

UPDATE – Media advisory – Video conference of ministers of justice, 9 October 2020



Indicative programme

New timing: 8.30 – Doorstep by minister Christine Lambrecht in [live streaming](#)

At the end of the meeting (+/- 13.30) – press conference in [live streaming](#).

Arrangements for the press conference

Please note that there will be **no physical press conference**. **EU accredited journalists will be able to ask questions remotely** provided they have registered in advance.

You can **register** and have the possibility to ask questions remotely through [this link](#). Journalists who already registered for previous justice videoconferences do not need to register again.

Deadline for registration: Friday, 9 October 2020, 12:00.

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Photos and videos from the event](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Press release – Bulgaria: MEPs calls for EU values to be fully and unconditionally respected



In a [resolution](#) adopted with 358 votes in favour, 277 against and 56 abstentions, MEPs express their “unequivocal support for the people of Bulgaria in their legitimate demands and aspirations for justice, transparency, accountability and democracy”. They condemn the police violence and “disproportionate intervention”, in particular any use of force against women and children and journalists, as well as the “unlawful and excessive audits” into private businesses that support the protests.

European values under threat

The text notes a “significant deterioration of respect for the principles of rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights, including the independence of the judiciary, separation of powers, the fight against corruption and freedom of the media”. It focuses also on persisting systemic issues in the judiciary, especially the lack of a framework to hold the Supreme Judicial Council and the Prosecutor General accountable.

Other concerns include:

- constitutional reform, which should be in line with international standards
- possible changes to electoral law, close to the next parliamentary elections
- legislation adopted too hastily
- investigations into high-level corruption without tangible results
- the state of fundamental rights, e.g. as regards hate speech, gender and sexual discrimination, the rights of Romani people and asylum seekers.

Media freedom and EU funds

MEPs condemn smear campaigns and violence against journalists. They are deeply concerned by the deterioration in media freedom, transparency and the lack of diversity in media ownership, and worried that EU funds are allegedly

more likely to be given to government-friendly outlets. They highlight the need for stricter controls on EU spending and want concerns over taxpayers' money being used to enrich those close to the ruling party to be addressed immediately.

Quote and debate

"The rule of law means separation of powers, but allegations of judicial corruption and politically-driven prosecutions proliferate. It means media freedom, but we witness the government exerting increasing influence on public media and applying clientelism when it comes to private media. It means upholding civil rights, but we are witnessing police brutality and the suppression of the rights of minorities", said rapporteur [Juan Fernando López Aguilar](#) (S&D, ES).

Catch up with the recorded debate (Monday, 5 October) [here](#) – around the 19.39 mark.

Background

Protestors in Bulgaria have called for Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and chief prosecutor Ivan Geshev to resign, as citizens grow increasingly more frustrated over systemic political corruption.

[Call for Evidence on the review of transparency requirements for equity and non-equity instruments](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority has published a Call for Evidence (CfE) in the context of the review of transparency requirements for equity and non-equity instruments. The purpose of this exercise is to gather input and views on practical issues related to the application of RTS 1 and RTS 2 that market participants have identified since the application of MiFID II/ MiFIR. ESMA would also like to receive feedback on any technical issue and policy gap that market participants have encountered at implementation level, as well as unclear provisions.

Respondents are invited to provide their suggestions and, where possible, related solutions by filling in the [ESMA template](#).

ESMA will consider all responses received by 31 October 2020.

Press release – Human rights breaches in Eritrea, Nicaragua and Saudi Arabia



Eritrea, notably the case of Dawit Isaak

Parliament demands that all prisoners of conscience in Eritrea, notably Swedish citizen Dawit Isaak and several other journalists detained since September 2001, are immediately and unconditionally released. It calls on the Eritrean authorities to provide information immediately regarding Mr Isaak's whereabouts and well-being, and to grant him access to representatives of the EU, its member states and Sweden, in order to establish his healthcare needs and any other support he might need.

Members also condemn, in the strongest terms, Eritrea's systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations and urge the country's government to put an end to detentions of the opposition, journalists, religious leaders and innocent civilians.

They further appeal to the African Union, as an EU partner that has explicitly committed to uphold the universal values of democracy and human rights, to step up its activity in relation to the regrettable situation in Eritrea.

The full text, adopted by 663 votes in favour, 19 against and 13 abstentions,

will be available [here](#). (08.10.2020)

The 'Foreign Agents' law in Nicaragua

MEPs condemn the attempts to adopt the unconstitutional law on the regulation of foreign agents, the special law on cybercrime and the law on hate crimes, and call on the national assembly of Nicaragua to reject them.

The text highlights that, if approved, these laws will provide Daniel Ortega's government with a new repressive tool to silence not only its critics, but any individual or organisation that receives foreign funding. This will, in turn, lead to more people falling victim to the current state-run repressive campaign and will intensify the broader climate of intimidation and threats, "leading to unacceptable human rights breaches in Nicaragua", says the resolution.

Parliament requests, in view of continued grave abuses and violations of human rights, that the Council quickly add new individuals and entities to its sanctions list, including President Daniel Ortega and Vice-President Rosario Murillo, whilst ensuring that this does not have a negative impact on the Nicaraguan people. It also calls for a European Parliament delegation to be sent to Nicaragua as soon as possible in order to resume monitoring the situation in the country, and urges the authorities to allow it unhindered entry and access to all interlocutors and facilities.

The full text, adopted by 609 votes in favour, 21 against and 64 abstentions, will be available [here](#). (08.10.2020)

The situation of Ethiopian migrants in detention centres in Saudi Arabia

Parliament strongly condemns the ongoing ill-treatment of Ethiopian migrants and the violations of their human rights in Saudi Arabia, notably in detention centres. Since April this year, according to Human Rights Watch reports, around 30 000 Ethiopians, including pregnant women and children, are being arbitrarily detained in the country under horrific conditions after having been forcibly expelled from northern Yemen by Houthi authorities.

MEPs urge the Saudi authorities to immediately release all these detainees, prioritising those in the most vulnerable situations, including women and children. The Saudi side must also ensure that every person entering the country from neighbouring war-torn Yemen is allowed to do so safely and is transferred to an appropriate reception centre that meets international standards.

The text finally urges Saudi Arabia to immediately end torture and other ill-treatment in detention, and to provide appropriate mental and physical care to all.

For all the details, the full resolution will be available [here](#) (08.10.2020). It was adopted by 413 votes in favour, 49 against and 233 abstentions.

Press release – Parliament calls on member states to fully exploit the European Youth Guarantee



In a resolution adopted on Thursday with 574 votes to 77 and 43 abstentions, the European Parliament urges member states to ensure that young people who register for the Youth Guarantee schemes are offered “good-quality, varied and tailored jobs, training or internships”.

With the youth unemployment rate at [17.6% in the EU in August 2020](#) (up from 14.9% before the COVID-19 crisis) and expected to continue rising, Parliament calls for more funds to strengthen the Youth Guarantee scheme for 2021-2027.

MEPs deplore that [in July the European Council significantly reduced](#), from 15 to 10%, [ESF+ resources under shared management](#) earmarked to support action to boost youth employment, which is “contradictory to the Union’s ambition to invest in young people”.

Ban unpaid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships

Parliament condemns the practice of unpaid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships, which exploit young people’s work and violate their rights. It calls on the Commission to table a legal framework for an effective and enforceable ban on these practices.

Tackling discrimination to ensure no one is left behind

MEPs stress that the Youth Guarantee should be embedded in a coherent set of social and welfare policies to ensure that the various subgroups of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) have access

to it. “Any discrimination experienced by young people on any grounds must be actively combatted in Youth Guarantee schemes”, they say.

Binding instrument

MEPs deplore the voluntary nature of the Youth Guarantee (currently a Council recommendation) and call on the Commission to propose a Youth Guarantee instrument that is binding for all member states.

Background

Since 2013, the Youth Guarantee has helped 24 million young people to get training, education or work. In July 2020, the Commission [proposed to extend its coverage](#) to include youngsters under 30, helping even more people to make the green and digital transitions.

Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee contributes significantly to the ongoing implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

In July 2020, Parliament endorsed an overall allocation of [€145 million for the Youth Employment Initiative](#) that supports young people who live in regions where the youth unemployment rate is above 25%.