

Justice ministers focus on combating antisemitism and hate speech

He presented findings from FRA's [annual overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the EU](#).

The exchange focused on what steps ministers can take to enhance criminal justice responses to antisemitism, with a particular focus on what could be done to encourage reporting and improve recording of hate crime.

During the exchange, Didier Reynders, EU Justice Commissioner, and ministers highlighted the importance of the agency's data and evidence in supporting the fight against antisemitism.

CPVO Administrative Council elects new Chair and Deputy Chair for the period 2020 – 2023

On 30 September 2020, the Administrative Council of the Community Plant Variety Office held its first entirely virtual meeting since the establishment of the CPVO in 1995.

During the meeting, the members of the Administrative Council elected their new Chair and Deputy Chair for the period 2020 – 2023. The new **Chair is Mr. Marien Valstar from The Netherlands**, who was previously Deputy Chair, and the new **Deputy Chair is Dr. José Antonio Sobrino Maté, from Spain**. Both assignments took effect on 5 October 2020.

"The election of Marien Valstar as Chair of the CPVO Administrative Council is excellent news. Marien is a respected expert in matters relating to plant policies in general and has detailed insights in plant variety rights and related areas such as seeds and plant propagating materials", said Martin Ekvad, President of the CPVO.

"Marien represents the Netherlands in various international fora and is presently the President of the UPOV Council. There is no doubt that Marien's experience will be a very valuable asset to the CPVO, for plant variety protection in Europe and for the recognition of the European Union plant variety rights system globally", he added.

"I am honoured to have been elected Chair of the Administrative Council which will allow me to work closely with the CPVO to support innovation in the

creation of new plant varieties. Coming from a country with a long standing history of plant breeding and seeing the benefits to society stemming from investments in this area, I hope to be able to contribute to the EU PVP system in my capacity as Chair”, explained Marien Valstar.

“The election of José Antonio Sobrino Maté, from Spain, as the new Deputy Chair of the CPVO Administrative Council, is an equally positive news. Juan Antonio is responsible for the Spanish Plant Variety Protection system and Spain is an important country in terms of breeding activities in the EU”, said Martin Ekvad.

“Spain’s know-how in testing new plant varieties is recognised globally, and Spanish authorities are entrusted by the CPVO to test many agricultural, vegetable and fruit crops in over a dozen testing facilities spread out throughout the country. In addition, Spain has the exclusive competence, capacity and entrustment to examine citrus in Valencia”, he concluded.

The CPVO is looking forward to working closely with the new Chair and Deputy Chair of the Administrative Council. CPVO’s President and colleagues also wish to express their sincere gratitude for the excellent work and collaboration with the former Chair, Mrs Bistra Pavlovska from Bulgaria.

Background

The Administrative Council is the budgetary authority of the CPVO, it monitors the CPVO activities, takes decisions on the discharge of the President, adopts general guidelines on matters for which the Office is responsible, advises the CPVO management, submits to the European Commission proposals for amendment of EU legislation on Plant Variety Rights and may issue guidelines on working methods of the Office.

The CPVO Administrative Council was established by Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 of 27 July 1994 on Community plant variety rights and normally meets two times a year. It is composed of a representative of each Member State and a representative of the European Commission, and their alternates. UPOV, EUIPO, CIOPORA, Plantum and Euroseeds participate as observers.

[Media access policy for Council meetings in Luxembourg, Foreign Affairs on 12 October and General Affairs on 13 October](#)



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Social Innovation Tournament's 2020 Results



The Social Innovation Tournament, the flagship initiative of the EIB Group Institute's Social Programme, recognises and supports the best European social entrepreneurs. [15 finalists](#) had been selected for the 2020 edition out of an outstanding group of 216 candidates in 31 countries. SIT is normally organised in a different country every year and rewards European entrepreneurs whose primary purpose is to generate a social, ethical or environmental impact. This year's tournament was scheduled to take place in Lisbon but – due to the COVID-19 pandemic spreading across the world – it had to be moved online.

EIB Vice-President [Emma Navarro](#), responsible for the EIB Institute and for the Bank's operations in [Portugal](#) stated: *"We are proud to reward Europe's best social entrepreneurs and, by doing so, to promote innovative startups in an early stage of development. The SIT tournament shows the EU bank's firm commitment to improving their competitiveness and access to finance with a view to turning good ideas into meaningful social and environmental projects. Moreover, at the EIB, the EU climate bank and world's largest multilateral provider of climate finance, we are particularly pleased to see so many amazing and disruptive ideas that aim to improve biodiversity and ecosystem conservation."*

General Category – Winners

[Navilens](#), from Spain, wants to make cities smarter and more inclusive by empowering visually impaired people with a cutting-edge technology based on a proprietary computer vision algorithm. It replicates the concept of using the camera of any mobile phone to read signage information for visually impaired people and its technology is much more powerful than a QR code. Available in 24 languages, it helps visually impaired users to be more independent in unknown spaces.

[Bee0monitoring](#) (Bee0diversity), from Belgium, combines nature (bees acting as drones to collect billions of environmental samples on large surfaces) and technology (software processing the data). Through the analysis of samples, Bee0monitoring can monitor industrial and agricultural pollution, assess the quality/diversity of plants, make targeted improvement decisions and involve local communities to enhance biodiversity.

Special Category – Winners

[Sponsh](#), from the Netherlands, developed a temperature-sensitive smart material that produces water from air, using the natural cycles of day and night. Launched in 2018, Sponsh's first products are water-producing tree guards for reforestation projects, to help young trees survive their first harsh summers. After 10 years, Sponsh will have planted 80 million trees, turned 174 000 ha of degraded land into forests and absorbed 68 million tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

[PlasticFri](#), from Sweden, is a CleanTech startup with the vision to end the plastic pollution catastrophe. PlasticFri's mission is to change that reality

by transforming renewable resources (agricultural waste and specific non-edible plants) into a biomaterial that looks and works like conventional plastics, but it is 100% biodegradable, compostable and non-toxic. PlasticFri's impact is not limited to saving CO₂, but also contributes to reducing the impact of climate change, ocean toxicity, ecosystem disruption and habitat disruption while improving food chain quality and biodiversity.

Audience Choice Award – Winners

[HeraMobileApp](#), from Turkey, aims to increase access to preventative health services, related to vaccine-preventable diseases and maternal health among Syrian refugees in Turkey. Before using the application, women are given a tutorial on recommended services and are taught about the risks and conditions during and after the pregnancy, the importance of vaccination for children and the situations that will occur if a child is not vaccinated according to guidelines. HERA currently serves 300 women between the ages of 20 and 49.

Background information

About the Social Innovation Tournament

The Social Innovation Tournament recognises and supports the best European social entrepreneurs. It promotes innovative ideas and rewards initiatives that contribute to creating social, ethical or environmental impact. Typically, it covers projects in the areas of education, healthcare, the environment, the circular economy, inclusion, job creation, ageing and many more.

All projects compete for the General Category and Special Category first and second Prizes of €50 000 and €20 000 respectively, as well as the Audience Choice Award of €10 000 for the project with the most audience votes. In 2020, the Special Category Prizes will go to projects focusing on the environment (with a special emphasis on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation). Two projects will be selected to attend INSEAD's Social Entrepreneurship programme in Fontainebleau, France.

The prizes are awarded by a jury of specialists from the academic and business worlds. The Audience Choice is awarded by the audience, based on their votes.

About the EIB Institute

The EIB Institute was set up within the EIB Group (European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund) to promote and support social, cultural, and academic initiatives with European stakeholders and the public at large. It is a key pillar of the EIB Group's community and citizenship engagement.

The EIB Institute supports social innovation and entrepreneurs who target social, ethical or environmental goals or seek to create and sustain social value. This is typically related to unemployment, equal opportunities, the marginalisation of disadvantaged groups and access to education and other

basic social services.

Article – Plenary highlights: Commission changes, EU budget and climate law



On Wednesday, [Parliament approved the appointment](#) of Mairead McGuinness as commissioner for financial services, financial stability and the Capital Markets Union as well as Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis' change of portfolio to include responsibility for trade.

MEPs called on Wednesday for [reinforcement of the rule of law](#) across Europe through a new mechanism linking receipt of EU funds by a member state to respect for the rule of law. In a separate vote, they called for EU values to be fully and unconditionally respected in [Bulgaria](#).

All EU countries must become climate neutral by 2050, MEPs said in a vote on the [EU climate law](#). Parliament also called for a 2030 emissions reduction target of 60% (compared to 1990 levels) and an interim target for 2040 to ensure the Union is on track to reach its mid-century goal of climate neutrality. In a separate vote, MEPs called for the EU to promote [forest management](#) models that ensure forests are environmentally and economically sustainable.

Members also discussed [Brexit and the economic recovery](#) in a debate with

Council President Charles Michel on last week's EU summit and the upcoming one on 15-16 October.

On Thursday, MEPs called for EU countries to take stronger action to counter the impact of the [Covid-19 crisis on young people](#) by ensuring that those who register for the Youth Guarantee schemes are offered "good-quality, varied and tailored jobs, training or internships".

Regarding Brexit, MEPs endorsed two proposals on Thursday concerning the [Channel Tunnel](#) with the goal of maintaining the same set of rules governing the whole railway tunnel once the UK has the status of a third country.

This week's plenary also approved a deal struck with the Council on common rules to boost EU [crowdfunding platforms](#) and protect investors. The new single set of rules aims to help crowdfunding services function smoothly across the internal market and to foster cross-border business funding.

On Thursday, with public health in mind, MEPs objected Commission proposals on [food products](#) containing titanium dioxide and acrylamide.

[*Click here to see what MEPs have to say about the issues on Parliament's agenda this week.*](#)