

## Article – Plenary highlights: Sakharov laureate, EU farm policy, digital services, Brexit



On Thursday, European Parliament President David Sassoli announced that the 2020 [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#) will be awarded to the Belarusian democratic opposition. The prize comes at a time of political crisis in Belarus after disputed presidential elections on 9 August led to an uprising, followed by a brutal crackdown on demonstrators by the regime.

On Wednesday, Parliament said the EU must comprehensively [review its relations with Belarus](#). MEPs called for sanctions and new, free and fair elections.

On Friday, MEPs adopted their position on [EU farm policy reform post-2022](#), calling for it to be more flexible, sustainable, and crisis-resilient, so that farmers can continue to deliver food security across the EU.

Members spelled out their priorities for [regulations on digital services](#), including [online platforms](#) and marketplaces, and called for a binding mechanism to tackle illegal content online in three reports adopted on Tuesday. The recommendations will feed into the Commission's proposal for a Digital Services Act, expected by the end of the year.

Parliament also paved the way for future artificial intelligence (AI) legislation on Tuesday, with a further three reports outlining [how the EU can best regulate AI](#). The reports focus on ethics, responsibility and intellectual property rights.

In a [debate on the outcome of last week's EU summit](#), MEPs stressed the importance of reaching an agreement on [future EU-UK relations](#) that does not compromise EU interests and values.

Parliament wants new rules to halt and reverse [EU-driven global deforestation](#). In a vote on Thursday, MEPs called [for better measures](#) to fight illegal logging and more checks to stop unsustainably produced wood and products that contribute to forest loss from entering the EU market.

The [Covid-19 crisis](#) has highlighted inequalities in access to education in the EU. On Thursday, MEPs called for the digital gap in education to be closed. They urged the Commission to invest in connectivity and equipment, criticised proposed Council cuts to programmes supporting education and training and reiterated their calls to triple the budget for Erasmus+.

At the opening of the plenary session on Monday, President Sassoli led a minute of silence to pay tribute to Samuel Paty, a history and geography teacher murdered by an Islamist terrorist in France. He paid tribute to all victims of terrorism and those who work to uphold freedom of expression.