

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against Belarus](#)



On 25 February 2021, the Council adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/353 [1] amending Council Decision 2012/642/CFSP.

The Council Decision prolongs the restrictive measures against Belarus for one year, until 28 February 2022.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania [2] and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this Council Decision.

They will ensure that their national policies conform to this Council Decision.

The European Union takes note of this commitment and welcomes it.

[1] Published on 26.02.2021 in the Official Journal of the European Union no. L 68, p.189

[2] The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[Press release – Opening – 24-25 March plenary session](#)



The Parliament will continue to be a strong defender of human rights in the EU and worldwide, said President Sassoli, referring to Chinese sanctions against five MEPs and the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights.

These retaliatory sanctions are an unacceptable response to Parliament's legitimate concerns about human rights abuses, he added, expressing support for those hit by them.

Chair of the Delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China Reinhard Bütikofer (Greens/EFA, DE) said the sanctions demonstrate that EU values are more important than ever. Describing the sanctions as an attack on the institutions, he affirmed that the EU will continue to stand united in defending freedom of expression.

Maria Arena (S&D, BE) Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, stressed that the EU has a duty to protect human rights. "We will not be silenced", she said, adding that the pro-democracy movement and defenders of human rights must not be abandoned.

During his opening statement, President Sassoli also marked the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution for independence in Greece, which ended with the creation of a Greek, independent state at the heart of the EU.

However, he continued, 25 March is also a day of mourning and remembrance, marking mass Soviet deportations to Siberia of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, of whom very few returned. Remembering the victims with a minute silence, President Sassoli said such human rights violations must never be

repeated.

Changes to the agenda

Thursday

Pursuant to Rule 163 on urgent procedure, the following files are added for adoption:

- Digital Green Certificate – European Union citizens, and
- Digital Green Certificate – third country nationals.

These requests will be put to the vote in the first voting session.

Requests for the floor according the Rule 163(3) will be taken on Thursday at 9:00 after the results of votes are announced. Any requests for the floor have to be submitted one hour in advance.

Information on the extraordinary remote participation procedure is available [here](#).

ESMA assesses the compliance with UCITS liquidity rules and highlights areas for vigilance

This exercise was launched on 30 January 2020. Its purpose was for all NCAs to conduct coordinated supervisory activities to assess whether UCITS managers comply with their LRM obligations. The CSA was also an opportunity to strengthen the ongoing exchange of supervisory knowledge and experience among NCAs.

Steven Maijoor, Chair, said:

“Effective liquidity management is essential for the protection of investors, maintaining market integrity and reducing systemic risk, all of which support financial stability. The 2020 CSA aimed to get a comprehensive market overview, including detailed insights into the practical implementation and quality of liquidity risk management processes. The outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis gave further impetus to deepening the exercise.

“Overall, NCAs reported that most UCITS managers have demonstrated that they have implemented and applied sufficiently sound liquidity risk management processes. However, the exercise also identified shortcomings in a few cases and the need for improvements in certain key areas. Consequently, NCAs are following up with market participants to address the supervisory findings identified in the CSA at the individual and collective level.

“These results demonstrate the importance of this additional supervisory convergence tool.”

The UCITS regulatory framework includes a broad range of LRM provisions which aim to ensure that UCITS’ investors are able to redeem their investments on request. They require continuous attention to liquidity risk at all stages of a UCITS’ life, from the design phase to the investment process so that the liquidity profile of the UCITS’ underlying investments is appropriate to the UCITS redemption policy.

Compliance with the UCITS LRM provisions contributes to ensuring investor protection, financial stability and the orderly functioning of financial markets.

Main results

This CSA was an important exercise to shed light on potential supervisory risks and market practices in the sector. Overall, most UCITS managers have demonstrated that they have implemented and applied sufficiently sound LRM processes. However, in a few cases, some adverse supervisory findings were identified, particularly linked to documentation, procedures and methodology. In some cases, the liquidity assessment before investing should be strengthened, as well as the data reliability verification and the internal control framework.

To further improve the quality of LRM processes, market participants should critically review their LRM frameworks to ensure that none of these adverse supervisory findings exist in their frameworks. More generally, they should also ensure ongoing compliance with all relevant UCITS regulatory requirements, and associated EU and national guidance.

NCA supervised the LRM practices of UCITS managers in their respective Member States with a high degree of convergence. Despite this, ESMA has identified the need for further convergence work with respect to NCA follow-up actions, including enforcement actions where appropriate.

Next steps

NCA will undertake follow-up actions on individual cases to ensure that regulatory breaches as well as weaknesses identified are remedied, especially regarding the adverse supervisory findings identified. Further work will be carried out at the level of ESMA to promote convergence in the way NCA follow-up on the supervisory findings made during the CSA.

Further information:

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Technical advice to EC on simplification and harmonisation of fees to TRs under EMIR and SFTR

ESMA invites comments on all matters in this paper and in particular on the specific questions summarised in Annex 1. Comments are most helpful if they:

- Respond to the question stated;
- indicate the specific question to which the comment relates;
- contain a clear rationale; and
- describe any alternatives ESMA should consider.

ESMA will consider all comments received by 24 April 2021.

All contributions should be submitted online at www.esma.europa.eu under the heading 'Your input – Consultations'.

Publication of responses

All contributions received will be published following the close of the consultation, unless you request otherwise. Please clearly and prominently indicate in your submission any part you do not wish to be publicly disclosed. A standard confidentiality statement in an email message will not be treated as a request for non-disclosure. A confidential response may be requested from us in accordance with ESMA's rules on access to documents. We may consult you if we receive such a request. Any decision we make not to disclose the response is reviewable by ESMA's Board of Appeal and the European Ombudsman.

Press release – Press Conference by EP President Sassoli on EU summit, Thursday at 14.30



When: Thursday 25 March, at 14.30

Where: EP Press room and via Interactio

President David Sassoli is set to convey Parliament's position and answer journalists' questions regarding the topics discussed during the summit, particularly the EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, EU-US relations, Turkey and the Single Market.

Interpretation will be available in Italian, English, French and German.

Journalists wishing to actively participate and ask questions, please connect via Interactio by using this:

<https://broadcaster.interactio.eu/join/66e2-hy1p-1w4u>

You can also follow it live from 14.30 via Parliament's [webstreaming](#) and [EbS+](#).

Important notice: Following advice from Parliament's medical service, EP President Sassoli has decided that anyone wishing to enter Parliament's premises must wear either a surgical mask or an FFP2 respiratory mask as of 8 March. You will not be allowed to enter Parliament wearing a 'community mask' or any mask made of textiles.

Information for the media – Use Interactio to ask questions

Interactio is only supported on iPad (with the Safari browser) and Mac/Windows (with the Google Chrome browser).

When [connecting](#), enter your name and the media you are representing in the first name / last name fields.

For better sound quality, use headphones and a microphone. Interpretation is only possible for interventions with video.

Journalists who have never used Interactio before are asked to connect 30

minutes before the start of the press conference to perform a connection test. IT assistance can be provided if necessary.

For more details, check the [connection guidelines](#) and [recommendations for remote speakers](#).