

Press release – EU-UK talks: MEPs display unwavering support for the EU position



In a report adopted by a large majority on Thursday, Parliament takes stock of the EU-UK negotiations on a new partnership so far and acknowledges the negotiating parties' call to [intensify talks in July](#).

They regret that no real progress has been achieved in the talks after four negotiating rounds, and that differences remain substantial.

MEPs emphasise that a comprehensive agreement is in the interest of both parties. However, having the UK side cherry-pick certain policies and push for access to the single market after Brexit is “unacceptable” for the EU, says the text, expressing deep concern over the British government's insistence on only wanting to negotiate areas that are in the interests of the UK.

The report also reiterates Parliament's full and unwavering support for the EU's Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier in his talks with the British negotiators, based on the political mandate given to him by EU member states and Parliament.

MEPs further call on the UK to respect its commitments set out in the Political Declaration, signed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson and ratified by both the EU and the UK.

Withdrawal obligations

Strict implementation of the [Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, and](#) the faithful implementation of the [Withdrawal Agreement](#), for the EU citizens in the UK but also on UK citizens' rights in the EU, is a precondition to ensure the trust needed to conclude a deal on the future relationship, notes the text.

Competition on equal footing, fisheries

The text further emphasises that Parliament's consent to any future trade agreement with the UK is conditional on the British government agreeing to a level playing field (common rules and standards) in the area of, among others, environmental protection, labour standards, and state aid, and on the conclusion of a satisfactory agreement on fisheries. This is a necessity due to the UK's geographical proximity, level of interconnectedness and already high level of existing alignment and interdependence with EU rules.

The British government has so far not engaged in negotiations on the provisions ensuring equal competition, the report notes.

The report, adopted by 572 votes in favour, 34 against and 91 abstentions, will be available [here](#) (18.06.2020)

Quote

"The European Union and the United Kingdom have shown their willingness to significantly advance in the negotiations during the month of July. With its timely resolution adopted today, the European Parliament is expressing its readiness to conclude an ambitious and fair agreement, without compromising our principles and our objectives", said [David McAllister](#) (EPP, DE), Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs and the UK Coordination Group (UKCG), commenting on the plenary vote and the outcome of the EU-UK high-level meeting on 15 June.

Click on names to view full video recordings of individual plenary statements by

[David McAllister](#)

[Bernd Lange](#) (S&D, DE), Chair of the European Parliament International Trade Committee, member of the UKCG

[Kati Piri](#) (S&D, NL), co-rapporteur, member of the UKCG

[Christophe Hansen](#) (EPP, LU), co-rapporteur, member of the UKCG

Background

The current transition period expires on 31 December 2020. For a new trade deal and overall agreement to enter into force the following day, it needs to be signed at the latest in October by the negotiating sides. The text would then need to be ratified by both the European Parliament and the UK Parliament, and, in case of a so-called mixed-agreement, by the national parliaments of all the EU member states.

Jordan: EIB supports the advisory services for the Al Mahattah multimodal transport hub



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The **Greater Amman Municipality (GAM)** and the [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#) have signed a €380 000 Technical Assistance cooperation agreement to provide advisory services for the Al Mahattah multimodal bus transport hub in the Greater Amman Municipality. The advisory services are financed through a grant under the Bank's [Economic Resilience Initiative \(ERI\)](#), which supports the preparation of projects that improve the resilience of EU neighbours.

The agreement was signed today at a ceremony hosted by the Greater Amman Municipality and attended by the European Union Ambassador to [Jordan](#), Maria Hadjitheodosiou, the Mayor of Amman, Dr Yousef Al Shawarbeh, and a representative from the Ministry of International Cooperation and Planning.

The advisory services include the project's feasibility study and the design of a road map for the redevelopment of the surrounding areas. It also includes proposing a simple and pragmatic architectural response that integrates the existing shops and other buildings and facilities within the area.

The Al Mahattah multimodal bus transport hub is part of the Transport and Mobility Master Plan of the Greater Amman Municipality. It will contribute to addressing the transport logistics needs of the municipality until 2025. The hub is expected to offer easy transport connections, connect available transport means with bus rapid transit, create safe passenger flows and offer passenger-oriented services.

The EIB's support for the preparation of the Al Mahattah project is part of the Bank's [Urban Project Finance Initiative \(UPFI\)](#) under the Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI), which is designed to strengthen the EU Southern Neighbourhood countries' ability to address key challenges. The Al Mahattah multimodal bus transport hub project will have substantial benefits in terms of enhanced urban transport in Amman, which is witnessing significant population growth.

The **Mayor of Amman** said: "The preparation of this study for the development of the transport centre and its urban surroundings is a continuation of GAM's efforts to develop the Amman Valley region and the previous associated projects for the development of Faisal Square and Hashemite Square, in addition to the general transportation link that extends to the fountains square and the station."

He added: "The development of the infrastructure and logistical area of the transport centre in the station is a first step for the development of the entire region, as the transport centres stimulate the urban development of its surroundings in the various economic, tourism and public transport areas, which will contribute to the revival of the downtown area."

The Mayor of Amman praised the efforts and joint work among the various state institutions, especially the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, for its coordination role with all institutions and international cooperation organisations that provide technical and financial support. This contributes to the conduct of these studies and the implementation of projects that increase the city's resilience and are compatible with the sustainable development goals, thus serving the public good with its positive impact for the residents of Amman.

European Union Ambassador to Jordan, Maria Hadjitheodosiou, welcomed the signing of this Cooperation Agreement between GAM and EIB, underlining "the importance of this grant in supporting the efforts of GAM to address Amman residents' needs by providing efficient, accessible and passenger-oriented transport services."

[Dario Scannapieco](#), **Vice-President of the European Investment Bank** made the following comment on the signature: "We strongly support the government's plans to improve and upgrade the urban transport sector in Jordan. The Al Mahattah multimodal bus transport hub will address a pressing need to upgrade urban transport in the Greater Amman Municipality to support a safe and easy transport system. This new agreement will provide grant funding to support the preparation of the hub as part of the Economic Resilience Initiative."

Illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol: EU renews sanctions by one year



The Council today decided to **renew the sanctions** introduced in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation **until 23 June 2021**.

The restrictive measures currently in place include prohibitions targeting the **imports of products** originating in Crimea or Sevastopol into the EU, and infrastructural or financial **investments** and **tourism services** in Crimea or Sevastopol. Furthermore, the **exports of certain goods and technologies** to Crimean companies or for use in Crimea in the transport, telecommunications and energy sectors or for the prospection, exploration and production of **oil, gas and mineral resources** are also subject to EU restrictions.

As stated in the declaration by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU on 16 March 2020, the **EU still does not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol** by the Russian Federation and continues to condemn this violation of international law.

Background

Sanctions were first introduced in June 2014 in response to the attempts to deliberately undermine Ukraine's territorial integrity and destabilise the country. Other EU measures in place in response to the crisis in Ukraine include **economic sanctions** targeting specific sectors of the Russian economy and **individual restrictive measures**.

Press release – COVID-19 crisis is a potential geopolitical game-changer, warn MEPs



A global pandemic needs global solutions, and the EU has to be at the centre of this response, said High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell in a plenary debate on the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on EU foreign policy, on Thursday.

To this end, the EU has launched a [Team Europe](#) response to support its partner countries in facing the pandemic, said Mr Borrell in his [introductory speech](#). It is vital to boost sustainable and green investment in the EU's partner countries worldwide, he added. "This crisis will be a crisis of biblical consequences", warned the EU foreign affairs chief, stressing also the importance of extending the European Union's programmes for refugees.

COVID-19 crisis a "geopolitical game-changer"

The pandemic has brought about changes of tremendous dimensions and will be a potential "geopolitical game-changer", MEPs pointed out, be it due to the deterioration of democracy and fundamental freedoms in many parts of the world, increasing disinformation campaigns, cyber-attacks, or isolationism instead of multilateral cooperation.

They supported strong and coordinated measures that would clearly show solidarity to EU partners throughout the world.

Recalling the EU's ambitions to be a global player, MEPs called for unity in facing the crisis. They pointed out that in the absence of the US as a global leader, Europe should step in and take on this role.

Several MEPs called for an adequate EU response to China, saying that the country has not acted as a reliable partner and accusing its government of human rights breaches, a state-led economy, spreading fake news and an inability to fight the pandemic transparently.

Background

Among key aspects of EU foreign policy affected by the COVID-19 crisis are

relations with major powers, humanitarian aid, development and peacekeeping, as well as the fight against disinformation and cyber-attacks. The crisis has also highlighted the debate about the future of multilateralism, which is one of the primary concerns that EU foreign policy must tackle.

In its [resolution adopted on 17 April 2020](#), the European Parliament has called for an update of the EU Global Strategy in the light of the global impact of the crisis, and for more strategic EU action that would also include better strategic communication.

You can watch the recording of the full debate [here](#)

[Press release – Green finance: Parliament adopts criteria for sustainable investments](#)



Parliament has adopted [new legislation on sustainable investments](#). It lays down six environmental objectives and allows economic activity to be labelled as environmentally sustainable if it contributes to at least one of the objectives without significantly harming any of the others.

The objectives are:

- climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources;
- transition to a circular economy, including waste prevention and increasing the uptake of secondary raw materials;
- pollution prevention and control; and

- protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Boosting green investments

Establishing clear European “green” criteria for investors is key to raising more public and private funding so that the EU can become carbon neutral by 2050 as set out in the [European Green Deal](#) as well as to prevent ‘greenwashing’.

The Commission estimates that Europe needs around [€260 billion per year in extra investment](#) to achieve its 2030 climate and energy targets. In a [resolution](#) (15.05.2020), MEPs also called for investments under the COVID-19 recovery plan to be prioritised as part of the Green Deal.

“The taxonomy for sustainable investment is probably the most important development for finance since accounting. It will be a game changer in the fight against climate change”, said lead negotiator for the Environment Committee, [Sirpa Pietikainen](#) (EPP, FI). “Greening the financial sector is a first step towards making investments serve the transition to a carbon-neutral economy”, she added.

“All financial products that claim to be sustainable will have to prove it following strict and ambitious EU criteria. The legislation also includes a clear mandate for the Commission to start defining environmentally harmful activities. Phasing out those activities and investments is as important to achieving climate neutrality as supporting decarbonised activities”, said Economic Affairs Committee rapporteur [Bas Eickhout](#) (Greens/EFA, NL).

Transition and enabling activities

Activities that are incompatible with climate neutrality but considered necessary in the transition to a climate-neutral economy are labelled *transition* or *enabling activities*. They must have greenhouse gas emissions levels corresponding to the best performance in the sector.

Solid fossil fuels, such as coal or lignite, are excluded, but gas and nuclear energy could potentially be labelled as an *enabling* or *transitional activity* in full respect of the “do no significant harm” principle.

Next steps

The law enters into force after publication in the Official Journal. The Commission will regularly update the technical screening criteria for *transition* and *enabling activities*. By 31 December 2021, it should review them and define criteria to identify activities that have a significant negative impact.