

Press release – European Parliament President David Sassoli’s speech to the European Council



This is the first time he has attended the Council in his role as President of the European Parliament.

Key extracts from the speech are below. The full text is available [here](#).

Brexit

“We welcome the agreement reached with the government of the United Kingdom. The European Parliament will examine closely the terms and substance of the agreement to verify that it is consistent with the interests of the European Union and its citizens. Parliament will continue to act with the sense of responsibility that we have shown to date.”

Future of Europe

“The European Parliament is the basis of legitimacy for the European democratic system. Citizens issued a call for a new Europe, which is more attentive to their needs, greener, more resolute in safeguarding the rule of law, more protective of social rights, and more effective and transparent in its decision-making.”

“The start of this parliamentary term has been difficult. The will of the European Council not to take into account the “Spitzenkandidaten” process represented, for the European Parliament, a wound that will have to be healed.”

“For that reason, we have issued a call for a conference on the instruments of democracy in Europe to be convened.”

Hearings

“The hearings of the Commissioners-designate are still under way and the vote on the new Commission headed by President Von der Leyen is due to take place in November.”

“That vote has been delayed by roughly a month. The European Parliament cannot be blamed for this delay, as it has and will continue to carry out its duty conscientiously and in line with its prerogatives under the Treaties.”

“The European Parliament intends to assert its role as one of the main actors in the European decision-making process.”

Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

“The European Parliament’s position is ready and is based on an ambitious budget, equal to 1.3% of gross national income and on the assumption that the decision on income and expenses is part of a “single package”.

“On the revenue side, we need to introduce a basket of new own resources which reflect the EU’s main political priorities and offer incentives to work towards achieving them.”

“On expenditure, it is crucial to boost the most successful programmes— for example in the fields of youth policy, research and innovation, environment and climate transition, infrastructure, SMEs, digitalisation and social rights – while maintaining in real terms the level of funding for traditional EU policies, in particular cohesion, agriculture, and fisheries.”

“We also need to respond to the difficulties and economic problems that so many EU citizens face. For that reason, we are convinced that the European social model must be strengthened. A minimum European income, European unemployment insurance, measures to combat child poverty, the Youth Guarantee, and an assistance fund for people in need are measures which must be properly funded.”

“We need a budget that is consistent with our values. A new budget protection mechanism that would penalise those who disregard the rule of law without affecting payments to final beneficiaries or recipients should be introduced.”

Climate change

“We urge those Member States that have not yet done so to increase their contributions to the Green Climate Fund and to support the establishment of a European Climate Bank.”

Enlargement

“We support the immediate opening of accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. The European Commission is in favour of this and we would find it hard to explain to the people of those countries why we are delaying it.”

“When we call on neighbouring countries to make an extra effort to change and they do so, it is our duty to match this effort.”

Turkey

“For days, people throughout Europe have been following with dismay and anger events in our neighbourhood. The Kurdish population of north-eastern Syria, which fought bravely against the terrorists of the so-called Islamic State, is now under attack by a NATO country.”

“We emphatically and unreservedly condemn Turkey’s military action in north-eastern Syria. This constitutes a grave violation of international law, undermines the stability and security of the region as a whole, bringing further suffering to people already affected by war, as well as obstructing access to humanitarian assistance.”

“We welcome the decision to coordinate national embargoes on future sales of arms to Turkey, but regard this as just a first step. It is our duty to send an unambiguous message by promoting a joint EU embargo not just on future arms shipments, but also on those already on their way.”

“The EU’s decision to impose sanctions on Turkey for an unacceptable action such as offshore drilling in waters near Cyprus is positive, but it is difficult to understand why the military aggression in north-eastern Syria did not prompt a similar response.”

“We must do everything in our power to stop this act of aggression and launch an initiative that can be thrashed out within NATO and submitted to the UN Security Council. The European Union would show itself to be speaking with one voice when working for peace in multilateral fora.”

“Against this background, the European Parliament reiterates its call for the accession negotiations with Turkey to be suspended.”

“We consider it unacceptable and firmly reject any attempt by the Turkish authorities to establish a link between its military action in north-eastern Syria and the fate of Syrian refugees on Turkish territory.”

“It is worth reminding our citizens that the European Union is not funding the Turkish authorities, but contributing directly to assisting and improving refugee living conditions through the work of UN agencies and humanitarian organisations. Human beings in need must never be used as a bargaining chip to justify violations of international law.”

Migration

“The European Union has a duty to guarantee the protection of people who are entitled to it, including setting up a voluntary system of genuine humanitarian corridors. With the help of the relevant humanitarian agencies, such corridors would enable those in need to make the journey to Europe without having to entrust their lives to human traffickers.”