

Press release – Parliament adopts InvestEU programme for strategic and innovative investments



Parliament endorsed the provisional agreement reached with the Council with 496 votes in favour, 57 against and 144 abstentions.

With €26 billion (in current prices) set aside in the EU budget as a guarantee, InvestEU is expected to mobilise €400 billion to be invested across the European Union from 2021 to 2027. The new programme is part of the €750 billion Next Generation EU recovery package, and will foster strategic, sustainable and innovative investments and address market failures, sub-optimal investments and the investment gap in targeted sectors.

Sustainable and strategic investments

InvestEU supports strategic investments in manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and supplies – crucial in the midst of a pandemic – as well as the production of Information and Communication Technology, components and devices in the EU.

It will also finance sustainable projects that can prove their positive environmental, climate and social impact. Those projects will be subject to the principle of “do no significant harm”, meaning they must not negatively

affect the EU's environmental and social objectives.

Furthermore, MEPs made sure that InvestEU contributes to achieving the target of spending at least 30% of EU funds on climate objectives by 2027 and that it provides support for SMEs negatively affected by the pandemic and at risk of insolvency.

Additional investments of around €400 billion

The additional investment across the European Union, expected to amount to €400 billion and the EU guarantee will be allotted to the following policy objectives:

1. sustainable infrastructure: around 38%
2. research, innovation and digitalisation: 25 %
3. SMEs: around 26%
4. social investment and skills: around 11%.

Moreover, the [European Investment Fund](#) (EIF), which will contribute to the implementation of the InvestEU programme, will get an additional €375 million.

Quotes

[José Manuel Fernandes](#) (EPP, PT), lead MEP from the Budgets Committee said during the debate on Tuesday: “The EU needs public and private investments to become more competitive, productive and to boost its territorial cohesion. Invest EU brings in additional funds to turn projects that otherwise wouldn't see the light of day into reality. Our strategic sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, should be independent. We need to help regions that suffered the most, and EU citizens deserve investment and high-quality jobs”.

[Irene Tinagli](#) (S&D, IT) leading the negotiations on behalf of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee added: : “We diverted more funds to meet environmental targets, to support SMEs, which suffered because of the pandemic, and we succeeded in placing Invest EU at the heart of NextGenerationEU. Since InvestEU will also help us to recover from the pandemic, we created synergies with the Recovery and Resilience Facility, allowing member states to implement part of their recovery and resilience plans through InvestEU”.

Next steps

Once Council has also formally approved the regulation, it will enter into force on the twentieth day after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU.

Press release – Parliament gives green light for new EU4Health programme



Parliament endorsed the provisional agreement reached with the Council with 631 votes in favour, 32 against and 34 abstentions.

The new EU4Health programme will contribute in areas where the EU can clearly add value, thus complementing member states' policies. Its main objectives include strengthening health systems by supporting countries to coordinate with each other and share data, as well as making medicines and medical devices more available, accessible and affordable.

Tackle cross-border health threats more efficiently

As the goal is to make health systems more resilient, EU4Health will prepare them more thoroughly for major cross-border health threats. This should enable the EU to face not only future epidemics, but also long-term challenges such as an ageing population and health inequalities.

The programme will also support actions linked to e-health and the creation of the [European "health data space"](#). Promoting access to quality healthcare, including access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, improving mental health and accelerating the [fight against cancer](#) will also be supported.

During the plenary debate on Tuesday, MEPs highlighted the key role that the new programme will play in fighting health inequalities, both between member

states and between different social groups. They also welcomed the establishment at EU level of a stockpile of essential medical supplies and equipment, which complements the work being done under rescEU, and a reserve of medical and support staff to be mobilised in the event a health crisis. Watch a recording of the debate [here](#).

Next steps

Once Council has also formally approved the regulation, it will enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. The regulation will apply retroactively from 1 January 2021.

Background

In May 2020, the Commission put forward a new stand-alone [EU4Health Programme for 2021-2027](#), as a response to the COVID-19 crisis. EU4Health aims to help the EU to be better prepared for major cross-border health threats and to make national health systems more resilient. Parliament and Council reached a [compromise agreement](#) on 14 December 2020.

Media advisory – Informal video conference of justice ministers, 11 March 2021



Indicative programme

Chair: Francisca Van Dunem, Minister of Justice

+/-9.30 – Doorstep by Minister Van Dunem

10.00 – Video conference of ministers of justice

Agenda

Any other business

Current legislative proposals ([public session](#))

Judicial training: Conclusions “Boosting training of justice professionals”

Setting up of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPP0)

Any other business

Initiative on EU–North Africa: Enhanced Political Dialogue on Justice and Home Affairs

Combating illegal content online in the context of the Digital Services Act

proposal

Retention of electronic communication data

Fundamental Rights

Conclusions on strengthening the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the European Union

Any other business

Update on ongoing preparatory work on the Rule of Law Report

Actions against judges and prosecutors – recent developments

Digitalisation of justice in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

Adequacy Decisions for transfers of personal data to the United Kingdom

At the end of the meeting (+/- 16.30) – 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** provided they have registered in advance.

You can **register** and have the possibility to ask questions remotely through [this link](#). Journalists who already registered for previous justice videoconferences do not need to register again.

Deadline for registration, Thursday 11 March, 15.30.

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[Press release – EU Presidents to sign declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe](#)



Following [the endorsement of the joint declaration by Parliament's Conference of Presidents](#) last week, the Presidents of the Parliament, the Council and the Commission will address Parliament's chamber in Brussels and sign the document agreed between their respective institutions. This will set the Conference on the Future of Europe in motion and invite citizens to thoroughly reflect on the direction the EU should be taking on crucial issues, as well as its institutional set-up. This was Parliament's primary objective throughout the negotiations.

When: Wednesday 10 March 2021, 13.00 – 13.30 (plenary).

Where: European Parliament in Brussels [hemicycle](#), with remote participation.

How: You can follow [the plenary](#) live. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, journalists are strongly advised to follow events online.

[Article – Companies should be held accountable for their actions, say MEPs](#)



On 8 March MEPs debated a [report](#) by the [legal affairs committee](#) on corporate accountability. The report calls on the European Commission to come up with a law obliging EU companies to address aspects of their value chains that could affect human rights (including social, trade union and labour rights), the environment (for example contribution to climate change) and good governance.

Doing the right thing does not give businesses a competitive advantage at the moment. The lack of a joint EU-wide approach on this matter could lead to a disadvantage for those companies that are proactive regarding social and environmental matters, the report said. The rules would apply to all large undertakings in the EU, as well as to publicly listed small and medium-sized enterprises and those that for example share “risky” supply chains with larger companies.

However, MEPs say the binding rules should also go beyond the EU’s borders, meaning that all companies that want to access the EU’s internal market, including those established outside the EU, would have to prove that they comply with due diligence obligations related to human rights and the environment.

In addition, the MEPs want the rights of stakeholders or victims in non-EU countries, who are particularly vulnerable, to be better protected. They likewise want a ban on importing products linked to severe human rights violations such as forced or child labour.

“The European Parliament has the chance this week to become a leader in responsible business conduct,” said report author [Lara Wolters \(S&D, the](#)

[Netherlands](#)) during the debate.

“For businesses, we’re creating a level playing field and legal clarity. For consumers, we’re ensuring fair products. For workers, we’re enhancing protection. For victims, we’re improving access to justice. And for the environment, we’re taking a step that is very long overdue.”

In February 2020, the Commission published a [study](#) which found that only one in three companies in the EU is currently taking some form of due diligence measures while 70% of European businesses support EU-wide due diligence rules.

MEPs are voting on the report on Wednesday 10 March.

Read more on [how the EU trade policy helps to promote human rights and environmental standards](#)