

## Article – Coming up in plenary: digital services, farm policy reform, covid-19, Belarus



### **Rules for digital service providers and artificial intelligence**

Digital services, including online platforms and marketplaces are a fast growing sector. MEPs want clear EU rules in the new Digital Services Act to [protect our privacy and consumer rights](#). They reject a “one-size-fits-all” approach and insist big platforms should be held to account while small ones should be allowed to grow. Plenary will vote on three reports to outline its priorities.

MEPs will also outline how the EU can best regulate [artificial intelligence](#) (AI) in order to boost innovation, ethical standards and trust in technology.

### **Future farm policy**

EU farm policy should be [more sustainable](#), resilient and flexible so that it can continue to deliver safe food to all Europeans. It also needs to be better tailored to the needs of individual member states. MEPs will set out what they want from a major reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

### **Covid-19**

Parliament wants to make sure that in case of future lock-downs, every pupil in the EU has access to education. MEPs will call on the Commission to come up with an urgent plan. MEPs will also debate how to protect employment and

income and [help young people find work in times of economic crisis](#).

## **Brexit**

[Brexit](#) is on the agenda Wednesday, when European Council President Charles Michel will discuss the 15-16 October **EU summit** with MEPs.

## **Deforestation**

Since 1990, 1.3 million km<sup>2</sup> of forests have been lost globally- an area larger than South Africa. MEPs want binding rules to stop EU-driven deforestation, with penalties for companies selling products that endanger forests and ecosystems.

[Find out more about forests in the EU](#).

## **Sakharov prize**

Parliament's President and political group leaders will decide on the 2020 Sakharov prize for freedom of thought on Thursday. The [finalists](#) are the democratic opposition in Belarus, Honduran environmental activists and the Archbishop of Mosul.

Also on the agenda:

MEPs will suggest a comprehensive **review of EU relations with Belarus**, reiterating their [September resolution](#).

The European **Commission will present its 2021 work programme** on Tuesday focusing on the recovery from the pandemic, the green economy and digitalisation.

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# **[HELP Programme on fighting racism, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia launches in Spain](#)**

It spoke about [FRA's Handbook on European non-discrimination law](#), available in Spanish and other EU official languages, which is used as basic training material for the Programme. FRA's also covered results from its recent survey [‘a long way to go for LGBTI equality’](#) and its comparative legal analysis on [‘Protection against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in the EU’](#).

The programme aims to support Council of Europe Member States in implementing European human rights norms in the fight against racism, xenophobia,

homophobia and transphobia. There is a special focus on the European Convention of Human Rights, other Council of Europe instruments and EU law.

This particular programme is aimed at lawyers, judges and prosecutors in Spain as well as lawyers in Latin America. The Council of Europe launched the programme in cooperation with the General Council of Lawyers in Spain.

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## [Article – Parliament launches the Daphne Caruana Galizia journalism prize](#)



The [Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism](#), launched on 16 October 2020, the third anniversary of her death, will reward outstanding journalism reflecting EU values.

“The Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize will recognise the essential role that journalists play in preserving our democracies and serve as a reminder to citizens of the importance of a free press. This prize is designed to help journalists in the vital and often dangerous work they do and show that the European Parliament supports investigative journalists,” said Parliament Vice-President [Heidi Hautala](#).

## Prize money of €20,000

The €20,000 annual prize will be awarded as of October 2021 to journalists or teams of journalists based in the European Union. Candidates and the eventual laureate will be chosen by an independent panel.

## Who was Daphne Caruana Galizia?

Daphne Caruana Galizia was a Maltese journalist, blogger and anti-corruption activist who reported extensively on corruption, money laundering, organised crime, sale of citizenship and the Maltese government's links to the Panama Papers. Following harassment and threats, she was murdered in a car bomb explosion on 16 October 2017.

The outcry over the authorities' handling of her murder investigation ultimately prompted the resignation of Prime Minister Joseph Muscat. Critical of failings in the investigation, in December 2019, MEPs [called on the European Commission to take action](#).

Parliament strongly advocates the importance of a free press. [In a May 2018 resolution](#), MEPs called on EU countries to ensure adequate public funding and to promote a pluralist, independent and free media. Parliament has once again underlined the importance of [media freedom in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic](#).

Watch our [Facebook live](#) interview about the Daphne Caruana Galizia Journalism Prize.

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## [Remarks by President Charles Michel following the first working session of the European Council](#)



Pour commencer je souhaiterais excuser l'absence de la Présidente de la Commission européenne. En effet, en début de réunion elle a été informée qu'une personne qui est considérée comme "close contact" a été testée positivement. Elle-même a été testée aujourd'hui négativ. Cependant, en application des règles nationales, elle a pris la décision de se placer en auto-isolément.

Nous avons eu l'occasion aujourd'hui de mener le débat comme c'était prévu dans le cadre de la relation future entre l'Union européenne et le Royaume Uni.

On Brexit, we are united and determined to reach an agreement. But not at any cost.

Any agreement on our future relationship would have to be based on our mandate, in particular when it comes to the level playing field, fisheries and governance.

A level playing field is critical because it ensures fair competition. For example, if the UK would produce cars without respecting our EU standards, and with the support of massive subsidies, how can we imagine they would have access to our markets with no tariffs and no quotas? That would be unfair and would risk hundreds of thousands of European jobs.

On those issues, we are concerned by the lack of progress at the negotiation table. We are 100 percent united. And we fully trust and support our chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, to continue negotiations. And we call on the UK to make the necessary moves.

As regards the Withdrawal Agreement and its Protocols, they must be fully implemented. Full stop. And that's also a question of international credibility for the UK.

In parallel, we will step up our work, at all levels and for all outcomes, including that of a no deal.

Vous l'avez compris, nous avons eu l'occasion aujourd'hui, non seulement d'écouter attentivement le briefing présenté par notre négociateur en chef, Michel Barnier. Nous avons eu l'occasion d'exprimer l'unité européenne dans le cadre de ce processus de négociation. Nous souhaitons être mobilisés pour permettre qu'un accord soit possible avec le Royaume-Uni et dans le même temps, nous continuons à défendre les principes qui sont importants à nos yeux: le level playing field, la question de la gouvernance de l'accord mais également la question de la pêche sont évidemment des thèmes pour lesquels, depuis le début, nous avons exprimé un certain nombre de principes et un certain nombre d'engagements qui nous semblent importants.

Nous sommes prêts à continuer les négociations et nous avons eu l'occasion d'exprimer une position européenne extrêmement calme, extrêmement tranquille et dans le cadre de laquelle nous espérons qu'il sera possible de faire des progrès afin de pouvoir amener de la clarté dès qu'il sera possible.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

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## **European Council conclusions on EU-UK**



# relations, 15 October 2020



## **II. EU-UK relations**

4. The European Council recalls that the transition period will end on 31 December 2020 and notes with concern that progress on the key issues of interest to the Union is still not sufficient for an agreement to be reached.

5. The European Council reaffirms the Union's determination to have as close as possible a partnership with the United Kingdom on the basis of the negotiating directives of 25 February 2020, while respecting the previously agreed European Council guidelines, as well as statements and declarations, notably those of 25 November 2018, in particular as regards the level playing field, governance and fisheries.

6. Against this background, the European Council invites the Union's chief negotiator to continue negotiations in the coming weeks, and calls on the UK to make the necessary moves to make an agreement possible.

7. As regards the Internal Market Bill tabled by the UK government, the European Council recalls that the Withdrawal Agreement and its Protocols must be fully and timely implemented.

8. The European Council calls upon Member States, Union institutions and all stakeholders to step up their work on preparedness and readiness at all levels and for all outcomes, including that of no agreement, and invites the Commission, in particular, to give timely consideration to unilateral and time-limited contingency measures that are in the EU's interest.

9. The European Council will remain seized of the matter.

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