

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Bolivia

Recent events in Bolivia where irregularities in the elections, as demonstrated by the audit of the Organisation of the American States, led to popular protest, to calls from various sectors of society such as the trade unions, armed forces, police, and key political actors for President Morales to leave power and finally to the resignation of the President, are putting in question the country's stability and social peace.

It is of vital importance to return to constitutional normality so that the rule of law, democratic principles and civil rights are respected. In this context, the European Union supports an institutional solution that allows for a caretaking interim leadership to prepare for new elections, and to avoid a power vacuum, which could have dire consequences for the entire country. The immediate objective of the transitional authorities should be to ensure peace and security in the country and bring it to swift elections, where the will of the people can be freely expressed.

We urge all political and social actors to support such an institutional path and work for a peaceful reconciliation. Violence and political retribution are unacceptable and will only aggravate the social divide. We call on the law enforcement bodies to guarantee security for the Bolivian people, while respecting human rights at all times. Bolivia's future stability depends on it upholding democratic values and rule of law, while keeping the country united and inclusive.

The European Union has been a major cooperation partner of Bolivia and will continue supporting the strengthening of its democratic institutions and its economic and social development.

The EESC conference in Zagreb: tackling demographic issues will be crucial for the EU's survival



On 14 November, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) held a conference on demographic challenges in the European Union. As announced by the Croatian government, demographic revitalisation will feature high on the agenda of the upcoming Croatian presidency of the Council of the EU.

Opening the conference, the EESC president **Luca Jahier** drew attention to some alarming indicators showing a rapid decrease in the EU population. These indicators suggest that by the end of the century the EU's share of the total world population will be a meagre 4.1%. Half of the countries in the EU currently have a negative birth rate and life expectancy is rising, which necessarily leads to the ageing and shrinking of the working-age and reproductive-age population. As a result, by 2060, for every elderly person there will be two people of working age, compared to four currently.

This will change the position of the EU in the global economic and geopolitical environment and affect its influence in the world. The EU needs to address this challenge if it wants to maintain its role as a global player in the future. Therefore, I deem it very important that this issue features on the agenda of the future Croatian presidency, Mr Jahier said, adding that he was happy that the Commission had for the first time included demographics among the core priorities of its next five year mandate and nominated a vice-president for demography and democracy, Croatia's Dubravka Šuica.

The Croatian Minister for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Issues, **Vesna Bedeković**, gave the opening speech on behalf of the Croatian government.

Demography needs to be put in the focus of EU policies in order to preserve the development of all Member States. The birth rate currently stands at 1.59 on average and almost half of the children in the EU are the firstborn in their families. This is why Croatia has recognised demographic revitalisation as a key question for its further development, Ms Bedeković said.

She added that her ministry was currently preparing a strategic document that will introduce a series of measures aimed precisely at demographic revitalisation.

Some of these measures have already been implemented. The amount of maternity allowance for the second six months of maternity leave has been increased and a further rise is expected meaning that more than 60% of parents will be paid their full salary until their child's first birthday. Another measure passed prolongs the length of service of parents by six months for every child born or adopted for whom they had taken maternity or paternity leave. This will increase their pensions by 2% once they retire.

Effective measures supporting family policies and recognising the potential of migration as a remedy for labour shortage on Europe's labour markets are some of the possible solutions to demographic challenges, the EESC president said. Fostering intergenerational solidarity and fighting age discrimination on labour markets in order to use the potential of older workers to help spur the growth of Europe's economy could also be among the solutions.

On top of negative birth rates and an ageing population, the countries of central, eastern and southern Europe also face increased emigration of people, particular younger and well-educated people, to wealthier Member States.

Although free movement of workers within the EU, a fundamental principle of

the Union and one of its greatest achievements, should ideally encourage a “brain exchange” among Member States, their social and economic differences make the reality much different.

According to the figures shown at the conference, there were 17 million people moving within the EU-28 in 2017. Most of them looked for a job in the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy and France, whereas most of movers arrived from Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal. Departure of workers also became a burning issue in Croatia.

A total of 175 135 people have left Croatia in the past five years, compared to just 79 753 who immigrated into Croatia. Since 2011, 105 103 more people died than were born. Every year the number of primary and secondary school students drops, Croatian demographer **Stjepan Šterc** said at the meeting.

Today Croatia does not have a single positive demographic indicator. Demographically speaking, we are disappearing, yet we have no national development strategy, Mr Šterc said.

*When such a large number of people emigrate, a country faces an existential risk. This is a universal problem for all eastern European countries, said the EESC member and Croatian trade unionist **Vilim Ribić**. Croatia does not implement any active economic measures that could respond to this problem. Measures introducing allowances in the framework of pro-natalist policies may result in more children being born, but after we invest in their education, these children will leave, to the benefit of the richest countries and at the expense of the poorest ones. This calls for urgent and strong action. Without adequate government economic policies, nothing is possible.*

Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, associate professor at the Institute of Statistics and Demography, Warsaw School of Economics, said the statistics showed that the biggest decline in population by 2080 was expected precisely in the countries of central, eastern and southern Europe.

The EESC president stressed the need to reduce economic disparities among Member States as a precondition for the political sustainability of the European project and of all the benefits this project has already brought. He said that tackling demographic challenges could be seen as an opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of the European economy.

The EESC member **Marina Škrabalo**, head of Croatia’s NGO Solidarna, said demographic challenges represented a chance to create a society built on democratic values that are enshrined in the foundations of the EU vision, such as the values of freedom, security, peace and sustainable development.

How can we create a society in which people want to live and raise their children? Ms Škrabalo asked, stressing the importance of the UN 2030 sustainable development goals, gender equality, proactive measures of pro-immigration policies and the European pillar of social rights, which secures some key rights and social protection for citizens.

We can build societies in which people come first and in which administrative

structures are there to create conditions for development. Demographic challenges are a chance to confirm our democratic model, Ms Škrabalo concluded.

At the request of the Croatian presidency of the EU, the EESC will draft an opinion on *Demographic challenges in the EU in light of economic and development inequalities*. The rapporteur will be **Stéphane Buffetaut**, who was also one of the speakers at the conference.

Human trafficking ring targeted in the UK and Romania

15 November 2019



In a synchronised joint action by law enforcement officers from the UK and Romania, 17 suspects were taken into custody in the UK and one suspect was taken into custody in Romania. The suspects from the UK are alleged to have participated in modern slavery, controlling prostitution, and committing drug and firearm offences. The Romanian suspect is alleged to have participated in trafficking in persons, ongoing pimping and money laundering. Sixteen searches were carried out in the UK and four in Romania, yielding cash, luxury cars and cocaine. A total of 29 potential victims, aged between 20 and 40 years, were recovered in London and brought to safety.

Two of the leaders of the group, detained in London, were also under investigation, on the basis of European Arrest Warrants issued by the Romanian authorities, for attempted murder.

Authorities suspect that an organised criminal group (OCG) was formed in Romania in 2013 for the express purpose of committing the crimes of human trafficking, ongoing pimping and money laundering. The OCG recruited more than 60 vulnerable young women in Romania, promising them significant amounts of money and legitimate work, and then trafficked them to the UK for the purpose of sexually exploiting them in London. The victims lived and worked, under threat of violence and blackmail, in houses provided by the OCG. The victims were promised a share of their earnings, but in reality received very little, and thus were kept completely dependent on the OCG.

Eurojust held one coordination meeting to facilitate the setting up of the joint investigation team (JIT). Eurojust also provided financial and logistic support for the JIT among the UK, Romania, Eurojust and Europol. Europol also held an operational meeting.

National authorities:

- **UK:** Metropolitan Police Central Specialist Crime – Vulnerability Investigations Team; Crown Prosecution Service
- **RO:** Directorate for Investigating Organised Crime and Terrorism (DIICOT) – Iasi Territorial Service; Organised Crime-fighting Brigade; Romanian National Police; Special Operations Directorate; B.C.C.O. Constanța and B.C.C.O. Bacău

[Link to DIICOT and Romanian Police video](#)

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[ESMA updates its Q&As on the Securitisation Regulation](#)

The majority of Q&As in this document provide clarification on different aspects of the templates contained in the draft technical standards on disclosure which were recently published by [the European Commission](#). In particular, the Q&As clarifies how several specific fields in the templates should be completed and also contains clarifications relating to STS notifications and securitisation repositories.

This fourth version of the Securitisation Q&As includes a summary table giving an easy overview of the list of Q&As. The order of some Q&As has been slightly adjusted compared to the previous version with a view to grouping Q&As treating similar topics. To ensure traceability, the overview table lists the number of each Q&A in the previous version where it is different from the new version.

The purpose of this document is to promote common, uniform and consistent supervisory approaches and practices in the day-to-day application of Securitisation Regulation and help regulated entities comply with their obligations.

ESMA will continue to develop this Q&A on the Securitisation Regulation in the coming months and will review and update them where required.