

## Press release – MEPs to discuss the situation in Belarus with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya on Monday



Members of the [Foreign Affairs Committee](#) will host Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and other members of the Belarusian democratic opposition, Volha Kavalkova and Pavel Latushka, for a debate on the latest political developments and the popular uprising in Belarus. Ms Tsikhanouskaya, who will be present in person, is expected to address the committee at 13.45 CET, followed by an exchange of views with MEPs.

She will also hold a bilateral meeting with [European Parliament President David Sassoli](#) on Monday at 12.00 CET.

The same day, Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs will vote on new recommendations on how the EU should reassess its relations with Belarus, in particular with regard to the latest developments. The vote result will be announced on Tuesday, 22 September.

You can follow the committee meeting live [here](#). (21.09.2020)

### **Mass protests since the latest “presidential elections”**

Belarus has been in the midst of a political crisis following accusations of vote rigging in the presidential elections held on 9 August, which incumbent authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko claimed he won with a vast majority, triggering massive popular protests and general strikes.

Since then, the Belarusian authorities have been cracking down hard on demonstrators calling for Mr Lukashenko’s resignation, with many reports and documented cases of torture and ill-treatment of detainees and protesters being brought forward.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Belarus on 17 September, in which MEPs called for new elections to be held, new sanctions against Alexander Lukashenko and his regime, while pointing out that Ms Tsikhanouskaya, who was the main democratic contender in the elections, is considered by many Belarusians as the actual winner of the vote and the country's real president-elect. Read more [here](#).

Monday's meeting will be organised together with the [Subcommittee on Human Rights](#) and the [delegation for relations with Belarus](#).

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## **Press release – EU long-term budget: EP still fighting for a good agreement**



“During this fourth meeting, on Friday, substantial progress has been achieved on the legally binding commitment to introduce new Own Resources”, said the members of the Parliament’s [negotiating team on the Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\) and Own Resources \(OR\)](#).

“On other issues such as the top-ups to EU flagship programmes, the German Council presidency did not table any viable or more detailed proposals that could have brought the negotiations further, following up on progress made [last time](#). We underlined once more that Parliament has shown significant willingness to come closer to Council’s position, for example scaling down its request for top-ups to EU programmes from 40+ programmes to 15 flagship programmes, in line with Parliament’s [resolution of 23 July](#)”, the MEPs added.

“It is still possible, and very much in the interest of EU citizens, to make every effort to come to an agreement as soon as possible, but the conditions are not there yet. Parliament stands ready to take all the steps necessary to

come to a satisfactory agreement”, the negotiators concluded.

### **Don't undermine Europe's commitments, protect the next generations**

Parliament insists on real increases to EU flagship programmes, which Council has cut severely. With plans currently on the table, as of 2024, the EU budget as a whole will be below 2020 levels, jeopardising the EU's commitments and priorities, notably the Green Deal and the Digital Agenda.

In addition, there must be a binding roadmap for the three institutions on new sources of EU income (Own Resources) in order to pay back the recovery cost, for example through the contributions from transnational polluters and multinational corporations that practice tax optimisation, so it won't become a burden for the next generation.

### **Parliament has cleared the way for swift launch of recovery plan**

This week, Parliament has cleared the way for COVID-19 recovery plan with a [plenary vote](#) on the consultative opinion on the Own Resources Decision, which will enable the EU to borrow €750 billion for the “Next Generation EU” recovery plan. This vote now allows the Council to proceed with an immediate approval of this decision and start the ratification procedure in the member states.

### **The EP's negotiating team for the next long-term EU budget and Own Resources reform**

[Johan Van Overtveldt](#) (ECR, BE), Chair of the Committee on Budgets

[Jan Olbrycht](#) (EPP, PL), MFF co-rapporteur

[Margarida Marques](#) (S&D, PT), MFF co-rapporteur

[José Manuel Fernandes](#) (EPP, PT), Own Resources co-rapporteur

[Valérie Hayer](#) (RENEW, FR), Own Resources co-rapporteur

[Rasmus Andresen](#) (Greens/EFA, DE)

Follow them on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/i/lists/1205126942384676866?s=20>

### **Background**

As the current long-term EU budget is running out on 31 December 2020, the EU needs a new budgetary planning horizon for the next seven years. The EU Commission has thus presented plans for the next multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 in May 2018. The European Parliament has adopted its position in November 2018, and re-confirmed it in October 2019. The European Council has [reached a political compromise on 21 July 2020](#), to which Parliament reacted [immediately](#). Trilateral negotiations between Parliament, Council and Commission have [started on 27 August](#).

Ongoing negotiations are structured around the following topics:

1. Reinforcing flagship programmes to preserve EU's capacity to invest besides and beyond the recovery.
2. A legally binding commitment to introduce new own resources to repay the common debt from the recovery instrument without burdening citizens and in line with the European Union's political ambitions.
3. Increased legitimacy and accountability to citizens in the budgetary decision-making process – a stronger role for the EP in how the recovery money is raised and spent.
4. Horizontal issues (climate, biodiversity, gender) and other provisions.

Parliament has also conditioned its agreement to the setting-up of a strong mechanism to ensure respect for the Rule of Law, which is to be negotiated separately according to the codecision/ordinary legislative procedure, where Parliament and Council are on an equal footing.

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## **Cross-Border Cooperation Platform on NOVIS: Národná banka Slovenska has issued an interim measure banning new business**

Today, Národná banka Slovenska (NBS), the Slovakian national supervisory authority, has issued an interim measure banning new business from NOVIS Insurance Company, NOVIS Versicherungsgesellschaft, NOVIS Compagnia di Assicurazioni, NOVIS Poistovňa a.s. (NOVIS), until specified conditions are fulfilled by NOVIS.

NOVIS is a life insurance undertaking established in 2014 in Slovakia and supervised by the NBS. Besides its home market, NOVIS pursues life insurance activity through freedom of establishment in Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany and through freedom to provide services in Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

In order to ensure the adequate protection of policyholders throughout the European Economic Area, EIOPA has been working closely with NBS and the other national competent authorities through its cooperation platform to address this issue in the operations of NOVIS, from both prudential and conduct of business perspective.

NBS [has published information on its website](#) which may be useful to NOVIS policyholders.

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## Press release – Roma integration: EU must do more against social exclusion and anti-gypsyism



In a resolution adopted on Thursday with 545 votes to 96 and 54 abstentions, Parliament stresses that, due to persistent anti-gypsyism, Romani people in Europe suffer the highest rates of poverty and social exclusion. MEPs therefore call for inclusive education, early childhood development and an end to discrimination and segregation.

The situation of Romani people in the EU has not improved, denounces the text, partly because of “the lack of political will”. MEPs complain that a significant number of Romani people in Europe live in “extremely precarious” conditions, with most deprived of their fundamental human rights.

They call on the Commission to table a legislative proposal focused on fighting poverty and anti-gypsyism and on improving Romani people’s living and health conditions. The proposal should include a plan to eliminate housing, health, employment and education inequalities, as well as specific binding objectives to improve inclusion.

### **Access to healthcare and compensation for victims of forced sterilisation**

Member states should improve access to good quality and affordable healthcare for Romani people, including sexual and reproductive healthcare. All forms of ethnic segregation in health facilities must be banned, including maternal health care settings. MEPs also ask member states to compensate survivors of forced and coercive sterilisation.

## No to school segregation

Providing Romani children with an equal start in life is essential to breaking the poverty cycle, say MEPs, who want to end all forms of school or class segregation experienced by these pupils. They condemn the discriminatory practice of placing them in schools for children with mental disabilities, still in place in some EU countries, and call on the Commission to continue pressing member states to desegregate, taking the cases to the European Court of Justice if needed.

## Worsening situation due to COVID-19

MEPs finally note that the COVID-19 crisis has worsened the situation of marginalised communities of Romani people living in overcrowded and inhumane conditions and warn that, due to limited access to healthcare, drinking water, sanitation and food, they are more at risk of contracting the virus.

## Quote

[Romeo Franz \(Greens/EFA, DE\)](#), rapporteur, said: “The EU has to do more to ensure the social inclusion of Romani people. For too many years, policies regarding Romani people were not binding and this has to change. We call on EU member states to officially recognise anti-gypsyism, which is the main cause of social exclusion of Romani people, and take legislative measures to combat it”.

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## Ukraine: Spokesperson statement on the sentencing of Crimean Tat



On 16 September 2020, the Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don sentenced seven individuals arrested in the Crimean peninsula on 7 July 2020, including Server Mustafayev, a Crimean Tatar activist and a coordinator of Crimean Solidarity, to prison terms for their alleged political affiliation.

Their terms range from 13 to 19 years.

The European Union does not recognise the enforcement of Russian legislation in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as it is illegal under international law, nor the transfer of Ukrainian citizens from Crimea to courts in Russia. The EU calls on Russia to reverse these decisions and to release all illegally detained Ukrainians without delay.

The EU expects Russia to end the pressure on the Crimean Tatar community. International human rights standards must be guaranteed in the peninsula. Full, free and unrestricted access for international human rights actors to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, continues to be paramount.

The European Union is unwavering in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.