

Statement on the situation at the EU's external borders

The EU Ministers of Home Affairs met today, together with the Ministers of the Schengen Associated Countries, for an extraordinary Council meeting to discuss the situation at the EU's external borders with Turkey.

In line with the strong statements of the four presidents of EU institutions during their recent visit to the Greek-Turkish border, the Council expresses its solidarity with Greece, with Bulgaria and Cyprus and other Member States, which might be similarly affected, including in efforts to manage EU's external borders. The EU will also continue to closely cooperate with the Western Balkans partners in managing migratory flows.

While the Council acknowledges the increased migratory burden and risks Turkey is facing on its territory and the substantial efforts it has made in hosting 3,7 million migrants and refugees, it strongly rejects Turkey's use of migratory pressure for political purposes. This situation at EU's external borders is not acceptable. The Council expects Turkey to implement fully the provisions of the 2016 Joint Statement with regard to all Member States. This Statement produces tangible results, including by supporting Turkey's significant efforts in hosting migrants and refugees. Both the EU and Turkey stand to benefit from the continuation of this cooperation and commitment.

The EU and its Member States remain determined to effectively protect EU's external borders. Illegal crossings will not be tolerated. In this regard, the EU and its Member States will take all necessary measures, in accordance with EU and international law. Migrants should not be encouraged to endanger their lives by attempting illegal crossings by land or sea. The Council calls upon the Turkish government and all actors and organisations on the ground to relay this message and counter the dissemination of false information. The EU will continue to actively fight human smuggling.

All Member States, the European Commission and EU Agencies stand ready to strengthen their support to areas under pressure, including through the deployment of FRONTEX's rapid border intervention and additional technical assistance. Member States will swiftly provide the support necessary to ensure the immediate deployment of the relevant teams and assets. The Commission will play an active role in coordinating Member States' support.

The Council welcomes the European Commission's additional support to Greece, notably its commitment to make immediately available EUR 350 million, and the proposal for an additional EUR 350 million to support migration and integrated border management. The Council also welcomes the Commission's efforts to coordinate the rapid delivery of assistance via the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

The Council (Justice and Home Affairs) will meet on 13 March to further develop the EU's response to needs expressed by Greece. The Council and the

Commission will continue to monitor the situation and coordinate the EU action, including through the Integrated Political Crisis Response mechanism and other possible coordinating measures, as appropriate.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[Article – Greta Thunberg urges MEPs to show climate leadership](#)



The climate activist was at the Parliament to discuss the [Climate Law](#), a proposal seeking to commit the EU to [carbon neutrality by 2050](#).

Addressing the committee, Thunberg criticised the proposal as insufficient: “The EU must lead the way. You have the moral obligation to do so and you have a unique economical and political opportunity to become a real climate leader. You, yourselves, declared that we are in a [climate and environment emergency](#). You said this was an existential threat. Now you must prove that you mean it.”

It is vital to follow “ a science-based pathway”. “Anything else is surrender,” she said. “This climate law is surrender because nature doesn’t bargain and you cannot make deals with physics.”

Introducing her, environment committee chair Pascal Canfin said: “Everyone has their role to play in this. I am deeply convinced that what we need is the energy of our young people. No society is transformed, no society can respond to the kind of challenges we face on climate if we do not take on board the energy coming from our young people. And you embody that.”

[Press release – Coronavirus: MEPs to debate current outbreak and EU reaction](#)



They will assess the situation and coordinated national efforts to stop the virus spreading.

The debate is the last point on the agenda of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee meeting on 5 March from 09.30 to 12.30, taking place in the ANTALL building, room 4Q2 in Brussels.

You can follow the debate on [EP Live](#)

Background

COVID-19 originated in Wuhan in the Hubei Province of China. It has since spread beyond Asia and there is [a rising number of people infected with COVID-19 in EU member states](#).

Additional note on attending meetings in Parliament

Since the novel coronavirus COVID-19 has reached Europe, there are new rules on entering the European Parliament and participating in meetings. Read them

[here](#). These measures are temporary. Parliament is monitoring the situation in real time and will adapt its measures accordingly.

[Article – How to close the gender pay gap in the EU \(video\)](#)



Although [gender equality](#) is one of the EU's founding principles and the equal pay for equal work principle was introduced more than 60 years ago, [women in the EU are still paid almost 15% less on average per hour than men](#).

The European Parliament wants to change that: in a [resolution](#) adopted on 30 January, MEPs call on the European Commission to come up with an ambitious gender equality strategy, including measures to tackle the gender pay gap.

The Commission is expected to present a gender equality strategy in March. It has said equal pay for equal work will be the strategy's cornerstone.

Solutions for equal pay: binding targets and transparency measures

Parliament wants binding provisions on the gender pay gap and pay transparency, applying to the public and private sectors, strong enforcement, clear targets and monitoring to measure progress.

MEPs also want the [Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#) to be revised by the end of 2020 and for it to include clear targets for EU countries to reduce the gap over the next five years.

Addressing root causes of unequal pay

In order to tackle a lack of female participation in the labour market, which is one of the reasons behind the gender pay gap, MEPs are calling for greater investment in early education, care services and more [family-friendly working arrangements](#).

They also want to encourage women into taking up better paid jobs through a series of measures, starting with the promotion of science and technology subjects for girls at school, encouraging female entrepreneurs and the possibility of lifelong learning

Reducing differences in pensions

To tackle the [gender pension gap](#), which is on average two times higher than the gender pay gap in the EU, MEPs suggest measures including the introduction of credits for care and minimum pensions.

[Press release – Greta Thunberg to MEPs: “we will not allow you to surrender our future”](#)



Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg on Wednesday attended an extraordinary meeting of the European Parliament's Environment Committee to talk about the European Climate Law.

"The EU must lead the way – you have a moral obligation to do so", Greta Thunberg said on Wednesday before MEPs. "In November 2019, you said that climate change was an existential threat. Now you must prove that you mean it", she added. She said that the new proposal for a climate law published on Wednesday by the European Commission is "a surrender": "Nature does not bargain, and you cannot make deals with physics. We will not allow you to surrender our future", she concluded.

MEPs highlighted the challenge of bringing other continents on board to raise climate ambition before the Glasgow climate conference to take place in November. While most MEPs agreed that the EU needs to raise its own emission reduction goals, several MEPs said that raising the EU's 2030 goals from 40% to 55%, as proposed by the European Parliament, would already be ambitious, but is met with much resistance from member states.

Following the meeting, the Chair of the Committee Pascal Canfin (Renew, FR) said: "Today we hosted Greta Thunberg. To win the battle against climate change, we need the energy of youth. Here in Parliament, and notably in the Environment Committee, we are fighting for climate neutrality in 2050. The climate law that was presented today cannot deceive young Europeans who are mobilised for the climate and all European citizens, and we must therefore succeed."

Greta Thunberg met with EP president David Sassoli before the meeting at 12.30.

A video of the opening statement of Greta Thunberg is available [here](#).