

Plenary round-up – June II 2021

During the June II 2021 plenary session in Brussels, Parliament continued to debate and adopt programmes financed under the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027, specifically this session in the areas of regional development, with the Common Provisions Regulation, European Territorial Cooperation Regulation, European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund all finalised. Important debates on Council and European Commission statements were held, in particular on the preparation of the European Council meeting on 24-25 June 2021 and the relaunch of the Malta Declaration on external aspects of migration, on the urgent need to complete nominations for the full functioning of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, and on the future of EU-Swiss relations. Members also debated and adopted, inter alia, the proposed European Climate Law, the Public Sector Loan Facility, and discussed the Commission's 2020 rule of law report. António Guterres, the recently re-elected Secretary-General of the United Nations, addressed Parliament in a formal sitting.

Common Provisions Regulation

During a joint debate on cohesion policy, Members debated and approved an early second-reading agreement (without a vote, as no amendments were submitted) on the [Common Provisions Regulation](#) for 2021-2027, which sets out new, simplified financial rules for eight EU funds in the light of the EU's policy objectives for a greener, smarter, more social and connected Europe. Parliament has succeeded in raising co-financing rates for the regions, increasing resources earmarked for sustainable urban development, and ensuring the rules better reflect the EU's new policy objectives.

European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund

During the joint debate, Members also approved, at early second reading (without a vote), the agreement reached during negotiations on the proposed revised regulation on the [European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund](#). The compromise agreed between Parliament and Council follows Parliament's focus on lower thematic concentration and greater funding for sustainable urban development. Funding should now be available for job creation and digital connectivity, with a focus on renewables under the Cohesion Fund. With around one third of the entire EU budget dedicated to reducing regional disparities and promoting cohesion during this seven-year MFF period, the Regional Development Fund seeks to support infrastructure and energy efficiency investment, as well as providing economic assistance for small businesses, while the Cohesion Fund should encourage environmental projects and transport infrastructure in the least-developed regions. In line with the EU's climate ambition, fossil fuel and landfill-related investments will be ineligible for funding.

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)

The third item debated during the joint debate was the revision of the regulation on [European Territorial Cooperation](#), ('Interreg'). Parliament approved the agreement on the compromise reached between the co-legislators on the changes at early second reading (also without a vote). Although Parliament has successfully secured the reintroduction of maritime border cooperation, as well as increased co- and pre-financing for Interreg programmes, the increased €8.05 billion budget for cross-border, outermost region and inter-regional cooperation nonetheless falls short of Parliament's initial ambitions. The proposal is expected to launch a revamped cooperation programme, removing barriers to development and fostering innovation and joint strategies to help border regions find solutions to the issues they face in common, emphasising their proximity rather than their location in different countries.

European Climate Law

Members debated and adopted the compromise agreed with the Council on the proposed [European Climate Law](#). The agreement reflects Parliament's consistent demands for a higher net greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2030, particularly as it states that the EU should advance the volume of

reductions and removals of greenhouse gases, possibly to a net reduction of 57 %, by 2030. Achieving climate neutrality by 2050, however, is going to take concerted effort. The EU has proposed measures that should both assist the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and ensure that climate ambitions become reality. The European Green Deal provides an action plan for these efforts, and the European Climate Law creates the legal framework underpinning these measures.

Public Sector Loan Facility under the Just Transition Mechanism

Members debated and approved the provisional agreement on a [Public Sector Loan Facility](#), which incorporates many of Parliament's demands, including beneficiaries' compliance with EU values, and a greater share of the loans going to the poorest regions. The Public Sector Loan Facility is the third pillar of the EU Just Transition Mechanism, part of the InvestEU scheme (a key financial element of the EU Green Deal), which aims at mobilising €25-30 billion in public investment through grants and loans in 2021-2027.

Northwest Atlantic fisheries management

Parliament approved a provisional agreement with the Council setting out EU compliance with the conservation and enforcement measures for the [Northwest Atlantic fisheries](#). Under the agreement, EU fishing vessels will respect conservation measures when fishing outside national waters in the region. These include seasonal closure and bans on bottom-fishing in some locations. The measures aim at encouraging realistic measures to protect endangered species, such as the Greenland shark, as well as to ensure responsible management of cod fisheries.

EU Ombudsman's Statute

The European Ombudsman is the EU's independent guardian of accountability and transparency, ensuring EU institutions adhere to principles of good administration and respect EU citizens' rights. In its 27 years' existence, the role has developed considerably, leading to a need to revise the underpinning Statute, last amended in 2008. Following Parliament's debate and vote to adopt a new [statute for the European Ombudsman](#) during the June I plenary session, and the Council's subsequent consent, the plenary formally adopted the revised European Parliament Regulation governing the role of the Ombudsman. This completes the procedure, begun in 2019, to further strengthen and improve the Ombudsman's role and effectiveness.

Opening of trilogue negotiations

Members [confirmed](#) the mandate for negotiations from the Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) Committee on the proposal for a regulation on the extension of the term of Community plant variety rights for the species asparagus and the species groups flower bulbs, woody small fruits and woody ornamentals. The committee can therefore launch negotiations as of now.

This 'at a glance' note is intended to review some of the highlights of the plenary part-session, and notably to follow up on key dossiers identified by EPRS. It does not aim to be exhaustive. For more detailed information on specific files, please see other EPRS products, notably our 'EU legislation in progress' briefings, and the plenary [minutes](#).

