

# Press release – Press Conference by EP President Sassoli on EU summit, Thursday at 14.30



**When:** Thursday 25 March, at 14.30

**Where:** EP Press room and via Interactio

President David Sassoli is set to convey Parliament's position and answer journalists' questions regarding the topics discussed during the summit, particularly the EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, EU-US relations, Turkey and the Single Market.

Interpretation will be available in Italian, English, French and German.

Journalists wishing to actively participate and ask questions, please connect via Interactio by using this:

<https://broadcaster.interactio.eu/join/66e2-hy1p-1w4u>

You can also follow it live from 14.30 via Parliament's [webstreaming](#) and [EbS+](#).

**Important notice:** Following advice from Parliament's medical service, EP President Sassoli has decided that anyone wishing to enter Parliament's premises must wear either a surgical mask or an FFP2 respiratory mask as of 8 March. You will not be allowed to enter Parliament wearing a 'community mask' or any mask made of textiles.

**Information for the media – Use Interactio to ask questions**

Interactio is only supported on iPad (with the Safari browser) and Mac/Windows (with the Google Chrome browser).

When [connecting](#), enter your name and the media you are representing in the first name / last name fields.

For better sound quality, use headphones and a microphone. Interpretation is only possible for interventions with video.

Journalists who have never used Interactio before are asked to connect 30 minutes before the start of the press conference to perform a connection test. IT assistance can be provided if necessary.

For more details, check the [connection guidelines](#) and [recommendations for remote speakers](#).

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## **Veterinary drug residues: compliance still high**

**Data on the presence of residues of veterinary medicines and contaminants in animals and animal-derived food show high rates of compliance with safety levels set by the European Union, according to EFSA's latest report. The report summarises monitoring data collected in 2019.**

A total of 671,642 samples were reported by Member States, Iceland and Norway. The percentage of samples that exceeded maximum levels was 0.32%. This figure is within the range of 0.25%-0.37% reported over the previous 10 years.

Compared to the previous two years, non-compliance increased slightly for antithyroid agents and steroids and decreased slightly for resorcylic acid lactones, prohibited substances, antibacterials, anticoccidials, and dyes.

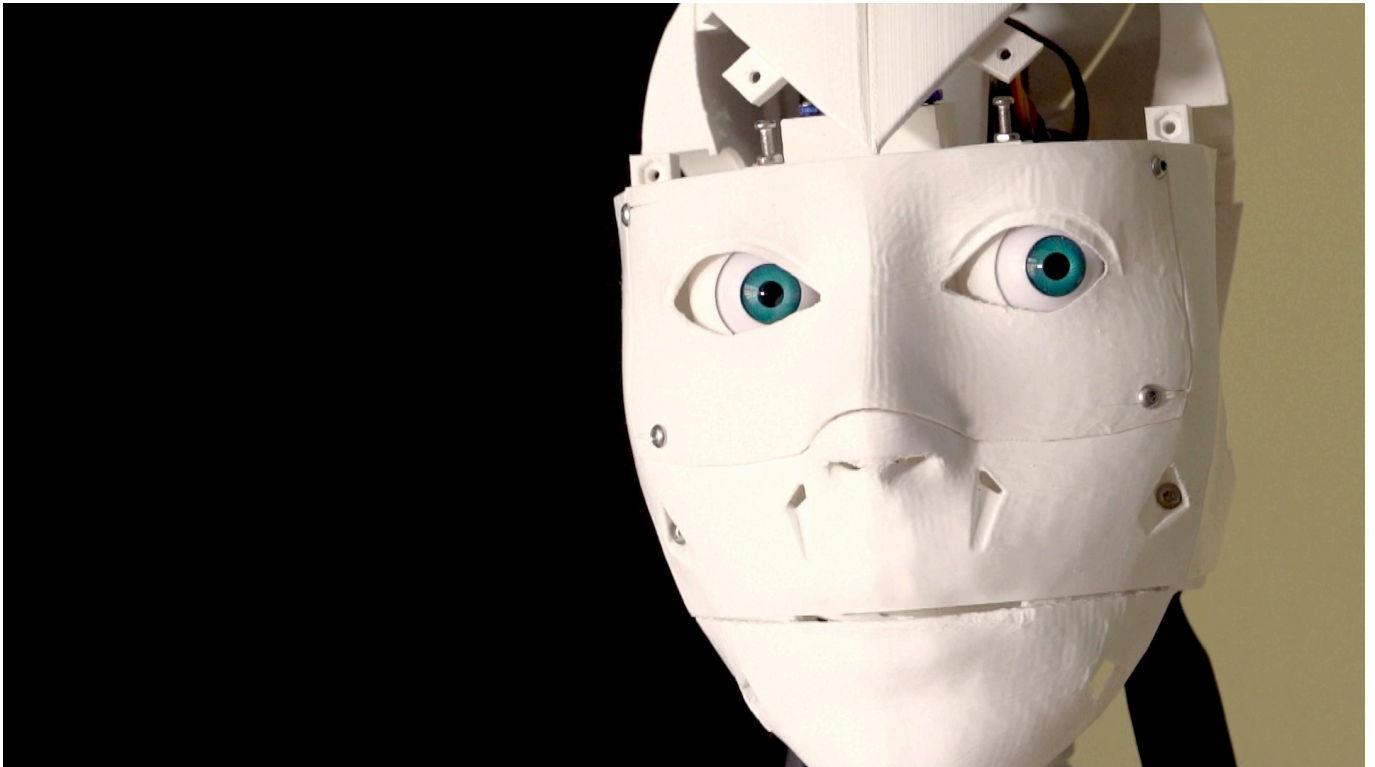
For chemical elements (including metals), non-compliance was higher than in 2018, but lower than 2017.

[The data are available on Knowledge Junction](#), EFSA's curated, open repository, which was set up to improve transparency, reproducibility and reusability of evidence in food and feed safety risk assessments.

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## **Article – Dual-use goods: what are**

# they and why are new rules needed?



## **What are dual-use goods?**

Dual-use products are goods designed for civilian use that in the wrong hands could be used to suppress human rights or launch terrorist attacks. They can be anything from drones to chemicals.

Although these goods can improve people's lives, they can be misused. Authoritarian regimes might use them to keep the population under control, while terrorist groups could use them to stage attacks.

## **Why are new rules needed?**

To prevent dual-use goods being repurposed in ways that violate human rights, the EU wants to make sure strict export rules prevent them being sold to people or organisations wanting to misuse them.

The EU is currently working on an update of the existing rules to take into account recent technological developments, including new cyber surveillance tools, and beef up protection of human rights.

## **What is the next step?**

The Council and the Parliament have [provisionally agreed on the new rules](#), but both need to officially approve them before they can enter into force.

MEPs will debate the new rules and vote on them on Thursday 25 March.

Read more about [how the EU's trade policy helps to promote human rights](#)

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## Motorised transport: train, plane, road or boat – which is greenest?

Traveling by plane, train or automobile: the most environmentally sound choice may not always be clear. The latest annual [Transport and Environment Report 2020 \(TERM\)](#) addresses the issue assessing the value of travel by train and plane, amid efforts to put in place the European Union's green deal. The European Green Deal includes the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emission from transport by 90% by 2050 compared with 1990. Shifting to more sustainable transport can make an important contribution to reaching this objective. For passenger transport, a shift from air to rail travel can play a key role, the report says.

### **Environmental impact of trains and planes**

Transport accounted for 25 % of EU greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. This sector's emissions come primarily from road transport (72 %), while marine transport and aviation represent shares of 14 % and 13% of emissions, respectively, and rail a share of 0.4% (emissions by diesel trains only). Apart from their direct contribution to global warming and air pollution, emissions that take place during the production, transmission and distribution of energy used by trains and aircraft are also considered. Transport also causes non-exhaust emissions of air pollutants, for example from the abrasion of brakes, wheels and tyres or railway tracks.

### **Train or plane?**

The report specifically looks into the impacts of rail and air travel, both of which are a big part of Europe's passenger transport sector. The assessment concludes that rail travel is the best and most sensible mode of travel, apart from walking or cycling. Aviation's emission impacts are much higher on a passenger-kilometre basis. But the report notes that flying is not necessarily the most harmful choice. Travel by a petrol or diesel-powered car, especially if traveling alone, can be more harmful.

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The report notes however, that over longer distances, the environmental costs of travelling by air increase less because the environmental costs of landing and take-off do not change with distance on a direct flight. The assessment is based on a comparison of travel between 20 city pairs across Europe.

A separate [EEA briefing](#), based on a study commissioned by the EEA also published today, says both rail and shipping are the least carbon-intensive choices for motorised transport. Rail and waterborne transport have the lowest emissions per kilometre and unit transported, while aviation and road transport emit significantly more.

While the efficiency of rail and aviation improved markedly during the 5-year period covered by the study, the efficiency of other modes appears to have stagnated. Shifting to rail and waterborne transport should be encouraged while at the same time improving the greenhouse gas efficiency of all motorised forms of transport, the briefing says.

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## **Invitation letter by President Charles Michel to the members of the European Council ahead of their video conference of 25 and 26 March 2021**



Given recent developments with regard to the epidemiological situation in Member States, we will hold our meeting by video conference on Thursday and Friday.

Following extensive consultations with all of you, we will discuss COVID, international relations, as well as our economic and digital agenda.

I am also delighted that we will be able to virtually welcome President Biden on Thursday evening, who will share his views on our future cooperation.

On COVID, our top priority is to speed up vaccination campaigns across the EU. To this end, the ongoing work to boost vaccine production, increase vaccine deliveries and ensure more transparency and predictability of supplies should be intensified. In addition, we will address COVID certificates and the international dimension.

On international matters, we want to defend our interests, uphold our values and actively contribute to shaping the global future. Our unity is a precondition to asserting our influence. As regards Russia, I propose to have

an information point and will share with you the outcome of my latest contacts with President Putin in advance of a more strategic debate on the matter at our next physical European Council meeting.

In relation to the Eastern Mediterranean, we will consider, with a view to our meeting in June, stepping up our engagement with Turkey in a phased, conditional and reversible manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the case for our digital transition even stronger, and the need for a resilient European industry more acute. It has also shown us, once again, how crucial the Single Market is to our economies. We will further develop our approach on these issues following our discussions last autumn. On digital we want to strengthen our ambition. We aim to strike the right balance between building our digital sovereignty and maintaining an open economy, while ensuring that nobody is left behind.

As to the practical proceedings, our videoconference will start at 1 p.m. on Thursday with the traditional exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament. After a report by Prime Minister Costa on the work in the Council, we will address COVID-19 and relations with Russia and Turkey.

On Friday, we will start our video-conference at 9:30 a.m. and discuss the economic and digital agenda. For the subsequent VTC in inclusive Euro Summit format, we will be joined by the Presidents of the ECB and of the Eurogroup to discuss the international role of the euro. I look forward to seeing you all.

[Visit the meeting page](#)