

Article – Sakharov Prize 2019: the nominees



Alexei Navalny, a Russian lawyer and political activist. In 2011, he was arrested for the first time for his role in a rally outside the State Duma. He finished second in the 2013 Moscow mayoral election. In 2017, he published a report attacking political corruption and criticising Vladimir Putin and his political allies. This sparked anti-corruption rallies in many Russian cities, which led to the arrest of more than 1,000 demonstrators, including Navalny's. The authorities prevented him from running in the 2018 presidential elections. Navalny was jailed three times in 2018 and 2019 for

violating Russia's strict protest laws.

Marielle Franco, a Brazilian political activist and human rights defender who was brutally killed in March 2018. Franco, a black bisexual woman born in a favela, was known for defending the human rights of young black people, women, favela residents and LGBTI people. She also frequently reported extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations committed by police officers and state security forces. Her case remains open.

Claudelize Silva dos Santos, a Brazilian environmentalist and human rights defender who became an activist after the brutal killing of her brother and sister-in-law for their efforts to combat deforestation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest. She is known for her stance against illegal lumberers, ranchers and coal producers operating in the Praia-Alta Piranheira region, a remote Amazon settlement.

Chief Raoni, an emblematic figure of the fight against deforestation in the Amazon. He is one of the great leaders of the Kayapo people, settled in the heart of the Amazon, and has dedicated his life to the fight for indigenous rights and the preservation of the Amazon.

Ilham Tohti, an Uyghur economist fighting for the rights of China's Uyghur minority. He is a proponent of dialogue and advocate for the implementation of regional autonomy laws in China. In 2014, he was sentenced to life imprisonment on separatism-related charges. Despite this, he remains a voice of moderation and reconciliation. Since 2017, more than one million Uyghurs have been detained in a network of internment camps.

Jean Wyllys, a Brazilian human rights defender, journalist, lecturer and politician. In 2010, he was elected federal deputy (PSOL party), being the first gay activist to win a seat in Congress. During his two mandates, he tabled laws on equal civil marriage, legalisation of abortion, regulation of sex work, gender identity law, humanised childbirth, legalisation of marijuana and schools free from prejudice. In January 2019, despite his re-election, he did not take office and left Brazil due to death threats. He lives in Europe and travels the world denouncing human rights violations in his country and the regressive policies of the far-right government of President Jair Bolsonaro.

The Restorers, a group of five students from Kenya – Stacy Owino, Cynthia Otieno, Purity Achieng, Mascrine Atieno and Ivy Akinyi – who have developed i-Cut, an app helping girls deal with female genital mutilation (FGM). The app makes it easier for young women to seek help, find a rescue centre or report the procedure to the authorities. FGM is internationally recognised as a human rights violation. It has been performed on more than 200 million girls and women alive today. Each year more than three million girls are at risk.

Next steps

Based on the official nominations, the foreign affairs and development committees vote on a shortlist of three finalists. Afterwards the Conference

of Presidents – consisting of the President of the European Parliament and the leaders of the political groups – selects the laureate.

[#EESCplenary: EESC president Luca Jahier and European Parliament vice-president Klára Dobrev together for a stronger, safer and happier Europe](#)



The September plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) hosted a debate where the Committee's president, Luca Jahier, reiterated his priorities for the future of Europe and the European Parliament vice-president, Klára Dobrev, presented the institution's focus for the 2019-2024 legislature.

The EESC president, Luca Jahier, addressed the European Parliament vice-president, Klára Dobrev, and underlined the importance of being closer to European citizens, strengthening democracy and increasing civic participation in EU policy-making, while at the same time demonstrating that Europe is

committed to delivering results.

“The EESC has always had a clear position towards the European Project: we need more and better Europe and we will support any action towards that objective, but we need to demonstrate to the European citizens that Europe delivers!,” he declared. “Citizens have to be at the core of the institutions and without civil society, democracy remains fragile. Our members are the real bridge between citizens and EU institutions,” he added.

Ms Dobrev was pleased to note that the Committee and the European Parliament were on the same wavelength. “We have to realise that our short political mandate will depend on our long political commitment. We need to listen to European citizens and this is a common task of all institutions. We need to hear their voice, they are asking for more security and better living conditions,” she said.

Mr Jahier stressed that a close and structured cooperation among all EU institutions was essential. “The European Parliament and the EESC should work more together. Our relations are important because the Parliament represents the voice of the EU citizens, whereas the Committee is the voice of civil society,” he indicated.

Looking ahead, **Mr Jahier** maintained that “the European Parliament will play a key role in the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe and this initiative should include civil society and the EESC as they provide clear added value. Together we are stronger and we can deliver better,” he concluded.

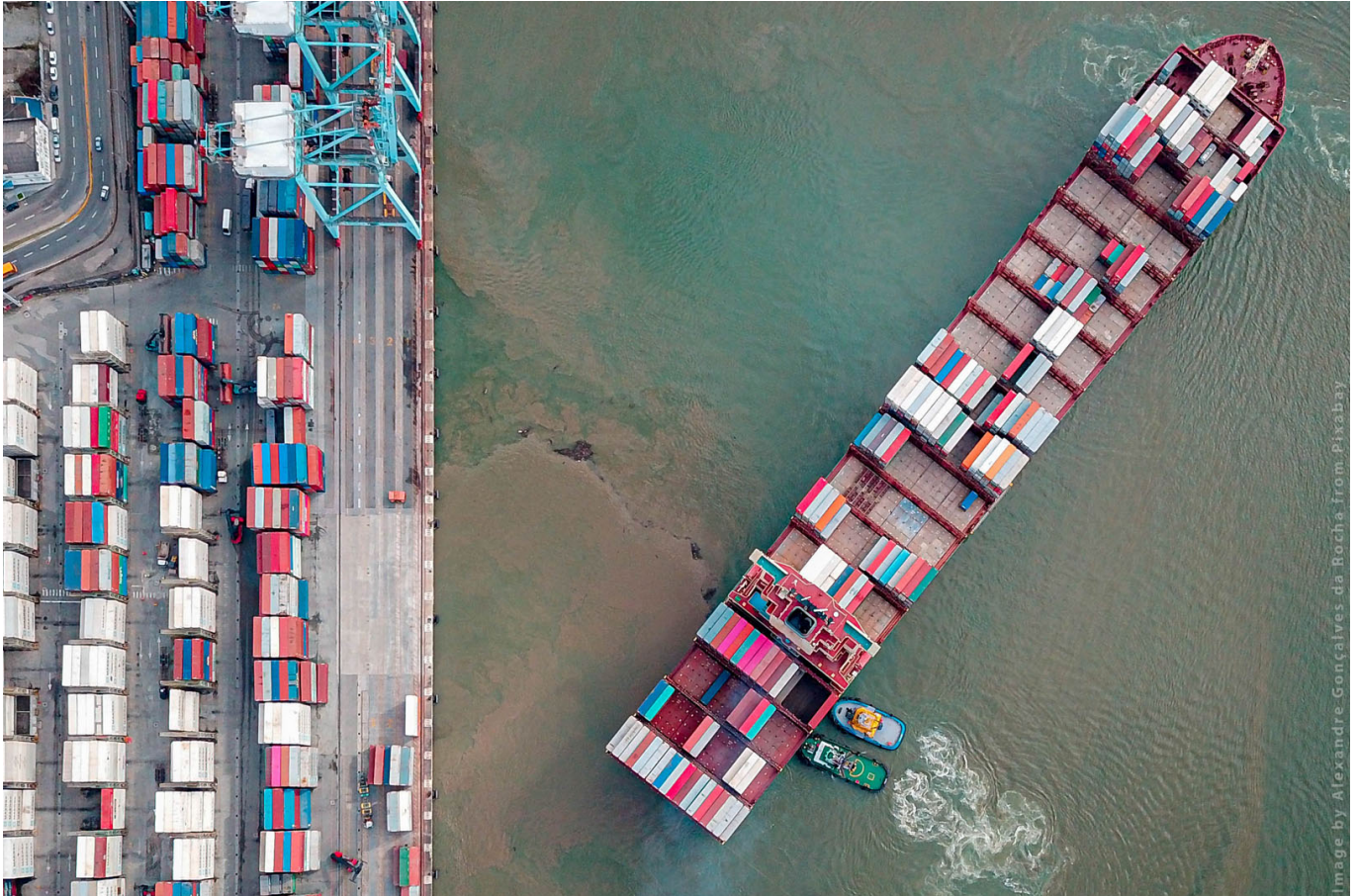
Ms Dobrev highlighted that the latest European elections had a record turnout. The European people sent a message that created confidence in the European institutions, because Eurosceptics parties did not take over, but also responsibility. “The focus now is on the citizens and a strong Europe means a strong European economy but also a strong social Europe,” she added. “Our priorities will be deepening the economic and monetary union, dealing with unemployment and tackling the social impact of climate change.”

Referring to cooperation among EU institutions, **Ms Dobrev** stressed that transparency and inclusivity were essential as well as a more structured approach to working with civil society. “Discussion is the central point for good and transparent governance and structured cooperation is a fundamental partner in decision-making. It’s the system of checks and balances,” she said. “The more structured our cooperation is, the more chances we have for it to be successful. We have to shape Europe together, not only in conferences and public events, but in our daily work, to help achieve a better and happier Europe,” she concluded.

The presidents of the Committee’s groups also took the floor. On the side of the employers, **Jacek Krawczyk** said that European values needed to be continuously defended and protected and that it was important to meet the expectations of the citizens. For the workers, **Oliver Röpke** argued that the main objective was to regain the trust of the people in the European project and in the work of the institutions. Finally, on behalf of the Diversity

Europe Group, **Arno Metzler** pointed to the importance of having an open exchange and a good collaboration with the European Parliament.

[Article – How to manage globalisation: EU responses](#)



The benefits of globalisation in the EU

The EU is [one of the largest players in international trade](#), next to the US and China, with EU exports representing more than 15% of global exports.

More than 36 million jobs in the EU depend on exports beyond its borders. On average, every €1 billion exports to non-EU countries supports more than 13,000 EU jobs.

International trade means more competition, which benefits consumers in terms of lower prices and more choice. The benefits to EU consumers amount to about €600 a year per person.

Find out [more about the benefits of globalisation in Europe](#)

Managing the negative impact on employment

Globalisation also creates challenges in terms of employment such as job losses and relocation.

In the EU, the most fragile sectors are textiles, clothing, footwear and leather, basic metals and fabricated metal products and manufacturing industries, which mostly offer low-skilled jobs.

To reduce this negative impact of globalisation, the EU created the [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund](#) in 2006. The purpose of this emergency fund is to help workers who have lost jobs because of globalisation.

EASO's 2020 Work Programme adopted by EASO Management Board

EU+ Member States repeat recognition of turnaround in management and internal control systems.

On 24-25 September 2019, the 33rd meeting of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Management Board was held at the Agency's Headquarters in Malta to take stock of the latest developments in support of the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

The Management Board formally **adopted the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2020-2022, including the 2020 Work Programme and Budget**. This adoption paves the way for EASO to continue ramping up its already substantial support for Member States' asylum authorities, most notably in terms of operational assistance. The adoption of the 2020 EASO Budget is subject to the overall adoption of the EU's budget for 2020 by legislators in Brussels.

The Agency is currently providing **more operational support than ever before** and is **now active on the ground in Malta, Cyprus, Italy and Greece**, with hundreds of deployed officials, including Member State experts. EASO has also taken on a central role in coordinating the processing of individuals arriving on rescue boats in Malta and Italy over the past few months, and the relocation to Member States who have volunteered to take responsibility for their cases. This ad hoc disembarkation and relocation was discussed by a group of EU Home Affairs ministers in Malta on Monday, 23 September, and will be further discussed at the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg on 8 October.

During the meeting, Member States again also **highlighted the intensive work that EASO's new management has taken to dramatically strengthen governance and internal control systems**. In just over a year, the Agency has already implemented 79% of its Governance Action Plan, which aims at ensuring the highest standards of good governance and financial responsibility. As part of this, an ongoing recruitment drive is underway which is enabling EASO to meet

the increased requirements for its support by Member States in different areas of asylum procedures.

EASO also updated the Management Board on the **latest asylum trends in the EU+**, where to date 2019 has seen a moderate 11% increase in asylum applications, although levels remain significantly lower than during the 2015-2016 migration crisis. The Agency continues to work with national authorities to ensure resilient systems that can absorb sudden increases, and notes that a fair reform of the CEAS remains the best way to accomplish this.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu.

[Article – Tanja Fajon: ‘If we lose Schengen, we will lose the European project’](#)



Six Schengen countries – Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway and Sweden – have had internal border checks in place due to exceptional circumstances since 2015, although the current limit is two years.

Parliament wants to allow the temporary reintroduction of border controls only as a measure of last resort. MEPs want a revision of the current rules to reduce the initial period for border controls from six months to two months and to limit any extension to a maximum period of one year, rather than the current maximum limit of two years.

Parliament formulated its position on the revision of the Schengen rules in a [resolution](#) adopted on 4 April 2019, but negotiations with the Council did not result in an agreement. Following the European elections in May, the Parliaments' position needed to be reconfirmed. This happened on 24 September when the [civil liberties committee voted in favour](#) of starting negotiations again. Before the talks can resume, MEPs will need to support it.

Learn more in our interview with [report](#) author [Tanja Fajon](#), a Slovenian member of the S&D group.

A temporary suspension of the Schengen rules has been in place in some Schengen countries for more than three years, although the limit is two. Why was this allowed to happen?

Six countries in the Schengen area have extended interior border controls beyond three years. They are using different legal grounds to extend them because there are, I would say, some grey zones in the current legislation

The current rules are clearly ambiguous. What do you see as the main areas that should be adapted and why?

We need to have very clear conditions under which countries can temporarily reintroduce border controls. We need stricter safeguards to make sure that it is really seen as a last resort.

Which circumstances would justify internal border controls?

Extraordinary situations, like major sport events or migration flows, as we experienced some years ago. Nowadays, there are no foreseeable serious threats that justify internal border controls, contrary to the claims of some EU governments.

The six Schengen countries applying internal border controls have said they will extend them: is it justified?

These prolongations are not justified and there is no evidence to prove they are. Over the last few years, national governments have pushed the limits of the current rules, extending controls for political purposes rather than out of necessity.

What are the main areas of disagreement with the European Commission and Council?

The Council has showed no flexibility in negotiations and was not willing to compromise. Despite the agreement, the main differences are what the safeguards are and the conditions for these prolongations.

I think that some Schengen countries do not wish to reform the rules since they benefit from the status quo. This is highly dangerous.

If we lose Schengen, we will lose the European project. The current situation damages our economies and makes our lives less convenient.