

Remarks by Mário Centeno following the Eurogroup meeting of 7 November 2019

We had a rather promising Eurogroup today. Last month we have managed to land the euro area budgetary instrument project, today I sensed a fresh new impetus to develop other important avenues to further strengthen the euro.

Let me start with our thematic discussion on investment and innovation.

We heard from the Commission that the Euro area underinvests in research and innovation compared to our more dynamic competitors. In particular, expenditure in R&D from the private sector remains low compared to Japan, the US or China.

We all agree this needs to change – and indeed this was a main conclusion from our discussion of the economic situation last month. The question is how.

The Commission argued for a set of national and European initiatives to promote an effective innovation system.

For this discussion, I invited Albert Bravo-Biosca, who is an expert in innovation policy. He emphasised the crucial role of policy design: namely how experimental approaches can improve the efficiency of public policies supporting innovation and maximise their return. He made concrete proposals on how a small portion of public investment, for instance via BICC, and a less fragmented regulatory regime for innovators can make a huge difference.

Our discussion was broader. Innovation fosters productivity and competitiveness of the monetary union, enhancing its resilience and promoting convergence. This was very timely food for thought, also given the need to implement sound policy responses to counter the slowdown.

In its autumn forecast released earlier today, the Commission confirmed this decelerating trend. Pierre Moscovici presented his forecast to ministers and I expect him to say a few words on that in a moment.

On fiscal aspects of the forecast, we will come back next month when we look at the Commission Opinions on the Draft Budgetary Plans.

Another important avenue today is our discussion on strengthening banking union, including the European Deposit Insurance Scheme – also known as EDIS. The Chair of the High Level Working Group informed us about the good progress in their discussions at deputy finance minister level. They have been discussing the features of a steady state banking union, including a fully-fledged EDIS but also others elements such as insolvency laws, cross-border integration, regulatory treatment of sovereign exposures and a safe asset.

Today we also heard a proposal from Germany on banking union. We all welcomed this contribution; it signals a clear commitment to engage with European

partners on a much-needed debate to complete the banking union. This is still a difficult discussion and we will need to move step by step, but this is not different from what we do in Europe in other instances. I sense a new mood in the room and I hope that next month we will be able to agree on a roadmap to start political negotiations on this very important file.

Other elements of our euro area reform are more advanced. And an agreement on implementation details has been brewing at technical level.

On ESM reform, as you may recall, we broadly agreed on Treaty changes in June and Leaders asked us to work on the legal documentation. The aim being to conclude on the full package in December.

Let me give you a state of play on this file. Intense technical work has been underway and some of these legal documents have been agreed and closed. Notably the Amended ESM Guideline for precautionary programs and the common methodology on Debt Sustainability Analysis. The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Commission and the ESM is also almost closed.

Today we focused on the common backstop. Part of the job is already done and work is advanced on the Guideline and Board of Governors resolutions. We will come back to the backstop, including the early introduction, at our next meeting, on 4 December. I am confident that we will finalise the pending issues and conclude the full package.

Finally, we did a short follow up from our October agreement on the euro area budgetary instrument. The legislative acts that set up BICC are underway. The legislative work has started under the Finnish Presidency. Several members asked for a dedicated regulation on the BICC on the grounds that it is a standalone instrument. Of course, this is something to be sorted out in the legislative process. We will work further on the IGA, which was one of the workstreams still open following our October meeting. We'll come back to this next year.

Let me end with a few quick notes.

Today we welcomed Christine Lagarde in her new capacity as President of the ECB. Christine has participated in the Eurogroup in different capacities for many years. She brings a wealth of experience into this new position and I know we can look forward to excellent cooperation.

Still, on the ECB, the Eurogroup gave its unanimous support to Prof. Isabel Schnabel to become member of the ECB Executive Board.

The Council is now expected to adopt tomorrow a formal recommendation to the European Council, who will be in a position to confirm the appointment, after consulting with the European Parliament and the ECB.

On Portugal, following the appointment of the new government, I asked Ricardo Mourinho Felix to present the policy priorities of the new government to the group, as it is usual in these cases.

Finally, we said goodbye to Harris Georgiades today. Recent meetings have

been calmer for Harris than when he joined the Eurogroup in 2013 and that is a reflection of the huge progress that was made in stabilising the Cypriot economy.

Last month we also said goodbye to Pierre Moscovici, but he came back to us for – at least – one more meeting.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[Genocide Network meeting held at Eurojust](#)



□The Hague, 7 November 2019

Suspects of terrorist activities, such as returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), can receive higher sentences if charges of terrorism are combined with acts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide or other offences. To prosecute for all acts committed and achieve an accumulation of charges at national level, better cooperation and coordination between prosecutors with different competences is desirable. Currently, the prosecution of war criminals and terrorists in EU Member States can fall under the responsibility of various prosecutors. The accumulation of charges in this area was for the first time discussed by prosecutors during the 27th meeting of the [Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes](#) (EU Genocide Network), held at Eurojust in The Hague on 6 and 7 November.

Eurojust's President, Mr Ladislav Hamran, said: 'The fight against terrorism is one of the main priorities for Eurojust. If a suspect is not only indicted for terrorist offences, but also tried for active involvement in war crimes or trafficking in human beings, the sentence can be higher, leading to more justice for victims and their loved ones. If we want justice done, we need optimal national coordination among prosecutors competent for different crime areas. Prosecutors need access to all sources of evidence, including evidence collected by UN bodies, military forces in the battlefield, non-governmental organisations and other partners.'

Finnish State Prosecutor, Mr Tom Laitinen, Chair of today's meeting, said: 'Many countries are struggling to find a way to bring to justice the perpetrators of horrendous crimes committed across the globe. In this struggle, it is important to think "outside the box". We have to be inventive and find new ways to ensure that justice is done, not forgetting the rule of law. The discussions during today's meeting show that much is already being accomplished, and that there is a common ambition and will to hold the

perpetrators of these crimes responsible for their actions. This is a good basis for all the work that lies ahead.'

The meeting of the Genocide Network focused on existing jurisprudence in various EU countries and different judicial practices to see how cooperation and exchange of information could ensure criminal responsibility of perpetrators by an effective accumulation of charges. Terrorist groups can also commit war crimes and other crimes during an armed conflict. Suspects charged with terrorism are often also involved in other criminal offences, such as money laundering, trafficking in human beings, slavery or rape. Interaction between different sets of law is required to lead to a more effective charging of suspects. To avoid prosecuting just one angle, different public prosecution offices need to coordinate to reach cumulative prosecution for war crimes, other crimes and terrorism offences.

With an increase in the number of FTFs who might return to EU countries, we need to use this approach and prosecute for all criminal acts committed to ensure their criminal responsibility, thus bringing justice to victims and reach a higher level of sentencing.

A high-level delegation from the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), UN IIIM, ICC, as well as representatives from Member States, Europol, the academic world, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and prosecutors participated in the meeting.

The Genocide Network provides a forum for practitioners to exchange information on ongoing cases and share expertise and best practice for the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of core international crimes. The Genocide Network is also dedicated to raising awareness of the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, thus demonstrating the EU's commitment to fighting impunity of suspected war criminals.

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[Article – Climate change: scientists warn over impact on food security and oceans](#)



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. In August, it presented a [report on climate change and land](#) and in September one on the [oceans and cryosphere in a changing climate](#). The reports are the latest scientific input for the UN climate summit COP25 to be held in Madrid in December.

The scientists behind the reports presented their findings to Parliament's environment, development and fisheries committees on Wednesday 6 November.

Food production and climate change a two-way street

Professor Jim Skea told MEPs climate change was exacerbating land degradation, such as erosion and pollution, which in turn affects infrastructure and people's livelihoods. [Better land management](#) can help tackle climate change but it must be complemented by other action, he added.

Dr Jean-François Soussana noted that the food system accounts for between a fifth and a third of all greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans. At the same time, climate change affects food security through declining crops of wheat and maize. He warned that in future the stability of our food supply would decrease further as the magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events increases.

Strengthening cooperation in the fight against IP crime

November 07, 2019 [About the EUIPO](#)

Strengthening cooperation in the fight against IP crime



The EU's law enforcement agency [Europol](#) and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) have today formally signed an agreement to further increase their cooperation in fighting infringements of intellectual property rights, both online and offline.

Europol and the EUIPO have been collaborating since 2013 on a range of issues. In 2016, they stepped up their cooperation to create the [Intellectual Property Crime Coordinated Coalition](#) (IPC3), a specialist unit within Europol

funded by the EUIPO.

Since its inception, the IPC3 unit has coordinated and supported cross-border operations aimed at tackling IP crime across the EU. The unit's operations have spanned sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food and drinks, pesticides, counterfeit luxury goods, clothing, electronics, car parts, toys and illegal streaming. In total, counterfeit goods valued at over EUR 980 million have been seized.

In addition, over a hundred organised crime gangs have been identified and/or dismantled as a result of the unit's work. The investigations coordinated by the IPC3 unit have also linked IP crime to the health and safety of consumers, drug trafficking, tax evasion, fraud and terror financing.