Any other business

At the end of the meeting (+/- 15.00) – press conference in [live streaming](#).

Arrangements for the press conference

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

Journalists who already registered for previous FAC press conferences do not need to register again.

Deadline: Thursday, 6 May 2021, 14.00

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](#)

[EIOPA publishes monthly technical information for Solvency II Relevant Risk Free Interest Rate Term](#)

Structures – end-April 2021

□ Today, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published technical information on the relevant risk free interest rate term structures (RFR) with reference to the end of April 2021.

RFR information has been calculated on the basis of the foreseen changes in the deep, liquid and transparent points and the content of the [Technical Documentation](#) published on 16 December 2020 and based on RFR coding released on 8 October 2019.

All the documents are available on [RFR](#) specific area on EIOPA's website. In particular, the updated version of the source code can be accessed under [Related links](#) in the RFR area.

Background

Technical information relating to risk-free interest rate (RFR) term structures is used for the calculation of the technical provisions for (re)insurance obligations.

In line with the Solvency II Directive, EIOPA publishes technical information relating to RFR term structures on a monthly basis via a dedicated section on EIOPA's Website also containing the release calendar for 2021, the RFR Technical Documentation, the RFR coding and Frequently Asked Questions.

With this publication, EIOPA ensures consistent calculation of technical provisions across Europe.

Media advisory – Press briefing ahead of Foreign Affairs Council of 10 May 2021



The **press briefing** ahead of the **Foreign Affairs Council** will take place on **Friday, 7 May 2021 at 14.00**. The briefing will be given by a senior EEAS official.

This briefing is “off the record”.

Please note that this press briefing will take place remotely.

In order to participate and ask questions, EU accredited journalists should register using [this link](#).

Those who already registered for previous press briefings of Foreign Affairs Council meetings earlier this year do not need to do it again.

- **Deadline for registration: Friday 7 May at 13.00**

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants shortly after the deadline.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[New action at EU level against 'Ndrangheta in Italy and Germany](#)



In a new major operation against international drug trafficking and money laundering, Eurojust and Europol have supported the competent Italian and German authorities with the arrest of 31 suspects in both countries, alleged to be part of the 'Ndrangheta mafia, operating in different regions of Italy and abroad. Further to this, in the context of a joint investigation team (JIT) between Italy and Germany, 65 other suspects have been identified and their places were searched during a large-scale action, for which around 800 police officers and tax officials were deployed today in both countries.

Today's actions are a follow up to the Eurojust and Europol coordinated Operation Pollino, during which already 84 suspects were arrested in December 2018 in the two aforementioned countries, as well as Belgium and the Netherlands. In view of today's operation, a European Arrest Warrant has been

issued for one of the main and already sentenced Pollino suspects, who was recently taken into custody in Spain and is awaiting surrender to Italy.

During the investigations, Eurojust assisted Italy and Germany in setting up a JIT and to ensure proper coordination of investigations, concerning two particular strands of an organised crime group (OCG), which amongst others is suspected of involvement with international drug trafficking and money laundering activities.

During a period of at least several years, the OCG is suspected of having organised the trade in cocaine between Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Spain using encrypted EncroChat and Sky ECC communication tools. A string of building and hospitality companies was allegedly used to launder the proceedings in Italy. The investigations in Germany focus in particular on drug trafficking and potential tax avoidance. For this purpose, financial and economic specialists of the German police joined the JIT.

The operation was carried out on the ground in Italy by the Anti-Mafia Investigation Directorate (DIA) under the coordination of the Public Prosecutor of Turin and of the National Antimafia Bureau (DNAA). In Germany, the operation was coordinated by the Public Prosecutor's Office of Konstanz, in cooperation with the Criminal Police of Friedrichshafen and the Economic and Financial Police of Ulm.

Both agencies have assisted the Italian and German authorities during the whole cycle of the investigations. Europol supported the operation by coordinating the international law enforcement activities and providing expertise through its dedicated Analysis Project on Italian Organised Crime (AP ITOC). Eurojust set up a coordination centre and organised two coordination meetings, to prepare for the action day.

In total at least several hundreds of thousands EUR have been seized, as well as weapons, cocaine, two luxury vehicles and jewelry. Furthermore, a full assessment of cash amounts seized is ongoing and bank accounts have been frozen.

This investigation is part of the Italian DIA Project ONNET, an EU-financed initiative to tackle mafia-type organised crime groups active in Europe. The project was launched at Europol's headquarters and targets the mafia-style criminal groups in their entirety, rather than one or more of their specific criminal activities.

[Elected leaders from the European Parliament and European Committee of](#)

the Regions are natural political allies to shape a more democratic Europe



Elected leaders from the European Parliament and European Committee of the Regions are natural political allies to shape a more democratic Europe

Local and regional authorities ask the President of the European Parliament David Sassoli to fully take part in the implementation and governance of national recovery plans

Just a few days ahead of the launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the President of the European Parliament David Sassoli addressed today the plenary session of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and shared with local and regional leaders the need to deliver the Conference on the ground, beyond the EU's institutions and beyond the capitals.

Make European values part of every region, city and rural village; strengthen European democracy; and fully involve local and regional authorities in the implementation of national post-pandemic recovery plans. These were the topics at the heart of the plenary debate between members of the CoR and the President of the European Parliament David Sassoli. The discussion showed the shared will to scale up the cooperation between the two EU institutions, especially ahead of the official launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe, on 9 May.

" As stressed by President Sassoli, the European Parliament and the CoR are comprised of elected officials, and therefore are natural political allies, both in Brussels and on the ground. We are determined to translate these words into concrete actions. We, regional presidents and local mayors, make Europe live on the ground. We make democracy deliver results. The citizens' voice, expressed via the CoR members and the one million local elected politicians they represent, must be heard in the Conference on the future of Europe, beyond the EU's institutions and capitals, " said [Apostolos Tzitzikostas](#) , President of the CoR.

The President of the European Parliament [David Sassoli](#) stated: *" It is especially in times of crisis that the European Union must demonstrate its importance by protecting people, supporting businesses, investing in equality, social progress and economic well-being. Meeting the needs of European citizens such as assistance, work, dignity, security and prosperity for their future is at the heart of the recovery. Regions, cities and villages will play an important role on the path to recovery, economic growth and job creation. They must, and they can, show their added value in paving the way for a fair, digital, green recovery and not least in rebuilding people's trust ."*

The CoR First Vice-President [Vasco Cordeiro](#) said: " *There is no one in the Committee of the Regions that refuses to be instrumental to make the Conference on the Future of Europe a success, but it is unfair to local and regional authorities across Europe to not recognise their role and their importance not only as instrument but also as active members who can have a role and say what they think the future of Europe should be. There is a wide margin of progress and improvement in the way local and regional authorities can be part of this process of rethinking Europe and how it works. Trust is at stake in this process. Regions and cities will not forget it and I hope all other EU institutions too.*"

Background:

On Tuesday 4 May, the European Parliament's Vice-President for Information policy, Press and Citizens Relations, [Othmar Karas](#) , and Vice-President for Relations with the CoR, [Klára Dobrev](#) , joined the members of the [Bureau of the Committee](#) to discuss how to better communicate the EU's actions and achievements to people in regions, cities and villages across Europe. They also discussed how to contribute to the Conference on the Future of Europe and scale up the cooperation between the only two EU institutions consisting of elected officials.

On 9 May, the CoR will hold a local debate in Strasbourg to mark the territorial dimension of the Conference. The event, co-organised with the main French regional and local associations, will allow regional and local leaders to discuss with citizens how to bring the Conference to regions, cities and villages across Europe. The local event will be attended, among others, by Dubravka Šuica, European Commissioner for Democracy and Demography, Guy Verhofstadt, Co-Chair of the Executive Committee of the Conference on the Future of Europe, and Ana Paula Zacarias, Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs.

More details [here](#) .

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