

Directorate for External Policies – Regions



Interparliamentary Delegations Activities **Guide for Members**

Review of the 8th Legislature
of the European Parliament



2019

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS ACTIVITIES **GUIDE FOR MEMBERS**

DIRECTORATE FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES - REGIONS



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I. INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF DELEGATIONS?

Interparliamentary Delegations and Assemblies are official organs of the European Parliament (EP), which permit MEPs to meet and exchange views with elected members of other parliaments from all over the world. They

- **Serve to maintain, develop and enhance** the EP's **international contacts** and the **international parliamentary diplomacy**;
- **Enhance and deepen** existing **partnerships** with traditional and new partners;
- Through partnerships, help to contribute to the promotion of the values on which the EU is founded: the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the rule of law (see Art. 6 and Art. 11(1) of the EU Treaty);
- Provide added value to the work of the Parliamentary Committees dealing with foreign Relations, such as the **AFET**, **DEVE** and **INTA** Committees and ensure the EP adopts a coherent approach;
- **Provide first-hand expertise** based on direct contacts on the ground;
- **Follow closely** the political and economic developments in these countries and regions;
- **Formulate recommendations** to be sent to the EU's appropriate political bodies;
- **Take the initiative** for EP urgency resolutions whenever necessary; and
- **Engage in a dialogue** with political forces close to **our political family**.

2. WHAT ARE THE POWERS OF THE EP IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS?

Since the Lisbon Treaty, the EP has gained new competences in EU policy-making:

- The **EP's role as co-legislator is fully recognised** > The EP's legislative power has been increased, whereby it actively participates in the "Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP)" in virtually all areas of European Union policy;
- In the field of external Relations, **the consent of the EP is required for the approval of a wide range of international agreements** signed by the EU (e.g. in the common trade policy area);
- In the field of the **Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)**, **the EP has acquired a general right to be informed, consulted and to exercise scrutiny** (the HR/VP of the Commission must undergo the same investiture procedure in the EP as any other Commissioner) and to **adopt the CFSP budget**;
- Its **budgetary powers**, which it shares **with the Council on equal footing**, are **now extended to all Union expenditure** > EP consent is necessary to adopt the legally binding Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF);
- **The EP was closely involved** in the creation of the **European External Action Service (EEAS)**, which is one of the most significant changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. The EP introduced amendments with the aim of reinforcing the **democratic accountability** of this new institution and to ensure that it would contribute towards **increasing the efficiency and coherence of the EU's external action as well as the EU's influence in the world as a global player**.

3. WHAT TYPES OF DELEGATIONS EXIST?

All of the EP’s Delegations reach out to parliamentarians in other countries, regions and organisations. However, just how and where they meet depends on the nature of delegation¹.

Parliamentary Assemblies

One group of delegations participate in "Parliamentary Assemblies", which are regular, formal meetings that bring together elected representatives from several parliaments from third countries with MEPs. In most cases, the EP’s Delegation is the largest single delegation at the assembly, with the number of MEPs accounting for about half the total number of delegates. Currently, five of the EP’s 44 Delegations participate in parliamentary assemblies. Examples include the Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (DNAT) and the Delegation to the Euro-Latin America Parliamentary Assembly (DLAT).

Interparliamentary Committees

The EP’s Delegations to Interparliamentary "committees" also meet their counterparts in regular, formal meetings. Most of these Interparliamentary Committees are bilateral: they involve the EP and one other delegation, usually from a single country. Interparliamentary Committees may be called "Parliamentary Association Committees", "Parliamentary Cooperation Committees", "Joint Parliamentary Committees" or "Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committees", depending on a number of factors. All these committees were created by bilateral agreements between the EU and the partner. The meetings have strict "rules of procedures". The EP currently has 15 Delegations that participate in 23 Parliamentary Committees. Examples include the Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-MX) and the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee (D-UA).

Other Interparliamentary Delegations

The largest group of delegations (some 25 of the total 44) focus on "Relations with" another country or, sometimes, with a group of countries. These delegations meet their fellow legislators in ordinary "interparliamentary meetings". The frequency of these meetings can vary according to the schedules and availability of the two partners. These meetings do not have their own rules, but do still adhere to the general «provisions» for delegations established by the EP. Two examples of this type of delegation are the Delegation for Relations with Japan (D-JP) and the Delegation for Relations with Canada (D-CA).

Ad Hoc Delegations

- Created in response to unforeseen events of major political significance;
- Composed of seven members appointed by the Political Groups in accordance with the rolling D’Hondt² system.

Election Observation Mission (EOM)

- On the basis of a request by the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG), the EP’s Conference of Presidents authorises an EOM;
- The DEG is co-chaired by the Chairs of the AFET and DEVE Committees; and
- The DEG examines all general questions related to planning, organisation, evaluation and follow-up of the EP’s EOMs; the composition of EOMs is based on the rolling D’Hondt system.

Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue

This special type of interparliamentary cooperation aims to enhance parliamentary ties between the EU and the US Congress, and support Activities developed by the EP Delegation for Relations with the US.

Windhoek Dialogue

Created by the EPP Group, the "Windhoek Dialogue" continues to be important platform for dialogue and exchange between EPP Group and partners of centre-right African parties.

4. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE EPP ADVISERS FOR DELEGATIONS?

That they

- **Provide insight and up-to-date information** on the country/region concerned;
- Participate and **provide support** during and before **delegation meetings**;
- Offer assistance with the **drafting of joint declarations and urgency resolutions**;
- Ensure close cooperation in terms of **press work** and press releases;
- Provide close **collaboration** with **other relevant committees**;
- Maintain an up-to-date intranet webpage, which includes:
 - the **latest minutes** of every interparliamentary meeting;
 - **EP resolutions** and **background materials** (newspaper articles, etc.); and
 - a list of **useful contacts** regarding the work in the delegation;
- Maintain a close **network** with **EPP sister parties** and other partners in the country concerned; and
- Maintain good cooperation with the EP administration and within the EU institutions.

Additional guidelines for external missions: The EPP Group Secretariat is there for you!

- To provide updated and **complementary information** for the **dossier** before the mission;
- To suggest and organise (if possible) **meetings** outside of the official programme which might be of interest for EPP Group Members;
- To serve as a **reference point** and provide support and feedback during the mission;
- To maintain contacts with the **media** and ensure adequate **press coverage** of the mission;
- To prepare a **summary report** on the mission within **10 days** after the mission;
- To maintain close contact with the **Office of the EPP Group Chairperson, Secretary-General and the Directorate for Press and Communications**;
- To provide assistance in the **case of emergencies**.

SECURITY DURING MISSIONS: The EP Crisis Cell was set up with the objective of coordinating and implementing preventive and reactive measures to ensure the security and safety of MEPs and any other staff during official missions. It has at its disposal a permanent secretariat integrated into the Business Continuity Management Unit, an EP 24/7 hotline (+32-2-2843505), a duty officer and a medical doctor on duty, as well as a set of procedures and tools to help it fulfil its mandate. Before the mission, participants are asked to enter their personal details into the Mission Crisis Management (MCM) database. MCM is an IT tool that facilitates a rapid and targeted response in the event of a crisis during official missions. MCM collects vital information for assisting Members and staff in the case of emergency: <https://mcm.secure.ep.parl.union.eu/mcm-web/app/mymissions/list>.

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/about/types-of-delegations>
² [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/580901/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)580901_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/580901/EPRS_BRI(2016)580901_EN.pdf)

5. HOW TO RAISE THE EPP GROUP PROFILE IN THE WORK OF THE DELEGATIONS?

The role of Members is crucial and their involvement in the Activities of delegations contributes largely to their success. It is therefore advisable for Members:

- **To attend and participate actively** in the meetings and missions of the delegation or assembly of which you are Member or substitute Member;
- **To inform** as quickly as possible the **EPP Group Adviser** in charge of the relevant delegation about your **availability to participate** in the external meeting;
- To sign the **daily list of attendance** when attending meeting sessions;
- To ensure that your views are **in line with the Chair** of the delegation while speaking to the media so that the EP Delegation is perceived in a consistent way > Only the Chair may take part in a press conference or issue press statements on behalf of the delegation, or sign bilateral statements jointly with the chair of the partner delegation. Such statements may not contradict the views expressed in resolutions adopted by Parliament (Article 16 of the Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the EU)³;
- To defend the EPP Group Position and not contradict views expressed in EP resolutions;
- To inform the EPP Group Adviser of the delegation and EP staff if any alternative visits, outside of the official programme, are envisaged;
- To cooperate fully with the Chair in fulfilling the terms of the delegation’s remit (particularly outside the EP) (Article 15);To use the assistance of the EPP adviser to obtain any additional information you may require; please refer to her/him to help with solving unexpected problems.
- To use the assistance of the **EPP Group Adviser** to obtain any additional information you may require; please refer to her/him to help with solving unexpected problems.
- Should you be involved in “friendship groups” or individual Activities with third countries, please be aware of the rules in place, in particular Annex I of the EP Rules of Procedure (Code of Conduct), and respect the decisions of the EP and the EPP Group. It is highly important that you make sure that your Activities cannot be misinterpreted as official representation of the EP or the EPP Group.

6. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (EEAS)?

- The EEAS supports the mandate of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP). The HR/VP chairs the monthly EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and is responsible for ensuring the consistency of EU external actions;
- The EEAS’s Headquarters is in Brussels. It also has a network of 139 EU Delegations around the world.

Year	Total budget	Delegations	Total staff	Staff in delegations
2016	€636 million	139 delegations	7500	2300 (+3600 from EC)
2017	€660 million	140 delegations (new delegation in Mongolia)	7683	2077 (+3616 from EC)

3 latest version 29.10.2015: http://www.sib.ep.parl.union.eu/SIB/download.do?file=/Documents/10_Recueil/1/1.4/1.4.1/422560_v2016-11_net2_en.pdf

- The EEAS, since its inception, has defended the European values of freedom, peace and respect for human rights, human dignity, good governance and democracy throughout the world.
- Through various meetings with third partners, such as e.g. Human Rights Dialogues, the EEAS actively works towards this goal. In many international crises, the EU has been an active mediator. When speaking about the Serbia-Kosovo mediation, the negotiations about the Iranian nuclear programme, or on how to improve the difficult Relationship with Russia, the strong participation of the EEAS and its representatives at the headquarters in Brussels and the many delegations throughout the globe has always to be mentioned.

7. EP DECISION OF 17 APRIL 2019 ON THE NUMBER OF INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS, DELEGATIONS TO JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES AND DELEGATIONS TO PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEES AND TO MULTILATERAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES-TEXTS ADOPTED

EP
2014-2019



P8_TA-PROV(2019)0408
Number of Interparliamentary Delegations, Delegations to Joint Interparliamentary Committees and Delegations to Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Multilateral Parliamentary Assemblies

EP decision of 17 April 2019 on the number of Interparliamentary Delegations, Delegations to Joint Parliamentary Committees and Delegations to Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and to Multilateral Parliamentary Assemblies (2019/2698(RSO))

- The EP,
- Having regard to the proposal from the Conference of Presidents,
 - Having regard to the association, cooperation and other agreements concluded by the European Union with third countries,
 - Having regard to Rules 212 and 214 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. anxious to strengthen parliamentary democracy by pursuing continuous interparliamentary dialogue;

1. Decides on the number of the Interparliamentary Delegations and their regional groupings as follows:

(a) Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey

Delegations to the:

- EU-North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee⁴
- EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee
- Delegation for Northern cooperation and for Relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary •
- Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee⁵
- Delegation to the EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee
- Delegation to the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee
- Delegation to the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee
- Delegation for Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

4 Previously EU-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia JPC
5 Previously Delegation for Relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee

(b) Russia and the Eastern Partnership states

- Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee
- Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee⁶
- Delegation to the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee⁷
- Delegation for Relations with Belarus
- Delegation to the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee, the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee⁸

(c) Maghreb, Mashreq, Israel and Palestine

Delegations for Relations with:

- Israel
- Palestine
- The Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union, including the EU-Morocco, EU-Tunisia and EU-Algeria Joint Parliamentary Committees
- The Mashreq countries

(d) The Arab Peninsula, Iraq and Iran

Delegations for Relations with:

- The Arab Peninsula
- Iraq
- Iran

(e) The Americas

Delegations for Relations with:

- The United States
- Canada
- The Federative Republic of Brazil
- The countries of Central America
- The countries of the Andean Community
- Mercosur
- Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee
- Delegation to the EU-Chile Joint Parliamentary Committee
- Delegation to the Cariforum – EU Parliamentary Committee

(f) Asia/Pacific

Delegations for Relations with:

- Japan
- The People’s Republic of China
- India
- Afghanistan
- The countries of South Asia
- The countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- The Korean Peninsula
- Australia and New Zealand
- Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU-Tajikistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees, and for Relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia

(g) Africa

Delegations for Relations with:

- South Africa
- the Pan-African Parliament

(h) Multilateral assemblies

- Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
- Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean
- Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly
- Delegation to the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly
- Delegation for Relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

2.

Decides that the membership of parliamentary committees created on the basis of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) shall be drawn exclusively from the Committee on International Trade and the Committee on Development – ensuring the maintenance of the leading role of the Committee on International Trade as the committee responsible – and that they should actively coordinate their work with the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly;
3.

Decides that the membership of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be drawn exclusively from the bilateral or sub-regional delegations covered by each Assembly;
4.

Decides that the membership of the Delegation for Relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly shall be drawn exclusively from the Subcommittee on Security and Defence;
5.

Decides that the Conference of Delegation Chairs should draw up a draft six-monthly calendar of Activities following a consultation with the Committees on Foreign Affairs, on Development and on International Trade. It should be drafted in close cooperation with the Conference of Committee Chairs’ six-month calendar of committee delegations, also taking into account the yearly work programme of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG), in order to ensure a consistent approach. This joint draft six-monthly calendar of Activities shall then be submitted for adoption to the Conference of Presidents. The Conference of Presidents may modify the proposed draft calendar with a view to responding to political events and to ensuring coherence of all Parliament’s external Activities;
6.

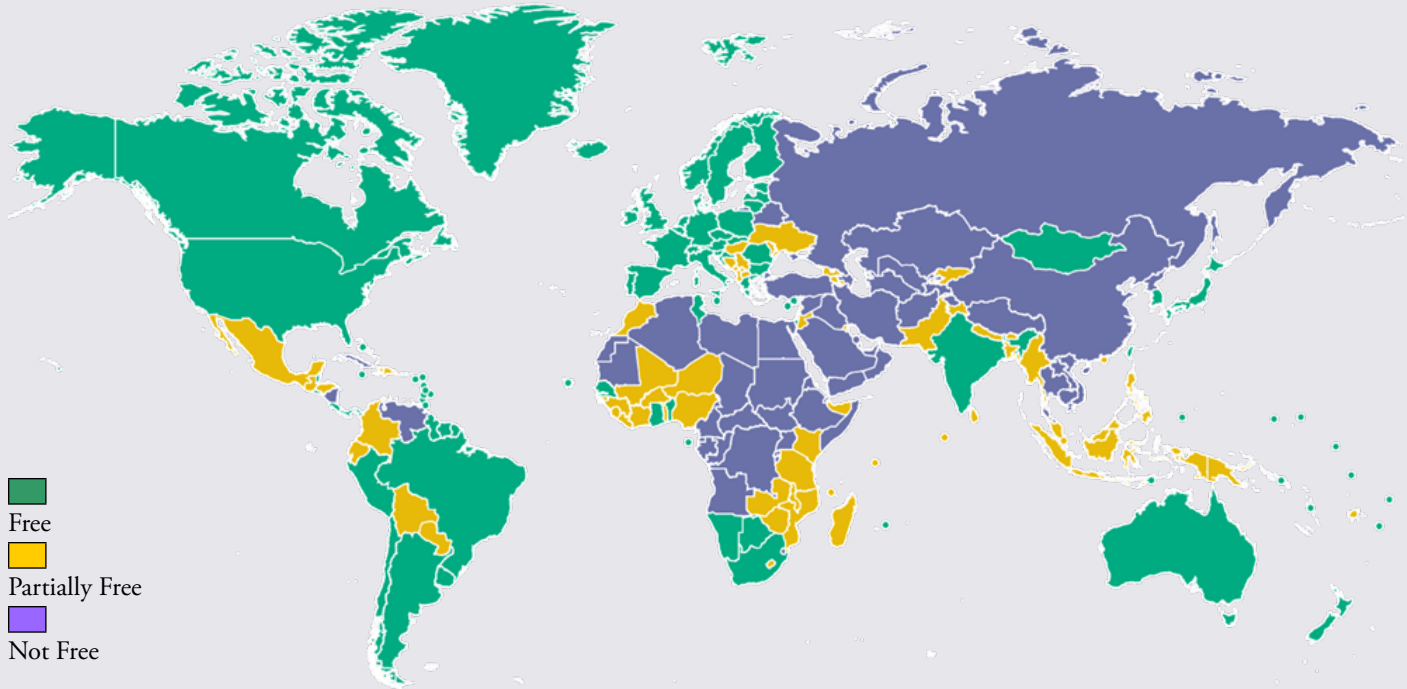
Recalls that only official delegations, duly authorised by the Conference of Presidents, are permitted to carry out Activities on behalf of the EP and to represent its Position;

6 Previously EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

7 Previously EU-Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

8 Previously Delegation to the EU-Armenia, EU-Azerbaijan and EU-Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committees

- 7. Decides that the Political Groups and non-attached Members shall appoint permanent substitutes to serve on each type of delegation and that the number of those substitutes may not exceed the number of full members representing the groups or non-attached Members;
- 8. Decides that full members of standing Interparliamentary Delegations shall be entitled to participate in interparliamentary meetings outside Parliament's places of work. If a full member is unable to travel, he or she may be replaced by one of the permanent substitute members or, if the substitute member is not available, by a member of the Interparliamentary Assembly covering this delegation, nominated by the political group to which the full member belongs. If a member of the Interparliamentary Assembly covering this delegation is not available, members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Development and the Committee on International Trade could be entitled to participate;
- 9. Considers that prior to an interparliamentary meeting with the counterpart (SAPC, JPC, PAC, PCC, IPM, etc.), or prior to any given outgoing delegation, close consultation should take place with the relevant committee(s) on possible political topics or legislative scrutiny issues that the delegation should address in meetings with the counterparts of the country concerned;
- 10. Will endeavour to ensure in practice that one or more Committee Rapporteurs or Chairs may likewise take part in the proceedings of Delegations, Joint Interparliamentary Committees, Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Multilateral Parliamentary Assemblies, and decides that the President, on the joint request of the Delegation and Committee Chairs concerned, shall authorise missions of this type;
- 11. Decides that this decision will enter into force at the first part-session of the 9th Parliamentary term;
- 12. Instructs its President to forward this decision to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service.



Source: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019/map>



II. EUROPE, WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

DELEGATION TO THE EU-NORTH MACEDONIA JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-MK)



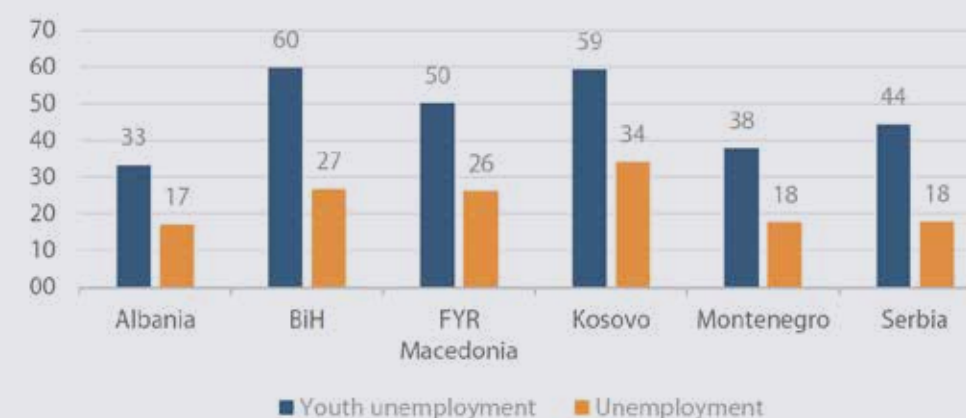
Population: 2,118,945
GDP: \$11.34 billion (2017 est.), **per capita:** \$13111.21 (2017 est.).
 Religions: Macedonian Orthodox 64.8%, Muslim 33.3%, other Christian 0.4%.
Ethnic groups: Macedonian 64.2%, Albanian 25.2%, Turkish 3.9%, Romani 2.7%, Serb 1.8%, other 2.2%.
Political system: parliamentary republic. Prime Minister Zoran ZAEV (since May 2017). Unicameral Assembly or 'Sobranie' (between 120 and 140 seats; currently 120 members directly elected by proportional representation vote; four-year terms). The last presidential elections took place on 21 April 2019.
EPP Parties: Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization/Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity - VMRO-DPMNE (Associated Member Party since 2007).
EPP Group Adviser: Olivier Le Saëc

Background and Relations with the EU

North Macedonia applied for EU membership in 2004, and in the same year the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) was launched. Although candidate status was granted already in 2005, the European Commission (EC) recommended accession negotiations begin only in 2009. On 29 May 2019 in its annual reports on Western Balkans countries, the EC recommends opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia. However, the opening of the accession negotiations awaits a positive decision of the Council in June 2019. One of the key requirements recalled by the EC is the continued implementation of the December 2015 "Pržino Agreement", which was facilitated by the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations and three MEPs, and substantial progress on the implementation of the "Urgent Reform Priorities".

The last parliamentary elections were held on 11 December 2016 as part of the EU-brokered Pržino Agreement to end the protests against the centre-right government of Prime Minister Nicola Gruevski and his party, VMRO-DPMNE. The Pržino Agreement also forced Gruevski to resign 120 days before the elections. The outcome of the elections resulted in stalemate, with VMRO-DPMNE winning 51 of 120 seats and SDSM 49. VMRO-DPMNE was unable to form a coalition and, subsequently, SDSM and the ethnic Albanian party agreed on a governing alliance. Zoran Zaev became PM in May 2017 with 62 MPs, ending months of political uncertainty. The new government showed commitment to advance the EU reform agenda. In July 2017, it announced the "3 – 6 – 9 Plan", aimed at implementing measures in key reform areas and so accelerate the accession negotiations following the 2018 EC Report.

Youth unemployment rate in the Western Balkans, 2016



Source: [SEE Regular Economic Report 10](#), World Bank, 2016. Average percentage for 2014 – 2016.

The government’s commitment to reform was further reinforced by the so-called Prespa Agreement with Greece in 12 June 2018, thereby renaming the country “Republic of North Macedonia”. An overwhelming majority of voters supported the agreement in a referendum on 30 September but the proposal failed on constitutional grounds as the turnout was below 50%. The Parliament in Skopje then ratified the agreement by a narrow majority in October 2018. The Greek Parliament ratified it in January 2019. The Prespa Agreement paves the way for EU and NATO membership for North Macedonia. On 6 February 2019, NATO’s 29 members signed the accession protocol with North Macedonia.

The political crisis hampered economic performance, with GDP growth slowing down in 2016 and 2017 and a decline in domestic private and public investment. Fiscal policies were lax, with unproductive public expenditure, including subsidies and pension increases, and rising guarantees for the debt of State-owned enterprises. Fiscal targets were also consistently missed. In 2017, public debt stabilised at about 47% of GDP. The EU remains North Macedonia’s largest trading partner, with a volume of €8.3 billion in 2017. 81.8% of all exports from North Macedonia go to the EU and 62.9% of all imports come from the EU. The EU also contributed to 64% of all foreign direct investment entering the country in 2016. The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance, allocating a total of €664.2 million in the period 2014-2020 (IPA II).

Delegation Activities: (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-mk/home)

Created in 2004, the Delegation to the EU-North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) met ten times alternating between Skopje and Strasbourg during the eighth legislature.

During the first meeting in November 2014, Members exchanged views on the rule of law, judiciary and public administration reforms, fighting corruption and freedom of expression. Fostering good neighbourly Relations and regional cooperation were also the subject of particular discussion. The 13th JPC meeting was held on 3-4 December 2015 in Skopje. Discussions centred on inter-community dialogue, migration crisis, electoral reform and the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

The 14th JPC meeting was held on 7-8 February 2018 in Strasbourg, where judicial, electoral and media reforms, in addition to administration reforms and increasing cooperation with the civil society were discussed. The new language laws on Albanian, the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Trieste Summit and the Berlin Process were also widely evoked. The 15th JPC took place on September 2018 in Skopje, during which the results of the 3-6-9 Reform Plan were discussed, in addition to rule of law issues. Members exchanged views on neighbourhood cooperation and inter-ethnic Relations, and highlighted the internal reforms progress. Members largely welcomed the country’s good Relations with other regional accession candidates and further expressed appreciation regarding the Prespa Agreement.

The last JPC meeting took place in a positive atmosphere; almost all the participants congratulated Macedonia’s representatives for the ratification of Prespa Agreement solving historical name’s issue. They discussed the EU-North Macedonia Relations and preparations for accession negotiations. MEPs also reaffirmed that the implementation of reform must advance, especially on the rule of law and fight against corruption. The importance of opening the accession negotiations has been recalled, pointing out that it would be a real positive signal to all Balkans countries.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group supports the Republic of North Macedonia on its path towards the European Union and NATO membership and, in that optic, welcomed the agreement on the name reached with Greece in the summer of 2018 as a crucial step in opening accession negotiations. However, the EPP group reiterates its call on the North Macedonian government to implement the reforms necessary to meet the Copenhagen criteria.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-TURKEY JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-TR)



Population: 81,257,239 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$1.167 trillion, **per capita (PPP):** \$27,000 (2017 est.).
Religions: Muslim 99.8%, other 0.2% (mostly Christians and Jews).
Political system: parliamentary republic. President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN (since 10 August 2014). Unicameral Grand National Assembly of Turkey or 'Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi' (600 seats - increased from 550 seats since the June 2018 election; members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote for five-year terms - increased from 4 to 5 years since the June 2018 election). Next elections scheduled for June 2023.
EPP Parties: none.
EPP Group Adviser: Jan-Willem Vlasman

Background and Relations with the EU

On 3 October 2005, the Council approved a Negotiating Framework with Turkey on its accession to the EU, as mandated by the European Council in December 2004, which indicated that, “These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand”.

On 29 November 2015, the EU Heads of State or Government held a meeting with Turkey where both sides decided to activate the Joint Action Plan, to bring order into migratory flows and help to stem irregular migration. They agreed to step up their cooperation for support of Syrians under temporary protection. Furthermore, on 18 March 2016, following a meeting of the Members of the European Council with their Turkish counterpart, an agreement on action points has been reached with the view to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU.

In July 2016, an attempt was made by part of the army to take over power. This attempted ‘coup d’état’ failed and many arrests were made, including of officials, and led to an escalation in crackdowns against political opposition and further repression of the freedom of the media.

On 21 January 2017, the Turkish Parliament adopted a constitutional reform package, which was confirmed by the outcome of a referendum, introducing changes to the country’s political system. The package introduced among others an executive Presidential system. On 24 June 2018, early Presidential and Parliamentary elections were held. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was re-elected with 52.59% of the vote.

The 2018 Commission Report on Turkey indicated that the country’s legal framework includes general guarantees of respect for human and fundamental rights, which have, however, been further challenged and undermined by a number of emergency decrees. Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly Relations, international agreements and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice.

The report indicated also that Turkey should respect its international obligations in relation to respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and effectively address serious human rights violations. Turkey should create a political and legal environment that allows the judiciary to perform its duties independently and impartially, with the executive and legislature fully respecting the separation of powers.

On 26 June 2018, the Council adopted conclusions on Turkey reaffirming the importance it attaches to EU Relations with Turkey, a key partner. The Council remains committed to maintaining an open and frank dialogue, to addressing common challenges and to cooperating in essential areas of joint interest such as migration, counterterrorism, energy, transport, economy and trade. However, the Council is especially concerned about the continuing and deeply worrying backsliding on the rule of law and on fundamental rights including the freedom of expression. In its conclusions, “the Council notes that Turkey has been moving further away from the European

Union. Turkey’s accession negotiations have therefore effectively come to a standstill and no further chapters can be considered for opening or closing and no further work towards the modernisation of the EU-Turkey Customs Union is foreseen”.

The resolution of the EP on the 2018 Commission Report on Turkey was adopted on 13 March 2019. The Parliament recommends that the Commission and the Council of the European Union, in accordance with the Negotiating Framework, formally suspend the accession negotiations with Turkey. The Parliament notes that the prolonged state of emergency has led to an erosion of the rule of law and to the deterioration of human rights in Turkey, which may have long-lasting implications for the country’s institutional and socio-economic fabric.

The Parliament is concerned about the serious backsliding in the areas of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and procedural and property rights. It recalls that the EP has called on the Government of Turkey to implement constitutional and judicial changes and reforms in cooperation with the Venice Commission and, last year, also called for the formal suspension of the accession negotiations should the constitutional reform be implemented unchanged, since this would be incompatible with the Copenhagen criteria.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-tr/home)

The 75th meeting of the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) was held on 11 November 2014 in Brussels. On 19 and 20 March 2015, the 76th meeting of the JPC was held in Ankara. The Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator and the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey took part in the meeting. During three sessions, discussions were held on EU-Turkey Relations and State of Play of the Accession Negotiations, Fight against racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and all other forms of discrimination, Freedom of media, Combating terrorism, EU-Turkey Customs Union, Free Trade Agreements and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and EU-Turkey foreign policy cooperation. The 77th JPC meeting was held on 26 April 2018 in Brussels. The topics of discussion included EU-Turkey Relations and state of play of the accession negotiations, EU-Turkey economic cooperation and Security challenges. The Co-Chairs underlined in their statement the importance of the JPC as a main platform for interparliamentary debate regarding the developments in the EU and Turkey, as well as progress achieved in our Relations. The 78th JPC meeting was held in Ankara on 19 and 20 December 2018. There were discussions on EU-Turkey Relations and State of Play of Accession Negotiations, Economic cooperation between Turkey and the EU and Security challenges. The Co-Chairs highlighted in their Statement that continued and open debate between the two Parliaments will help to increase the understanding between Turkey and the EU and to work together facing the common challenges. The standing rapporteur took part in the meetings of the JPC. At the meetings of the JPC, there was an exchange of views with representatives of the Presidency-in-Office of the Council, the European Commission, the EEAS and the Government of Turkey.

EPP Group Position

The Relations between the EU and Turkey are important. The EPP Group stresses that there is a need for reforms in Turkey, in particular as regards the rule of law. The Group underlines that judicial reforms should be an important part of the reform agenda. The Group calls on Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Group underlines the importance of good neighbourly Relations and, in this connection, calls on Turkey to step up efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral issues. The Group calls on Turkey to recognise the Republic of Cyprus, withdraw its troops from the island and fully implement the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement towards all Member States.

DELEGATION FOR NORTHERN COOPERATION AND FOR RELATIONS WITH SWITZERLAND AND NORWAY AND TO THE EU-ICELAND JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA) JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (DEEA)



LIECHTENSTEIN – EEA & EFTA MEMBER



Population: 38,547 note: immigrants constitute 65% of the total population (2017 UN data).
GDP: \$6.672 billion, **per capita:** \$139,100 (2009 est.).
Political system: constitutional monarchy. Prime Minister Adrian HASLER (since 27 March 2013). Unicameral Parliament (25 seats; members directly elected in 2 multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote for four-year terms). Next elections to be held in February 2021.
EPP Group Adviser: Collin Ermans

EU-Lichtenstein Relations:

Liechtenstein, together with Switzerland, is part of a common currency and economic union as well the Schengen area. Both countries maintain a policy of neutrality. In its December 2018 Conclusions, the Council of the EU noted that “Liechtenstein’s participation in the Automatic Exchange of Information on tax as an ‘early adopter’ of the Common Reporting Standard, exchanging information from September 2017, is a very welcome contribution to the huge global changes in tax transparency in recent years.”⁹ Furthermore, the ECOFIN meeting in October 2018 acknowledged: “the constructive, transparent and open cooperation with Liechtenstein, aimed at ensuring that the principles and all the criteria of the EU Code of Conduct on Business Taxation are applied. In this regard, it welcomes in particular the swift completion in 2018 of the legislative process to address the issues identified by the EU Code of Conduct Group.”

NORWAY – EEA & EFTA MEMBER



Population: 5,372,191.
GDP: \$398.8 billion, **per capita:** \$72,100 (2017 est.).
Political system: parliamentary constitutional monarchy. Prime Minister Erna SOLBERG (since 16 October 2013). Unicameral Parliament (169 seats; members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote; members serve four-year terms) Next elections to be held in September 2021.
EPP Party: **Hoyre - Conservative Party (Associated Member Party since 1995) and Kristelig Folkeparti|KrF (Observer Member Party since 1999).**

EU-Norway Relations

In a referendum in 1972, Norwegian people rejected by 53.5% the proposed membership to the EU. It was again rejected in 1994 by 52%. Since then, all opinion polls show that approximately 70% of the population remains opposed to EU membership. In May 2018, the Norwegian Government presented “A vision for Europe”, its strategy for cooperation with the EU 2018–2021, outlining its key priorities, such as the fight against climate change and the sustainable management of natural resources, cooperation in the area of justice and home affairs as well as in security and defence. Norway also stands with the EU for an open, rules-based trade, a well-regulated labour market and a comprehensive approach to migration. The EEA and Norway Grants for the period 2014-2021 amount to a total of EUR 2.8 billion and are aimed at reducing social and economic disparities in the EEA (28 EU Member States + 3 EEA/EFTA countries).

⁹ www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/12/11/council-conclusions-on-a-homogeneous-extended-single-market-and-eu-relations-with-non-eu-western-european-countries/

ICELAND – EEA & EFTA MEMBER



Population: 343,518.
GDP: \$24.48 billion, **per capita:** \$52,200 (2017 est.).
Political system: parliamentary republic. Prime Minister Katrin JAKOBSDOTTIR (since 30 November 2017). Unicameral Parliament (63 seats; members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote for four-year terms). Next elections to be held in 2021.

EU-Iceland Relations

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, in 2009, Iceland applied to join the EU. Negotiations started but in 2015 Foreign Minister sent a letter to the EU withdrawing the application. However, without the approval of the Icelandic Parliament, the EU considers that Iceland had not formally withdrawn the application.

In its December 2018 Conclusions, the Council of the EU noted that “Iceland is a close and reliable partner on Arctic issues. The Council therefore looks forward to developing this special partnership in order to fully tap into the opportunities that the Arctic presents, in particular in the areas of research and science, action to enhance climate change resilience and pollution prevention. The Council also looks forward to Iceland’s upcoming chairmanship of the Arctic Council for the period 2019-2021. The Council welcomes Iceland’s continued strong support for the EU to be given observer status in the Arctic Council.”

It further recalled “The robust economic recovery of Iceland after the 2008 financial and economic crisis is noteworthy. The Council welcomes the progress of the Icelandic Government’s comprehensive plan for removal of capital controls without threatening the economic and financial stability of the country. The Council recalls that restrictions can only be implemented temporarily, on the basis of the provisions of Article 43 of the EEA Agreement”. It is worth noting that Norway and Iceland public opinion’s main reservations against EU membership are their desire to preserve their autonomy in relation to fisheries and agricultural policy (CAP), both sectors being excluded from the EEA Agreement.

SWITZERLAND – EFTA MEMBER



Population: 8,292,809.
GDP: \$679 billion, **per capita:** \$62,100 (2017 est.).
Political system: federal republic (formally a confederation). Head of government: President of the Swiss Confederation Ueli MAURER (since 1 January 2019). Federal Council indirectly elected, usually from among its members by the Federal Assembly for a four-year term. Next elections to be held in October 2019.
EPP Party: Christian Democratic Party, CVP (Associated Member Party since 1994).

EU-Switzerland Relations

In December 1992, 50.3% of the Swiss people rejected EEA membership. Consequently, the cooperation between the EU and Switzerland is based on a large number of sectoral agreements, the so-called “bilateral approach” (cf table below). Since 2012, the European Council has repeatedly stated that the EU will no longer conclude single market access agreements for Switzerland until both sides approve a new Institutional Framework Agreement (IFA). Negotiations started in 2014 and by the end of 2018, both sides had reached a common Position regarding the dynamic adoption of the EU acquis by Switzerland, the mechanism for independent dispute settlement and the provisions to ensure increased legal certainty, as well as a level playing field for citizens and economic operators. It is important to note that the draft agreement will apply mainly to the Bilateral I (cf table below: Free Movement of Persons, the Agreement on Air Transport, the Overland Transport Agreement, the Agreement on Trade in Agricultural Products and the Mutual Recognition Agreement). Furthermore, it will apply to any new Swiss access to the single market (such as access to the electricity market, for example).

At the beginning of 2019, the Swiss Federal Council announced it would launch public stakeholder consultation on the text. Given the specificity of the Swiss direct democracy system (information, consultation of intermediary bodies, popular vote and ratification by parliament) and given the elections scheduled for the end of 2019, it is unlikely that the text would be ratified before 2020.

Summary Table - Models of Relationship to the European Union

			Access to the Single Market in goods and services								
		Votes on EU law	Tariff-free trade	Customs Union and external trade	Level playing field for business	'Ever closer union'	Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)	Free Movement of People	Schengen border-free area	Contribution to EU financing	Eurozone membership
UK membership of the EU								a)		b)	
Standard EU membership											
Norway (non-EU EEA)											
Bilateral Agreements	Switzerland										
	Canada										
	Turkey										
WTO membership			c)		d)						

Legend	
Full	
Partial / voluntary / special arrangement	
None	

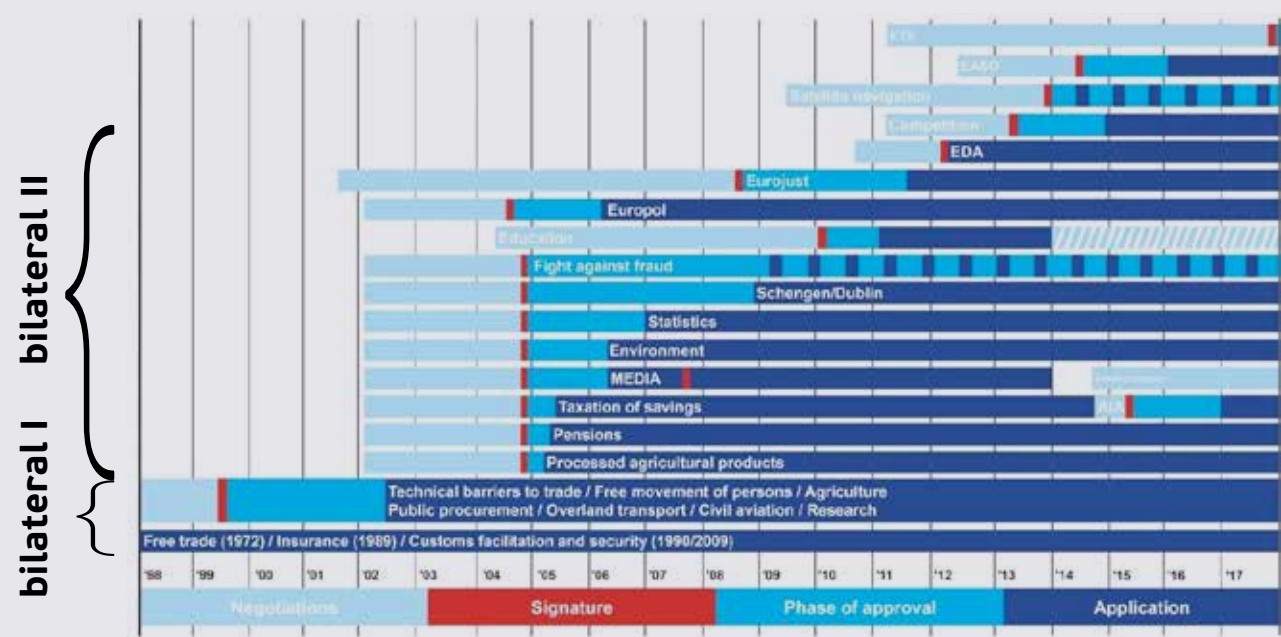
- a) Free movement of people: at the 2016 February European Council the Prime Minister secured a new settlement that will enable the UK to have a new emergency brake to limit full access to in-work benefits by newly arrived EU workers for up to four years when they enter our labour market. This will be in force for seven years.
- b) The UK receives a rebate on its contributions to the EU budget.
- c) Except where the EU has bound tariffs at zero per cent in WTO commitments.
- d) Except where the EU has made commitments under General Agreement on Trade and Services.

Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/504604/Alternatives_to_membership_-_possible_models_for_the_UK_outside_the_EU.pdf

In its February 2019 conclusion, the Council of the EU called for the modernisation of the 1972 free trade agreement, to enhance “access to the Swiss market for operators from the EU, notably in the agri-food and services sectors. It further reiterated its concern regarding the inconsistent implementation of certain agreements and the application by Switzerland of legislative measures that are incompatible with those agreements, in particular with the FMFA (notably in the area of posted workers). It called to abrogate or adapt flanking measures that Switzerland applies to EU economic operators providing services in its territory, in line with EU principles of proportionality and non-discrimination. The Council welcomes the entry into force of the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the automatic exchange of financial account information on 1 January 2017¹⁰.”

¹⁰ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/02/19/council-conclusions-on-eu-Relations-with-the-swiss-confederation/?utm_source=dsms-auto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Council+conclusions+on+EU+Relations+with+the+Swiss+Confederation

Bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU:



Source: Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, November 2018

In March 2019, the EP adopted a recommendation on Switzerland, in which it “considers that securing an IFA with Switzerland is of great importance, since it would guarantee legal certainty for both Switzerland and the EU, dynamic incorporation of the EU acquis, enhanced access to the internal market for Switzerland to the benefit of both sides, and the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union in the event of unresolved disputes relating to the application or interpretation of the IFA.” Besides, the EU and Switzerland are close allies and important economic partners. Nevertheless, our cooperation goes well beyond mutual economic and trade benefits, covering a broad range of areas, from justice and home affairs to research, education and transport. Switzerland coordinates its Positions with the EU on international issues and in areas such as fighting climate change and environmental protection, promoting human rights, rule of law, international criminal justice, compliance with international humanitarian law, democracy, and sustainable development or preserving the multilateral trading system.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/deea/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

Besides the EEA JPC and the bilateral interparliamentary meetings with Switzerland, Norway and Iceland, the delegation is also responsible for the EP's Relations with the Nordic Council, the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum and to the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. The delegation is also responsible for the Relations with the West Nordic Council (The Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland).

During the eighth legislature, EEA JPC meetings (two meetings per year) mainly addressed the issue of Brexit and the consequences of the UK withdrawal from the EU on the EFTA/EEA countries. The governments of Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein, although not at the negotiating table, are very interested to know how the situation will evolve since, whatever the outcome of Brexit, it will affect them in the same way as the EU Member States. Other topics of discussion include, inter alia, the labour mobility package: social security coordination, the European pillar of social rights and the European labour authority, Europol and police cooperation in Europe, the energy union, challenges and opportunities in the Arctic region, workplace harassment (initiatives taken by the EP and in the Icelandic Parliament) and a new deal for consumers. Members of the EP Brexit Steering Group, EP Rapporteurs and Shadow Rapporteurs and officials from the EU and EFTA institutions are regularly invited and present to the MEPs and EEA/EFTA MPs the developments of the different legislative files they follow.

In addition, every year, Members of the delegation scrutinise the developments in the EEA Agreement and adopt the resolution on the annual report on the functioning of the EEA agreement. EEA JPC meetings also address EU-Switzerland Relations with Members from Swiss parliament being invited as observers.

EPP Group Position:

Since its entry into force in 1994, the EEA Agreement¹¹ has proven to be a success story. It has been effective in extending the EU's Internal Market to third countries (Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein) and has brought tremendous benefits to EEA citizens, whilst opening up new opportunities for businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. For the EPP Group, maintaining and deepening our Relations with our European neighbours is a key policy of European integration. Remaining obstacles must be overcome while cooperation and constructive Relations must be extended. The EPP Group acknowledges regional differences and, as such, respects the wish for autonomy of the EEA and EFTA Member States.

That said, our Group attaches considerable importance to the homogeneity of the single market and a level playing field for all citizens and economic actors. Therefore, we underline the need to preserve and maintain the EEA agreement, which has proven to be a success and shown its usefulness for all partners, and we call on Switzerland to ratify the IFA as soon as possible.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-SERBIA STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-RS)



Population: 7,078,110 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$105.7 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$15,100 (2017 est.).
Ethnic groups: Serb 83.3%, Hungarian 3.5%, Romani 2.1%, Bosniak 2%, other 5.7%, undeclared or unknown 3.4% (2011 est.).
Political system: parliamentary republic. President Aleksandar VUCIC (since 31 May 2017). Prime Minister Ana BRNABIC (since 29 June 2017). Unicameral National Assembly or 'Narodna Skupstina' (250 seats; members directly elected by party list proportional representation vote in a single nationwide constituency for four-year terms). Next elections to be held by April 2020.
EPP Parties: Serbian Progressive Party - SNS (Associated Member Party since 2016). Alliance of Hungarians in Vojvodina (Associated Member Party since 2007).
EPP Group Adviser: Jan Willem Vlasman

Background and Relations with the EU

Serbia was granted EU candidate status in March 2012. However, the EU demanded that Serbia normalise its Relations with Kosovo before beginning accession negotiations. The breakthrough came on 19 April 2013 when the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton announced that Belgrade and Pristina had reached a landmark Agreement, the Brussels Agreement. Serbia and Kosovo agreed that neither side would block nor encourage others to block the other side's progress in their respective EU paths. Following the Brussels Agreement, the June 2013 European Council endorsed the Commission's recommendation to open negotiations with Serbia. The first Intergovernmental Conference with Serbia was held on 21 January 2014. Since the opening of negotiations, 16 out of 35 chapters have been opened, two of which were provisionally closed. The Council on 26 June 2018 welcomed the overall progress made in the accession negotiations.

According to the World Bank, Serbia has gone through a period of dramatic change during the last fifteen years. There have been greater fiscal responsibility and a reengagement on critical issues, such as State-owned enterprise reform, public administration reform, and public sector efficiency. Serbia has pursued these reforms while struggling to recover from the impact of the international financial crisis.

¹¹ EEA agreement full text: www.efta.int/media/documents/legal-texts/eea/the-eea-agreement/Main%20Text%20of%20the%20Agreement/EEAAgreement.pdf

The EU is Serbia's largest trading partner, with 66% of total exports in 2016 going to the EU, and 63% of imports coming from the EU. The total volume of trade in 2017 was €2.3 billion. The EU allocated €2.5 billion in EU pre-accession funds for the period 2007-2020, and the European Investment Bank has lent more than €5.4 billion since 2000.

The EP adopted four reports on Serbia in the 8th Parliamentary term. In the report of 29 November 2018, Serbia's continued engagement on the path of integration into the EU is welcomed. The Parliament calls on Serbia, with the support of the Commission, to promote this strategic decision actively among the Serbian public and to increase further timely and transparent information and visibility about the EU and the projects and programmes funded by it. The Parliament calls on Serbia to increase its alignment with the EU's foreign and security policy, including its policy on Russia, and within the United Nations. It welcomes Serbia's important contribution and continued participation in a number of EU common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions and operations. The Parliament is concerned, however, about Serbia's continuing military cooperation with Russia and Belarus.

Regarding the normalisation of Relations with Kosovo, Serbia remained committed to the implementation of the Brussels Agreement. Progress was limited, also due to the electoral process in Serbia and the domestic situation in Kosovo. However, momentum was regained in August 2016 with the start of the work on the Mitrovica Bridge and freedom of movement. Continued efforts are needed to implement the agreements already reached with Kosovo. The steps taken should have a positive and concrete impact on the everyday life of citizens in both Serbia and Kosovo.

The Serbia 2019 Report indicated that the legislative and institutional framework for upholding fundamental rights is broadly in place. Consistent and efficient implementation of legislation and policies needs to be ensured. Regarding the normalisation of Relations with Kosovo, Serbia has remained engaged in the dialogue and shown restraint in its response to the introduction of customs tariffs. Serbia needs to make further substantial efforts and contribute, in particular in its international Relations, to the establishment of an environment conducive to the conclusion of a legally binding agreement with Kosovo.

An AFET mission to Serbia and Kosovo took place from 27 February to 2 March 2019. The Members assessed the political situation on the ground. It took stock of the latest developments in Serbia and Kosovo as regards Relations with the EU, including on the mutually agreed reforms and the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. There was also an AFET/DROI mission to Serbia from 23 to 24 September 2015, in the framework of the preparations for the annual Commission report on Serbia.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-rs/home)

The EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC) held its first meeting on 15 November 2013 in Belgrade. There were nine meetings of the SAPC in the eighth parliamentary term. The tenth meeting of the SAPC took place in Strasbourg on 27 March 2019. The Members of the SAPC, including the standing rapporteur, addressed the following subjects: “state of play of the accession negotiations and EU-Serbia Relations” and “Dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina”. The Members welcomed Serbia's continued progress in the accession negotiations, bringing the total number of chapters opened to 16. They recalled that the country's consistent progress under rule of law (Chapters 23 and 24) and in the process of normalisation of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina (Chapter 35) remained essential for the overall pace of the negotiating process.

The Members reiterated the importance of freedom of expression and media and called for progress in this area. They emphasised the unambiguous support for Serbia in the European integration process. The Members commended Serbia's active participation in EU CSDP missions and operations and in the roster of the EU Battle Groups. At the meetings of the SAPC, there was an exchange of views with the representatives of the Presidency-in-Office of the Council, the European Commission, the EEAS and the Government of Serbia. The Delegation to the EU-Serbia SAPC held its meetings either in Brussels or Strasbourg. At the meetings of the Delegation, there was an exchange of views on the political and economic situation in Serbia and on its Relations with the EU.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group welcomes the continued engagement of Serbia on the path of integration into the EU and its constructive and well-prepared approach to the negotiations. The Group welcomes the progress made by Serbia in developing a functioning market economy. The Group underlines that thorough implementation of reforms and policies is a key indicator of a successful integration process. Reforms are needed to tackle the important challenges that remain in the area of the rule of law, notably in ensuring an independent, impartial, accountable and efficient judiciary and in the fight against corruption and organised crime, as well as in the protection of fundamental rights. The Group welcomes Serbia's continued engagement in the normalisation process with Kosovo, and its commitment to the implementation of the agreements reached in the EU-facilitated dialogue. The Group supports the dialogue facilitated by the EU as the framework to reach a comprehensive normalisation agreement between Serbia and Kosovo.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-ALBANIA STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-AL)



Population: 3,057,220.
GDP (PPP): \$36.01 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$12,500.
Religions: Muslim 56.7%, Roman Catholic 10%, Orthodox 6.8%, other 26.5%.
Political system: Parliamentary Republic, Prime Minister Edi RAMA Unicameral Assembly (140 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote for four-year terms). Next elections will be held in 2021. **EPP Parties:** Partia Demokratike e Shqipërisë (The Democratic Party of Albania - Associated Member Party since 2003).
EPP Group Adviser: Bozena Marciniak

Background and Relations with the EU

Albania signed its Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in June 2006, which entered into force in April 2009. Albania also submitted its formal application for EU membership in 2009. In its 2010 Opinion on Albania's application, the Commission assessed that before accession negotiations could be formally opened, Albania still had to achieve a necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria and, in particular, to meet the 12 key priorities identified in the Opinion.

In October 2012, the European Commission recommended that Albania be granted EU candidate status, subject to completion of key measures in the areas of judicial and public administration reform and revision of the parliamentary rules of procedures. The Council of the European Union awarded Albania candidate status in June 2014. Albania had already joined NATO in 2009. In terms of trade and cooperation, the EU is Albania's largest trading partner, with total volume of €4 billion in 2016. The EU also allocated a total of €649.4 million to Albania for the period 2014-2020 through the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA). For the period 2007-2020, IPA funds amounted to a total of €1.24 billion.

The 25 June 2017 parliamentary elections in Albania had as a result the victory of the coalition of the social democrats with the former socialist mayor of Tirana, Edi Rama, becoming Prime Minister. The current government pushed through a legislative programme broadly in line with the reforms required by the EU. Albania has made considerable progress in recent years in the areas of rule of law and judiciary reform. This progress, however, needs to be substantially strengthened, particularly when it concerns the fight against the cultivation and traffic of cannabis, the fight against corruption at all levels and the fight against organised crime.

The Democratic Party and the Socialist Movement for Integration have resigned from the parliament and have been staging street protests since February 2019 with some of them turning violent between protesters and police. They are calling for early elections but the Prime Minister Rama refuses to step down. Some EU officials and lawmakers have warned recently that the new tensions could harm Albania's chances of opening EU accession talks this year. EU officials have called on Albania to continue to deliver on all reform areas and, in particular, on fighting crime and

corruption. On 29 May 2019 in its annual reports on Western Balkans countries, the EC recommended opening accession negotiations with Albania. However, the opening of the accession negotiations awaits a positive decision by the Council in June 2019.

The 2018 Commission’s Report on Albania recommended that the Council decide that accession negotiations be opened with Albania in light of the progress achieved and, at the same time, encourage Albania to maintain and deepen the current reform momentum. On 26 June 2018, the General Affairs Council adopted conclusions on the EU-Western Balkans stabilisation and association process, including Albania. The Council agreed to respond positively to the progress made by Albania, and set out the path towards opening accession negotiations with this country. The AFET mission was held in February 2019 ahead of the June Council meeting. The visit took place in the midst of a political crisis in Albania, with the opPosition relinquishing their parliamentary mandates and organising mass protests. Members urged the opPosition to come back and fulfil their duty at the Parliament, noting that the responsibility for any instances of violence during the opPosition-led rallies lay with the organisers. Members stressed that it was high time that Albania sort out its political crisis by itself, without any international mediation. Members called for the reengagement of all political forces, urging the opPosition to return to the Parliament at a critical point ahead upcoming local elections in June 2019. Members urged policy-makers to agree on the electoral reform and to ensure meaningful consultations with civil society and youth, along with the media freedom.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-al/home)

The EP follows developments relating to the reform process in Albania very closely and the related issues are regularly discussed with Members of the Albanian Parliament in the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC). Interparliamentary meetings take place twice a year, alternating between the EP’s working places (Brussels and Strasbourg) and Tirana. The first EU-Albania SAPC meeting took place on 3-4 May 2010 in Brussels. In total, thirteen EU-Albania SAPC meetings were held until the end of the eighth legislature. During the last parliamentary term, six EU-Albania SAPC meetings took place respectively in Brussels and Tirana.

The 12th EU-Albania SAPC meeting was held on 12-13 February 2018 in Tirana and it resulted in the unanimous adoption of the joint recommendations. It fully supported the start of Albania’s accession negotiations to the EU. Furthermore, it stated that setting a date for the opening of accession negotiations would provide a powerful incentive for adopting and implementing the whole set of EU-related reforms. Members underlined Albania’s sustained progress and the political commitment by all political parties to reform. They stressed that the EU accession negotiations would require joint efforts by all political parties so as to represent the interests of all Albanian citizens. Members emphasised that progress of the country should be based on its merit, meeting established criteria and carrying out necessary reforms.

The EU-Albania SAPC held its 13th meeting, on 15 October 2018 in Brussels. The EU-Albania SAPC Members addressed the following topics: political dialogue and electoral reform - OSCE recommendations; implementation of the judiciary reform and the rule of law; continuation of the vetting process; human rights; minorities; fight against corruption and organised crime; cultivation and trafficking of cannabis; state of play of the EU-Albania Relations: exchange of views with representatives of the Albanian Government and of the EEAS/ European Commission. In conclusion of the meeting, the EU-Albania SAPC Members adopted the joint recommendations.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group has been always active in promoting a constructive political climate in Albania. This has not only taken the input of EP resolutions, but also of direct dialogue and mediation, including in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, but also through ad hoc efforts, such as meetings with Albanian counterparts in Brussels and Tirana.

The EPP Group repeatedly express support of the EC recommendation that the country’s candidate status be encouraged, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions proposed by the Commission. Furthermore, EPP Group MEPs emphasise the importance of the rule of law and the fact that public administration and State institutions have to remain independent. EPP Group Members highlight that democratic consolidation presupposes a free and fair electoral process, the results of which are viewed as legitimate by all relevant political parties.

The EPP Group reiterates the importance of genuine and constructive political dialogue, and sustainable cross-party cooperation, in particular in all areas of reforms related to the EU accession process. EPP Group Members underline that this process should be accompanied by a serious commitment on the part of all parties, government and opPosition, to contribute positively to Albania’s progress in the EU accession process. EPP Group Members reiterate their strong belief that political debate should take place within the Parliament and other democratic institutions, in full respect of existing laws and procedures. Finally, the EPP Group underlines, therefore, that any form of boycotting and blocking of parliamentary work de facto significantly hinders progress towards EU accession.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-MONTENEGRO STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-ME)



Population: 614,249 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$11.08 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$17,800 (2017 est.).
Ethnic groups: Montenegrin 45%, Serbian 28.7%, Bosniak 8.7%, Albanian 4.9%, Muslim 3.3%, Romani 1%, Croat 1%, other 2.6%, unspecified 4.9%.
Political system: Parliamentary Republic. Prime Minister Dusko MARKOVIC (since November 2016). Unicameral Assembly or ‘Skupstina’ (81 seats; members directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote for four-year terms). Next elections in October 2020.
EPP Parties: none.
EPP Group Adviser: Olivier Le Saëc (substituting Julianna Huszar-Dekany)

Background and Relations with the EU

Montenegro became an official EU candidate in 2010. Visa liberalisation was granted already in 2009, negotiations opened in 2012, and as of June 2018, 32 of the 35 accession chapters have been opened, three of which provisionally closed. Montenegro is the most advanced candidate state, as was also recognised in the European Commission’s February 2018 Enlargement Strategy. The country also joined NATO in June 2017.

The latest parliamentary elections were held in October 2016 and saw the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) claiming the majority (41.41%). To form a slim majority (41 MPs), DPS reached a coalition agreement with five significantly smaller parties.

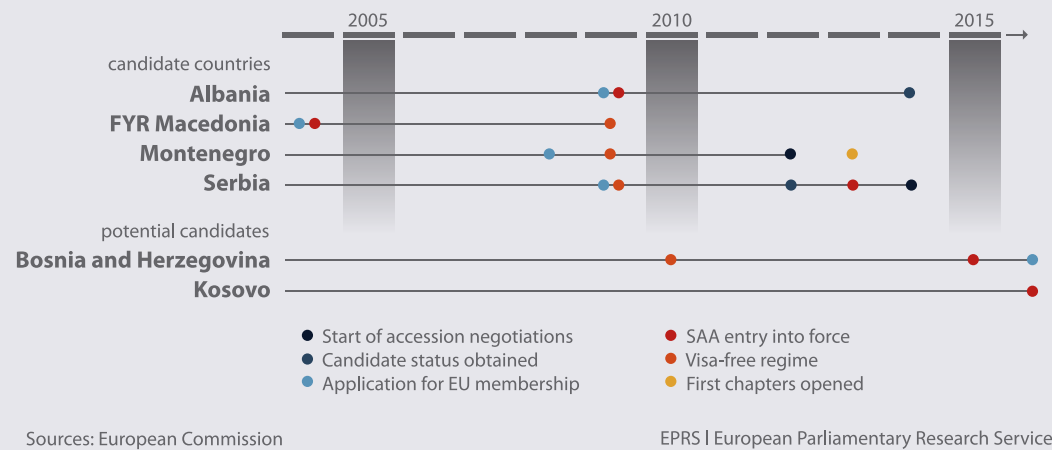
An alleged coup attempt was planned to take place on the day of the 2016 election, with a group of 20 Serbian and Montenegrin citizens arrested on the eve of the election. It is believed that this coup plot was supported by Russia and was intended to reverse Montenegro’s evermore Euro-Atlantic orientation. As a result of this alleged coup attempt and unhappiness with the newly formed majority, 39 opPosition MPs decided to boycott the parliament until further notice, or at least until the uncertainty around the suspected coup had been thoroughly investigated. As presidential elections approached in 2018, part of the opPosition returned to parliament. The elections saw DPS’ Đukanović, already in power since 1991, winning already in the first round, as he surpassed the 50% mark, obtaining 53.90% of the votes.

Montenegro’s economy is still in the process of transition to a free market economy, with around 90% of its State-owned companies privatised. Montenegro uses the euro, although it is not part of the eurozone, and it joined the World Bank and IMF in January 2007. WTO membership followed in 2011. The EU has emphasised the need for Montenegro to tackle corruption and organised crime, strengthen the rule of law and the oversight role of parliament, pass public administration reforms and ensure media freedom and fundamental rights.

Since 2014, China has heavily invested in the country, namely by building part of the road network. In 2018, public debt was 65.9% of GDP, but the forecast is that it will grow to 80% when the repayment of a €800 million road network loan begins in 2019. Value-added tax was increased in January 2018, with exception of the tourism sector, in order to curb public debt. Net foreign direct investment in 2017 reached \$848 million. Thanks to low corporation tax rates, investment per capita is one of the highest in Europe. The biggest foreign investors in Montenegro in 2017 were Norway, Russia, Italy, Azerbaijan and Hungary.

Unemployment remains at 16.1% (2017 est.). The main source of income is tourism, which accounts for more than 20% of GDP. Montenegro aims to become a net energy exporter, as only 20% of its potential hydropower is used. The construction of an underwater cable to Italy should help meet its goal. Macroeconomic and fiscal stability were strengthened but further efforts are required to address persistent challenges, especially high public debt. The EU is Montenegro’s largest trading partner, with the volume of trade between the two entities being €1.1 billion in 2016. Montenegro was also allocated €270 million in pre-accession funds for the period 2014-2020, with the largest part of it going to the improvement of agriculture and rural development, rule of law and fundamental rights, and transport infrastructure.

Enlargement: state of play



Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-me/home)

The EP Delegation to the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC) was formed in 2014 and consists of 14 MEPs. Fourteen more seats in the SAPC are reserved for Montenegrin members of parliament. However, because part of the opPosition has boycotted the Montenegrin parliament since the October 2016 elections, some seats of the SAPC that are reserved for the opPosition remain empty.

The SAPC usually meets twice per year, once in Podgorica and once in Strasbourg. Since 2014, the SAPC has met on the following dates: 1-2 December 2014, 16-17 December 2015, 19-20 May 2016, 18-19 December 2017, 16-17 July 2018, 14-15 November 2018, 13 March 2019.

Following the boycott by the Montenegrin opPosition, the SAPC meetings held in 2017 did not attempt to adopt any joint declarations or recommendations given the absence of the opPosition members. Since the gradual return of the Montenegrin opPosition, the SAPC meetings held in 2018 and 2019 did once again adopt joint statements, focusing mainly on economic and tax reforms, judiciary reforms and the fight against organised crime and corruption, fundamental rights and media freedom, and finally on the long-standing issue of the reform of the electoral process.

EPP Group Position:

The EPP Group strongly supports Montenegro on its path towards EU membership and, in that optic, welcomes the return of the opPosition to the Montenegrin parliament. The EPP Group welcomes the overall progress in fundamental rights, but calls for more efforts in guaranteeing media freedom and the need to reduce polarising political rhetoric. We also welcomed Montenegro’s membership of NATO in summer 2017.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND KOSOVO (DSEE)

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Population: 3,849,891.
GDP: \$44.83 billion, **per capita:** \$12,800 (2017 est.).
Ethnic groups: Bosniak 50.1%, Serb 30.8%, Croat 15.4%, other 2.7%, not declared/no answer 1% (2013 est.).
Religions: Muslim 50.7%, Orthodox 30.7%, Roman Catholic 15.2%, other 3.4% (2013 est.).
Political system: Parliamentary Republic. Chairman of the Council of Ministers Denis ZVIZDIC (since 11 February 2015). Bicameral Parliamentary Assembly or ‘Skupstina’ consists of: House of Peoples or ‘Dom Naroda’ (15 seats - 5 Bosniak, 5 Croat, 5 Serb; members designated by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s House of Peoples and the Republika Srpska’s National Assembly for four-year terms). House of Representatives or ‘Predstavnicki Dom’ (42 seats to include 28 seats allocated to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 14 to the Republika Srpska; members directly elected by proportional representation vote for four-year terms). Next elections in 2019 and 2022.
EPP Parties: Stranka Demokratske Akcije - SDA (Observer Member Party since 2004). Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina - HDZ (Observer Member Party since 2004). HDZ 1990 (Observer Member Party since 2014). Partija Demokratskog Progresa - PDP (Observer Member Party since 2004).
EPP Group Adviser: Olivier Le Saëc (standing in for Julianna Huszar-Dekany)

Background and Relations with the EU

Following the 1995 Dayton Accords, Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities: Republika Srpska, which is predominantly Serb, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is predominantly Bosniak and Croat. The two entities have their own constitutions and are partly autonomous. There is a third, small, autonomous region: the Brčko district, which is jointly governed. Dayton Agreement also introduced the Position of High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR - Office of the High Representative), who was in charge of the international civilian presence in the country and whose purpose was to oversee the civilian implementation of the agreement. The OHR was the highest political authority and was able to bypass the elected Parliamentary Assembly. In 2008, a set of conditions were identified to terminate the OHR, most of which corresponded to EU accession requirements.

Reflecting the ethnic divisions of BiH, the head of state consists of a three-member Presidency, elected directly by the people for four-year terms. The Chairperson rotates every eight months, with the one who obtained the most votes overall first taking up the post first. The main responsibility of the Presidency is foreign policy and the budget. Next to BiH’s Parliamentary Assembly, both Republika Srpska and the Federation also have their own parliaments. The Prime Minister, who is appointed by the Presidency, must be approved by the national Parliamentary Assembly and chairs the cabinet.

The last general election was held in October 2018 (for the Presidency, national Parliamentary Assembly and entity parliaments). The elections took place in a peaceful and orderly manner, and saw the conservative ‘Party for Democratic Action’ (SDA) win for the Bosniaks, the social democratic ‘Democratic Front’ (DF) win for the Croats, and the once-socialist and now Serbian nationalist party ‘Alliance of Independent Social Democrats’ (SNSD) win for the Serbs.

BiH’s economy is in a transitional state, having undergone limited market reforms. The country relies heavily on exports of metals, energy, textiles and furniture, as well as on remittances and foreign aid. The institutional design of the country hampers economic policy coordination and reform, while an excessive and slow bureaucracy and a segmented market discourage foreign investment. The ‘konvertibilna marka’ (convertible mark), introduced in 1998, is pegged to the euro through a currency board arrangement, which has maintained confidence in the currency and has facilitated reliable trade links with European partners. Despite this, BiH’s economy remains among the least competitive in the region. BiH became a full member of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) in September 2007.

The EC launched the Stabilisation and Association Process in 1999, including BiH. The June 2000 European Council recognised all SAP countries as “potential candidates” for EU membership. During the Thessaloniki Summit, BiH was confirmed as a potential candidate for EU membership. In 2008, the Council adopted a European Partnership with BiH, setting priorities for EU assistance to the country through IPA funds. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) was signed in June 2008. An Interim Agreement on Trade and

Trade-Related Matters came into force from July 2008, which established a free trade area between the EU and BiH. BiH also enjoys a visa-free regime since 2010. In the context of the CFSP, the military mission EUFOR/Operation Althea oversees the Dayton Agreement implementation, while the EU Police Mission aims at facilitating sustainable, multi-ethnic policing in line with EU criteria. A High-Level Dialogue on the Accession Process was launched in Brussels in June 2012 to address EU accession requirements and to bring the integration process to the foreground of BiH's agenda. The SAA entered into full force in June 2015, replacing the Interim Agreement and thereby increasing BiH's authorities' obligations in relation to reforms. The SAA encompasses a wide range of issues from trade-related matters to EU law. In February 2016, BiH applied to join the EU. The same year, the Council invited the EC to present an opinion on the application. In December 2016, the Commission handed its comprehensive Questionnaire covering all accession criteria to BiH authorities and the Questionnaire was delivered back to the EC in February 2018. On 29 May 2019, the EC adopted its opinion on the country's membership application, and identified 14 key priorities to be met¹².

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dsee/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

The members of the EP delegation to the EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina SAPC also participate in the EU-Kosovo SAPC. From the EP's side, it consists of 13 permanent members and 13 substitute members. While it is the same delegation, it deals with the two SAPCs in two separate fora.

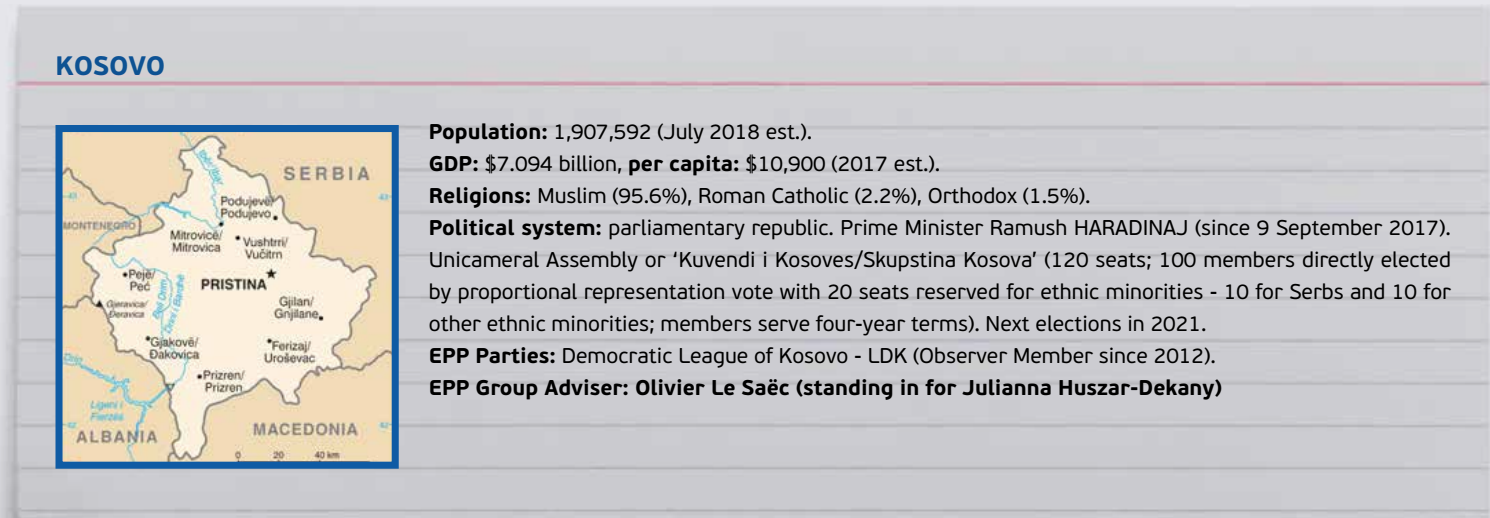
The first EU-BiH SAPC meeting took place in 2015. Unfortunately, the Rules of Procedure were not adopted at that meeting and therefore the Chair of the delegation decided that no meetings would be held in full SAPC delegation format until there was agreement on the Rules of Procedure on part of the bureau of the delegation. The impasse is due to the fact that BiH's Delegation wants to replicate their ethnic structure in the SAPC voting process, thereby reserving a right of veto for each constituent people (ethnic blocking). This is fundamentally contrary to SAPC rules, since each delegation decides on the basis of a simple majority. So far, no solution has been found, therefore the delegation meetings are on hold. In previous meetings, the issue of insufficient engagement on the part of political leaders in BiH to reach a compromise was raised, as well as the obstacles caused by the complex and inefficient institutional architecture. Even though the EP delegation is not meeting its BiH counterparts in the SAPC, it has continued to have exchanges of views with BiH representatives in Brussels, officials from the EC and EEAS, and experts, in order to continue debating the situation of BiH and its Relations with the EU.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group expresses continuous concern about the political situation in this country. It deeply regrets that the political leaders of the three ethnic communities are not able to cooperate and discuss ways to overcome the existing disputes and establish a new national Government after last general elections in October 2018. The current institutional system appeared to be more a “system for stability than for efficiency” with the obligation to reach a consensus for taking a decision. Moreover, the Relations between three main communities (Bosniak, Serb and Croat) remain very difficult and sensitive. Thus, it is external actors that mainly have a positive influence on Relations between BiH’s Members of Presidency, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republika of Srpska as regards borders and competencies.

The political leaders' inability to compromise is even blocking the designation of BiH representatives to the SAPC since the SAA became effective in June 2015. It appears that constitutional reform towards a functioning democratic State is urgently needed.

Furthermore, the EPP Group also expresses concern about the fact that the high level of corruption, organised crime, money laundering, trafficking in human beings, drugs and goods continue to persist in the absence of effective institutions. Finally, the last election campaign confirmed that tensions and disputes are still related to ethnic matters rather than economic and social issues. Nevertheless, the EPP Group reaffirms its commitment to support the country's unity and the dialogue between communities in the face of all internal and external influences affecting the country's EU integration process.



Background and Relations with the EU

Following the 1999 Kosovo war, the United Nations placed Kosovo under its administration. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which was to last until the determination of Kosovo's future status. UNMIK was granted sweeping powers to govern Kosovo, but also directed UNMIK to establish interim institutions of self-governance. UNSCR 1244 also authorised KFOR, a NATO-led peacekeeping force, and the EU's Rule of Law mission (EULEX). EULEX is the largest civilian mission ever launched by the EU, with the aim of assisting the Kosovar authorities in the area of rule of law, specifically in relation to the police, judiciary and customs.

UN-sponsored negotiations regarding the status of Kosovo began in 2006 and, in 2008, the International Civilian Representative for Kosovo (ICR) was appointed to oversee the Kosovo status settlement. The ICR was supported by an International Civilian Office, which doubled as the EU Special Representative's Office. In February 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo voted to declare independence from Serbia - recognised today by a majority of EU Member States and other major countries (the United States and Japan). Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece and Cyprus and, of course, Serbia, do not recognise Kosovo's independence. In July 2010, the International Court of Justice released an advisory opinion affirming that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate general principles of international law, UN Security Council Resolution 1244, or the Constitutive Framework. In September 2010, following that opinion, Serbia supported a compromise UN resolution that dropped its demands to reopen talks on the status of the disputed province. In efforts to normalise Belgrade-Pristina Relations, EU-mediated talks were initiated between the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia and led to the Brussels Agreement in 2013. In 2012, the Commission had considered that there were no legal obstacles against Kosovo signing a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. Negotiations started following the signing of the Brussels Agreement, with the SAA signed three years later. It entered into force in 2016. Kosovo has received more than €2.3 billion in EU assistance since 1999 and close to €1 billion in support of international presence since 1999. It has been a member of the World Bank and IMF since 2009 and of the CEFTA since 2006.

In March 2018, a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro was reached, meeting the final criteria for visa liberalisation to be granted. Indeed, in June 2018, the EC stated that Kosovo should be granted visa liberalisation and this was supported by the EP in 2018. In November 2018, Kosovo increased tariffs on imports from Serbia and BiH from 10% to 100%. The move was a response to Serbia blocking Kosovo's bid to join international organisations, specifically Interpol in this case. The tariffs have been widely condemned by the EU as harmful to regional cooperation, good neighbourly Relations and reconciliation. The EC stated that the tariffs infringe both the CEFTA and the spirit of the SAA between the EU and Kosovo. The tariffs are still in effect. On 14 December 2018, Kosovo's MPs almost unanimously voted to back the government's plan to transform the Kosovo Security Force into an Armed Force that would grow to 5,000 active troops over the next decade. This move to transform the KSF into a KAF has been negatively received by Serbia and by NATO, the EU and UN, but the US, as well as the governments of Germany, the UK and France have endorsed it.

Kosovo's economy has shown progress in changing over to a market-based system and maintaining macroeconomic stability, but it is still highly dependent on the international community and the diaspora for financial and technical assistance. Remittances from the diaspora, located mainly in Germany and Switzerland, are estimated to account for about 17% of GDP and international donor assistance accounts

12 <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-bosnia-and-herzegovina-opinion.pdf>

for approximately 10% of GDP. With international assistance, Kosovo has been able to privatise a majority of its State-owned enterprises. An unemployment rate of 33%, and a youth unemployment rate of nearly 60%, in a country where the average age is 26, encourages emigration and fuels a significant grey economy. While Kosovo’s economy continued to make progress, unemployment has not been reduced or living standards raised, due to the lack of economic reforms and investment.

Delegation’s Activities

The Kosovo delegation took the form of SAPC in 2016 following the entry into force of the EU-Stabilisation and Association Agreement on April 2016. The meetings have maintained a regular pace since the committee was created in the spring of 2016, with the first meeting of the EU-Kosovo SAPC delegation taking place in May 2016. There were two meetings in 2016; one meeting in 2017; two meetings in 2018 and the last meeting took place on 14 February 2019.

The meetings have taken place alternatively in Brussels, Strasbourg and Pristina. The Members noted the progress made within the process of normalisation of Relations between Kosovo and Serbia, and called upon Kosovo to engage constructively in formulating and implementing future agreements. They also called for political dialogue to improve the functioning of democratic institutions, emphasised the importance of good neighbourly Relations and regional cooperation on the path to reconciliation. Members highlighted the necessity to protect fundamental rights and freedoms, notably of minority groups, and the need to protect media pluralism. The committee also welcomed the efficient fight against terrorism, including successful intelligence Activities, subsequent investigations and efficient court proceedings of terrorism cases. Members noted, however, that corruption and organised crime remain widespread and represent an obstacle to Kosovo’s development and stressed that greater efforts must be made in the fight against organised crime. The social and economic situation, which is heavily tied to the visa liberalisation issue, remain at the heart of discussions. Members welcomed the 2018 EP vote in favour of visa liberalisation for Kosovar citizens and the co-Chairs called on EU Member States to follow suit.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group welcomed the entry into force of SAA agreement in 2016. The Group notes that Kosovo has registered some progress in terms of public administration and values the efforts made in the fight against terrorism and the financing of terrorist Activities. However, impartiality and transparency in public administration and the judiciary are still lacking, and there are ongoing concerns regarding the fight against corruption and organised crime.

Kosovo must demonstrate further efforts in terms of fundamental reforms in the areas of rule of law and good neighbourly Relations, particularly with Serbia. Additionally, the Group stresses the need for protection of minority rights and to continue efforts to reconcile the Albanian and Serbian communities living in Kosovo.

The EPP Group recalls Kosovo’s Government’s commitment to revoke the 100% increased tariffs on imports from Serbia and BiH and to reach a legally binding agreement on full normalisation of Relations between Pristina and Belgrade.

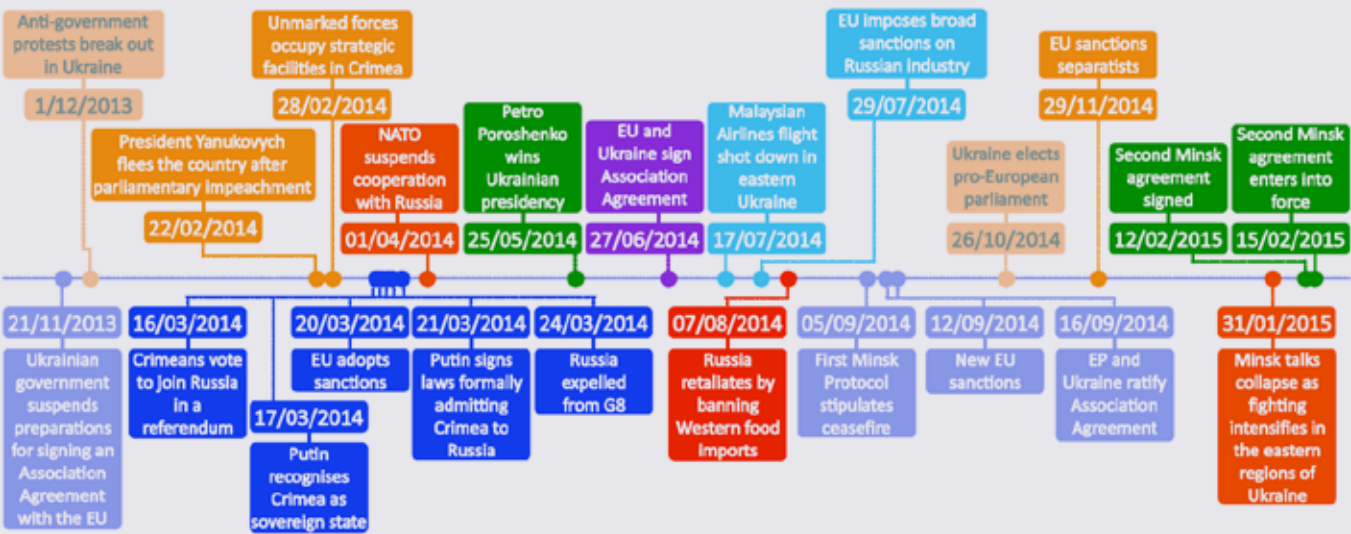


A map of Ukraine showing its geographical location and major cities. The map includes labels for neighboring countries: Belarus to the north, Romania to the south, and Moldova to the southwest. Major cities marked include Kyiv (the capital), Lviv, Cherniv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Poltava, Cherkassy, Kirovohrad, Kyyiv Rih, Mykolayiv, Odessa, Riverson, Zaporizhzhya, Dnepropetrovsk, Luhansk, Donetsk, Mariupol, Berdyansk, Kerch, Feodosiya, Sevastopol, and Simferopol. The Black Sea is to the south, and the Sea of Azov is to the southeast. The Crimean Peninsula is shown at the bottom, with a note indicating it is a Russian province. A scale bar at the bottom left shows distances up to 200 km.

EPP Group Advisers: Robert Golanski, Bogdana Depo

Since the beginning of the conflict with Russia, the EU has expressed its full and univocal support for Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. It also insists on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, which serve as the basis for a sustainable political solution to the conflict in the east of the country. In numerous statements, reports and Council conclusions, EU leaders have regularly reiterated their commitment to the sanctions against Russia and stressed on the importance of a genuine and ambitious reform process, highlighting the need for a consistent fight against endemic corruption.

Figure 2 – Timeline: November 2013 – February 2015



Source: EPRS

The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was signed in June 2014 and ratified by all the Parliaments, including the EP, and fully entered into force in September 2017. The DCFTA (trade part) provisionally entered into force in January 2016 with an aim of giving an impetus to the Ukrainian economy, given the difficult situation resulting in economic contraction. Full implementation of the agreement will help Ukraine draw closer to the European Union and its standards as well as increase the quality of life for its citizens. On 11 June 2017, Ukraine was granted a visa-free regime with the EU, which has a positive impact on mobility and people-to-people contacts.

The economic situation of Ukraine has worsened since the annexation of the Crimea and the Russia-led conflict in the east. Ukraine's industrial production dropped by 20% leading to a 17-20% GDP, while military spending reached an unprecedented 5% GDP. Additionally some million internally displaced persons (IDPs) originating from the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are an additional unforeseen burden for the State budget. At the same time export revenue as well as FDI remains low due to unstable security situation.

Given Ukraine's economic situation, the EU has granted unprecedented financial support in the form of loans, grants and direct Micro-Financial Assistance (MFA) to the State budget. The EU and European Financial Institutions have mobilised over €12 billion in loans. Under the new MFA programme approved by the EP and the Council in July 2018, up to €1 billion is made available to Ukraine. The programme helps Ukraine to cover its financing needs and supports the implementation of a wide-ranging structural reform agenda. The MFA funds are available in the form of low-interest long-term loans and grants conditional on the implementation of specific policy measures agreed in the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the EU and Ukraine. The total MFA extended to Ukraine by the EU since 2014 will reach €3.3 billion, the largest amount of such assistance granted to any non-EU country.

The main achievements of the reinforced EU-Ukraine cooperation are:

- Trade in goods between the EU and Ukraine grew by 24% in 2017;
- Ukraine's GDP increased by 2.5% in 2017 and 3.5% in 2018;
- The EU's additional instruments supporting the reform process:
- The Support Group for Ukraine within the European Commission, which works exclusively on cooperation with the Ukrainian administration, accompanying the development of strategies or drafting legislation in key areas;
- The EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) was established in July 2014 with the mandate to provide strategic advice to Ukraine's civilian security sector;
- The EP's Parliamentary Support and Capacity Building Programme for the Verkhovna Rada, which follows and supports the reform process of Ukraine's parliament;
- The U-LEAD programme focusing on decentralisation.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-ua/home)

The EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Association Committee (PAC) was the most active and hands-on in the EP, given the significant number of high-level events, conferences, meetings, as well as resolutions and statements. At the end of February 2016, the EP hosted the "Ukraine Week", which was an unprecedented event involving 60 high-level Members of the Rada and of the EP. Additionally, the EP has initiated closed-door discussions, known as the Jean Monnet dialogues, aimed at facilitating consensus building and cooperation between the Rada's leaders.

A PAC is convened every six months and provides a framework for parliamentary oversight of the Association Agreement (AA) implementation. It also serves as an open forum for debate on questions of mutual interest and is reinforced by the established tandem programme, where selected MPs and MEPs explore in detail policy areas of their particular interest, such as energy, decentralisation or anti-corruption.

During the PACs, MEPs and Ukrainian counterparts have discussed the progress as well as agreed on a further ambitious reform agenda for Ukraine. They have debated the political situation in Ukraine and its reform agenda, EU-Ukraine cooperation on energy and nuclear safety, as well as the security situation, implementation of the Minsk agreements, human rights and the humanitarian situation. Ukrainian Parliamentarians and their counterparts in the EP are working closely together on the reforms in question in the EP-Rada tandem system. This allows for the transfer of best practices, knowledge and opinions, but also for better scrutiny of the reform progress. Parliamentarians of both sides have continuously stressed that the AA did not constitute the final goal in EU-Ukraine Relations and welcomed Ukraine's European aspirations; they have acknowledged the reform efforts of the Ukrainian authorities since 2014. At the same time, the PAC has expressed its disappointment at the further lack of progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements and recalled that the security situation in the east of Ukraine remains tense and gradually continues to deteriorate, including in the Azov Sea.

Additionally, MEPs have had a unique opportunity to take advantage of field visits to get to know the situation on the ground better. This was particularly the case for visits to the government-controlled parts of Donbas, where MEPs had the chance to see the devastation of the infrastructure and the resilience of the local population. This allowed MEPs to get a better understanding of the security and humanitarian situation in the conflict area.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group is strongly involved in supporting Ukraine, particularly during the current crisis. It wishes to see a free, democratic, secure and prosperous Ukraine emerge from the current reform efforts and the volatile security environment. To this end, we work closely with our sister parties in Ukraine, so that they can be a driving force for change.

The EPP Group fully supports the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The EPP Group condemns the escalating destabilisation and aggression in the east and south of Ukraine caused by pro-Russian armed, trained and well-coordinated separatists led by Russian special forces.

The EPP Group supports the sanctions applied to date. We consider the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia as illegal and do not recognise it. This act is a grave violation of Russia's international legal obligations stemming from the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the Statute of the Council of Europe and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on security guarantees for Ukraine. The EPP Group demands release of all illegally detained prisoners from Ukraine in Russia, including the Sakharov Prize Laureate Oleg Sentsov.

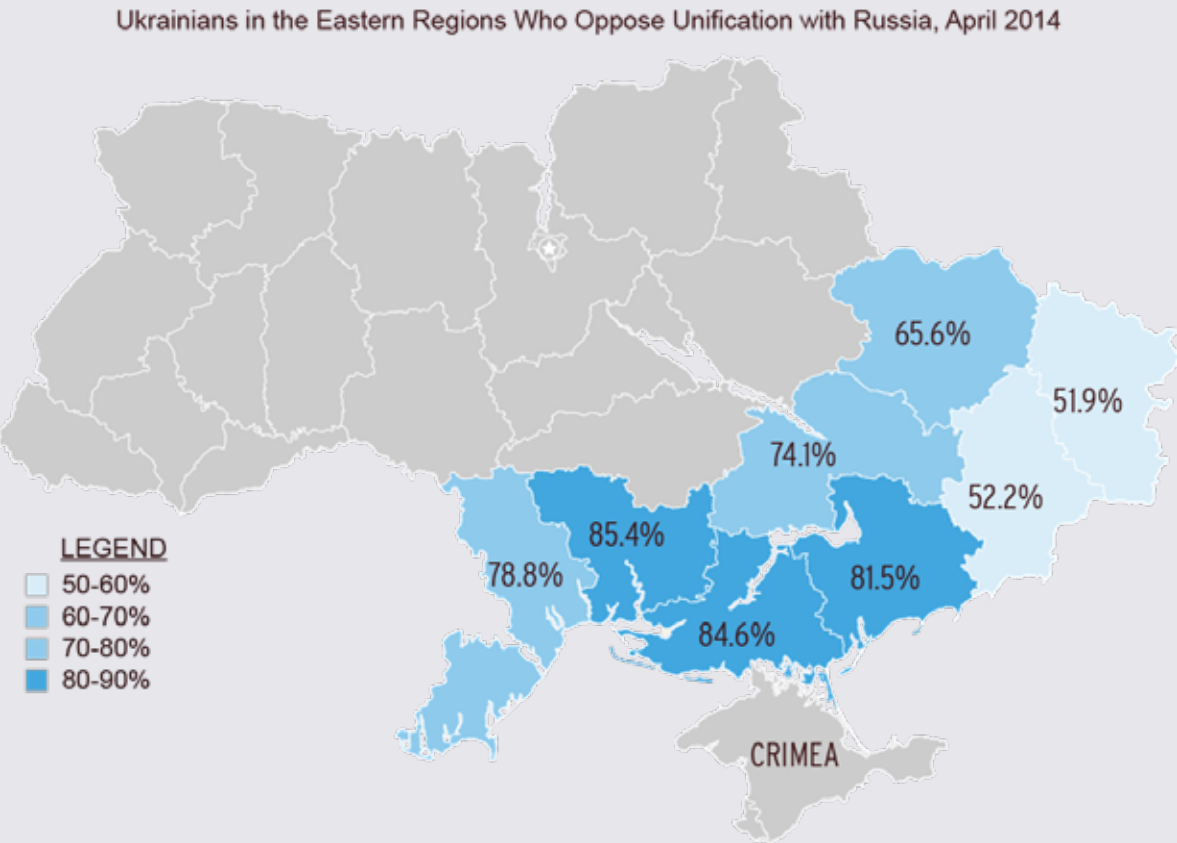
The EPP Group demands that Russia withdraw its troops from the border with and within Ukraine and is fully committed to finding a political solution to the crisis, on the basis of full respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as restoration of the control by the Ukrainian authorities over the Ukraine-Russia border.

The EPP Group supports the efforts of the government of Ukraine to launch an ambitious agenda of economic, political and social reforms. Eradication of corruption must continue to be a top priority for the Ukrainian authorities, as well as comprehensive judicial reform and a unified electoral code. The swift implementation of the reform agenda is necessary.

The EPP Group continues to support the unprecedented effort of the international financial institutions and the European Union to provide Ukraine with a generous short- and long-term financial aid package. However, the Group also supports the much-needed conditionality to be attached to international financial assistance, in order to make sure that these funds are properly used and benefit the people. The EPP Group welcomed the establishment of visa liberalisation with Ukraine, which has led to a significant increase in people-to-people contacts.

The EP Resolutions on Ukraine were initiated by the EPP Group (on MFA for Ukraine, Savchenko and Sentsov cases, multiple times on the situation in Ukraine, as well as on the political motivation of behaviour of the Russian authorities with regard to Oleksandr Kolchenko, as well as the deteriorating human rights situation, especially of the Crimean Tatars, and the worsening of the security situation in Azov Sea).

All these EPP Group Positions are contained in the EPP Group Position Paper on Ukraine, which was adopted in 2015. Since then, the security situation has further deteriorated; therefore, EPP Group remains firm in its support for Ukraine’s rigorous reform process and for maintaining restrictive measures against Russia in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the deliberate destabilisation of Ukraine.



Source: Kiev International Institute Of Sociology (KIIS), The Views And Opinions Of South-Eastern Regions Residents of Ukraine

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2015/05/21/10-maps-that-explain-ukraines-struggle-for-independence/>

DELEGATION TO THE EU-MOLDOVA PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE (D-MD)



Population: 3,437,720 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$23.72 billion, per capita (PPP): \$6,700 (2017 est.).
Ethnic Groups: Moldovan 75.1%, Romanian 7%, Ukrainian 6.6%, Gagauz 4.6%, Russian 4.1%, Bulgarian 1.9%, other 0.8% (2014 est.).
Political system: parliamentary republic. Prime Minister Maia SANDU (since 8 June 2019). Unicameral Parliament (101 seats; 51 Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 50 Members directly elected in a single, nationwide constituency by closed party-list proportional representation vote; all Members serve four-year terms. Next elections to be held February 2023.
EPP Parties:
1 Member Party Name: Partidul Liberal Democrat Din Moldova - PLDM/Date of Entry in the EPP: 2011/ Membership status: Observer Member Party/President of the Party: CIBOTARU Viorel
2 Member Party Name: Party of Action and Solidarity/Date of Entry in the EPP: 2017/Membership status: Observer Member Party/President of the Party: Maia SANDU
3 Member Party Name: Platforma Demnitate și Adevăr/Platforma DA/Date of Entry in the EPP: 2017/ Membership status: Observer Member Party/President of the Party: Andrei NASTASE.
EPP Group Adviser: Viktor Sata

Background and Relations with the EU

In 1991 the Republic of Moldova declared its independence and succeeded the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, which was part of the Soviet Union. Due to virtually identical languages, a commonly shared history and cultural heritage, Moldova has maintained close ties with Romania. Two regions in Moldova enjoy autonomy, namely the Turkic-language speaking Gagauz region in the southwest and the region of Transnistria. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Transnistria unilaterally declared independence from Moldova in 1990. Following this declaration, which was not recognised internationally, fierce fighting broke out, leading to one of the so-called “frozen conflicts”. Ongoing negotiations are taking place to put an end to it. A 5+2 format including representatives of the sides, mediators and observers in the negotiation process – Moldova, Transnistria, the OSCE, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the European Union and the United States – is working on the parameters of a comprehensive settlement based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognised borders with a special status for Transnistria within Moldova.

Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, suffers from high unemployment rates and a large foreign debt. Furthermore, it has no own energy resources and relies heavily on Russian gas imports, which has a significant impact on the Moldovan economy. In 2009, a pro-Western coalition of four parties, the Alliance for European Integration, came to power. Political instability has persisted, however, with repeated changes of government.

Pro-Russian candidate Igor Dodon was elected president in November 2016, beating pro-European rival Maia Sandu with 55% of the vote. His election marked the first time in 16 years that Moldova’s Head of State was chosen directly by the people and not by parliament. Infighting among coalition members led to prolonged legislative gridlock and political instability, as well as the collapse of four governments, all ruled by pro-European coalitions centred around the Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM) and the Democratic Party (PDM). A political impasse ended in January 2016 when a new parliamentary majority led by PDM, joined by defectors from the Communists and PLDM, supported PDM member, Pavel FILIP, as Prime Minister.

Parliamentary elections were held in Moldova on 24 February 2019 in order to elect the 101 members. Monitors have condemned what they say are “strong indications of vote-buying” in Moldova’s general poll. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also reported “pressure on public employees” and “misuse of State resources”. The elections were held under a parallel voting system, replacing the closed-list proportional system used in Moldova at all previous parliamentary elections since independence. Candidates from four parties were elected to Parliament: the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, the Democratic Party of Moldova, the ACUM electoral alliance of DA and PAS, and the Șor Party. Moldova’s Constitutional Court confirmed the results on 9 March 2019. For nearly a week, a new coalition government had been prevented from taking office in Chisinau, the Moldovan capital, after the outgoing administration refused to leave.

The impasse ended with the resignation of former Prime Minister, Pavel Filip, in response to the prospect of mass protests over the weekend. He also faced increasing international pressure from Moscow and several European capitals, and a private visit from the American ambassador. The new government was formed from a coalition of two groups, the pro-Russian Socialist party and the pro-Western Now Platform party. Maia Sandu, a former World Bank official who leads the Now Platform party, was named Prime Minister. The EU cooperates with Moldova within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. EU assistance to Moldova supports the objectives of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement and the 20 Deliverables for 2020. It is linked to the country's reform commitments under the Association Agreement, which was signed in June 2014. It aims at improving the quality of life of ordinary Moldovans in a tangible and visible manner, strengthening the rule of law, as well as improving the business climate, with a view to reaping the benefits from the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), and supporting greater connectivity between Moldova and the EU in the areas of energy and transport. Visa liberalisation came into effect in April 2014, although many Moldovans also hold Romanian citizenship.

Moldova benefits also from regional and multi-country Action Programmes funded under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). Since 28 April 2014, Moldovan citizens with a biometric passport may travel to the Schengen area without a visa. The new EU multiannual programming 2017-2020 (Single Support Framework) was adopted on 13 September 2017. It focuses on four priority areas: economic development; governance; connectivity; contacts between people. Beyond these areas, the programming also includes support for civil society, strategic communication and capacity development/institution building. On 13 September 2017, the EP and the Council agreed on a €100 million macro-financial assistance programme with a view to supporting Moldova's economic stabilisation and a substantive reform agenda. Regarding cooperation to create growth and jobs, Moldova became the first Eastern Partnership country to participate in the EU's Competitiveness of Enterprises and SME programme.

The European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova (EUBAM) and Ukraine was launched in 2005. Illicit cross-border Activities, including trafficking of human beings, smuggling and other illegal trade, were occurring along the Moldova-Ukrainian border. This was aggravated by the fact that the Moldovan government had no direct control over the secessionist region of Transnistria in Moldova (which stretches along 454 km of the Moldova-Ukraine border). Moldova is one of the non-EU States that participate in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-md/home)

EU-Moldova Relations were formalised again in 2014 with the signing of the Association Agreement. The first meeting of the EU-Moldova Association Council was held on 16 March 2015 and the fifth meeting of the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee took place in Strasbourg in April 2017. The sixth EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee took place in Chişinău on 5 April 2018. The following items were discussed:

- EU-Moldova Relations and the state of play of the Association Agreement's implementation and reforms in selected areas;
- State of implementation of the national action plan of the Republic of Moldova in the AA implementation for 2017-2019;
- Cooperation with civil society in AA implementation;
- State of play of reforms in the field of justice, public administration reform and fight against corruption;
- State of play of reforms in the economic field; in particular improvement of the business climate;
- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including media freedom and audiovisual reform;
- Financial Services and the current situation in the banking system;
- EU assistance, including the monitoring of the joint statement by the EP, Council and Commission related to the macro-financial assistance to the Republic of Moldova.

IN FIGURES

EU imports from Moldova increased by nearly **33%** in the first half of 2018 compared to the same period in 2017.

15,700 people have access to safe and sufficient drinking water thanks to new water supply infrastructures funded by the EU.

350 Moldovans from the diaspora received EU assistance in order to set up their own companies when returning to their home country.

TRANSNISTRIA

The EU participates as an observer in the 5+2 negotiation process on the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. It continues to support a comprehensive, peaceful settlement based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova with a special status for Transnistria. The EU supports confidence building measures designed to facilitate the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict by increasing confidence between Chişinău and Tiraspol through joint initiatives involving stakeholders from both sides. Confidence building measures have allowed 70 people from both sides of the Nistru River to set up businesses and create 350 jobs. The EU also supports confidence building measures designed to foster regional development in Gagauzia.

SECURING MOLDOVA'S BORDERS

The European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Moldova and Ukraine was launched in 2005. The aim of EUBAM is to support Moldova's and Ukraine's efforts to effectively manage their common border and actively support concrete measures contributing to the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

COOPERATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Moldova is one of the non-EU states that participate in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations. Moldovan experts take part in the EU Training Mission in Mali and have also contributed to the EU Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic. The EU continues to provide security sector reform-related advisory support to Moldova.



Source: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eap_factsheet_moldova_eng_web.pdf

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group fully supports the reform process introduced by the Coalition for a Pro-European Government, which is an alliance between Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM/EPP), Democratic Party and a breakaway faction from the Liberal Party. The Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM) received observer status in the EPP Group in 2011.

The EPP Group is calling for greater involvement by the EU in Moldova and has been supporting the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

The EPP Group supported the process of its initialling during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013. The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and visa liberalisation accord apply throughout the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region, thereby benefiting people on both sides of the Nistru River.

The EPP Group believes that the citizens of the Republic of Moldova should benefit from the reforms carried out by the pro-European governments and that closer political and economic ties between the EU and Moldova create opportunities for both sides.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH BELARUS (D-BY)



Population: 9,527,543 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$179.4 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$18,900 (2017 est.).
Ethnic Groups: Belarusian 83.7%, Russian 8.3%, Polish 3.1%, Ukrainian 1.7%, other 2.4%, unspecified 0.9% (2009 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. Prime Minister Sergey RUMAS (since 18 August 2018). Bicameral National Assembly or Natsionalnoye Sobraniye consists of: Council of the Republic or ‘Sovet Respubliki’ (64 seats; 56 Members indirectly elected by regional and Minsk city councils and 8 Members appointed by the President; Members serve four-year terms). House of Representatives or ‘Palata Predstaviteley’ (110 seats; Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by absolute majority vote in 2 rounds if needed; Members serve four-year terms). Next elections to be held in 2020.
EPP Parties: United Civic Party of Belarus - UCP (Observer Member Party since 2006), Belarusian Christian Democracy - BCD (Observer Member Party since 2017), The Movement For Freedom - MFF (Observer Member Party since 2018).
EPP Group Adviser: Sylwia Kosinska

Background and Relations with the EU

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus became independent in 1991. Since 1994, the country has been ruled by President Aleksandr Lukashenko, who has ruled with an increasingly iron fist and today is perceived as “Europe’s last dictator”. The last presidential election took place in the country in 2015 and saw Lukashenko re-elected with 83.47% of the vote. Given its weak economy, Belarus is highly dependent on Russia, with whom it has developed close ties since independence. For a large part of its recent history Belarus has benefited from access to cheap Russian gas, as well as being a major transit country for Russian gas exports to Europe. Despite some tensions with Russia in July 2010, Belarus agreed on a joint customs union with Russia and Kazakhstan.

Between 2008 and 2010, EU-Belarus Relations gained some momentum when Belarus showed a willingness to develop constructive Relations with the EU and moved towards improved conditions as regards civil society Activities. However, the brutal crackdown following the 2010 presidential elections and tightening of repressive policy led to a significant deterioration in these Relations. As a consequence, EU restrictive measures have been reviewed and extended.

In 2011, the EU offered to open negotiations on a visa liberalisation and readmission agreement. In November 2013, at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Foreign Minister Makey indicated that Belarus now agreed to enter into negotiations on such an agreement. This was welcomed by the EU: negotiations were launched in January 2014 and are still ongoing. Compared with other EaP countries, Belarus has consistently received the smallest share of EU funds. The EU supports civil society through, among others, the Development and CooperationInstrument thematic programme for non-State actors and local authorities (NSA-LA) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument’s Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility (NCFS).

Nevertheless, the EU continues its cooperation with and support for Belarusian civil society for which it has considerably increased its financial support and launched a European Dialogue on Modernisation (DoM) in March 2012. This dialogue consists of an exchange of views and ideas between representatives of Belarusian civil society and the EU and its Member States. Belarus is the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment. The EU has urged the authorities to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its universal abolition. Although a dialogue between Belarus and the EU on ending capital punishment has restarted lately, executions still take place there.

Small improvements in the situation in the country have been observed, such as release of political prisoners in August 2015, and the election of two opPosition and independent members in the last parliamentary elections held in September 2016. Recently, Belarus has also engaged in a dialogue with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). It has also initiated reforms aimed at facilitating its future accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It has made some progress in the protection of the environment and in governance, engaged into negotiations on visa facilitation and readmissions with the EU and resumed the dialogue on human rights since July 2015 within the framework of the EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue. The EU and Belarus are currently negotiating the new, tailor-made Partnership Priorities.

On 25 February 2019, the European Council decided to prolong the restrictive measures against Belarus for one year, until 28 February 2020. These measures include an arms embargo; a ban on the export of goods for internal repression; an asset freeze; and a travel ban against four people listed in connection with the unresolved disappearances of two opPosition politicians, a businessman and a journalist in 1999 and in 2000. These measures were first introduced in 2004 in response to the disappearance of the four persons referred above. The arms embargo was introduced in 2011. The EP adopted in October 2018 a resolution on deterioration of media freedom in Belarus (Charter 97) and resolutions on the situation in Belarus in April 2017, November 2016 and September 2015.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-by/Activities/interparliamentary)

Currently the EP Delegation for Relations with Belarus, established in 1994, does not have any official Relations with the parliament or the government in Belarus. The EP does not recognise the current comPosition of the Belarusian parliament¹³. However, the delegation maintains an active and close dialogue with the representatives of the democratic opPosition, independent NGOs and members of the Belarus civil society.

At its last meeting, on 29 January 2019, the EP’s delegation for Relations with Belarus held a debriefing on its last mission held on 28-30 October 2018 to Minsk, as well as an exchange of views with Belarusian opPosition on the current political situation in Belarus - the Delegation travelled to Minsk, in the current legislature, in June 2015, July 2017 and, at Bureau level, in October 2018.

Regarding the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, the EPP Group was in favour of the participation of the Belarusian opPosition in this body until future parliamentary elections in Belarus are internationally recognised as free and fair. In this light the EPP Group is convinced that the removal of all restrictions on the opPosition and civil society is the only way to restore democracy and civil freedoms in Belarus.

¹³ On 23 September 2012, Belarus elected a parliament filled with supporters of President Alexander Lukashenko, after a boycott by the two main opPosition parties. Election officials said the minimum turnout of 50% was reached in all 110 constituencies. In 16, there was only one candidate, because of the boycott. Western observers said the election was “not competitive from the start”.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group is very concerned about the political situation in Belarus and condemns the serious shortcomings in the areas of human rights and democratic principles. Given the continuous violations by the regime, the EPP Group supports the EU’s restrictive measures, such as visa bans, and is of the opinion that any financial assistance from the EC, EIB or EBRD should be subject to conditionality based on real progress in the areas of human rights, media freedom and political freedoms, as well as democratic developments. In this light, the EPP Group supports the EC’s final stage of negotiations with Belarus on visa facilitation and readmission in order to promote people-to people contacts.

The EPP Group strongly condemns any repression against those participating in any peaceful political action and gatherings of political parties and civic society organisations, including media. In this context, the EPP Group further points to the unacceptable discrimination against national minorities and political parties and NGOs. The EPP Group works closely with leadership of the United Civic Party of Belarus, Belarusian Christian Democracy - BCD and The Movement For Freedom - MFF, which have observer member party status. In the current legislature, the EPP Group organised a conference on Belarus 2018: the voice of the civil society, held on 5 June 2018.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-ARMENIA PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE, EU-AZERBAIJAN PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE AND EU-GEORGIA PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION COOPERATION COMMITTEE (SOUTH CAUCASUS)



ARMENIA (PCC)



Population: 3m.
GDP: \$20.6billion / **GDP per capita:** \$6,300.
Religion: Armenian Apostolic 92.6%, Evangelical 1%, other 2.4%.
EPP parties: Republican Party of Armenia (RPA).
EPP Group Adviser: R. Golanski

EU-Armenia: In September 2013, the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, unexpectedly announced that Armenia would not initiate the Association Agreement (AA)/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the EU, but instead join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union, which is incompatible with the provisions of the DCFTA.

Regardless of this turmoil in bilateral Relations, implementation of the EU-Armenia Mobility Partnership continued. The EU-Armenia Readmission Agreement was signed in April and was ratified by the Armenian National Assembly in November 2013, together with the already signed Visa Facilitation Agreement. Both agreements entered into force on 1 January 2014.

Following the dramatic decision of the Armenian authorities, the EU decided that it could not pursue a negative strategy with its South Caucasus partner and freeze Relations. On the contrary, the EU considered that, given Armenia’s volatile security situation and its overdependence on Russia in this regard, the EU would try to negotiate the most ambitious agreement possible. Negotiations on

the future Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) started in December 2015. The agreement was signed in November 2017 and provisionally came into force on 1 June 2018. It is a comprehensive and sectoral agreement deepening Relations in the political and trade domains. Its implementation is ongoing. CEPA will be the centrepiece in bilateral Relations for the coming future.

2018 was crucial for Armenian domestic politics. It marked the Velvet Revolution, which brought to power Nikol Pashinyan, following street protests against former President Serz Sargsyan becoming Prime Minister with increased powers. In December 2015, a constitutional referendum took place, which changed the political system of Armenia from a presidential to parliamentary one. From the very outset, this was seen as a tool of securing the presence of Serh Sargsyan in power once his second term as president was over. The referendum was deemed not to meet internationally recognised standards. Serzh Sargsyan, as president, had made a public commitment that he had no intention of becoming Prime Minister. He did not keep that promise. Street protests against the former President and newly installed Prime Minister in the spring of 2018 forced him to leave office after ten days. Nikol Pashinyan was installed as the new Prime Minister. The Velvet revolution had no foreign policy agenda. The street protests, which paralysed the entire country, led to the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) losing power after ten years. In snap parliamentary elections in December 2018, the coalition of Prime Minister Pashinyan (My Step) received a constitutional majority, whilst the RPA did not manage to cross the 5% threshold and is not represented in parliament. The new Prime Minister’s priority is fighting corruption and kick-starting the economy. The EU is Armenia’s main export market and second-largest source of imports.

AZERBAIJAN (PCC)



Population: 9.7m.
GDP: \$100billion, **per capita:** \$10,800.
Religions: Muslim 93.4%, Russian Orthodox 2.5%, Armenian Orthodox 2.3%.

EU-Azerbaijan: The EU-Azerbaijan Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement was signed at the Vilnius EaP Summit in November 2013 and came into force in 2014. It makes it easier and cheaper for citizens of Azerbaijan and, in particular, frequent travellers to obtain short-term visas. Since 2013, negotiations have been taking place with Azerbaijan on a common civil aviation area agreement. In February 2017, negotiations on a new ambitious and comprehensive agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan were launched. The latter will be the centrepiece of bilateral Relations in the years to come. It will replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement from 1999 and give new impetus to bilateral Relations.

Azerbaijan tightened political freedoms in many areas: deterioration of freedom of expression, pressure against journalists and human rights activists, restrictions on the freedom of assembly, restrictive legislation on NGOs, particularly in relation to their foreign financing. The most disturbing new case during the last five years was the alleged abduction of the independent journalist, Afgan Mukhtarli, from exile in Tbilisi in 2017 and his subsequent sentencing to 6 years of imprisonment by a court in Baku. Human rights and democracy remain the most contentious issues on the EU-Azerbaijani agenda. This has also resulted in a suspension of Relations between the EP and Milli Mejlis.

On the other hand, there is significant cooperation in the area of energy. The Southern Gas Corridor, which is currently being constructed, will be a new important pipeline bringing Caspian gas to the European market and making an important contribution to Europe’s energy security. The EU is also Azerbaijan’s major trading partner, accounting for 36.2% according to 2017 figures.

In April 2018, in a surprising early election, incumbent President Ilham Aliyev was re-elected president. Following the 2016 Constitutional Referendum, the presidential term was increased from five to seven years. In 2009, the limit for presidential terms had been scrapped. In February 2017, Ilham Aliyev appointed his wife as first Vice President, putting her first in line to take over if the President were to die or become incapable of governing (before the referendum, it was the Prime Minister).

GEORGIA (PAC)



Population: 4.9m
GDP: \$27billion, **per capita:** \$6,100.
Religions: Orthodox Christian (official) 83.9%, Muslim 9.9%, Armenian-Gregorian 3.9%.
EPP parties: United National Movement (UNM), European Georgia (EG).

EU-Georgia: On a bilateral level, Georgia continues to underline its strategic goal of Euro-Atlantic integration. In comparison to other Eastern Partnership countries, it is making substantial progress in reforms. Since July 2016, the AA/DCFTA is in force, the objective of which is a comprehensive deepening of Relations in the political and economic spheres. Georgia also enjoys a free-visa regime with the EU since March 2017. The EU is Georgia’s main trading partner, responsible for 27% of total trade. Approximately 120 million euros are provided to Georgia annually by the EU in financial and technical assistance.

At the political level, the Georgian Dream, which has been in power since autumn 2012, continues to control tightly the reins of power. In 2016, they succeeded in winning a constitutional majority in parliament and, in 2018, they elected Salome Zourabichvili, formally an independent candidate, as president. Particularly the last election was marred by serious allegations of abuse of administrative resources, intimidation and pressure on voters. Additionally, the government announced a plan of debt relief for some 600,000 citizens who had been blacklisted by credit institutions. This was announced a week before the elections. The debt relief will be financed by a charitable organisation linked to the leader of the governing party, Bidzina Ivanishvili, who is the richest person in the country. That will cost him approximately \$600,000,000. Under local legislation, this could amount to vote buying. Accusations of election fraud were numerous. On the day of the elections, every holder of a Georgian sim card received a text message and a pre-recorded message from the leader of the governing party requesting him/her to go out and vote and take the right decision. All this led to a dramatic imbalance to the detriment of the opPosition candidate.

Delegation Activities (www.euoparl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dsca/Activities/interparliamentary)

The Delegation for the Relations with the South Caucasus is set up under the provisions of the relevant agreement between the EU and the given country. For Georgia, it is the Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA) and for Armenia, it is the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). However, in the case of Azerbaijan, it is still the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA). With the exception of the EU-Georgia PAC, which meets twice a year, the members meet on an annual basis, alternating between one of the working places of the EP (Brussels/Strasbourg) and the capital of the respective country.

The topics on the agenda during the meetings with the parliamentarians of the three countries vary but certain issues remain the same for all three countries, such as the implementation of the relevant treaties (AA/DCFTA and CEPA), 20 Deliverables for 2020: Bringing tangible results for citizens, Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy from November 2015, wider EU assistance in the countries, support for institution-building, strengthening the judiciary and the rule of law. These are in addition to economic development, energy, security and the progress achieved under the programmes of the Eastern Partnership, the multilateral platform designed for the Eastern European States. The Delegation also closely follows the progress of the negotiations on the new agreement with Azerbaijan; which will replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA).

The Activities of the Delegation in the various formats are summarised in Recommendations adopted at the end of each meeting where a consensus of both parliamentary components - the EP’s side and the side of the respective country – is required. The 2014-2019 legislature was characterised by lively debates on various issues of common interest and concern.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group supports strengthening political cooperationwith all three South Caucasian countries. The Group believes that the Eastern Partnership format is a framework conducive to helping sustain a regional approach to our cooperation. All three South Caucasian countries are important partners of the EU. We stand ready to continue assisting them in their transformation to democratic States, where the rule of law, freedom and democracy prevail.

The EPP Group continues to believe that the instruments of the Eastern Partnership provide a good basis for overcoming the existing tensions in the region in order to achieve an open, peaceful, stable and democratic South Caucasus.

The EPP Group strongly supports the process of democratisation and is ready to deepen cooperationwith the region, in particular in the areas of energy security and the fight against terrorism.

The EPP Group calls for greater involvement on the part of the EU in the region. At the same time, we support bilateral engagement with all three countries at the level of their ambitions and capabilities.

In the case of Georgia, the full and effective implementation of AA/DCFTA is key. The same is true in the case of the Armenian CEP. The Group looks forward to seeing an ambitious agreement being concluded with Azerbaijan.

Regional conflicts are the gravest threat to security in the South Caucasus. The dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, which erupted in a war that started in 1988 and lasted until 1994, as well as in April of 2016 when military hostilities lasted four days, is the longest-lasting frozen conflict in the post-Soviet space. The other conflict in the region, is the occupation of Georgian territories of South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia by Russia, which was the result of a brief war between the two countries in August 2008. The above-mentioned conflicts have a spillover potential beyond the boundaries of the region and, therefore, proper, constant and long-term attention from the side of the EU is necessary.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-RUSSIA PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE (D-RU)



Population: 142,122,776 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$4.016 trillion, **per capita (PPP):** \$27,900 (2017 est.).
Ethnic groups: Russian 77.7%, Tatar 3.7%, Ukrainian 1.4%, Bashkir 1.1%, Chuvash 1%, Chechen 1%, other 10.2%, unspecified 3.9% (2010 est.).
Political system: The Russian Federation has a centralised political system, with power concentrated in the hands of a President and a Prime Minister and a bicameral legislature (Federal Assembly) or ‘Federalnoe Sobraniye’. The Federal Assembly consists of a lower house (State Duma) or “Gosudarstvennaya Duma” and an upper house (Federation Council) or ‘Sovet Federatsii’. The Federation Council has 170 seats - 2 Members per representative/executive body of each of the 85 Russian federal administrative units; Members serve four-year terms. State Duma has 450 seats; as of February 2014, the electoral system reverted to a mixed electoral system for the 2016 election, in which one half of the Members are directly elected by simple majority vote and one half directly elected by proportional representation vote; Members serve five-year terms. The next elections are to be held in the autumn of 2021.

EPP Group Adviser: Elina Skarby

Background and Relations with the EU

The President of the Russian Federation is the Head of State. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin is the current President of Russia serving his fourth term in office after he won the elections in March 2018 by 76.7%. He had already been elected President of Russia three times previously - in 2000; 2004 and 2012, and was once appointed Prime Minister by presidential executive order in May 2008. Russia’s prime minister is Dmitriy Anatolyevich Medvedev, who has served in that Position since 2012. From 2008 to 2012, Medvedev served as the third President of Russia.

Russia is the direct successor of the Soviet Union and geographically the largest country in the world. A key factor for its geopolitical significance is its wealth in terms of natural resources, notably gas. Given its history and size, Russia is trying to regain lost influence in its “neighbourhood”.

The desire to regain its role as a global power became most evident when Crimea was annexed after a change in government in Ukraine. Relations with the West had already significantly worsened already in 2008 due to the conflict in Georgia. The annexation of Crimea and subsequent Russian support of secessionists in Eastern Ukraine has been widely condemned by the international community, resulting in sanctions from the US and EU. EU-Russia Relations have been strained in recent years, most notably since the beginning of Putin’s third term as President in May 2012. Russia’s intervention in the Syrian conflict in 2015 further deepened the cleavage between Moscow and the West, with Russian forces supporting Assad’s regime.

Given its interests in its neighbourhood, Russia is critical of the EU’s and NATO’s enlargement to the east. Russia has voiced its concern about NATO’s missile defence plans on numerous occasions and has not shied away from threatening to station nuclear weapons in the Russian Baltic Sea exclave of Kaliningrad. Indeed, the suspension of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) in February 2019, following the withdrawal of the US on the grounds of Russian violations of the treaty was another step in the worsening of Relations. To consolidate its regional influence, Moscow founded the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015, including Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This is on top of the already existing Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

It is clear Russia is eager to limit the influence of other established powers, such as the US. Russia’s engagement with the other BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries and other regional organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is evidence of this. Likewise, in May 2014, after 10 years of negotiations, Russia’s Gazprom and China’s CNPC signed a historic gas deal, under which the China is supplied with the natural gas it needs for its economy over the next 30 years. The total value of the contract is \$400 billion; however, the price of gas stipulated in the document remains a “commercial secret”.

Russian institutions are rather weak, as the power is firmly held by President Putin, who was re-elected in March 2018 with 76.7% of the vote. Despite some pro-market rhetoric, economic policy remains statist, nationalist and protectionist. Putin’s term runs until 2024 but, given how heavily the political system leans on his charismatic leadership and popularity, attention will gradually shift to how the president will manage an eventual presidential transition. According to polls, in the period mid-2018 to early 2019, approval of both the government and the president fell to pre-2014 levels.

Russia has a contested reputation as regards the status of its civil society and respect for human rights internally. Reports about irregularities persist in the North Caucasus republics and, in particular, in Chechnya. Incidents of violence persist, including the abductions and killings of NGO workers, journalists and politicians, including Natalya Estemirova, Anna Politkovskaya, Sergey Magnitsky and Boris Nemtsov. In this light, the EP’s Sakharov Prize was awarded to the human rights organisation Memorial in 2009 and, in 2018, to the Ukrainian filmmaker, writer and Russian political prisoner, Oleg Sentsov.

The current legal basis for EU-Russia Relations is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which came into force in 1997 initially for 10 years, and has been renewed annually since 2007. It established a political framework for regular consultation between the EU and Russia, based on the principles of respect for democracy and human rights, political and economic freedom, and commitment to international peace and security. Furthermore, the PCA is complemented by sectorial agreements covering a wide range of policy areas, including political dialogue, trade, science and technology, education, energy and environment, transport and the prevention of illegal Activities. The annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have seriously affected the bilateral political dialogue. As a result, some of the policy dialogues and mechanisms of cooperation are temporarily frozen, with sanctions directed at promoting a change in Russia’s actions in Ukraine in place. However, Russia remains a natural partner for the EU and a strategic player when it comes to combating regional and global challenges.

Russia is the EU’s largest neighbour, which has always been reflected in extensive cooperation and exchange over the 25 years prior to the current crisis. Russia is a key player in the UN Security Council and, due to history, geographic proximity and cultural links, is one of the key players in Europe and its neighbourhood. Russia is also a major supplier of energy products to the EU and a large, dynamic market for EU goods and services, with considerable economic growth.

In March 2019, the EP adopted a resolution assessing the state of EU-Russia Relations, stating that Russia can no longer be considered a ‘strategic partner’ and that the EU should remain open to imposing further sanctions if Russia continues to violate international law. Closer Relations will only be possible if Russia fully implements the Minsk agreements to end the war in Eastern Ukraine, halts disinformation campaigns and cyber attacks in Europe, as well as airspace violations (especially in the Baltic Sea region). The resolution further expresses concerns that the Nord Stream-2 project could reinforce the EU’s dependence on Russian gas supplies and threaten the EU internal market. It also condemns illegal financial Activities and money laundering by Russia.

Delegation Activities after the introduction of EU sanctions (March 2014) (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-ru/Activities/interparliamentary)

Since March 2014, the EU has progressively imposed restrictive measures against Russia. The measures were adopted in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the deliberate destabilisation of Ukraine.

The EU imposed different types of restrictive measures:

- **Diplomatic measures** - In 2014, the EU-Russia summit was cancelled and EU Member States decided not to hold regular bilateral summits. Bilateral talks with Russia on visa matters, as well as on the new agreement between the EU and Russia, were suspended. Instead of the G8 summit in Sochi, a **G7** meeting was held in Brussels on 4-5 June 2014. Since then, meetings have continued within the G7 process. EU countries also supported the suspension of negotiations over Russia’s joining the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- **Individual restrictive measures (asset freeze and travel restrictions)** - The measures were introduced in March 2014. They were last extended in March 2019 until 15 September 2019 and at the moment cover 170 people and 44 entities.
- **Restrictions on economic Relations with Crimea and Sevastopol** - On 18 June 2018, the Council extended these measures until 23 June 2019.
- **Economic sanctions** - In July and September 2014, the EU imposed economic sanctions targeting exchanges with Russia in specific economic sectors. The economic sanctions were most recently extended until 31 July 2019.
- **Restrictions on economic cooperation**- Restrictions on economic cooperation were introduced by EU leaders in July 2014

As a result, no PCC meetings were held during the eighth legislative term of the EP (2014-2019). The Chair of the Parliament’s Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee for the period 2014 – 2019, Othmar Karas MEP, has worked hard to keep the EP Members of the PCC up to date with the last developments in Russia. There were regular meetings with the Ambassador/s of the EU Delegation to the Russian Federation, NATO representatives, European Commission officials from EEAS working on Russia, members of Russian NGOs and political parties critical of the government, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, representatives of the Crimean Tatar People of Ukraine and their leader, 2016 Sakharov Prize Nominee, Mr Mustafa Dzheamiliev, etc. Joint meetings and initiatives were held jointly with the EP AFET committee as well as with some of the other Delegations of the EP, such as the ones to EU-Armenia, EU-Azerbaijan, EU–Ukraine and the EURONEST PA.

EPP Group Position

- The EPP Group supports the five guiding principles for EU-Russia Relations agreed by the Foreign Affairs Council on 14 March 2016:
- Implementation of the Minsk agreement as the key condition for any substantial change in the EU’s stance towards Russia;
 - Strengthened Relations with the EU’s Eastern Partners and other neighbours, in particular in Central Asia;
 - Strengthening the resilience of the EU (for example, in energy security, hybrid threats or strategic communication);
 - The possibility of selective engagement with Russia on issues of interest to the EU;
 - The need to engage in people-to-people contact and support Russian civil society.

The EPP Group has adopted its Position paper on Russia in 2017 and, in it, recognises Russia as an important neighbour. The EPP Group takes the view that a realistic and responsible strategy for the EU’s Relations with Russia must be based on the principles of international law, credible deterrence and on a principled approach in areas of common interest, with a view to guaranteeing security in the EU’s neighbourhood and a European peace order. The Position paper recognises that sanctions are needed as a principled reaction to any flagrant violation of internationally recognised borders and the sovereignty of States and that sanctions have proven to be an effective means of deterring further Russian aggression in Ukraine. The EPP Group underlines the importance of investing more in cooperation with and support for Russian civil society, so as to strengthen the democratic movements in Russia and build a long-term basis for EU-Russia Relations.



IV. MAGHREB, MASHREQ, ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL (D-IL)



Population: 8,9m (2019 Israel Central Bureau of Statistics data).

GDP per capita: \$40,270.

Religions: Jewish 75.1%, Muslim 17.4%, Christian 2%.

Political system: Parliamentary democracy. Prime Minister Benjamin NETAHYAHU (since 2009). Unicameral Parliament (120 seats; Members elected from a single nationwide electoral district to concurrent four-year terms). Next elections to be held in 2019.

EPP Group Adviser: Alexandra Entrena Rovers

Background and EU- Israel Relations

At the end of the British Mandate, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948. The declaration was signed in a context of civil war between the Arab and Jewish populations that had started the day after the partition vote at the UN six months earlier. Neighbouring Arab States and the Arab League were opposed to the vote and had declared they would intervene to prevent its implementation. Since then, Israel's history has been marked by violence inside the country and wars with neighbouring countries.

For decades, the advancement of peace negotiations has remained in the hands of the political class. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and his party Likud won 35 of the 120 parliamentary seats in the 9 April 2019 election. As head of his right-wing coalition, he was tasked to form a new government but failed to do so within the legal deadline: Likud had secured 60 of the 61 seats it needed to form a governing coalition. Consequently, the parliament voted to dissolve itself; new elections should be held on 17 September 2019. This is first time in Israel history that there has been a call for early elections before the formation of a government.

The EU-Israel Association Agreement forms the legal basis governing Relations between Israel and the EU, modelled on the network of Euro-Mediterranean Agreements between the Union and its partners in the southern flank of the Mediterranean Sea. After a Cooperation Agreement in 1975, an Association Agreement (AA) was signed in 1995 and entered into force in 2000, providing for preferential economic, commercial, technological and research status between the parties. The Agreement also includes provisions on regular political dialogue, freedom of establishment and liberalisation of services, the free movement of capital and competition rules, and the strengthening of economic and social cooperation. Respect for human rights and democratic principles is an essential element of the agreement, which is monitored by the two main bodies for the EU-Israel dialogue: **the EU-Israel Association Council** (held at ministerial level) and the **EU-Israel Association Committee** (held at the level of senior officials). Their representatives meet regularly to discuss political and economic issues, as well as bilateral and regional cooperation. The **2005 Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy underpins the EU-Israel Relations**. The Action Plan aims to integrate Israel gradually **into European policies and programmes**. Ten sub-committees meet regularly to discuss its priorities.

Despite the EU and Israel developing close economic, social, financial, civil, scientific, technological and cultural ties, **controversy erupted regarding guidelines surrounding the Horizon 2020**, which saw **the exclusion of businesses operating in illegal West Bank settlements from EU funding**. The EU's Position is that bilateral agreements with Israel do not cover the territory that came under Israel's administration in June 1967 - including the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. A "Technical Arrangement" was signed between the EU and Israel in 2012 on products originating from settlements, stating that products produced in the Israeli settlements located within the territories brought under Israeli administration since June 1967 were not entitled to benefit from preferential tariff treatment under the EU-Israel Association Agreement. The diplomatic row over the Guidelines in 2013 saw intense negotiations between EU officials and their Israeli counterparts; however, it ended on a positive note with Israel's participation in the Horizon 2020 programme, signed in June 2014 (an €80 billion Research and Innovation package for 2014-2020).

In 2015, the European Commission published guidelines for labelling products produced in Israeli settlements, which state that Israeli producers must explicitly label farm goods and other products that come from settlements built on land occupied by Israel if they are sold in the EU. As such, goods from that region may not be labelled “Made in Israel” and should be labelled as coming from settlements, which the EU considers illegal under international law.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-il/Activities/interparliamentary)

Besides holding regular meetings at the EP, the Delegation for the Relations with Israel is also responsible for the Interparliamentary Meetings of the MEPs and Knesset parliamentarians, held once a year, alternating each year. During the eighth legislature, these focused on subjects, such as Relations between the EU and Israel, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Israel’s security threats and the security challenges in the Middle East and the situation in the region. The parliamentarians also discussed the domestic political situation in Israel, its diplomatic and political Relations, trade and economy, cybersecurity, and other issues at stake within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean - European Neighbourhood Policy.

From 2014 to 2019, the Delegation organised several meetings with EU and Israeli officials, national and EU Ambassadors, experts, think tanks, institutions and NGOs, among others. These meetings covered several topics: EU-Israel Relations, the Middle East Peace Process/ Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the security challenges in the Middle East, terrorism, Anti-Semitism in Europe and in the world, Israeli innovation and entrepreneurship, geopolitics in the Middle East and the status of Israel’s Arab citizens.

EPP Group Position

There is a critical need for political action by Israel, its Arab neighbours and the whole international community for a comprehensive solution to end the conflict and contribute to the security and stability of the region. A comprehensive peace, which is in the fundamental interest of the parties in the region and the EU, must be achieved on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The EPP Group believes that:

- Lasting peace can be based only on an enduring commitment to non-violence, justice, and mutual recognition, building upon previous agreements and legal obligations;
- The city of Jerusalem will become the future capital of two states through negotiations; On 6 December 2017, the United States President, Donald Trump formally announced the US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. European Union HR/VP Mogherini emphasised that all the governments of EU Member States were united on the issue of Jerusalem, and reaffirmed their commitment to a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital;
- The expansion of Israeli settlements constitutes a serious obstacle to the peace process and is not legally valid under international law;
- The resolution of the Gaza humanitarian crisis and a solution that addresses Israel’s legitimate security concerns, including an end to weapons smuggling into Gaza is urgent;
- The two-State solution envisions a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders;
- A just and equitable settlement of the Palestinian refugee problem that ensures the sustainability of the Jewish identity of the Israeli State will be supported.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH PALESTINE (D-PAL)



Population: 1.8m (Gaza strip), 2.7m (West Bank).
GDP: \$14.4 billion
Religions: Muslim 84%, Jewish 9%, Christian 3% (the proportion of Christians continues to fall as a result of the growing Muslim population and the declining birth rate of the Christian population).
Towns: Ramallah (seat of PLC), Gaza, Hebron.
Political system: Monocameral system: Palestinian Legislative Council. Palestinian government of national Union (Hamas and Fatah). Head of State: Mahmoud ABBAS (since 24 February 2005) Prime Minister: Mohammad SHTAYYEH (since 10 March 2019).
EPP Group Adviser: A. E. Rovers

Background and EU Relations

After the end of World War II, the UN General Assembly voted in 1947 in favour of the establishment of both a Jewish and an Arab State, and the creation of an international oversight administration for greater Jerusalem. However, the Partition Plan was never implemented because the Arabs rejected the division. Following the declaration of independence by the Israeli State, the Arab-Israeli War broke out. The war led to an exodus of Palestinians. In order to aid the displaced Palestinians in 1948, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was founded.

The 2006 parliamentary elections brought to power the radical Hamas Group at the expense of the moderate Fatah. In 2007, a National Unity Government was formed. However, hopes for a constructive dialogue did not last long and, in June, the government split, as Hamas seized full control of the Gaza Strip. Fatah then took control of the West Bank and is recognised internationally as the official government of the Palestinian Authority. The deep internal division of the Palestinians, which almost led to a civil war, hindered the development of the Palestinian territories. The indefinite postponement of elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) means that policy is effectively made by decree in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Policy is determined by Fatah President, Mahmoud Abbas, in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The EU works with the Palestinian Authority (PA) to build up the institutions of a future democratic, independent and viable Palestinian State living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security. The EU has played an active role since the start of the Middle East Peace Process. The EU is a member of the Middle East Quartet, which supports the implementation of a two-State solution based on the 2003 Roadmap for Peace.

A new **EU-Palestine Action Plan** was approved in May 2013 setting the agenda for economic and political cooperation with the EU. The legal basis for the EU’s Relations with the Palestinian Authority is the Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation signed with the PLO on behalf of the Palestinian Authority.



The European Commission is the **largest donor of financial assistance to the Palestinians**. From 2007 to 2013, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) was the main EU financial instrument to fund development cooperation programs with the Neighbourhood partner countries including Palestine. Under this instrument, **Palestine benefited from a baseline amount of €300 million per year** for bilateral cooperation distributed through direct financial support programs, support for the refugees and development programs. In line with the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022, the EU has developed a Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2017-2020, together with EU Member States.

Palestine further **receives direct financial support through the PEGASE program**. Launched in February 2008, assistance through PEGASE is primarily targeted to the Palestinian Authority to meet its recurrent expenditure (salaries and pensions, assistance to vulnerable Palestinian families) and the delivery of public services. The EU is strongly supportive as regards the Palestine refugee issue. Together with its Member States, the **EU is the largest donor to UNRWA**. UNRWA receives further contributions from the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, through the food security program and the Instrument contributing to Peace and Security. On the judiciary level, the EU Police Mission for the Palestinian territories (EUPOL COPPS) also supports the Palestinian civil police reform.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dpal/Activities/interparliamentary)

The main objectives of the Delegation are to follow and contribute to the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) and the EU’s Position towards the establishment of the two-State solution. In doing so, the Delegation promoted several exchanges of views with Palestinian and regional and international interlocutors, ambassadors, parliamentarians, EU officials, UNRWA or NGOs. Besides the MEPP, the topics discussed involved EU-Palestinian Relations, political and economic developments in Palestine, human rights and refugees, the regional situation, the Gaza blockade, the labelling of goods originating from the settlements and, more recently, the shift in US policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Throughout the eighth legislature of the EP, the Delegation held four Interparliamentary Meetings (IPM), in Palestine, combined with working visits. These sought to assess the situation on the ground and maintain Relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council and Authorities, to listen to civil society, to evaluate the EU policy, projects and EU-funded infrastructure, to be the first EP delegation to gain access to Gaza since 2011 (not possible), to understand the humanitarian situation and to learn about the Palestinian perspective on the MEPP.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group has repeatedly **urged the parties in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to resume negotiations with the aim of reaching a peace agreement based on a two-State solution**. Peace requires accountability on both sides and any actor that supports Palestinian statehood has to react and, most importantly, act when Palestinian Authority is cracking down on basic freedoms¹⁴.

The two-State solution envisions a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders. Keeping in mind that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible, these borders should be based on the withdrawal from the territory occupied in 1967 with modifications mutually agreed and in accordance with the “land for peace” principle. The future Palestinian State, which will include the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, must be stable and viable; the State of Israel must have secure and recognised borders. Specific measures will have to be taken to ensure that the lack of territorial continuity in the future Palestinian state is not an obstacle to its viability, in particular its economic viability.

The resolution of the Gaza humanitarian crisis and a solution that addresses Israel’s legitimate security concerns, including an end to weapons smuggling into Gaza is urgent and an end to the rocket attacks on Israel, the opening of the crossings to allow for the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza, which are essential to the wellbeing of the Palestinian people and for growth and development, are consistent with UN SC resolution 1860 (2009).

¹⁴ The report “Two Authorities, One Way, Zero Dissent” published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on 23 October 2018 about the situation for dissidents in the Palestinian territories, in which HRW suggests that both the Hamas authorities in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank systematically and arbitrarily arrest citizens and threaten, abuse and torture prisoners.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE MAGHREB COUNTRIES AND THE ARAB MAGHREB UNION (UNION DU MAGHREB ARABE – UMA) (D-MAG)



ALGERIA (JPC)



Population: 31.6m.
GDP \$630 billion
Religion: Islam 99 %, others (Christianity, Judaism) 1 %.
Political system: Presidential republic. Interim President Abdelkader BENSALAH; note - Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA resigned from the Presidency on 2 April 2019. Bicameral Parliament: Council of the Nation (upper house with 144 seats; one third of Members appointed by the President, two thirds indirectly elected by simple majority vote by an electoral college composed of local council members; Members serve six-year terms with one half of the membership renewed every 3 years); National People’s Assembly (lower house with 462 seats including 8 seats for Algerians living abroad); Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote to serve five-year terms).
EPP Group Adviser: Alexandra Entrena Rovers

LIBYA (IPM)



Population: 6.7m.
GDP: \$61.9 billion
Religions: Islam 96.6%, Christianity 2.7%.
Political system: In transition. Prime Minister Fayiz al-SARAJ (since December 2015). Unicameral House of Representatives (200 seats, including 32 reserved for women; Members directly elected by majority vote).

MAURITANIA (IPM)



Population: 3.8m.
GDP: \$17.2 billion
Religions: Islam 100% (officially).
Political system: Presidential republic. President Mohamed Ould Abdel AZIZ (since 5 August 2009). Unicameral Parliament: National Assembly (157 seats; 113 Members in single- and multi-seat constituencies directly elected by a combination of plurality and proportional representation voting systems, 40 Members in a single, nationwide constituency directly elected by proportional representation vote and 4 members directly elected by the diaspora; all Members serve five-year terms).

MOROCCO (JPC)



Population: 34.3m.
GDP: \$298.6 billion
Religions: Islam 99%, Christianity 1%.
Political system: Parliamentary constitutional monarchy. Prime Minister Saad-Eddine al-OTHMANI (since 17 March 2017). Bicameral Parliament: Chamber of Advisers (120 seats; Members indirectly elected by an electoral college of local councils, professional organisations and labour unions; Members serve six-year terms); Chamber of Representatives (395 seats; 305 Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote and 90 directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote; Members serve five-year terms). Next elections are to be held in October 2021.
EPP Parties: Two political parties from Morocco Istiqlal party and the National Rally of independents (RNI) became EPP Partners in the EPP Helsinki Congress in 2018; the National Democratic Rally (RND) has requested EPP Partnership.

TUNISIA (JPC)



Population: 11.5m.

GDP: \$137.7 billion

Religions: Islam 99%, Christianity 1%.

Political system: Parliamentary republic. President Beji CAID ESSEBSI (since 31 December 2014). Unicameral Assembly of the Representatives of the People (217 seats; 199 Members directly elected in Tunisian multi-seat constituencies and 18 Members in multi-seat constituencies abroad by party-list proportional representation vote; members serve five-year terms).

Next elections are to be held in October 2019.

Background and EU Relations

Discussions on stronger regional cooperation have taken place since the independence of the Maghreb countries in the 1960s. However, it took until 1988 for the first Maghreb Summit to be held in Zeralda, Algeria. In order to foster political cooperation, economic integration, as well as people-to-people contacts, the five Heads of State in Marrakech launched the Maghreb Arab Union (UMA - L' Union du Maghreb Arabe) one year later, in 1989. One of the key goals of the UMA was to launch a common economic market. Plans for a customs union remain to be finalised and implemented. The UMA secretariat is located in Rabat, Morocco.

While the UMA offers a good platform for working together on areas, such as energy cooperation and the realisation of the inter-Maghreb high-speed motorway, historic disputes between the five members have hampered the progress of the UMA. A prominent example is the controversy over the status of Western Sahara. While it is claimed and administered by Morocco, Algeria highlights the right of self-determination and advocates an autonomous Western Sahara. Consequently, the UMA was unable to overcome important institutional issues, such as the order of its presidency. This institutional crisis led to a standstill of the UMA which also means that no **Maghreb Summit has been organised since 1994**.

Following the Arab Spring, the EU decided to review its neighbourhood policy. In March 2011, the EU HR/VP presented a new strategy called 'A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean' followed on 25 May by a 'New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood'. The new approach, the so-called "more for more", rewards the efforts made on the path of democracy: the more a country progresses in its democratic reforms and institutional building, the more support it can expect from the EU. In addition, the EU has increased its funding of instruments for promoting cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood by 20% (Overall European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, EIB, EBRD, SPRING program, Erasmus Mundus, Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility, etc.).



Algeria: EU-Algeria Relations **date back to 1976**, when a Cooperation Agreement covering trade, labour and financial cooperation was signed. Several projects were carried out throughout the 1980s and 1990s, notably under the Mediterranean Financial Protocols and in the framework of the Barcelona Process. Relations between Algeria and the EU have strengthened since an **Association Agreement** came into effect as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (2005).

In the **political area**, the Agreement covers dialogue on all issues of interest to the parties. This dialogue occurs at different levels: the Association Council (ministerial); the Association Committee (high-level civil servants); and the 'Political dialogue, security and human rights' Sub-Committee (technical).

Since 2013, Algeria has also been involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), setting its partnership priorities with the EU until 2020. The main focus of EU support to Algeria during this period has been on economic reform, with a strong emphasis on employment (including the promotion of women and young people) and the diversification of the economy, as well as economic governance. Moreover, significant EU support has also been provided in the **environmental sector**, with a water and sanitation programme, as well as a second one aiming at the environmental protection of the coastal areas. **The EU is Algeria's main trading partner**, absorbing almost 60 % of its exports, although European exports have been declining since 2015. Bilateral trade between the two partners is primarily based on Algerian exports of oil and gas products. **Algeria is the EU's third-largest supplier of natural gas**, after Russia and Norway. However, as a supplier to Algeria, the EU is facing strong competition from Asia, particularly China and more recently South Korea, and, to a lesser extent, Turkey.

Libya: Libya and the EU have no contractual Relations. In fact, Libya is the only Mediterranean country (other than Syria) that has not yet signed a Free Trade Agreement with the EU. **Negotiations for an EU-Libya Framework Agreement were suspended in 2011.** EU engagement with Libya during the last years has developed along four main axes: EU engagement with Libya during the last years has developed along four main axes: Support for political transition and negotiated settlement, bilateral assistance and humanitarian support, cooperation on migration and protection of migrants and addressing security challenges through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations.s

Since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, **the EU has tried to assist Libya in its process of establishing democracy and stability** by implementing transparent and accountable institutions, by promoting a prosperous private sector and the involvement of civil society. In the absence of an Association Agreement with the EU, **Libya remains outside most of the structures of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)**. However, it is eligible for funding under the new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and the ENI's regional programs, in addition to thematic assistance programs.

The EU has been providing significant support to Libya since the beginning of the crisis. The EU currently has a package of close to **€70 million in bilateral support to Libya in 23 projects across several sectors**, such as civil society; governance; health; economy, youth and education; and support for the political process, security and mediation Activities, mainly through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). Through **ENI projects, the EU contributes to the capacity building** of Libyan Institutions at national and local level in the areas of public administration, socio-economic development and the health sector. **The EU provided humanitarian funding of €10 million in 2017.** Assistance goes to Libyans displaced by conflict and helps the most vulnerable to gain access to primary health care and emergency medicines, education in emergencies, psychosocial support, food assistance and other essential support.

Mauritania: Relations between the EU and Mauritania are principally **founded on the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (the Cotonou Agreement)** and on the **National Indicative Plan for the 2014-2020 Period**, signed in Nairobi on 19 June 2014. As well as being a member of the Arab Maghreb Union, the Union for the Mediterranean and the 5+5 Dialogue, Mauritania also participates in the EUROMED partnership and, as a result, benefits from specific regional funding under this framework.

Following the elections in 2006-2007 and 2009, **the EU offered the country political and financial support to help its transition towards democracy**. Furthermore, the EU supported the holding of legislative (in 2013) and presidential (in 2014) elections by sending electoral expert missions and technical assistance.

Mauritania is a **significant partner in the EU's Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel**. The EU and Mauritania maintain a regular political dialogue which enables a broad range of subjects to be dealt with, including regional, political, economic and trade issues, development, governance and human rights. Mauritania is also a significant partner of the EU in the **field of fisheries**. In 2015, the Sahel G5 (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad) and the EU agreed on deepened cooperation in the priority areas identified in the EU's Sahel Regional Action Plan, including preventing and fighting radicalisation, creating development conditions that help young people, managing migration and combating illegal trafficking and transnational organised crime.

Morocco: With the signing of an **association agreement in 1996**, which entered into force in 2000, cooperation between Morocco and the EU was expanded to include **politics and security**. This Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement aims to provide an appropriate framework for political dialogue between the EU and its partners in the Mediterranean Basin. Morocco **plays an important role in the regional cooperation conducted under the MEDA Program** that was created to encourage and support the reform of economic and social structures in the area and manages the aid under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Cooperation between the EU and Morocco was further strengthened by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched by the EU in 2003, which is based on mutual responsibility and a shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Within this framework, an action plan has been implemented in all areas of cooperation. The ENP has given more permanence and structure to the dialogue between the EU and Morocco. Morocco has benefited from an advanced status with the EU since 2008. Its objectives are to strengthen dialogue and cooperation in the areas of politics and security; to integrate Morocco progressively into the EU internal market through legislative and regulatory convergence; and to extend the partnership to include new participants.

The EU is Morocco's first trading partner with total trade amounting to approximately €29.25 billion in 2014. EU imports from Morocco are dominated by three main areas: machinery and transport equipment, textiles and clothing, and agricultural products. The main EU exports to Morocco are machinery and transport equipment, fuels and metals.

During 2018, Morocco became the main point of departure for irregular migrants crossing the Mediterranean. Morocco is a long-standing key partner of the EU on migration. In 2006, Spain and Morocco launched the Rabat Process, a forum for Euro-African dialogue on migration and development. In 2013, the EU and Morocco signed a mobility partnership aimed at managing the movement of persons better. In 2018, the EU committed EUR 148 million towards Morocco in migration-related assistance under the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

Tunisia: The Association Agreement between the EU and Tunisia, concluded in July 1995, replaced the 1976 cooperation agreement and added new fields for cooperation, such as political dialogue and cultural exchanges. In terms of trade Relations, the Tunisian economy is strongly linked to the EU; total trade in 2014 was approximately € 2.1 billion. EU imports from Tunisia are dominated by machinery and transport equipment, textiles and clothing, and fuels and mining products. EU's main exports to Tunisia are machinery and transport equipment, fuels and mining products, followed by textiles and clothing, and chemicals. **The flows of Foreign Direct Investment to Tunisia are concentrated in the area of infrastructure network development**, as well as in the textile and clothing sectors. Tunisia is also an important participant under the MEDA framework for regional cooperation.

Since 2011, the EU has more than doubled its financial contribution to cooperation with Tunisia. A 'Privileged Partnership' was established in 2012. Through a combination of grants, macro-financial assistance and loans, total support to Tunisia from 2011 to 2016 amounted to approximately €3.5 billion. The opening of negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) in October 2015 is another key element of the EU's commitment to support democratic consolidation in Tunisia. On 1 January 2016, Tunisia became the first Arab country to participate fully in the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, which provides new opportunities to Tunisian researchers and academics. The Youth Partnership, launched on 1 December 2016, should offer mobility opportunities for 1,500 students, educators and young people a year until 2020.

DELEGATION ACTIVITIES (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dmag/Activities/interparliamentary)

The main purpose of the Delegation is to enhance bilateral parliamentary Relations between the EU and the Maghreb countries, promote EU values and integrate the Maghreb region. To that end, the Delegation organised numerous meetings at the EP, Joint Parliamentary Committee meetings (JPC) and Interparliamentary Meetings (IPM).

During the eighth legislature, two new Joint Parliamentary Committees were created: the EU-Tunisia JPC and the EU-Algeria JPC (in 2016 and 2018, respectively), while the EU-Morocco JPC adopted an original method of working "in pairs", in which one Moroccan parliamentarian and one MEP work together and produce a joint contribution on an aspect of the EU-Morocco partnership. From 2014 to 2019, the Delegation meetings sought to follow closely developments in each one of the countries in particular as well as in the region as a whole, given its great importance for the EU. The topics of discussion include the countries' bilateral Relations with the EU, political and economic developments, the impact of each election, the role and employability of youth and women in the region, gender equality, the ENP, security in the region, energy and human rights, among others.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group supports greater political integration in the Maghreb region and the relaunching of the Arab Maghreb Union with a view to strengthening regional stability.

The EPP Group has been an active party on the Maghreb Delegation, advocating the creation of the Joint Interparliamentary Committee with Tunisia, achieved in 2016, and with Algeria, approved in January 2018. The EPP Group has participated in the different Delegation and EU electoral observation missions, especially in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

Morocco

Morocco remains a key partner for the EPP Group, despite Relations having been affected by the December 2015 ruling by the European Union Court of Justice annulling the 2012 EU-Morocco Liberalisation Agreement covering trade in agricultural and fishery products due to the inclusion of the Western Saharan territory in the agreement. The EPP Group supported the amendments to the agriculture and fisheries protocols finally adopted, which lead to a renewal of EU-Morocco Relations across all sectors of cooperation, including in the fields of politics, economics, security and migration, but also on regional issues, such as the Euro-Mediterranean region and Africa.

The EPP Group supports a fair, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution in Western Sahara. As such, it remains supportive of the negotiations within the framework of the United Nations.

Tunisia

The EPP Group remains committed to and supports Tunisia's development as stated on the occasion of the EPP Group Mediterranean Policy Working Group visit to Tunis in February 2017.

The municipal elections of 6 May 2018 were a major milestone in Tunisia's democratic transition, representing the first step in the devolution process from the capital to the regions and serving to bring Tunisian citizens closer to public decision-making.

We are conscious of the historic responsibility of the new Tunisian authorities in terms of strengthening the remarkable democratic progress, dealing with the numerous socio-economic challenges of the country, as well as assuring the security of all the Tunisians. Our Group is fully aware of the risk of destabilisation of the country posed by the migratory flows from Libya and is committed to supporting Tunisia in this regard.

Algeria

Starting on 22 February 2019, massive nationwide demonstrations in Algeria opposed a new mandate for President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Once he had stepped down, protesters started demanding a broad reform of Algeria's political system. The EPP Group believes that any process has to be transparent and include all sections of Algerian society and supports a positive response to the people's aspirations: the call for reform of governance, for greater political openness and for more economic and social opportunities, especially for the young. All this should be done in full respect of Algeria's sovereignty and in a spirit of partnership, as set out in our neighbourhood policy.

Libya

The EPP Group underlines the need for a sustainable political solution supporting and complementing the UN-led dialogue to resolve the Libyan situation. Military intervention is not an option.

It is only by having one common and coherent international action and approach, together with regional and neighbouring countries that all the Libyan actors can be brought round the negotiation table. Having several actors with individual approaches will continue to destabilise the country further.

We condemn the abuses and human rights violations against the migrants in the detention camps and call on the International Criminal Court to exercise its mandate in order to investigate the human rights abuses and violations in Libya. The perpetrators of crimes need to be brought to the Court for accountability.

The EU should consider developing a joint military force comprising Libyans and other African military forces in order to effectively combat terrorism, control the border and prevent the smuggling of migrants. In addition to this, educational programmes and social integration of former and current extremists will help counter extremism.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE MASHREQ COUNTRIES (D-MAS)



EGYPT



Population: 99.4m.
GDP: \$1.2 trillion.
Religion: Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 90%, Christian 10%.
Political system: Presidential republic. President Abdelfattah ELSISI (since 8 June 2014). Unicameral House of Representatives (596 seats; 448 Members directly elected by individual candidacy system, 120 Members - with quotas for women, youth, Christians and workers - elected in party-list constituencies by simple majority popular vote, and 28 Members appointed by the president; Members serve five-year terms). Next elections are to be held in 2020.
EPP Group Adviser: Alexandra Entrena Rovers

JORDAN



Population: 10.4m.
GDP: \$89 billion
Religions: Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 97.2%, Christian 2.2%.
Political system: Parliamentary constitutional monarchy. Prime Minister Omar al-RAZZAZ (since 4 June 2018). Bicameral National Assembly: Senate/House of Notables or Majlis al-Ayan (65 seats; Members appointed by the monarch to serve four-year terms); Chamber of Deputies/House of Representatives (130 seats; 115 Members directly elected in single- and multi-seat constituencies by open-list proportional representation vote and 15 seats for women; 12 of the 115 seats reserved for Christian, Chechen, and Circassian candidates; Members serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in 2020.

LEBANON



Population: 6.1m.
GDP: \$88.2 billion
Religions: Muslim 54% (27% Sunni, 27% Shia), Christian 40.5%.
Political system: Parliamentary republic. Prime Minister Saad al-HARIRI (since 24 May 2018). Unicameral National Assembly (128 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote; members serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in 2022.
EPP Parties/Partners: During the EPP Political Assembly of 15 November 2016, for the first time in the EPP’s history, two Lebanese parties, Kataeb and Lebanese Forces, became partners of our political family.

SYRIA



Population: 18m.
GDP: \$107.6 billion
Religions: Muslim 87% (Sunni 74% - Alawi, Shia 13%), Christian 10%.

Egypt: The EU is firmly committed to continue supporting Egypt in addressing the increasingly complex economic, social, political and security environment challenges. The EU is the number one investor in Egypt. The **first Cooperation Agreement between the EC and Egypt was signed in 1977**. The MEDA Programme remained, until 2000, the main instrument to manage the aid under the **Euro-Mediterranean Partnership**. It was created to encourage and support the reform of economic and social structures of Mediterranean partners, in view of the establishment, by 2010 of a free trade area around the Mediterranean.

The EU and Egypt have been moving forward engaging on shared priorities under their **Association Agreement that was signed in 2001** and entered into force in 2004. The Association Agreement provides the framework for regular political dialogue between the two partners and enhanced cooperation in a number of key sectors, ranging from trade and investment to energy and education, and also for sustained and substantial EU assistance. The Association Agreement establishes a free-trade area with the elimination of tariffs on industrial products and significant concessions on agricultural products. In addition, an ambitious agreement on agriculture and processed agricultural and fisheries products entered into force on 1 June 2010. **The EU remains Egypt’s most important export market (around 30 % of Egyptian exports)**. In the context of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (2015) to foster stabilisation, security and prosperity, the jointly agreed Partnership Priorities **(2017-2020) aims to address common challenges facing the EU and Egypt**, to promote joint interests and to guarantee long-term stability on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Jordan: Relations between Jordan and the EU have evolved over the years into a solid partnership built on shared and common values. Jordan committed itself to working for the further enhancement and consolidation of this partnership. **The EU has consistently supported Jordan’s moderate and stabilising role in the region**. Jordan appreciates the EU’s long-standing commitment and its continued support at all levels.

The EU-Jordan Association Agreement (AA) entered into force in 2002 with the goal of integrating Jordan into European economic and social structures. The objective of the AA was to foster the establishment of bilateral free trade between Jordan and the EU, which was seen as the first step towards creating a wider regional Euro-Mediterranean free trade area.

Jordan is an active and constructive partner country within the ENP, showing a strong commitment to a wide range of social and economic reforms and taking steps towards political reform. Furthermore, Jordan was the first Mediterranean partner country to conclude technical negotiations leading to an **“Advanced Status” with the EU in 2010**.

In line with the revised ENP, the EU and Jordan have adopted the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities and the **EU-Jordan Compact**. Cooperation under the Partnership Priorities is structured around three mutually reinforcing objectives: a) macro-economic stability and sustainable and knowledge-based growth; b) strengthening democratic governance, the rule of law and human rights; and c) regional stability and security, including counter-terrorism. Cooperation is also being pursued on cross-cutting issues such as migration and mobility as well as the economic, social and political inclusion of vulnerable groups, including youth and women. The Partnership Priorities also build on the Government of Jordan’s national strategies, in particular “Jordan 2025: a National Vision and Strategy”, a ten-year socio-economic blueprint aimed at improving the welfare of citizens and the basic services provided to them.

Lebanon: In 1977, Lebanon signed the Economic, Technical and Financial **Cooperation Agreement** with the Economic European Community. In 1995, the European Union and Lebanon started negotiations on an **Association Agreement** and the agreement **entered into force on 1 April 2006**. The bilateral EU-Lebanon Agreement has a major role in establishing a framework for dialogue and tries to promote cooperation in economic and social fields in the effort to transform Lebanon into a strong neighbour of the EU. In addition, those objectives are detailed in the EU-Lebanon Action Plan that contains effective actions. **The EU is Lebanon’s first trading partner (34%)** and trade has been increasing over the years.

As a response to the conflict in Syria and the spill-over into neighbouring countries, the EU and its Member States have also provided substantial additional financial assistance to help Lebanon face the economic and social impact of the conflict and address the pressing needs of the refugees from Syria. The EU response to the crisis is the implementation since 2012 of programs and Activities financed by the European Commission in Lebanon. Those programs are executed under the ENP with a substantial financial support for areas affected by the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon.

The EU and Lebanon signed on 11 November 2016 the new EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities in order to consolidate their partnership by agreeing on a set of priorities for the period 2016–2020, with the aim of supporting and strengthening Lebanon’s resilience and stability while seeking to address the impact of the protracted conflict in Syria. The Partnership priorities in EU-Lebanon Relations for the coming years include security and countering terrorism, governance and the rule of law, fostering growth and job opportunities, and migration and mobility.

To ensure Lebanon’s ownership of its development agenda, the EU works through national institutions. EU-Lebanon cooperation includes specific support for capacity development and institution building as well as measures in favour of civil society. The indicative allocation for EU-Lebanon cooperation for 2017-2020 is approximately between €186.05 and €228 million.

Syria: Relations between the EU and Syria are governed by the **Cooperation Agreement signed in 1977**. Negotiations on an **Association Agreement were frozen in May 2011** and **bilateral cooperation** programs under the ENP have been **suspended**.

In August 2011, in response to the harsh repression of peaceful demonstrations against the Syrian government, the EU froze financial and technical assistance programs provided bilaterally to Syria, and gradually extended restrictive measures in areas such as oil, banking and trade. The aim has been to encourage an end to violence and a political solution to the conflict. From the outset, the EU has condemned human rights violations in Syria. By 2015, the Syria crisis became the largest humanitarian and security disaster in the world.

The EU has provided significant funds towards supporting international efforts to locate and destroy Syrian chemical weapons. The EU is a full member and has been an active participant in the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) and its two taskforces (humanitarian and cessation of hostilities). It fully supports the UN-led process, notably the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Syria facilitating the intra-Syrian negotiations. A negotiated settlement remains the only way of bringing the conflict to an end. The EU, therefore, calls on all those countries with influence on the Syrian regime, as well as those engaged with armed opPosition groups, to apply maximum pressure to cease the attacks, allow unhindered and continuous humanitarian access to those in need and resume political negotiations under the auspices of the UN in Geneva as swiftly as possible.

Since its establishment in December 2014, an increasing share of the EU’s non-humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees and their host countries is provided through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the ‘Madad’ Fund. With contributions and pledges from 22 EU Member States and Turkey, amounting now to almost €180 million, and contributions from various EU instruments, the Fund has reached a total volume of more than €1.6 billion. Large programmes focusing on education, livelihoods, health, socio-economic support, water and waste water infrastructure – benefiting both refugees and their host communities - have already been approved by the Fund’s Board, for a total of more than €1.5 billion.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dmas/Activities/interparliamentary)

The Delegation for Relations with the Mashreq Countries is one of the EP’s oldest delegations, having been established after the first European elections in 1979. It organises several meetings at the EP, often with national authorities and ambassadors, EU officials - EEAS, the European Commission (DG ECHO and DG NEAR) - or outside experts, including from UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, the European Council for Foreign Affairs and other private institutes that focus on Middle East policies. During the eighth legislature, the joint debates focused mainly on the developments and political transitions after the “Arab Spring” (since 2011), the Syrian war and its regional impact, the security situation in the region, human rights and the Relations between the EU and each country.

In addition, DMAS also holds Interparliamentary Meetings (IPM) once a year with its counterparts in Egypt, Jordan or Lebanon. By promoting EU values and mutual understanding, the IPMs contribute to further strengthening bilateral Relations, while also assessing the respective situation on the ground (whether political, economic, or in relation to human rights or EU projects).

EPP Group Position

Lebanon

Lebanon shares and captures the tensions of the entire region and is essential to an eventual solution of the Middle East Peace Process, and has always been a priority for the EPP Group as supported by the two Mediterranean Policy Working Group missions to Lebanon in March 2016 and in February 2018. The EPP Group reaffirms its support for the moderate, pro-Western forces, who are seeking a progress-orientated reform program, which is in the interest of the Lebanese citizens.

Regarding Hezbollah, EPP Group has defended the decision in 2013 listing the so-called military wing as a terrorist organisation as a step in the right direction. However, making a distinction between the group’s supposed “military” and “political” wings is “illogical” and rejected even by Hezbollah itself.

Syria

Since the beginning of the war, the EPP Group has taken a much harder Position on Syria, calling for the immediate departure of Bashar Al-Assad and the end of violence. The EPP supports a change in the EU strategy towards Syria thereby adopting a more unified Position. We believe the EU’s must play a greater role in the reconstruction of Syria.

Jordan

Our Group recognises that Jordan has always been one of the most active members in the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. The EPP Group also underlines the importance of Jordan for the Middle East Peace Process. Jordanian diplomacy plays a necessary and important role as a moderator and, for that reason, the EPP Group continues to favour long-term EU support and will continue to work with the Government to create opportunities, promote entrepreneurship and generate economic growth.

On Egypt

The EPP Group supports the legitimate democratic aspirations of the people of Egypt. The EPP Group stresses in particular the importance of reforms focusing on good governance, the fight against corruption, the independence of the judiciary, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms with special regard to women’s rights, freedom of conscience, religion, thought and expression. The EPP Group condemns the use of force and violence used against peacefully manifesting protesters and calls for an independent inquiry to bring those responsible to justice.

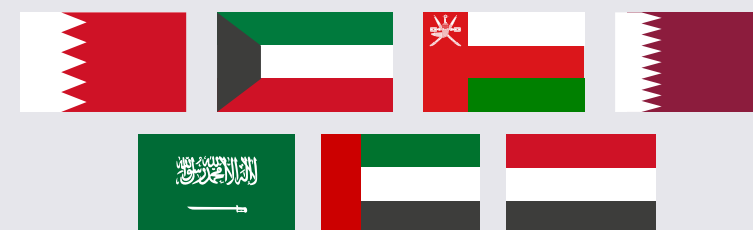
The EPP Group Members of the Mediterranean Policy Working Group highlighted their commitment to building strong cooperation between the EU and Egypt during their mission to Cairo in November 2016. Members stressed throughout their meetings that Egypt is a key partner since stability in the country means stability in the Mediterranean and, therefore, in Europe. The EPP Group has recalled in several EP resolutions its continued outrage at the torture and killing of the Italian researcher Giulio Regeni and has stated that it will continue to urge the EU authorities to engage with their Egyptian counterparts until the truth is established on this case and the perpetrators are held accountable.

Furthermore, the EPP Group is concerned about the situation of Christians, especially Copts, in Egypt. Copts have to be considered not as a minority but should be fully integrated into the Egyptian society. The EPP Group strongly condemns the continuously growing violence against Copts and calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure their safety and full integration into the Egyptian society. The EPP Group is against the death penalty and strongly rejects Egyptian death sentences for hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood supporters.



V. THE ARAB PENINSULA, IRAQ AND IRAN

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB PENINSULA (DARP)



BAHRAIN



Population: 1.4m.

GDP: \$71.1 billion

Religions: Muslim 70.3%, Christian 14.5%, Hindu 9.8%.

Political system: Constitutional monarchy. Prime Minister KHALIFA bin Salman Al-Khalifa (since 1971). Bicameral National Assembly: Consultative Council (40 seats; Members appointed by the king); Council of Representatives (40 seats; Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by absolute majority vote, in 2 rounds if needed; Members serve four-year renewable terms). Next elections are to be held in 2022.

EPP Group Adviser: Gabor Török

KUWAIT



Population: 2.9m.

GDP: \$289.7.8 billion

Religions: Muslim 76.7%, Christian 17.3%, other 5.9%.

Political system: Constitutional monarchy (emirate). Prime Minister JABIR AL-MUBARAK al-Hamad al-Sabah (since 30 November 2011). Unicameral National Assembly (65 seats; 50 Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 15 ex-officio Members - Cabinet Ministers - appointed by the Prime Minister; Members serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in 2020.

OMAN



Population: 4.6m.

GDP: \$190.1 billion

Religions: Muslim (majority are Ibadhi 85.9%), Christian 6.5%, Hindu 5.5%.

Political system: Absolute monarchy. Sultan and Prime Minister QABOOS bin Said Al-Said (sultan since 23 July 1970 and Prime Minister since 23 July 1972). Bicameral Council of Oman: Council of State (85 seats including the Chairman; Members appointed by the sultan from among former government officials and prominent educators, businessmen, and citizens); Consultative Council (85 seats; Members directly elected in single- and 2-seat constituencies by simple majority popular vote to serve renewable four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in October 2019.

QATAR



Population: 2.3m.

GDP: \$339.5 billion

Religions: Muslim 77.5%, Christian 8.5%, other 14%.

Political system: Absolute monarchy. Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Nasir bin Khalifa Al Thani (since 26 June 2013). Unicameral Advisory Council (45 seats; 30 Members directly elected by popular vote for four-year re-electable terms and 15 appointed by the monarch to serve until resignation or until relieved). Next elections are to be held at the end of 2019 or in 2020.

SAUDI ARABIA



Population: 33m.
GDP: \$1.7 trillion.
Religions: Muslim (85-90% Sunni and 10-15% Shia).
Political system: Absolute monarchy. King and Prime Minister SALMAN bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since 23 January 2015). Unicameral Consultative Council (150 seats; Members appointed by the monarch to serve four-year terms).

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)



Population: 9.7m.
GDP: \$696 billion
Religions: Muslim 76%, Christian 9%.
Political system: Federation of monarchies. Prime Minister Vice President MUHAMMAD BIN RASHID Al-Maktum (since 5 January 2006). Unicameral Federal National Council (FNC) (40 seats; 20 Members indirectly elected by an electoral college, the Members of which are selected by each emirate ruler proportional to emirate's FNC membership, and 20 members appointed by the rulers of the 7 constituent States; Members serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in October 2019.

YEMEN



Population: 28.6m.
GDP: \$ 73.63 billion
Religions: Muslim 99.1% (65% are Sunni and 35% are Shia).
Political system: In transition. Prime Minister Maeen Abd al-Malik SAEED (since 15 October 2018). Bicameral Parliament: Shura Council (111 seats; Members appointed by the president); House of Representatives (301 seats; Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote to serve six-year terms).

Background and EU Relations

The six-member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, represent an important region from a trade point of view and constituted the EU's fourth-largest export market in 2016. The GCC was created in 1981 with the aim of coordinating economic, political, cultural and security policies in the region. With more than 25% of the world oil reserves, the Arab Peninsula holds not only the world's largest oil reserves, but is also a key source of wealth, as well as political and economic power.

Regional integration has always been a key characteristic of the GCC. In this light, certain similarities with the EU's internal market exist. In addition to the foundation of a free-trade zone in 1983, the launch of plans for a customs union in 2001 and the setting of a common external tariff of 5%, in 2008 the GCC launched the project of a common market. Furthermore, talks about a monetary union have been going on since 2001. While both the monetary union as well as the customs union have not yet materialised, the discussions show the seriousness behind the GCC integration process. The framework for economic and political cooperation between the EU and the GCC countries is provided by the 1988 EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement that seeks to improve trade Relations and stability in a strategic part of Europe's neighbourhood. The agreement

created a Joint Council and a Joint Cooperation Committee which meet annually. In May 2017, the EU and GCC launched a dedicated Dialogue on Trade and Investment issues, with the participation of their respective private sectors. This Dialogue provides a dedicated platform to tackle trade and investment-related issues and enhance cooperation on matters of mutual interest, such as market access irritants¹⁵, regulatory requirements and ways to encourage greater two-way trade and investment flows. Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood has led to increasing tensions with other Arab States of the Persian Gulf. These tensions came to a head during a March 2014 meeting of the GCC, after which the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain announced the recall of their ambassadors to Qatar. On 5 June 2017, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Egypt officially cut diplomatic ties with Qatar. Saudi Arabia said it took the decision to cut diplomatic ties due to Qatar's "embrace of various terrorist and sectarian groups aimed at destabilising the region", including the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaida, ISIL and Iranian-supported groups in Saudi Arabia's eastern province of Qatif. In June 2017, various GCC members put a ban on Qataris and their businesses.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/darp/Activities/interparliamentary)

DARP Members regularly meet with their counterparts from the Arab Peninsula countries' consultative councils, within the framework of interparliamentary meetings, either in the EP or in the Gulf countries. Bilateral and multilateral Relations as well as pressing issues are discussed in regular meetings in the EP. Senior staff from the EEAS and the Commission, experts, researchers and diplomats contribute to the discussions in these meetings.

The DARP has addressed a significant number of military, political, economic and cultural issues. The Delegation has stressed the Parliament's political priorities. While these priorities generally align with the priorities of the EU in relation to the Gulf countries, the Parliament has emphasised specific issues, such as the human rights situation in the Arab Peninsula, cooperation with the Gulf on managing migration and arms exports to the region.

The Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought for 2015 was awarded to the Saudi blogger, Raif Badawi.

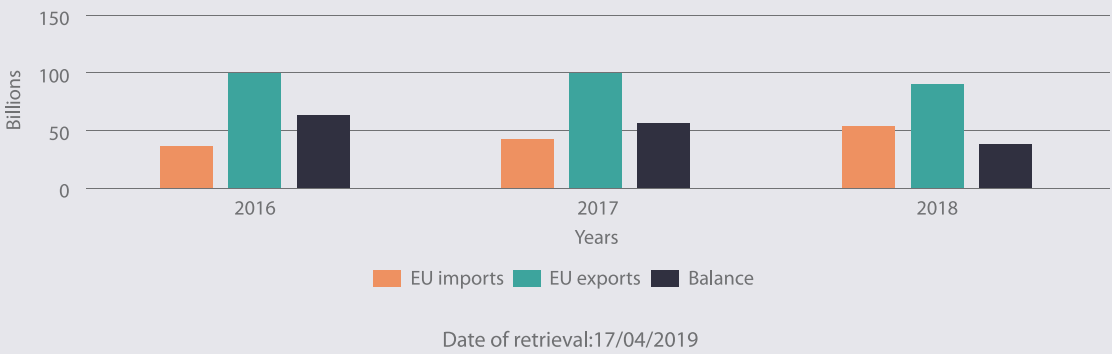
EPP Group Position

Considering that the Arab Peninsula countries are undergoing considerable socio-economic and political changes, the Group has supported the key priorities of the EU for closer cooperation with the GCC.

EPP Group Members have closely followed the geostrategic developments related to the crisis of the Qatar blockade and expressed concerns about the humanitarian and security situation in Yemen. They have addressed sensitive issues in frank discussions with the representatives of the countries.

Members stressed that the EU can best cooperate with the region if stability and predictability prevail.

EU-Gulf Region "trade in goods" statistics



Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/gulf-region/>

¹⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/gulf-region/>

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH IRAQ (D-IRQ)



Population: 40.1m.

GDP: \$ 649.3 billion

Religions: Muslim (Shia 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian 0.8%.

Political system: Federal Parliamentary Republic. Prime Minister Adil ABD AL-MAHDI (since 24 October 2018). Unicameral Council of Representatives (329 seats; 320 Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by open-list proportional representation vote and 9 seats at the national level reserved for minorities; Members serve four-year terms); note - Iraq's constitution calls for the establishment of an upper house, the Federation Council, but it has not been instituted. Next elections are to be held in 2022.

EPP Group Adviser: G. Török

Background and EU Relations

In 1990, Iraq invaded its oil-rich neighbour Kuwait in order to help stimulate its weak economy. After a UN Security Council resolution, Iraq was driven out of Kuwait by a US-led military operation. In the following decade, Iraq was continuously accused of developing weapons of mass destruction. After insufficient Iraqi cooperation with UN inspections, the US, supported by a coalition, declared war on Iraq and thus the second Gulf War started in 2003.

After overthrowing the Hussein government, the US, supported by the international community, tried to pacify the country and install a democratic government. On 1 September 2010, the US combat forces withdrew from Iraq. The country, however, continues to be in disarray as terrorist bombings continue. Furthermore, so far there is no agreement among the ethnic groups on how to rule the country and divide the proceeds from its natural resources. Religion (Shiites and Sunnites) and ethnic diversity (Kurds in the north), continue to be main reasons for an unstable situation in Iraq.

Another core problem that must be addressed by the government is the continuously growing violence against Christians. The number of Christians in Iraq has decreased from about 1 million in the early 1990s to only about 450,000 today. The situation with Kurdish people and some of their nationalistic claims to create an independent State for Kurds increase tensions in Iraq and other concerned countries such as Turkey and Iran.

The birth and growth of Islamic State caused huge parts of Iraq to fall under its control. The Iraqi government called on the US and other Western forces to intervene and help stave off the increasingly powerful terror group. On 30 April 2014, Iraqis voted in their country's first parliamentary elections since the withdrawal of US forces in 2011. Heavy security was in place and, in some provinces or towns (for example, Anbar and Falluja), no polling stations were open due to insecurity.

Iraq is an important partner for the EU because of its geopolitical Position and role in the Middle East, and the country's many political, security and socio-economic challenges. Several aspects of its internal organisation are hotly debated, including the degree of federalism, the status of Kirkuk, the drawing of internal boundaries, and the sharing of resources.

The EU-Iraq Relationship is underpinned by two bilateral agreements: the Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Cooperation, signed in 2010, and the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed in 2012. The first is a framework for cooperation in the field of energy (security of energy supplies, renewable energy and energy efficiency), while the second deals with a wider range of issues, including counter-terrorism, political and electoral processes, human rights, the rule of law, trade, energy and migration. The 2012 PCA has been ratified by the EP and the Iraqi Parliament, and has been provisionally in force since August 2012. However, the agreement will not be fully implemented until it is ratified by all the EU Member States.

The EU supports the Global Coalition to counter ISIS/Daesh in Syria and Iraq. It supports Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and considers political inclusiveness and national reconciliation to be essential to defeating ISIS/Daesh. In response to a request from the Iraqi authorities for support in the civilian security sector reform area and in line with the Council conclusions on Iraq of 19 June 2017, the EU agreed on 17 July 2017 to send a civilian CSDP mission in Baghdad. The EU Assistance Mission (EUAM) was officially launched on 16 October 2017 and deployed in November 2017. The mission is focused on assisting the Iraqi authorities in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Iraqi Security Strategy. EU experts are providing advice and assistance in the priority work areas that respond to the needs of the relevant authorities.

IOM Presence in Iraq - UN Migration:



Source: <https://iraq.iom.int/iom-iraq>

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-iq/Activities/interparliamentary)

The Delegation spearheaded the Parliament's interparliamentary dialogue with the Iraqi Council of representatives and held discussions with Iraqi political leaders, international and civil society organisations and minority group representatives. The meetings covered a range of issues from international agreements and economic issues to the situation of religious minorities and humanitarian needs.

During the legislative term of 2014-2019, there were two different periods of Activities: the Delegation met frequently in 2014, 2015 and 2016. From 2017 until 2019, it met rarely. An unofficial explanation for this inactivity was that, because Iraq was in the grip of dramatic battles to free its territory from ISIS/Daesh military control, meetings would have been vain. Once this fighting was over, regular Activities would resume. Iraq has been a focus of various resolutions in the EP, most recently on mass graves, on the systematic mass murder of minorities by ISIS/Daesh and the situation in northern Iraq.

The 2016 Laureates of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought were the Iraqi Yazidi activists, Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar, who survived slavery under ISIS/Daesh and came out fighting for others who suffered their same fate.

EPP Group Position

Members are concerned with the huge challenges Iraq is facing: the need for security, stability, reconstruction and reconciliation so as to enable the return of hundreds of thousands of displaced people, including those who have fled to Europe, where Iraqis are one of the largest groups of asylum seekers.

Iraq's diverse religious and ethnic communities, including Christians, Yazidis and other groups, particularly hard-hit under ISIS/Daesh, were of particular concern for EPP Group Members. As these communities struggle to take back their space in society and have a voice in governance, Members have expressed concerns about the overall situation in the country and the future prospects for a multi-ethnic and multi-religious State.

The Group supported the resolution and the consent of the Parliament to the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). The PCA is the essential instrument for implementing the EU strategy for Iraq and for strengthening cooperation in the country's reconstruction, stabilisation and reconciliation.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH IRAN (D-IR)



Population: 83m.

GDP: \$1.64 trillion.

Religions: Muslim (Shia 90-95%, Sunni 5-10%), other 0.3% (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian), unspecified 0.4%.

Political system: Theocratic republic. Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-KHAMENEI (since 4 June 1989); President Hasan Fereidun ROHANI (since 3 August 2013). Unicameral Islamic Consultative Assembly (“Majlis”) (290 seats; 285 Members directly elected in single- and multi-seat constituencies by 2-round vote, and 1 seat each for Zoroastrians, Jews, Assyrian and Chaldean Christians, Armenians in the north of the country and Armenians in the south; Members serve four-year terms). All candidates to the Assembly must be approved by the Council of Guardians, a 12-Member group of which 6 are appointed by the Supreme Leader and 6 are jurists nominated by the judiciary and elected by the Assembly.

EPP Group Adviser: J. KOPEĆ

Background and EU Relations

Iran, formerly known Persia, is strategically located and has one of the biggest petroleum and natural gas reserves. Its recent history is marked by the 1979 Islamic Revolution, during which the last Shah was overthrown and an Islamic government was installed. Due to discontent, the Shah, who was supported by the West, had to flee the country. Soon after, Ayatollah Khomeini, who had returned from exile, was declared the Supreme Leader, thereby becoming the highest political and spiritual authority of Iran. Following the revolution, violence against former supporters of the Shah arose and numerous people were executed. Shortly after the revolution, an eight-year-long war with Iraq broke out.

Based on Western support for the Shah and Saddam Hussein during the Iraq-Iran war, Iran’s Relations with the West have been very complicated. Relations further deteriorated after the inauguration of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president in 2005. In 2009, following reports about massive irregularities and fraud connected to his re-election, riots broke out.

In 2013, Iranians elected Mr. Rohani as their president. At the time, he stated that he would “follow the path of moderation and justice, not extremism”. He was re-elected in 2017 for another term, promising to focus on human rights and reduce the number of executions of prisoners convicted.

Amendments were made to the anti-narcotics law in November 2017, which include a mechanism to limit the use of the death penalty in the case of drug-related crimes. According to human rights groups, 278 people were executed in 2018 (lowest number documented since 2007 - Iran Human Rights), and Iran also has the highest rate of juvenile executions in the world (6 minors in 2018).

Concerns about Iran’s nuclear programme have persisted throughout the past years and about the Iran’s ambitious secretly to become a nuclear power in order to underline its status as a regional power. Concerns further increased when Iran, with Russian support, inaugurated its first nuclear power plant in Bushehr in August 2010. Given the persistent refusal of the Iranian side to disclose full information about its nuclear programme and its unsatisfactory cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN Security Council imposed a variety of sanctions against Iran.

After long and difficult negotiations, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the E3+3 group (France, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and the United States) was agreed on 14 July 2015. This agreement was to ensure Iran’s nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful and, in exchange, sanctions were to be progressively lifted starting from 2016. The JCPOA was endorsed by UN Security Resolution 2231(2015) and Iran’s compliance with nuclear-related provisions was to be verified by the IAEA according to the agreement.

Relations between Iran and the EU are coordinated via the Iran Task Force, which was established following the JCPOA agreement, which coordinates and develops a coherent framework for bilateral engagement with Iran in close cooperation with the EEAS.

On trade, the EU is the first trading partner of Iran, accounting for almost a third of Iran’s exports. Trade had been severely restricted due to the nuclear-related sanctions. However, the economic and financial sanctions were lifted on 16 January 2016 in accordance with

the JCPOA, and this opened a new era in the Relations with Iran. In its November 2016 conclusions, the Council expresses its resolute commitment to the JCPOA and further welcomed Iran’s effective implementation of its nuclear-related commitments.

In May 2018, US President Trump decided to re-impose sanctions on Iran after withdrawing from the JCPOA, stating that “the deal was flawed as it did not curb Iran’s ballistic missile programme or support for proxies in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Iraq”. This caused Iran’s currency to crash, rampant inflation and resulted in many foreign investors leaving Iran. In response, EU ministers stated they wished to keep the Iran nuclear deal in place as long as Iran remained committed to it and that the EU and Member States were coordinating measures and mechanisms to protect the economic investments of European businesses that had legitimately invested and engaged in Iran.

In September 2018, EU Member States set up a mechanism to protect legitimate business with Iran. The new payment system will assist and provide reassurance to European businesses wishing to continue trading with Iran, mitigating the effect of reimposed US sanctions in accordance with European Law. This was reaffirmed by the Council’s conclusions of February 2019, which highlight the EU’s support for the JCPOA and the lifting of sanctions, and regret the re-imPosition of sanctions by the US.

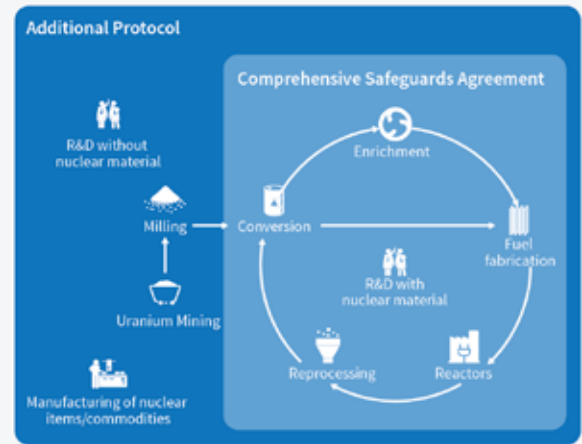
The restrictive measures related to violations of human rights put in place back in 2011 (including a travel ban and an asset freeze against individuals and entities responsible for grave human rights violations and a ban on exports to Iran of equipment which might be used for internal repression and of equipment for monitoring telecommunications) were extended by the Council until 13 April 2020.

IAEA verification in Iran - Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

Under the JCPOA, the IAEA has **wider access to, and more information on, Iran’s nuclear programme** and **implements a more robust verification system**



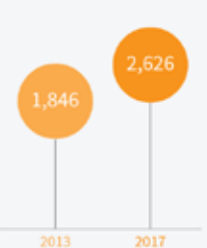
The Additional Protocol enables
IAEA Inspectors to conduct complementary
access to any location in Iran



Surveillance cameras installed at facilities

+89%
2013 - 2017

Seals attached to nuclear material and equipment



Verification activities conducted

+152%
2013 - 2017

IAEA’s presence in Iran

Calendar days in the field



State-of-the-art technology collected

1.2 million
open-source documents/month in 2017



Source: <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/18/03/verification-iran-jcboa.pdf>

In May 2019, President Trump intensified US economic pressure by imposing sanctions on Iran’s metals industry (its second-biggest export earner after oil). During the visit of US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, to Brussels on 13 May 2019, the High Representative Mogherini reiterated the EU’s support for the nuclear deal with Iran and its full implementation and called for Iran to comply with all its nuclear commitments. Furthermore, Mogherini called for “maximum restraint and (the) avoiding (of) any escalation on a military side” between the US and Iran and stated that the EU “will continue to support it (the JCPOA) as much as we can with all our instruments and all our political will.”

Oil and Gas fields in the Gulf and the Middle East:



Source: i0.wp.com/www.oilandgas360.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Oil_and_Gas_Infrastructure_Persian_Gulf_large_.gif?ssl=1

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-ir/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

After years of the limited bilateral Relations, the Delegation for Relations with Iran was established in 2004 with the goal of building up mutual trust and respect and creating a direct channel of communication between the EP and the Majlis. There have been seven EP-Iran interparliamentary meetings (IPM), the last one taking place in September 2018 in Brussels.

In addition to the IPMs, the Delegation meets on its own on a monthly basis in general during Strasbourg plenary session to discuss relevant issues, such as political developments in Iran, the human rights situation (death penalty, refugees and minorities), environmental emergencies and the security situation in the region. The delegation has discussed these topics together with representatives from Iran's civil society, minorities and NGOs, researchers, the EEAS and the UN officials, and with the Iranian Ambassador, who has frequently attended the meetings.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group acknowledges the importance of Iran as a major regional player and its role in fighting ISIS/Daesh in the region. Therefore, the EPP Group emphasises the strategic importance of the JCPOA, which is a historic achievement of the international diplomacy. The agreement at its own is seen as a milestone in the persistent efforts to ensure stability and security in the region. Despite the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, the EPP Group stands for the engagement with Iran and remains committed to jointly implementing the JCPOA, as long as the IAEA – the organisation monitoring Iran's nuclear Activities - confirms that Iran is implementing all its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA.

The EPP Group remains concerned about the human rights situation in Iran, including the minorities' situation and alarming number of death penalties, and addresses the human rights situation in Iran at any occasion in the bilateral exchanges with the Iranian counterparts.



VI. THE AMERICAS

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (D-US) TRANSATLANTIC LEGISLATORS DIALOGUE (TLD)



Strategic partner

Population: 323 m.

GDP: \$19.49 trillion.

Political system: constitutional federal republic. President Donald J. TRUMP (since 20 January 2017). Bicameral Congress: Senate (100 seats; 2 members directly elected in each of the 50 State constituencies; Members serve six-year terms with one-third of membership renewed every 2 years); House of Representatives (435 seats; members directly elected in single-seat constituencies; Members serve 2-year terms). Next elections are in November 2020.

EPP Group Adviser: J. Kraft, A. Dentler

Background and EU Relations

The EU and the United States established diplomatic Relations as early as 1953, but it was only in November 1990 that the cooperation was formalised for the first time with the Transatlantic Declaration. The US has historically been the EU's closest ally, with common interests and values as well as a shared view of the world guiding bilateral Relations and joint actions. Currently, Relations are based on the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA). This ambitious agenda of cooperation between the EU and the US is taken forward via constant, intensive dialogue at various levels from the annual summit meetings between EU and US leaders to technical work at expert level.

Together, the EU and the USA have the largest bilateral trade and investment Relationship in the world, roughly 31% of the world trade and over 53% of the world's GDP. Within the framework of the NTA and in line with the Transatlantic Economic Partnership launched in 1998, the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) was created in 2007 to boost the transatlantic economy. The TEC had originally set the objective to create a transatlantic market by 2015. However, this did not amount to a proposal for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks started in July 2013. Negotiating groups set out respective approaches and ambitions in 20 various areas that the TTIP was set to cover, including customs duties and technical standards for goods produced on both sides of Atlantic. Negotiations ended without conclusion due to divergences in several crucial areas, such as agriculture and public procurement at the end of 2016. The Council decision of 15 April 2019 authorising the opening of negotiations with the United States of America for an agreement on the elimination of tariffs for industrial goods stated that the negotiating directives for the TTIP were obsolete and no longer relevant.

The implementation of the America First foreign policy has resulted in US criticism of, and withdrawal from, a number of multilateral initiatives, and is recalibrating the US's Relations with traditional allies, including the EU. Major areas of tension in bilateral Relations have included the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris Agreement on climate change, trade, burden-sharing within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and differing perceptions of the multilateral order.

The EU-US trade Relationship, which constitutes the largest economic Relationship in the world (US\$1 trillion in bilateral trade), has become strained since President Trump took office. From the EU's perspective, at least four issues have increased tensions between the traditionally close trading partners, namely:

- The US decisions in spring 2018 to impose tariffs on imports of steel and aluminium under the pretext of national security and its refusal to grant the EU a permanent exemption;
- The continued US blockage of new appointments to the Appellate Body (AB) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which threatens to paralyse the WTO's dispute settlement system;

- The imPosition of anti-dumping and countervailing duties on imports of Spanish ripe olives in 2018, which could have wider implications for the EU’s common agricultural policy;
- The US threats to impose tariffs on imports of EU cars and car parts before the mid-term elections. At the same time, the EU and US have (together with Japan) regularly discussed common trade concerns.

Following intensive contacts and interventions by several Heads of State and Government in the EU towards the US President, Commission President Juncker and US President Trump agreed measures to avoid a further escalation on 25 July 2018. They agreed, among other things, to work toward zero tariffs, non-tariff barriers and zero subsidies on non-auto industrial goods. The Commission also indicated that it wants to facilitate increased EU imports of liquefied natural gas from the US as well as strengthen trade in several other areas. The two sides further agreed not to go against the spirit of their agreement while they are negotiating; President Trump promised not to impose new tariffs on cars as long as progress is being made (although in August 2018 he claimed that he would) and to reassess the US steel and aluminium measures. Lastly, the parties agreed to work towards WTO reform, address unfair trading practices and launch a dialogue on standards. An executive working group has been established to prepare negotiations on a potential trade deal.

Under President Trump, the US has withdrawn from a number of multilateral bodies and agreements, including the Paris Agreement on climate change, the nascent Trans-Pacific Partnership, the UN Human Rights Council (based on its accusation of ‘chronic bias’ against Israel) and UNESCO. Along with its blockage of the WTO’s AB, this has raised questions about US commitment to the principle of multilateralism (in trade, security and global governance more widely), a cornerstone of EU external action and of cooperation between the two partners. Clashes between President Trump and other leaders at the G7 and G20 summits over trade and climate change have reinforced these concerns, although he supported both communiqués in the end.

Despite the actions of the US government and failure to deliver on the agreement between the two Presidents, in January 2019, the Commission adopted proposals for negotiating directives for a limited agreement on conformity assessment and on the elimination of tariffs for industrial goods. The EU Member States adopted the mandates in spring 2019 and ensured with this that the EU stands ready to start formal talks with the US and help to ease trade tensions.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-us/Activities/interparliamentary)

The Transatlantic Legislators’ Dialogue (TLD) aims to strengthen and enhance the level of political debate and interaction between European and American legislators. It does so against the background of numerous other contacts, which have resulted in a significantly closer EU-US Relationship at a variety of levels. These include, namely, the annual EU-US Summit meetings established by the Transatlantic Declaration of 1990, the Transatlantic Dialogues (Business, Consumers, Environment and Labour) and other initiatives. The TLD constitutes the formal response of the EP and the US Congress to the commitment in the New Transatlantic Agenda to enhanced parliamentary ties between the EU and the US.

The Steering Committee, which co-ordinates TLD Activities, also maintains contacts with the members of the Senior Level Group (SLG), which is composed of high-ranking officials from the European Commission, the EU Presidency and the US Administration. The current Co-Chair of the TLD on the European side is Christian Ehler MEP (EPP/DE); following the US midterm elections, Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA) replaced Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) as Co-Chair on the American side. During the eighth legislature, nine Transatlantic Legislators’ Dialogue meetings have taken place, alternatively in the EU and the US: Riga (June 2015), Washington D.C. (November 2015), The Hague (June 2016), Washington D.C. (November 2016), Valletta (June 2017), Washington D.C. (December 2017), Sofia (June 2018) and Washington D.C. (December 2018, then rescheduled to February 2019).

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group firmly believes that the EU and the US have an unparalleled political and economic Relationship and a common interest in promoting global governance based on the core principles of freedom and democracy, transparency, accountability, and rule of law. In this spirit, the EPP Group supported the negotiations of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the objective of

creating new opportunities for jobs and growth on both sides of the Atlantic, while preserving and recognising the high labour, consumer protection and environmental standards our Member States have. Following the halt of TTIP, the EPP Group supports the renewed efforts for the two potential agreements with the US, thereby giving a new momentum to the transatlantic trade Relations.

Beyond trade, the EPP Group considers that NATO is and should remain the pillar for a shared understanding of common threats both for the EU and the US. As an integral part of our joint defence, we are ready to contribute our share and likewise count on the commitment of the US towards NATO. This shared understanding of threats encompasses not only defence, but the EPP Group believes in a strong and close cooperation with the US on all global security concerns, in particular the threat of terrorism.

Likewise, the EPP Group believes that the EU and US have a shared interest in addressing global economic and security challenges stemming from competing powers, such as China and Russia, which are working towards imposing world orders contrary to our common principles of democracy, rule of law, human rights, open and free societies and markets. Therefore, the EPP Group stands ever more for strong and close cooperation with the US and a global order defined by multilateralism.

In view of the policies and politics of the current unorthodox US administration and President Trump, the EPP Group attaches great importance to the role of parliamentary diplomacy. Since the early days of the current administration, the close contacts between the EP and the US Congress have played a growing importance and fostered a common understanding between legislators of shared concerns on trade, security, multilateralism and common threats, based on our close Relationship.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH CANADA (D-CA)



Population: 35,881,659 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$1.774 trillion, **per capita (PPP):** \$48,400 (2017 est.).
Cities: Ottawa (cap), Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal.
Political system: federal parliamentary democracy (Parliament of Canada) under a constitutional monarchy. Prime Minister Justin Pierre James TRUDEAU (Liberal Party) (since 4 November 2015). Bicameral Parliament or ‘Parlement’ consists of: Senate or ‘Senat’ (105 seats; Members appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister and may serve until age 75). House of Commons or ‘Chambre des Communes’ (338 seats; Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote with terms up to 4 years). Next elections are to be held 21 October 2019.
EPP Group Adviser: Marek Hannibal

Background and Relations with the EU

Canada, the second largest country in the world, is a federation of 3 territories (located in the sparsely populated northern part) and 10 provinces. Canada is a multi-ethnic country and has a large French-speaking population; consequently, the country’s two official languages are English and French. Canada is a member of a number of international organisations, such as NATO, the G8, G20, OECD and the Organisation of American States (OAS), as well as the Commonwealth. Given the latter, Queen Elisabeth II is the reigning Head of State. The Queen’s very limited duties are fulfilled through the Governor General of Canada.

In terms of foreign policy Canada has been an active supporter of multilateralism and the United Nations. It has participated in over 50 UN Peacekeeping missions. Given its geographical location, Canada is also a major player in the Arctic area. Canada is often cited for its liberal immigration system. Immigration is structured around three main categories: a) economic immigration; b) family reunification and c) refugee resettlement. There are currently more than 80 programs for immigration to Canada. The vast majority of immigrants come under economic programs designed to address skills shortages and gaps in the labour market. Selection is based on a point system that rewards applicants with higher levels of education, job experience and language skills.

EU-Canada Relations date back to the 1950s. Canada is one of the closest allies of the EU and is a strategic partner in resolving the important global issues of today. From the purely economic Relations in the 1950s, the Relationship has evolved into today's political and strategic partnership.

EU-Canada Relations have been upgraded with the provisional application of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). The Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) is a framework agreement that was negotiated to give structure and regularity to political, economic and sectorial cooperation. Through the SPA, the EU and Canada cooperate on global economic issues of common interest, sustainable development, energy security and efficiency, the environment and climate change.

The Agreement covers more than 25 policy areas of high priority (peace and security, sustainable development, justice and home affairs issues). The SPA was signed on 30 October 2016 on the occasion of the EU-Canada Summit. Two thirds of the Agreement have entered into force on a provisional basis since 1 April 2017.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is considered the most far-reaching trade and investment agreement that the EU has achieved so far. The EU and Canada widely open their markets to one another's goods, services and investments, including public procurement. The most important sectors in terms of EU exports are the machinery, automotive and pharmaceutical industries, while imports from Canada heavily feature gemstones and machinery, as well as aircraft and aircraft parts. Under CETA, customs tariffs on 98 % of tariff lines were scrapped upon CETA's entry into force, and one more percent will ultimately follow. An analysis carried out by DG Trade estimated that imports from Canada and EU exports could increase by almost EUR 6 billion each until 2030 and EU GDP could increase by about EUR 2 billion per year.

The value of trade in goods between the EU and Canada was €69.1 billion in 2017. The EU is Canada's second-biggest trading partner after the United States, accounting for 9.6% of its trade in goods with the world in 2016. Canada accounted for almost 2% of the EU's total external trade in goods in 2016.

Sensitive issues with Canada persist in the areas of whale and seal hunting, oil sands and GMOs. On the one hand, whale and seal hunting are of special relevance for the indigenous population living in the arctic north of Canada, which makes up roughly 2% of its population. The Canadian oil sands, on the other hand, are the world largest reservoir of heavy oil – even larger than the light oil reserves of Saudi Arabia. The exploitation of these oil sands is highly controversial as it has a significant impact on the environment. GMOs finally are an important element of Canadian farming Activities. The products mainly cause problems in the context of trade exchange with the EU.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-ca/home)

The EP Delegation with Canada is one of the oldest, having organised 40 Interparliamentary Meetings since 1975. Due to their multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and federal characteristics, both the EU and Canada have frequently been interested in each other's experience of dealing with questions related to sovereignty and subsidiarity. The Interparliamentary Meetings take place once per year; the last, 40th EU-Canada Interparliamentary Meeting took place in March 2019 in Strasbourg. Talks focused on recent political developments in the EU and Canada (elections, migration, environment and climate change, and Brexit) and trade.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group strongly advocated the conclusion of the SPA and CETA, including the approval of both Agreements in the EP that took place in February 2017. The EPP Group sees EU-Canada Relations as crucial for defining a fair and effective global order in the globalised, multi-polar world of the 21st century. As such, we will continue to actively pursue a close partnership with our Canadian friends.

Work in the Delegation therefore seeks to maintain the high importance of building up and further enhancing our contacts with representatives of the Canadian political scene and civil society. At the political level, the EPP Group has close ties with the Conservative Party of Canada, through the International Democrat Union (IDU). The Chairman of the IDU is former long-term Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper. During the meeting of the 39th EU-Canada IPM that took place in May 2018 in Ottawa and Vancouver, the EPP Group MEPs who participated met with the Leader of Canadian Conservatives, Mr Andrew Scheer, the Leader of the official op Position.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL (D-BR)



Population: 208.8m.
GDP: \$3.248 trillion.
Political system: federal presidential republic. President Jair BOLSONARO (since 1 January 2019). bicameral national congress; Federal Senate (81 seats; 3 members each from 26 States and 3 from the federal district directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by simple majority vote to serve 8-year terms, with one-third and two-thirds of the membership elected alternately every 4 years); Chamber of Deputies (513 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote to serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in October 2022.
It is too early to give a judgement on the activity of the new government that entered into force only in January 2019. Bolsonaro promised a lot in the electoral campaign and, as a former military man, wants a country that is able to combine the values with the development, a not easy task. Most of his ministers are newcomers and should be more pragmatic in finding alliances and support in the Congress and in Senate where a lot of small parties are represented. The recent legislative elections were a clear rejection of traditional parties. After three months, two ministers were fired because of lack of pragmatism.
EPP Group Adviser: J. Salafranca, P.G. Rizza

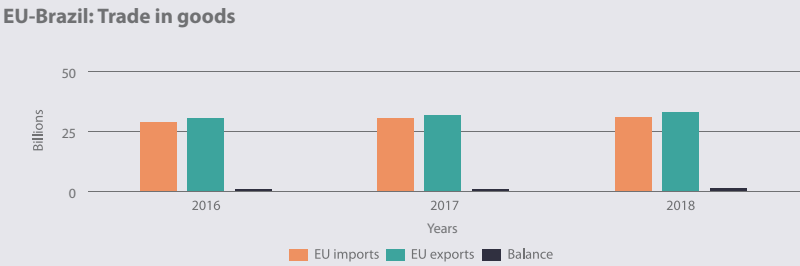
Background and EU Relations

Years ago it seemed that Brazil could emerge as one of the new key global players. Due to the current unresolved internal problems, it remains the country of the future as always. However, as the largest country in Latin America and one of the fastest growing economies, the former Portuguese colony's influence is ever growing, both regionally and globally. While the country benefits from natural resources, such as offshore oil fields, it continues to struggle with high crime rates, poverty, pollution and corruption.

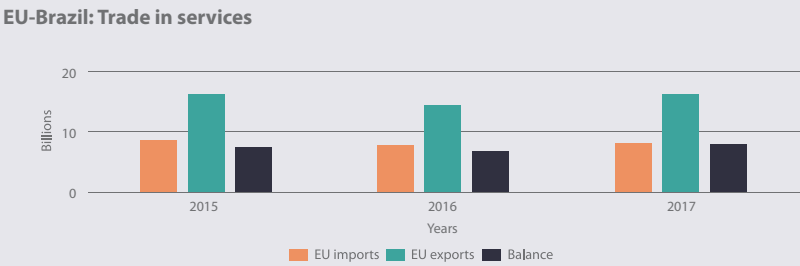
Currently EU-Brazil Relations are governed by three agreements: the EC-Brazil Framework Cooperation Agreement (1992); the EU-Mercosur Framework Cooperation Agreement (1995); and the Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (2004). In 2007, the EU recognised Brazil as one of its key global partners through the establishment of the formal EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership. This partnership covers a range of issues including climate change, sustainable energy, the fight against poverty, the Mercosur integration process and stability and prosperity in Latin America, as well as technical cooperation in many other areas. The EU is negotiating a free trade agreement with Brazil as part of the EU's Association Agreement negotiations with the Mercosur. Brazil is the largest economy of Latin America and its trade with the EU made up 30.8% of the EU's total trade with the Latin America region. Therefore, the Position of Brazil in those negotiations is crucial for its conclusion.

The 2018 election of President Bolsonaro could be a turnabout in the Relationship between the two parties. He was elected with a very large majority, in particular as a key barrier to corruption and criminality but he has to show that, behind the electoral rhetorical promises, he and his government are able to give concrete responses to the needs of the citizens. In the Relations with the EU, there are two important issues to consider: the possible withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate change and the attitude of the country in the negotiations on the Association Agreement. On the latter, after an initially critical approach, it seems that Brazil finally wants this agreement. However, the Position on the Paris Agreement could create problems on the EU side. The impression is that Mr Bolsonaro will give priority to the United States as a strategic world partner, although the EU is a very close commercial partner for Brazil and, therefore, it can be assumed that such a Relationship will be stable. Additionally, the Position taken on the Venezuelan political crisis, with strong support for the alternative president Mr Guaidó, has brought the two parties closer together politically on this crucial issue. Finally, it is unclear what the new government will do to strengthen or weaken Mercosur ties.

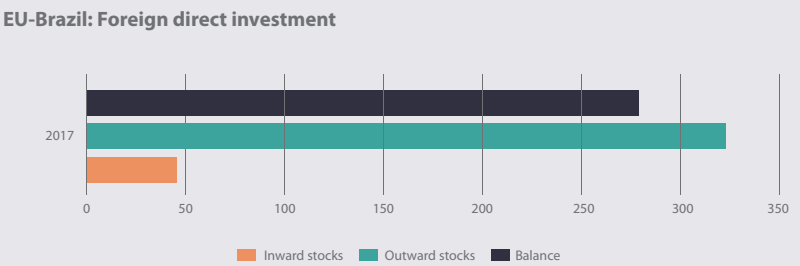
EU-BRAZIL: TRADE IN GOODS:



EU-BRAZIL: TRADE IN SERVICES:



EU-BRAZIL: FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT



Source: ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/brazil/

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-br/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

The EP Delegation's last visit to Brazil was in October 2017, after the removal of Wilma Rousseff, who was replaced by Temer as President of the republic. The delegation had the opportunity to meet prominent members of the government who reiterated the strong Brazilian engagement to pursue and conclude the current negotiations. Brazil was in the process of reforming its own pension system in order to reduce the huge State deficit; this is an example of the reforms that Brazil needs to undertake to modernise itself and become a major actor on international scenario. Both objectives were also supported by Brazilian industry and partially by civil society, which leads one to think that they should become the priorities for the new President.

This was under the previous presidency and, therefore, we would suggest visiting Brazil again as soon as possible in order to establish contacts with the new government.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group considers that the election of Bolsonaro to the presidency of Brazil could be a good opportunity for the country if he is able to put aside the electoral rhetoric and act in a truly pragmatic fashion in order to tackle the enormous challenges of the country. He took significant and clear steps in the Venezuelan crisis in favour of Mr Guaidó and this should reshape the alliances and the strategies in Latin America for a less radically leftist approach. Brazilians expect a lot from him and the Group cautiously expects some positive developments in terms of the internal and international agenda.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA (D-CAM)



COSTA RICA



Population: 4,987,142 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$83.94 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$16,900 (2017 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. President Carlos ALVARADO Quesada (since 8 May 2018). Unicameral Legislative Assembly or 'Asamblea Legislativa' (57 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies - corresponding to the country's 7 provinces - by closed list proportional representation vote; members serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in February 2022.
EPP Group Advisers: J. Salafranca, P.G. Rizza, A. Giesemann

EL SALVADOR



Population: 6,187,271 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$51.17 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$8,000 (2017 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. President Nayib Armando BUKELE Ortiz (since 1 June 2019). Unicameral Legislative Assembly or 'Asamblea Legislativa' (84 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies and a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote to serve 3-year terms). Next elections are to be held in March 2021.

GUATEMALA



Population: 16,581,273 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$138.1 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$8,200 (2017 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. President Jimmy Ernesto MORALES Cabrera (since 14 January 2016). Unicameral Congress of the Republic or 'Congreso de la Republica' (158 seats; 127 Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies in the country's 22 departments by simple majority vote and 31 directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote; Members serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held on 16 June 2019.

HONDURAS



Population: 9,182,766 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$46.3 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$5,600 (2017 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. President Juan Orlando HERNANDEZ Alvarado (since 27 January 2014). Unicameral National Congress or 'Congreso Nacional' (128 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by closed, party-list proportional representation vote; Members serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held on 28 November 2021.

NICARAGUA



Population: 6,085,213 (July 2018 est.).

GDP (PPP): \$36.4 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$5,900 (2017 est.).

Political system: presidential republic. President Jose Daniel ORTEGA Saavedra (since 10 January 2007). Unicameral National Assembly or 'Asamblea Nacional' (92 seats; 70 members in multi-seat constituencies and 20 Members in a single nationwide constituency directly elected by proportional representation vote; 2 seats reserved for the previous president and the runner-up candidate in the previous presidential election; Members serve five-year terms). Nicaragua is together with Venezuela and Cuba one of the last remaining dictatorship regimes in Latin America. Next elections are to be held by November 2021.

PANAMA



Population: 3,800,644 (July 2018 est.).

GDP (PPP): \$104.1 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$25,400 (2017 est.).

Political system: presidential republic. Last election held on 5 May 2019 (next to be held in 2024). Centre-left candidate Nito CORTIZO (PRD) elected president by 33.3%. He will take office on 1 July 2019. Unicameral National Assembly or 'Asamblea Nacional' (71 seats; 45 Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies - populous towns and cities - by proportional representation vote and 26 directly elected in single-seat constituencies - outlying rural districts - by a first-past-the-post vote; members serve five-year terms).

CUBA



Population: 11,116,396 (July 2018 est.).

GDP (PPP): \$137 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$12,300 (2016 est.).

Political system: communist State. President of the Council of State and President of the Council of Ministers Miguel DIAZ-CANEL Bermudez (since 19 April 2018). Unicameral National Assembly of People's Power or 'Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular' (605 seats; Members directly elected by absolute majority vote; members serve five-year terms); note - the National Candidature Commission submits a slate of approved candidates; to be elected, candidates must receive more than 50% of valid votes otherwise the seat remains vacant or the Council

of State may declare another election. Cuba is together with Venezuela and Nicaragua one of the last remaining dictatorship regimes in Latin America. Next elections are to be held in early 2023.

Background and Relations with the EU

The region of Central America is comprised of Belize, formerly known as British Honduras, the only English-speaking country in the region, and six former Spanish colonies. Belize is the only country from the region which is one of the ACP countries. Due to its different background, Belize's role in the region's integration process is of a special, sometimes limited nature. Regional integration has a long history in Central America. Already in 1951, the Organisation for Central American States (ODECA) was founded. ODECA also initiated the Central American Common Market (MCCA/CACM) in 1960.

Due to regional instability and disputes between its members, ODECA was suspended in 1973. After the end of the political crises, in the early 1990s, it was decided to resume the regional integration process. In order to overcome the damage resulting from decades of instability, the 1991 Tegucigalpa Protocol upgraded ODECA to the Central American Integration System (SICA). The Tegucigalpa Protocol explicitly mentions the goals of liberty, democracy and development for the region and puts a special emphasis on the respect and promotion of human rights. Today SICA's membership comprises all seven countries of Central America, as well as the Dominican Republic as an associate member. The secretariat of SICA is based in San Salvador. SICA has a variety of bodies and institutions, including the Central American Court of Justice and the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN).



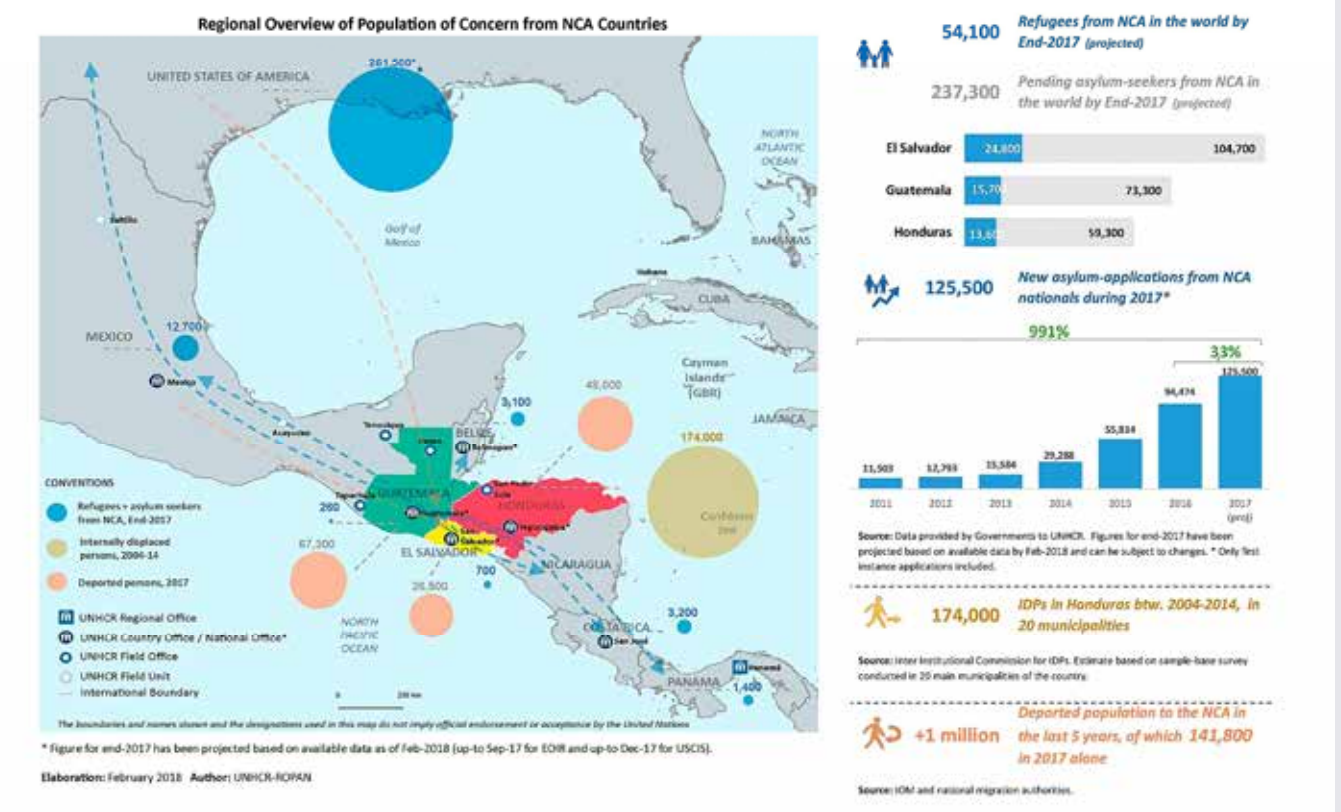
The main concern in Central America currently is the situation in Nicaragua. President Ortega has been elected to the office of President on three consecutive occasions since 2007, despite the fact that the Constitution of Nicaragua prohibited consecutive re-election. Since the outbreak of social protests in April 2018 against planned reforms to Nicaragua's social security system led by the Civic Alliance (Alianza Civica (AC)), the country suffers from a serious breach of democracy and lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Nicaraguan government, its institutions and its para-political organisations have responded to the protests with unprecedented violence and repressive action.

Following two first Cooperation Agreements concluded in 1985 and 1993, a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) between the EU and the six Central American countries on new areas of cooperation was signed in 2003. The EU and Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) then concluded the first region-to-region Association Agreement (AA) in June 2012, based on the three pillars of political dialogue, cooperation and trade. The trade pillar of the Association Agreement has been provisionally applied since 2013. Taking into consideration existing asymmetries between the EU and Central America, it introduces gradual free trade between the two regions. Austria, Belgium and Greece have not yet ratified the AA. In 2017, the EU exported €5.4 billion worth of goods to Central America, with machinery and chemicals being the most relevant exports. Imports from Central America in the same year amounted to €6.1 billion and mainly concerned agricultural products, in particular coffee and bananas. Since 2014, DCAM has made the setting-up of the EU-Central America Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) a priority.

The DCAM remit also covers Cuba, which is a member of CARIFORUM but did not sign the Cotonou Agreement or participate in the EU-CARIFORUM EPA negotiations. The EU and Cuba signed a PDCA on 12 December 2016, covering the three pillars of political dialogue, cooperation and sector policy dialogue, as well as trade. Most parts of the agreement have been applied provisionally since 1 November 2017. Diplomatic Relations were first established in 1988 and were governed by the so-called Common Position between 1996 and 2016. The new PDCA provides new instruments to engage with Cuba at all levels, in particular with regard to human rights and democracy.

North of Central America (NCA) Situation:

Key Population Figures in the Region during 2017



Source: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full%20page%20photo_17.pdf

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dcam/home)

In total, 28 DCAM meetings took place in Brussels, Strasbourg and Panama during this legislature. Besides the regular monitoring of the implementation of the EU-CA AA, the protection of human rights defenders, as well as political developments in Central America, has been an important issue in the work of DCAM.

Costa Rica: Costa Rica has seen stable economic growth over the past 25 years. The country is today one of the countries with the best human development performance. However, budgetary imbalances, political fragmentation, drug-trafficking, organised crime and violence remain major challenges. The country is currently in the accession process to the OECD. Costa Rica is no longer eligible for receiving EU bilateral assistance, but benefits from regional and other programmes. From 28 March to 1 April 2016, a DCAM delegation visit took place to Costa Rica and Panama. The visit also included an important interparliamentary event in San José, a tripartite meeting of the EP Delegation, PARLACEN and the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, which discussed the roadmap for the establishment of an EU-Central America JPC.

El Salvador: El Salvador has seen modest economic growth with low investment and job creation over the past 15 years. The country faces major political, social, economic and security-related challenges, although some progress has been made with regard to human rights and democracy. El Salvador is receiving €149 million in EU cooperation funding for the 2014–2020 period. The EP adopted a resolution on cases of women prosecuted for miscarriage in El Salvador in December 2017. An EU Electoral Observation mission (EOM) for the Legislative and Municipal elections in El Salvador was held on 4 March 2018. Overall, the election process was successful, despite some difficulties with the electoral system. The EOM made 23 recommendations for the next elections. Furthermore, the EuroLat plenary session took place in September 2017 in San Salvador.

Guatemala: Guatemala is the largest and most populous country in Central America. However, it is also one of the countries with the lowest revenue and the largest indigenous population in terms of percentage. The main challenges remain the management of public finances, high levels of insecurity and violence, as well as drug-trafficking. It is receiving EU cooperation funding of €186 million for the 2014–2020 period. DCAM firstly visited Guatemala and Honduras from 16 to 20 February 2015. Another DCAM visit to Guatemala took place in Guatemala City from 28 October to 1 November 2018 in the context of an increasing conflict between the Government of Guatemala and the International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG). In January 2019, the Government of Guatemala unilaterally decided to withdraw from the UN Agreement establishing the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). The EU strongly advocates that the CICIG be allowed to complete its work with the Guatemalan judicial authorities to fight corruption, impunity and strengthen the rule of law until its current mandate ends in September 2019. Since the last delegation visit in 2015, the human rights situation has deteriorated considerably. In this regard, the EP adopted a resolution on the situation of human rights in Guatemala in February 2017 and March 2019, recalling that the country's membership of the EU-CA AA could be suspended on the basis of the human rights clause.

Honduras: DCAM visited Honduras and Guatemala from 16 to 20 February 2015. The EP adopted a resolution in April 2016 on the situation of human rights defenders in Honduras, in which the Parliament strongly condemned in particular the assassination of the activists, Berta Cáceres, Nelson García and Paola Barraza. However, the EP welcomed the latest legal reforms and the Honduran Government's efforts to improve the current situation of human rights defenders in the country. An EU Election Observation Mission took place for the November 2017 general elections. The candidacy of the outgoing President, Juan Orlando Hernández triggered increased tensions in the run-up of the elections, following a Supreme Court ruling finding that the prohibition on presidential re-election was inapplicable. The ruling was strongly contested by the opposition parties and the lead opposition candidate, Salvador Nasralla. Although the election day was in general peaceful, violent post-electoral protests started when doubts arose about the electoral server's integrity in the context of very tight results. At least 22 people died as a result of actions of the Honduran security forces.

Nicaragua: Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, facing political problems, poverty (especially in rural areas), climate change and natural disasters. Nicaragua is receiving €169 million in cooperation assistance from the EU for the 2014–2020 period. An EP ad hoc delegation to Nicaragua from 23 to 26 January 2019 was dedicated to assess the current situation following the outbreak of the social protests in April/May 2018. The delegation made three clear requests to the authorities, namely to release all political prisoners, put an end to the repression and allow the return of human rights organisations to the country. The EP also

adopted a resolution on the situation in Nicaragua in March 2019, considering that the Government's actions amounted to a planned strategy to destroy the political opposition, which had led the protests in 2018, being applied methodically against all opposition leaders, NGOs, media and the social movements seeking to express their legitimate demands for freedom and democracy. Besides considering a staggered process of targeted, individual sanctions against the Government of Nicaragua, the EU and its Member States should also consider triggering the human rights clause of the EU-CA AA.

Panama: Panama is one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America. Despite a decrease in poverty, social inequalities and the public provision of social services remain a challenge. Though the human rights record of Panama is much better as compared to other countries in Latin America, in particular with regard to the rights of indigenous people, drug trafficking and criminality are still a concern. Panama is no longer eligible for receiving EU bilateral assistance, but benefits from regional and other programmes. Following scandals, such as the “Paradise Papers”, Panama had been included in the first ever EU list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions. Following reforms, Panama was removed from the list in March 2019. From 28 March to 1 April 2016, a DCAM delegation visit took place to Panama and Costa Rica. The visit included a public forum held in Panama City with the participation of PARLACEN and the National Assembly of Panama discussing the advantages of the Relations EU-Central America. EuroLat Committee meetings took place in Panama City in March 2015 and April 2018.

Cuba: Cuba has a single-party regime based on socialism. The country faces enormous challenges, such as economic regression, the militarisation of the public security or the prosecution of media, political dissidents and human rights defenders. On 25 February 2019, a new Constitution was ratified by 86.85%, which enshrines the one-party socialist system of the Communist Party as “irrevocable”. Political dissidents deem this process a fraud and question the legitimacy of the constitution. International observers were not allowed to monitor the referendum. A visit of an EP delegation to Cuba was repeatedly denied by Cuban authorities. Several debates on EU-Cuba Relations have been held in the meetings of the DCAM delegation since 2014. While the EP welcomed the signing of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) including a human rights clause in July 2017, it highlighted the importance of the human rights dialogue between the EU and Cuba and the need for Cuba to take action with regard to the realisation of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. A follow-up resolution of November 2018 denounced the lack of any substantial progress in the implementation of reforms and steps towards a framework for the respect of the rule of law and a pluralistic democracy so far.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group is supportive of regional integration in Central America as a means towards peace, prosperity and development. We believe that the EU should provide all the assistance possible to organisations that foster regional integration, such as SICA. The EPP Group is ready to share the successful experience of European integration with its partners in Central America and will continue to seek dialogue and friendship with the region actively. The EPP Group played a key role in the EP's assent to the EU-Central America AA and strongly advocates that the remaining Member States ratify the Agreement and ensure the full application of all its parts. With regard to Nicaragua, the EPP Group plays a leading role in pushing for the implementation of the three urgent measures set out by the recent EP delegation, as well as in maintaining public pressure through the March 2019 resolution. Regarding the Relationship with Cuba, the EPP Group has strong reservations about changing the policy strategy until and unless substantial democratic reforms towards a multi-party democracy take place, what has not yet occurred. Our Group considers the new constitution and the referendum of February 2019 as fraudulent. We continue to support the on-going civil society dialogue and recognition of a political opposition to the Cuban Government strongly as well as, in particular, human rights defenders, such as the EP Sakharov Prize laureates, Guillermo Fariñas and Ladies in White. While, the EPP Group welcomed the PDCA between the EU and Cuba, the Group stressed that its success - in particular regarding human rights - depended on its implementation and compliance with its provisions. The PDCA should be suspended if the human rights provisions are violated.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY (D-AND)



BOLIVIA



Population: 11.3m.
GDP: \$83.72 billion
Political system: Presidential republic. President Juan Evo MORALES Ayma (since 22 January 2006). Bicameral Plurinational Legislative Assembly. Chamber of Senators (36 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote; Members serve five-year terms); Chamber of Deputies (130 seats; 70 Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote, 53 directly elected in single-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote, and 7 - apportioned to non-contiguous, rural areas in 7 of the 9 States - directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote; Members serve five-year terms).
EPP Group Advisers: J. Salafranca, A. Gieseemann, A. Glogowski, P.G. Rizza

COLUMBIA



Population: 48.1m.
GDP: \$711.6 billion
Political system: Presidential republic. President Ivan DUQUE Marquez (since 7 August 2018). Bicameral Congress: Senate (108 seats; 100 Members elected in a single nationwide constituency by party-list proportional representation vote, 2 Members elected in a special nationwide constituency for indigenous communities, 5 members of the People's Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) political party for the 2018 and 2022 elections only, as per the 2016 peace accord, and 1 seat reserved for the runner-up presidential candidate in the recent election; all Members serve four-year terms); Chamber of Representatives (172 seats; 166 Members elected in multi-seat constituencies by party-list proportional representation vote, 5 Members of the FARC for the 2018 and 2022 elections only, as per the 2016 peace accord, and 1 seat reserved for the runner-up vice presidential candidate in the recent election; all Members serve four-year terms).

ECUADOR



Population: 16.4m.
GDP: \$193 billion
Political system: Presidential republic. President Lenin MORENO Garces (since 24 May 2017). Unicameral National Assembly (137 seats; 116 Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote, 15 Members directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote, and 6 directly elected in multi-seat constituencies for Ecuadorians living abroad by simple majority vote; Members serve four-year terms).

PERU



Population: 31.3m,
GDP: \$430.3 billion,
Political system: Presidential republic. President Martin Alberto VIZCARRA Cornejo (since 23 March 2018). Unicameral congress (130 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by closed party-list proportional representation vote to serve five-year terms); note - a referendum held in December 2018 approved a single consecutive term for Congress Members.

Background and EU Relations

The EU's economic Relations with Colombia and Peru are mainly based on a comprehensive Trade Agreement provisionally applied since August 2013. That trade agreement was extended to Ecuador from 1 January 2017. An assessment of the implementation of the trade agreement - limited to Peru and Colombia - issued on 31 October 2018. It showed clearly that the agreement has contributed to the modernisation and diversification of exports from Colombia and Peru and that it has had a positive impact on Colombian and Peruvian small and medium-sized enterprises, by increasing the stability and predictability of the trade and investment environment. In addition, it provides significant opportunities for the growth and development of rural areas in Colombia, largely affected by the civil war of the past decades. In this context, it can significantly help the peace process.

The preliminary data on exports from Ecuador are positive too. The EU is the third-largest trade partner and a major investor in the Andean countries. The Trade Agreement is a cornerstone of the bilateral Relationship between the EU and Andean countries. Bolivia, as a member of the Andean Community, may also seek accession to the trade agreement and is rethinking about a possible accession and leaving the Generalised Scheme of Preferences.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dand/Activities/interparliamentary)

During the eighth EP Parliamentary term, the delegation for Relations with the Andean Community held 16 ordinary and eight interparliamentary meetings (IPMs): Ecuador (3-6 November 2015), Colombia (28 September-3 October 2016), Peru (17-22 April 2017) and Ecuador (7-9 May 2018). The IPMs have regularly included exchanges of views with elected representatives and prominent Andean officials, as well as EU specialists (from the Commission and External Action Service, in particular), researchers and representatives of civil society.

The EP sent several election observation missions: to monitor the presidential elections of 27 May 2018 and 17 June (second round) in Colombia, and the presidential elections of 10 April 2016 and 5 June (second round) in Peru.

In 2016, an ad hoc delegation comprising Members from all political groups travelled to Colombia to monitor the plebiscite called on 2 October by President Juan Manuel Santos to confirm the peace agreements negotiated in Havana between the Colombian government and the FARC terrorist group. The delegation could not play a role as a simple election observer since it had expressed its support for the peace process in a series of resolutions and, therefore, lacked the neutrality required to monitor any electoral process.

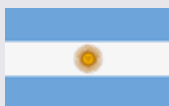
During the EP-DAND IPM, which took place in Peru (17-22 April 2017), several meetings reviewed Peru's political, social and economic situation, in addition to examining Relations between the two strategic partners.

In Quito (7-9 May 2018), the delegation discussed important issues, including the political situation, trade and other priorities for the bilateral Relations, and human rights issues, as well as visa-free travel for Ecuadorians.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group has always been a strong supporter of close Relations with the Andean countries. It considers that the current trade agreement with three of those four countries is a very important tool that has contributed to promoting Relations with them, not only at a political level. Colombia and Peru are traditionally close partners of our Group and their transition to a full democracy after long civil wars is one of the most important events of the whole continent. The political stability in Colombia has helped to generate economic growth and the consolidation of the peace process. Peru is also on the right track to both economic and political stability. The accession of Ecuador to the agreement, originally signed with Colombia and Peru, coincided with the definitive departure of President Correa whose heritage has been taken over by a more pragmatic and market-oriented government, more respectful of the rights of the citizens in the country. The Group, longstanding critical of President Correa's regime, has appreciated the turnout that could also contribute to a definitive end of the regime in Venezuela. Bolivia remains far away from what our Group would consider to be a properly functioning democracy, given the still authoritarian actions by President Morales, who is seeking to be re-elected by a popular referendum.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH MERCOSUR (D-MER)



ARGENTINA



Population: 44,694,198 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$637.6 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$20,900 (2017 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. President Mauricio MACRI (since 10 December 2015). Bicameral National Congress or ‘Congreso Nacional’ consists of: Senate (72 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by simple majority vote to serve six-year terms with one-third of the membership elected every 2 years). Chamber of Deputies (257 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote; Members serve four-year terms with one half of the membership renewed every 2 years). Next elections in October 2019. Mr MACRI is playing an important role in changing and modernising Argentina after the radical and populist governments of the Kirchner family (husband and wife). It is a huge task and implies significant sacrifices on the part of the population in the short-term and probably in the medium-term too. Inflation is still very high but the country has received a new international credibility in politics and economy. As a reflection of its new orientation in the context of world affairs, Argentina organised the WTO Ministerial Conference in 2017 and G20 Meeting in 2018. The mid-term elections in 2016 were quite positive for President Macri. The October 2019 elections will be the crucial test of his policy.
EPP Group Advisers: J. Salafranca, P.G. Rizza, A. Gieseemann, A. Glogowski

PARAGUAY



Population: 7,025,763 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$88.91 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$12,800 (2017 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. President Mario Abdo BENITEZ (since 15 August 2018). Bicameral National Congress or ‘Congreso Nacional’ consists of: Chamber of Senators or ‘Camara de Senadores’ (45 seats; members directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote to serve five-year terms). Chamber of Deputies or ‘Camara de Diputados’ (80 seats; Members directly elected in 18 multi-seat constituencies - the country’s 17 departments and the capital - by proportional representation vote to serve five-year terms). Next elections are to be held in April 2023.
Paraguay is becoming a mature democracy after the recent turbulences. The new elections of 2018 took place in a very peaceful atmosphere and a centre-right government is running the country. The main objective remains the consolidation of State with effective rules of law and there are ongoing reforms aiming at that objective. Trend in economic growth is positive around 5% with unemployment under control but due to the limits of fiscal policy (only 15% of the budget), the appropriate social reforms and infrastructure modernisation cannot be carried out. Another important objective is the fight against criminality.

URUGUAY



Population: 3,369,299 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$78.16 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$22,400 (2017 est.).
Political system: presidential republic. President Tabare VAZQUEZ (since 1 March 2015). Bicameral General Assembly or ‘Asamblea General’ consists of: Chamber of Senators or ‘Camara de Senadores’ (31 seats; Members directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote; the vice-president serves as the presiding ex-officio member; elected members serve five-year terms). Chamber of Representatives or ‘Camara de Representantes’ (99 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote to serve five-year terms). The next elections are to be held in October 2019. Uruguay is a solid democracy in Latin America; despite a very small majority in the Congress, Frente has been able to govern during the entire legislature. In the next elections, also due to the rising criminality rate a new centre-right majority could go to the government. Economic data are positive: Inflation is around 9% and the deficit 3.2% with a tax burden of 33%. Income per capita is more or less the same as in Greece or Romania.

VENEZUELA (SUSPENDED)



Population: 31,689,176 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$381.6 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$12,500 (2017 est.).
Political system: federal presidential republic. President Nicolas MADURO Moros (since 19 April 2013). Unicameral National Assembly or ‘Asamblea Nacional’ (167 seats; 113 Members directly elected in single- and multi-seat constituencies by simple majority vote, 51 directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by closed party-list proportional representation vote, and 3 seats reserved for indigenous peoples of Venezuela; Members serve five-year terms). Next elections in 2020. Venezuela is, together with Cuba and Nicaragua, one of the last remaining dictatorship regimes in Latin America. It is a country led by a political class, which could be considered a mafia, that is unable to govern and that has pushed Venezuela to a very deep economic crisis where the most of the population lives below the threshold of poverty. Briefly, it is a country economically and politically destroyed by Chavez and the subsequent Maduro dictatorship with 6 million of its inhabitants having left the country over the past years for economic and political reasons together. The legitimate National Assembly was deprived of power when Maduro decided to anticipate and organise elections excluding most of the democratic opposition, and elect a National Constituent Assembly, which, of course, is not recognised outside of the country. On 10 January 2019, some days after Maduro began a new controversial term of office following the false elections in May 2018, Juan Guaidó, president of the opposition-controlled National Assembly, challenged the dictatorship and declared himself interim-President in accordance with the Constitution. Since then, more than 50 States, including most of the EU Member States, the EP, the United States and the most Latin American countries have recognised Guaidó as the legitimate President of Venezuela in spite of the fact that Maduro still has the monopoly of power and leads the de facto government. In his new Position, Guaidó attempted to bring humanitarian aid to Venezuela, a measure strongly opposed by the regime. He failed but nevertheless he was able to re-energise the population. More crucially, Guaidó secured US sanctions on oil trade conducted by the State-owned oil company. Maduro remains in power, with the international support of China and Russia and at a lower scale, Cuba and Nicaragua, but the degree of political instability is very high and the evolution of that situation is not foreseeable at that stage.

BRAZIL



Population: 208,846,892 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$3.248 trillion, **per capita (PPP):** \$15,600 (2017 est.).
Political system: federal presidential republic. President Jair BOLSONARO (since 1 January 2019). Bicameral National Congress or ‘Congresso Nacional’ consists of: Federal Senate or ‘Senado Federal’ (81 seats; 3 Members each from 26 states and 3 from the federal district directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by simple majority vote to serve 8-year terms, with one-third and two-thirds of the membership elected alternately every 4 years). Chamber of Deputies or ‘Camara dos Deputados’ (513 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote to serve four-year terms). Next elections are to be held in October 2022.

Background and Relations with the EU

In 1991, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay founded Mercosur, which serves as a common market and is South America’s leading trading bloc. The long-term ambition of Mercosur is to create a free trade area for all of South America. In an approach similar to the EU single market, it envisages fostering economic integration between Members States in order to ensure free circulation of goods and services. Furthermore, a common external tariff, based on a common commercial policy and a closer coordination of macroeconomic policies, as well as a harmonisation of legislative regulations, are the centrepieces of the Mercosur free-trade area. Mercosur covers a territory four times the size of the EU with a population of about 250 million. The EU is the largest trading partner of the region, representing about 20% of total Mercosur trade. By accounting for roughly 3% of EU trade, Mercosur ranks eighth among the EU’s trading partners. While Mercosur’s exports to the EU are mainly composed of agricultural products, and account for about 20% of EU agricultural imports, EU exports to the region are largely industrial products.



Despite the fact that its original driving force was economic cooperation, Mercosur also has a democratic basis. In the founding treaty, Member States commit themselves to a set of common values, which include the belief in pluralistic democratic societies, defence of fundamental liberties, human rights, environmental protection, sustainable development, judicial independence and combating poverty.

In December 2012, the Protocol of Accession of Bolivia to Mercosur was signed. This protocol is pending ratification by the parliaments in all Mercosur countries. Paraguay was suspended from Mercosur from 2012 to 2014, while Venezuela has been suspended since 2016 due to failing to implement Mercosur requirements and the worsening human rights situation in the country.

In 1995, the EU and Mercosur have signed an Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force in 1999. The agreement was further expanded with an annex which lays the basis for political dialogue in the form of summits of Heads of State and ministers. In 2000, negotiations started on an Association Agreement based on three pillars: political dialogue, cooperation and a free trade area. The agreement is based on a region-to-region approach and goes beyond WTO obligations. In addition to fostering efforts to protect intellectual property rights, it was proposed to set up a binding dispute-settlement mechanism. As a consequence of differences over the trade chapter, the negotiations were temporarily suspended in 2004. However, after a series of new contacts, at the EU-LAC Madrid Summit in May 2010, it was decided to re-launch negotiations. With the political change in Argentina in October 2015, the negotiations received a new impetus and dynamism with a more engaged political and technical commitment by the four MERCOSUR countries (Venezuela being excluded). On 28 June 2019 the two parties were finally able to reach a political agreement for the conclusion of the negotiations by solving the outstanding issues such as the market access (cars and car parts, as well as dairy products and beef quotas) the list of geographical indications and, the EU access to maritime services in Brazil.

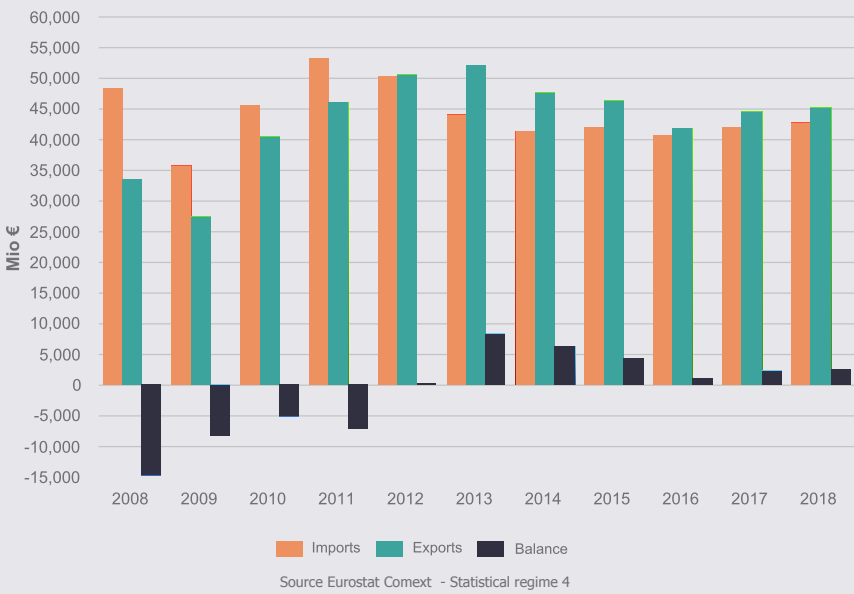


The EU continues to be a strong supporter of Mercosur integration. As such, it is also the largest supplier of assistance, which is focused on institutional support and civil society projects. Trade between the two blocs is significant, with the EU exporting €44.4 billion worth of goods to Mercosur, and importing €42 billion in 2017.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dmer/home)

The last visit of the Delegation took place in November 2018 and was limited to Uruguay (pro tempore presidency) and Paraguay. The MERCOSUR-EU negotiations were at the core of the exchange of views between the MEPs of the Delegation and representatives of the National Assemblies and the Government. All the speakers from both parties clearly demonstrated strong support for the current negotiations and considered that the Association Agreement will significantly boost reciprocal economic Relations. Uruguay was very restrained in granting concession on the dairy market that represents a very sensitive sector in the country. As usual, the visit gave the possibility to contact not only politicians but also representatives of civil societies, stakeholders and different economic associations. Venezuela was not the object of EP official delegations due to the lack of readiness of the country's authorities to host such an EP delegation. However, the EPP Group has often been present in that country in order to promote and support democracy and respect for human rights, and show a strong solidarity with the opposition to Maduro regime. The EPP Group delegation was there for the Parliamentary elections that registered the clear victory of the opposition, for the presidential election of Mr Maduro and, more recently, after Mr Guaidó proclaimed himself the legitimate President of the country. The delegation could not enter the country and instead, at the invitation of the Colombian government, participated later in the demonstrations for the delivery of economic aid to Venezuela's population at the Colombian-Venezuelan border.

Total goods: EU Trade flows and balance, annual data 2008 - 2018



Source: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/region/details_mercosur-4_en.pdf

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group is a strong supporter of the Latin American integration process and, thus, stands ready to assist MERCOSUR in maintaining and further deepening Relations with the EU. We are keen to develop further our economic, political, social and cultural partnerships, which would benefit both our societies and economies. Due to our close historical ties, the EPP Group is ready to offer its advice to the region and is prepared to enhance further the already excellent dialogue. The Group had a leading role through its standing rapporteur in INTA, strongly supporting and promoting the finalisation of the current negotiations, for a balanced Association Agreement between the EU and Mercosur and therefore welcomes the political agreement that, when it enters into force, will pave the way to the creation of the largest free trade area in the world with a strong potential to boost commercial relations and create additional jobs and growth on both sides.

The Group strongly supports Mr Guaidó as the legitimate President of Venezuela, hoping that this bold act of self-proclamation can really be the start of a new era of peace and prosperity for the population of Venezuela. The Group will continue to use all the tools in its hands to support the change in the country.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-MEXICO JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-MX)



Population: 125,959,205 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$2.463 trillion, **per capita (PPP):** \$19,900 (2017 est.).
Cities: Mexico City (cap), Tijuana, Guadalajara, Ciudad Juarez, Monterrey, Cancun.
Political system: federal presidential republic. President Andres Manuel LOPEZ OBRADOR (since 1 December 2018). Bicameral National Congress or 'Congreso de la Union' consists of: Senate or 'Camara de Senadores' (128 seats; 96 Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 32 directly elected in a single, nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote; Members serve six-year terms). Chamber of Deputies or 'Camara de Diputados' (500 seats; 300 Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 200 directly elected in a single, nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote; members serve 3-year terms). Next elections are to be held 1 July 2024.
EPP Group Adviser: J. Salafranca, P.G. Rizza, A. Giesemann, A. Glogowski

The elections of July 2018 saw a landslide victory for Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (Morena), representing a momentous shift to the left in the political pendulum and away from the governments of the past 50 years or so, led mostly by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), as well as Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) in 2000-12. Morena and its allies - the Partido del Trabajo and the Partido Encuentro Social - now hold a majority in both houses of parliament. The alliance was boosted recently by the decision of the Partido Verde Ecologista de México to end its longstanding alliance with the PRI and Position itself as an independent force, albeit open to ad hoc support for the government. Thus, governability is likely to be secure over the first half of the government's term. However, Mr López Obrador's alliance is short of a two-thirds majority, needed as a first step to making constitutional amendments (which also require support from majorities in State assemblies).

The administration faces the various challenges it promised to tackle, namely corruption, inequality, and crime. Economic challenges are also present, namely the concerns about the strength of the business environment, budgetary consolidation and currency volatility. The current-account deficit is expected to widen to a peak of 2.3% of GDP in 2020, reflecting lower import demand from the US. The first measures adopted by Lopez Obrador- such as the introduction of the minimum wage, the reduction in government salaries (including his own - were very popular for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, the most serious challenges will probably be in the economic areas with a serious risk of loss of confidence of investors and private companies. The new style of governing based on general consultations is not convincing such sectors. The result on economic growth - quite high under the previous government - will be the area to test Lopez Obrador presidency. Migration is an additional concern and challenge: in recent years, the US has intensified security measures to monitor and control legal and illegal personnel, transport and commodities across its border with Mexico.

Background and Relations with the EU

Mexico was the first Latin American country to sign a partnership agreement with the EU in 1997. The Global Agreement, called the EU-Mexico Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Association Agreement, entered into force in 2000 and has considerably strengthened bilateral Relations between the EU and Mexico. It is based on shared values - such as democracy and human rights - and reflects Mexico's relevance on the international scene. There has been a significant increase in trade, especially between companies. In April 2018, the EU and Mexico reached an “agreement in principle” on the main trade parts of a modernised EU-Mexico Association Agreement. The new agreement replaces the previous agreement from 2000 and aims at removing remaining trade barriers, namely Mexican tariffs on European goods and services. Public procurement and Geographical Indication protection are included in the new text. The Agreement will contain a special chapter on labour and environmental standards, as well as strong cooperation against corruption. A special chapter on investment protection based on the new Investment Court System is part of the text. The political agreement reached in April 2018 should be officially finalised as soon as the Mexican central government obtains the formal commitment of the sub-federal entities to permit the access of EU companies to sub-federal public procurement market. The Mexican government is working on that. As an Association Agreement, it will also include a political and cooperation pillar.

In 2017, the EU was Mexico's second-biggest export market after the US. The EU's key imports from Mexico are fuels and mining products, office and telecommunication equipment, transport equipment, and other machinery. In 2017, the EU exported €37.9 billion worth of goods to Mexico, while importing €23.8 billion. In 2016, the exports of services to Mexico amounted to €9.8 billion, and imports accounted for €5 billion.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-mx/home)


Delegations of both parties regularly met during the 2014-2019 legislature twice a year under the umbrella of a Joint Parliamentary Committee established by the Association Agreement currently in force. Each of the meetings concluded with a joint statement. The last of those meetings took place in Mexico City in February 2019 and focused on the outcome of elections in Mexico, the perspectives, the objectives and the challenges of the new government and the majority in the Congress and in Senate. Furthermore, the modernised Association Agreement was at the core of the discussions: all political parties from both delegations showed a strong support for an Agreement that will update and upgrade our commercial ties. For Mexico, the Agreement will represent a great occasion to diversify its trade partners and exports. The meeting confirmed how strong and good the ties between the two parties are.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group has always considered Mexico to be a key and reliable partner in Latin America. The positive results of the Association Agreement in political and economic terms confirm the nature of the strategic partnership between the two parties. In Mexico, there has been a change of government for a more leftist and, in some cases, radical government led by Lopez Obrador, who is not the best friend for our Group. The hope for the Mexicans is that, in governing, he will prove to be pragmatic, seeking to tackle the

most serious challenges Mexico faces: corruption, impunity and criminality. On the economic side, pragmatism will be essential in order to retain the reforms put forward by his predecessor Mr Pena Nieto. In foreign affairs, Lopez Obrador should also forget his past Activities and ideas and act as the Head of a large State fully involved in world affairs as it is now. The fact that he has not acted against the dictatorships of Maduro and Ortega in relation to Venezuela and Nicaragua does not bode well for the future. The very recent request to Spain and the Catholic Church to apologise for the damages caused by the “conquistadores” of the XVI century in Mexico is another - although minor - example of a resurgence of the radical-populism that may sometimes arise during the Lopez Obrador presidency.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-CHILE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-CL)



Population: 18.3m.

GDP: \$ 452.1 billion

Political system: parliamentary republic. President Sebastian PINERA Echenique (since 11 March 2018). Bicameral congress. Senate (43 seats, to increase to 50 in 2021; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by open party-list proportional representation vote to serve 8-year terms with one half of the membership renewed every 4 years); Chamber of Deputies (155 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by open party-list proportional representation vote to serve four-year terms).

EPP Group Advisers: J. Salafranca, A. Gieseemann, P.G. Rizza, A. Glogowski

Background and EU Relations

Chile often appears to be an enclave of economic stability in a region often characterised by financial upheavals. The return to democracy in 1990 consolidated a process of wise economic and monetary discipline. Chile's multilateral policy is one of the main reasons for its economic success; despite its participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) and its associate status to Mercosur, it continues to favour bilateral free trade agreements. In total, it has signed 59 bilateral or regional trade agreements, including with the EU. The Relationship between the EU and Chile is stable and very good with cooperation in political, trade and other areas. In April 2002, Chile and the EU concluded an Association and Free Trade Agreement, on which the current Relations are based. As an Association Agreement (AA), it is founded on the three pillars of political dialogue, cooperation and trade. The EU is now Chile's third trading partner and the largest foreign direct investor in Chile. While the EU mainly exports machinery and transport equipment, Chile's exports to the EU are mainly copper, iron and steel.

Chile has adopted enforcement efforts to respond to drug-trafficking. Chile also participates in the EU funded EU-LAC Drug Treatment City Partnerships programme being implemented by the Inter-American Drug Control Commission of the Organization of American States. Chile and the EU have worked together to solve the controversial issue of the Chilean reservations regarding the granting of rights to EU vessels fishing for swordfish to upload their catch in Chilean ports. In the end, the Chilean government and the European Commission negotiated an “Understanding on the conservation and management of swordfish stocks in the South Eastern Pacific Ocean”.

In 2013, Chile proposed that the Association Agreement be modernised. To this end and after the positive conclusions of the Joint Working Group, the EU and Chile opened negotiations on the modernisation of the AA in Autumn 2017. After four rounds, the negotiations are making significant progress on the political pillar and the technical and preliminary issues. On the trade pillar, the progress has been slower and the two parties have still to tackle the most sensitive issues of market access, intellectual property rights, including geographical indications, transparency, and investment protection. The European Union and Chile are strongly committed to concluding the negotiations as soon as possible but it will probably take more time than expected. When concluded such an agreement has the whole potential to increase the political and economic Relations significantly between the two parties.

The EU and Chile signed a Framework Participation Agreement in January 2014 institutionalising the participation of Chile in EU crisis Management Operation. Chile participates in the EU Crisis Management ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-cl/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

During the eighth EP Parliamentary term, the two parties had the opportunity to meet regularly in the format of the Joint Parliamentary Committee established by the Association Agreement and discuss among others, the issue of the updating of the Association Agreement, signed in 2002. There is a natural need to update the Agreement in view of the international economic developments. The Agreement is the key tool for development of political, economic and trade Relations and closer cooperation. There is a need to include new subject areas (role of SMEs in trade, gender policy, clear rules of origin, better access to markets, etc.).

The two parties had the possibility to exchange views and discuss the political and economic situation in the EU and Chile regularly as well as other sensitive topics such as cooperationand environmental challenges. A joint statement accompanied the meetings.

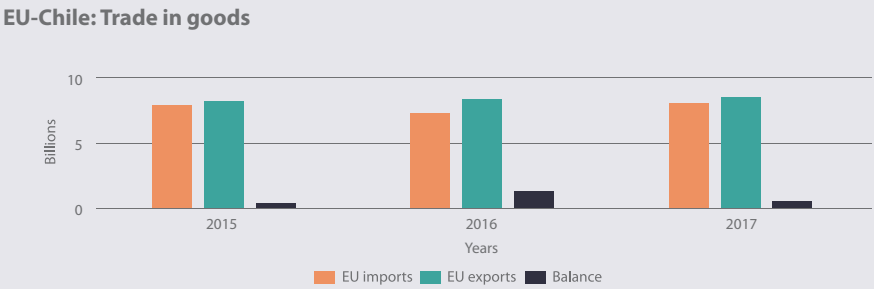
EPP Group Position

The victory of the centre-right former president Sebastian Piñera, warmly **welcomed by the EPP Group**, can serve as a catalyser to boost the economic dynamism of the country, which went through a period of relentless and economic instability.

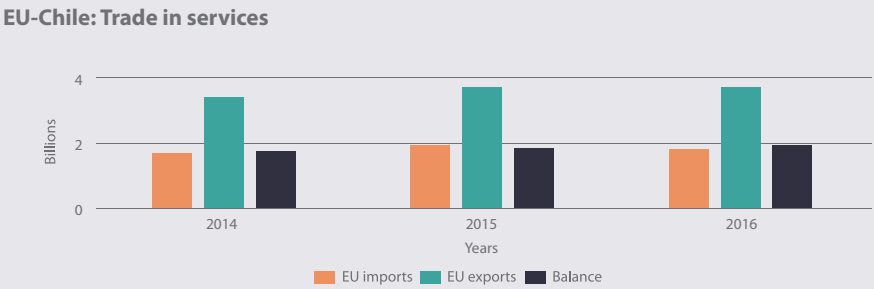
In this context, the traditional openness of the country, being the world’s highest signatory country of FTAs, and the recovery of commodity prices, despite Chile’s geographical situation, can play a decisive role in the growth of the country for the coming years.

The EPP Group fully supports the updating of the agreement with the EU, which can be a perfect complement, helping Chile to consolidate its role as an important actor and partner of the EU at the multilateral level.

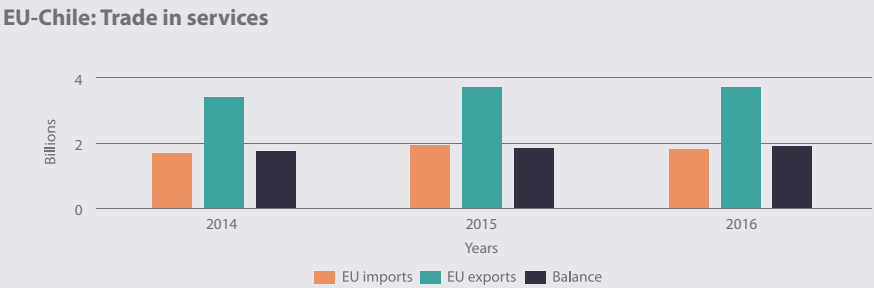
EU-CHILE: TRADE IN GOODS:



EU-CHILE: TRADE IN SERVICES:



EU-CHILE: FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT:



Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/chile/>

DELEGATION TO THE JOINT CARIFORUM EU PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (D-CAR)



EPP Group Adviser: P.G. Rizza

COUNTRY	POPULATION	TERRITORY (SQ KM)	GDP (US \$)	GDP(PPP) (PER CAPITA)
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	95,882	442.6	2.4 billion	\$26,400
BAHAMAS	332,634	13,880	12.06 billion	\$32,400
BARBADOS	293,131	430	5.218 billion	\$18,600
BELIZE	385,854	22,960	3.218 billion	\$8,300
DOMINICA	74,027	751	783 million	\$11,000
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	10,298,756	48,670	173 billion	\$17,000
GRENADA	112,207	344	1.634 billion	\$15,100
GUYANA	740,685	214,969	6.301 billion	\$8,100
HAITI	10,788,440	27,750	19.97 billion	\$1,800
JAMAICA	2,812,090	10,991	26.06 billion	\$9,200
St KITTS & NEVIS	53,094	261	1.55 billion	\$28,200
St LUCIA	165,510	616	2.542 billion	\$14,400
St VINCENT & GRENADINES	101,844	389	1.265 billion	\$11,500
SURINAME	597,927	163,820	8.688 billion	\$14,900
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	1,215,527	5,128	42.85 billion	\$31,300

Background and Relations with the EU

The Caribbean Forum of Caribbean States (CARIFORUM) is the only region among the African Caribbean Pacific Countries (ACP) to have so far signed a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union. CARIFORUM is made up of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), plus the Dominican Republic. Haiti, as a member of CARICOM, signed the Agreement in December 2009, but it is still pending ratification. The common element of this group of countries is their membership in the ACP and their status as former European (mostly British) colonies. They are mostly small, dependent, vulnerable and

primarily single sector economies, which results in low production, decline in earnings from traditional crops, inadequate trade policy, high dependency on imported food, increasing poverty and diseases. However, there are significant differences in terms of size, population and GDP per capita, Human Development index and the agriculture share of total GDP.

A comprehensive EPA, which has been in place since January 2009, replacing the previous framework of the Cotonou Agreement, governs EU-CARIFORUM economic Relations. The overarching objectives of the EPA are to alleviate poverty in CARIFORUM, promote regional development and integration, economic cooperation and foster the gradual integration of CARIFORUM States into the world economy by improving their trade capacity and creating an environment conducive to investment. Development is therefore the core component of the EPA.

The EPA provides for development cooperation funds and duty-free quota-free market access into the EU for all CARIFORUM products; on the other side, a certain degree of asymmetry has also been ensured since only 82% of the exported products are liberalised in long periods of up to 25 years with the complete exclusion of sensitive products. Furthermore, the agreement ensures predictability in market access into the EU, improvements in the rules of origin in some key sectors, such as textiles, as well as market-opening beyond WTO commitments, in the service sectors, including creative industries.

In 2017, EU exports to CARIFORUM countries amounted to €7.2 billion worth of goods, while EU imports amounted to €4 billion. The main exports from the Caribbean to the EU are fuel and mining products (notably petroleum gas and oils), bananas, sugar and rum, minerals (notably gold, corundum, aluminium oxide and hydroxide), iron ore products, and fertilisers. The main imports into the Caribbean from the EU are boats, ships, cars, construction vehicles and engine parts, phone equipment, milk and cream, and spirit drinks. The next meeting of the Joint Cariforum-EU Council will take place in the last quarter of 2019 or first quarter of 2020.¹⁶

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dcar/home)

There has been little activity and there have been only three meetings during this legislature. The last meetings of the EU side took place in 2016. The EU Delegation was able to visit the CARIFORUM countries (Dominican Republic) only once in the legislature. This was due to the difficulties experienced by the CARIFORUM countries in organising themselves and speaking with one voice to the European Union. The objective of the Group in the next term should be to revitalise this delegation with a stronger commitment of MEPs in the EU-Cariforum JPC.

EPP Group Position

From the beginning of the procedure, the EPP Group has been in favour of this new and more modern form of cooperation between the EU and the Cariforum countries. The new agreement should go beyond the regime of the Cotonou Agreement, which did not manage to trigger the desirable level of development of ACP countries. Furthermore, the Cotonou Agreement was no longer compatible with WTO rules and has had to be adequately replaced by bilateral, regional and asymmetrical agreements. This EPA satisfies these requirements and, if it is adequately implemented, it could open a new and fruitful chapter in the cooperation with the EU with evident advantages for the Caribbean countries that should remain the main beneficiaries of the new system.

¹⁶ http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/september/tradoc_144912.pdf



VII. ASIA - PACIFIC

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH JAPAN (D-JP)



Strategic partner

Population: 126,168,156.

GDP: \$5.443 trillion **per capita:** \$42,900.

Political system: parliamentary constitutional monarchy.

Prime Minister Shinzo ABE (since 26 December 2012). Bicameral Diet or Kokkai consists of: House of Councillors or Sangi-in (242 seats; 146 Members directly elected in multi-seat districts by simple majority vote and 96 directly elected in a single national constituency by proportional representation vote; Members serve six-year terms with half the membership renewed every 3 years), and House of Representatives or Shugi-in (465 seats; 289 Members directly elected in single-seat districts by simple majority vote and 176 directly elected in multi-seat districts by party-list proportional representation vote; Members serve four-year terms). Next elections for House of Councillors are to be held in July 2019. Next elections for House of Representatives are to be held by 21 October 2021.

Religions: Shintoism 70.4%, Buddhism 69.8%, Christianity 1.5%, other 6.9% (total number of adherents exceed 100% because many people practise both Shintoism and Buddhism).

EPP Group Adviser: J.-W. Vlasman

Background and Relations with the EU

As one of the strongest economic performers worldwide and one of the major Asian democracies, Japan is a key global player and a regional heavy weight in Asia. Japan is a strong supporter of multilateralism and is striving to gain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

In December 2012, parliamentary elections led to the nomination of Shinzo Abe as Prime Minister (he had already served as Prime Minister between 2006 and 2007), ending a three-year break in decades of near-constant rule by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Since his election, Shinzo Abe has focused his agenda on lifting Japan's economy out of recession through the so-called Abenomics reform program. Abenomics is based upon three arrows of fiscal stimulus, monetary easing and structural reforms. The program, as a mix of reflation, government spending and a growth strategy, is designed to jolt the economy out of the stagnation that has gripped it for more than two decades. In addition, it aims to become a stronger counterweight to China in the Asia-Pacific region and to make Japan less reliant on the United States for defence.

Given the history of conflict in the region, Relations with Japan's neighbours continue to be complicated. In this context, it has to be noted that territorial disputes with China, Russia, Taiwan and South Korea persist and are often linked to the exploitation of natural resources.

The most pressing territorial dispute concerns the Senkaku Islands (Japanese)/Diaoyu Islands (Chinese). These islands are located on vital shipping lanes and are believed to be close to potentially rich gas and oil fields. Currently controlled by Japan but with China claiming sovereignty since the Japanese government purchased three of the islands from a private landowner in September 2012. China saw this move as a shift in the status quo and voiced its disapproval. Afterwards, anti-Japan protests spread across China and the government decided to halt the export of raw earth to Japan. As of late March 2014, no solution to the situation had been found.

The EU Relationship with Japan, founded on the 2001 Action Plan is characterised by both sides being advanced industrialised democracies, which share many common interests and values. Cooperation takes place at all levels culminating in the annual EU-Japan Summit meetings and covers foreign policy, economic and trade Relations, as well as regional and global challenges. The EU and Japan actively participate in each other's reform processes through the Regulatory Reform Dialogue. Furthermore, close cooperation exists on the international and multilateral fora such as the UN, WTO and the G8.

The EU and Japan held the first EU-Japan High-level Industrial, Trade and Economic Dialogue on 22 October 2018 in Tokyo. The discussions covered a range of strategic topics of importance for EU-Japan Relations and their cooperation in addressing global challenges. The High-Level Dialogue focused on four main areas: global trade challenges, economic transformations linked to energy, environment and climate change issues, international investment and connectivity initiatives, and the digital economy.

Japan is the world's third-largest economy and trade has long been the predominant focus of EU-Japan Relations. The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and Japan entered into force on 1 February 2019. The EPA is the largest ever negotiated by the European Union. It creates an open trade zone covering over 600 million people and nearly a third of global GDP. It will remove the vast majority of the €1 billion in duties paid annually by EU companies exporting to Japan, and has led to the removal of a number

of long-standing regulatory barriers, for example, on cars. It will also open up the Japanese market of 127 million consumers to key EU agricultural exports and will increase EU export opportunities in a range of other sectors. The Agreement follows the highest standards of labour, environmental and consumer protection and has a chapter dedicated to sustainable development. It is the first trade agreement negotiated by the European Union to include a specific commitment to the Paris Agreement on climate change. As of 1 February 2019, a large part of another agreement – the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the European Union and Japan – also applies on a provisional basis. The SPA will set the stage for even stronger collaboration both bilaterally and in multilateral fora. It will enrich the political dimension of the Relationship between Japan and the EU and allow for deeper cooperation in a broad range of sectors, notably with regard to peace and security, migration, the fight against terrorism, energy, climate change, education, research and innovation, and development. On 12 December 2018, the EP gave its consent to the EPA and the SPA. The Parliament considers the EPA to be of major bilateral and global strategic importance and that it represents a timely signal in support of open, fair, values- and rules-based trade. The Parliament welcomes the conclusion of the draft SPA, which provides a legally binding framework, strengthens EU-Japan bilateral Relations and increases cooperationin more than 40 areas.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-jp/home)

There is a close Relationship between the Japanese Diet and the EP, notably through its annual EU-Japan Interparliamentary Meetings (IPM). The 35th EU-Japan IPM meeting took place on 29 and 30 April 2015, in Strasbourg. The 36th EU-Japan IPM meeting took place on 16 and 17 May 2016, in Tokyo. The standing rapporteur for INTA and the standing rapporteur for AFET took part in the meetings. The Members had meetings in Osaka and Kyoto as well. The 37th EU-Japan IPM meeting took place on 5 and 6 July 2017, in Strasbourg. The Japanese Minister for Economic Revitalisation took part in the meeting. The Delegations issued a Joint Statement indicating that, “In light of the challenges the rule-based international order faces and the growing uncertainty within the international community, the two delegations recognise the increasing importance for Japan and the EU to cooperate as partners sharing fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.” The 38th EU-Japan IPM meeting took place on 9 and 10 May 2018 in Tokyo. The Members had meetings in Hiroshima as well. The standing rapporteur for AFET took part in the meetings. The leaders of both delegations issued a Joint Statement indicating that, “Both Delegations are committed to strengthening the interparliamentary dialogue between Japan and the EU and parliamentary oversight.”

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group highly values the strong partnership with Japan. The Group acknowledges the fact that the EU and Japan share common values, such as the respect for human rights and democracy, as well as a deep confidence in effective multilateralism. The Group attaches great importance to the cooperation with Japan. The Group is committed to the strategic and economic partnership between the EU and Japan. The Group considers the conclusion of the EPA and the SPA as an upgrade in partnership with the objective of providing concrete benefits for the peoples of EU and Japan, and supports further cooperationin multilateral fora.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (D-CN)



Strategic Partner

Population: 1,384,688,986 (July 2018 est.).
Political system: communist party-led state (Communist Congress of China under the leadership of President Xi Jinping since 2013).
GDP: \$12.01 trillion.
GDP per capita: \$16,700.
Ethnic groups: Han Chinese 91.6%, Zhuang 1.3%, other (includes Hui, Manchu, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Tujia, Tibetan, Mongol, Dong, Buyei, Yao, Bai, Korean, Hani, Li, Kazakh, Dai, and other nationalities) 7.1% (2010 est.). Note: the Chinese Government officially recognises 56 ethnic groups
Religions: Buddhist 18.2%, Christian 5.1%, Muslim 1.8%, folk religion 21.9%, Hindu < 0.1%, Jewish < 0.1%, other 0.7% (includes Daoist (Taoist)), unaffiliated 52.2%. Note: officially atheist.
Languages: Standard Chinese or Mandarin (official: Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (see Ethnic groups entry). Note: Zhuang is official in Guangxi Zhuang, Yue is official in Guangdong, Mongolian is official in Nei Mongol, Uighur is official in Xinjiang Uyghur, Kyrgyz is official in Xinjiang Uyghur and Tibetan is official in Xizang (Tibet).
Military spending: in 2018, official figures state \$175 billion (the world's second after the US). International estimates of real military spending in 2017 were at around \$228 billion Taking into account the official increase of 8% between 2017 and 2018, the real spending in 2018 could be at around \$ 50 billion
EPP Group Adviser: M. Hahn

Background and Relations with the EU

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a nuclear power, and one of the fastest growing economies, China is a major global player. It has come a long way to reach its current Position and, while the Communist Party maintains a firm grip on power, it has introduced a number of economic reforms over the past decades, which have made it one of the leading global actors. However, China remains a restrictive society, with little challenge to party rule. Ethnic minorities’ rights are poorly addressed by the government and regular clashes continue to threaten social stability. Intellectuals and activists regularly face jail sentences for subversion. China is the world’s second largest economy with a GDP of \$13.3 trillion and, given its economic power and subsequent growth, its need for energy is ever-growing. Hence, China seeks cooperation throughout the world in order to gain access to scarce resources; in this context, the government is actively investing in Africa (Chinese FDI in Africa rose by 58,9% in 2011 to \$1,7 billion). China is second only to the United States in consumption of oil and electric power, and its coal industry leads the world in annual output. In this regard, it is worth noting that at the end of May 2014, after 10 years of negotiations, Russia’s Gazprom and China’s CNPC finally signed a historic gas deal worth \$400 billion, which will provide the world’s fastest growing economy with the natural gas it needs for its economy over the next 30 years. The EU’s diplomatic Relations with China were established in 1975 and are governed by the 1985 EU-China Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Annual summits and regular political, trade and economic dialogues are held, including over fifty thematic dialogues and agreements.

The two documents comprising the EU’s China policy are:

- A European Commission ‘joint communication’ titled ‘Elements for a new EU strategy on China’ dated 22 June 2016; and
- The Council of the European Union’s response to that communication, titled ‘Council Conclusions EU Strategy on China’ dated 18 July 2016.

Reciprocity is an important theme: ‘The EU expects its Relationship with China to be one of reciprocal benefit in both political and economic terms.’

Coordination within the EU is also emphasised: ‘Dealing with China requires a comprehensive approach to ensure maximum impact.’

In concluding, the strategy states that recommendations will follow:

- To improve the preparation and follow-up of EU-China Summits and other high-level meetings, as well as their coherence with Member States’ high-level contacts with China;

- To propose common policy frameworks in specific areas; and
- To mainstream key themes and objectives across all EU-China dialogues, while concentrating on a smaller number of priorities where the EU has the greatest added value.

The European Union and China are two of the biggest traders in the world. China is now the EU’s second-biggest trading partner after the United States and the EU is China’s biggest trading partner. China is the EU’s biggest source of imports and its second-biggest export market. China and Europe trade on average over €1 billion a day. The EU’s main imports from China are industrial and consumer goods, machinery and equipment, and footwear and clothing, and the EU main exports to China are machinery and equipment, motor vehicles, aircraft and chemicals. The EU is committed to open trading Relations with China. However, the EU wants to ensure that China trades fairly, respects intellectual property rights and meets its obligations as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In July 2016, the EU adopted a new Strategy on China. 2018 was also the year that marked the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the EU-China Strategic Partnership, as most recently expressed through the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, the highest-level joint document in EU-China Relations.

In September 2018, the Vatican and China signed a secret accord on the appointment of bishops and perhaps other matters. Oppressive measures by Chinese authorities against official and unofficial Christian churches continued unabated. On 12 March 2019, the EU Commission and Council issued a joint communication “EU-China - a strategic outlook”. The conclusions of this document set the tone for the EU-China Summit in April in terms of common responsibilities on international level and a more robust implementation of reciprocity in bilateral Relations.

The 21st EU-China Summit on 9 April 2019 in Brussels led to a joint statement of both sides, in which China committed itself to a “substantially improved market access, the elimination of discriminatory requirements and practices affecting foreign investors”, “transparent and predictable market access for food and agricultural products”, an “agree[ment] that there should be no forced transfer of technology”, and “enhanced intellectual property protection and enforcement”. The importance of the regular Human Rights Dialogue was confirmed and both sides reaffirmed that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. The EU and China confirmed their firm support for a rule-based, multilateral order and system of global governance in the existing platforms, such as UN, WTO, Climate Dialogue and G20.

The summit had been prepared in “difficult negotiations” and the EU threatened to refuse signing a joint declaration. China, in the light of a still ongoing trade conflict with the US, made concessions which before had been unsuccessfully negotiated for more than a decade. Monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of certain commitments were agreed.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-cn/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

Between 2014 and 2019, numerous regular (internal) meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg as well as five Interparliamentary Meetings (IPM) co-organised with the Chinese National Peoples’ Congress (NPC) were held.

Interparliamentary Meetings eighth term:

- 37th EU-China IPM, 20-24 July 2015, Beijing and Shenyang
- 38th EU-China IPM, 22-23 September 2015, Brussels
- 39th EU-China IPM, 16-19 May 2016, Beijing and Chengdu
- 40th EU-China IPM, 15-16 November 2017, Strasbourg
- 41st EU-China IPM, 7-9 May 2018, Beijing and Hangzhou.

Between September 2016 and October 2017, the Relations between the EP and the Chinese side were practically frozen as a reaction of the Chinese side to meetings of EP President Martin Schulz and other Members of the EP with the Dalai Lama.

The Bureau of the China-Delegation visited Hong Kong and Macao on 4-6 December 2017.

Apart from the IPMs, regular internal meetings of the China-Delegation took place in Brussels and Strasbourg with external experts invited or via video conference. The topics of these meetings reflected the state-of-play of the EU-China agenda:

- Regular debriefings by the European External Action Service (EAAS) after EU-China Summits;
- Regular briefings by the Chinese Ambassador to the EU on relevant decisions or policy in initiatives of the Chinese government or Communist Party of China (CPC);
- Issues of geo-strategic importance such as “China’s global and security roles and cybersecurity”, “The situation in the South-China Sea” or “China’s Africa strategy”;
- Issues of economic importance such as “Comprehensive Investment Agreement and Trade negotiations with China”, “EU-China Space cooperation”, “Chinese Foreign Direct Investments in Europe” or “Made in China 2025 strategy and access to the Chinese market” or “China’s Belt and Road Initiative”; and
- Human Rights-related issues, such as “Labour Relations in China”, “Situation in Hong Kong and Macao” or “Situation in Xinjiang province”.

Internal issue-related meetings were organised in cooperation with Parliamentary Committees (INTA, DROI and SEDE). Many meetings were held “in camera”, with restricted access for external participants.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group maintains Relations with the authorities in the Peoples’ Republic of China within the framework of the EP-China-Delegation and bilaterally within the framework of “party-to-party Relations” with the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC).

China’s importance as the second largest economy in the world, a strategic player in Central Asia, the Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions and as increasingly assertive actor on the global stage makes it inevitable that close Relations and an open dialogue with China and its authorities be maintained.

Almost all sectors of European economies depend on or are affected by economic Relations with China. Existing imbalances in EU-China Trade but also in discriminatory requirements and practices against European investors in China have been regularly addressed by EP reports, mainly in AFET and INTA but also in other Committees. EPP Group Members have played an essential role as initiators and experts on the matter and have done their utmost to support European businesses, jobs and security interests.

At the same time, the principal differences in the system of governance, political and state structure, the understanding of fundamental rights and values but also different short- and long-term economic and trade interests complicate the dialogue and cooperation with China.

The EP has regularly addressed human rights violations in China by Human Rights Urgency Resolutions, often at the initiative of EPP Group. Despite sometimes different views and interests, the Chinese counterparts in Brussels and Beijing value the open and critical dialogue with EPP Group Members.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH INDIA (D-IN)



Population: 1,296,834,042 (July 2018 est.).

GDP (PPP): \$9.474 trillion, **per capita (PPP):** \$7,200 (2017 est.)

Ethnic groups: Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3% (2000)..

Cities: New Delhi (cap), Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Kolkata.

Political system: federal parliamentary republic. Prime Minister Narendra Modi (since 26 May 2014). Parliament or 'Sansad' consists of: Council of States or Rajya Sabha (245 seats; 233 Members indirectly elected by State and territorial assemblies by proportional representation vote and 12 Members appointed by the president; members serve six-year terms). House of the People or 'Lok Sabha' (545 seats; 543 Members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 2 appointed by the president; members serve five-year terms) Elections were held in 7 phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019.

EPP Group Adviser: F. Neher

Background and Relations with the EU

About 60 years after its independence from Great Britain in 1947, India has become a global player, being the largest democracy in the world, and one of the strategic partners of the EU. Its economic growth has been largely linked to the era of globalisation and an increased relevance of the IT sector. India nowadays is an important partner on issues, such as climate change, sustainable development and clean energy, trade, security, fight against terrorism and financial reform. Along with China, Brazil, Russia and South Africa, India forms the BRICS block. Primarily focused on economic cooperation between the emerging powers, the grouping is increasingly seen as an international force, taking up political responsibility at the global level, next to the Western partners.

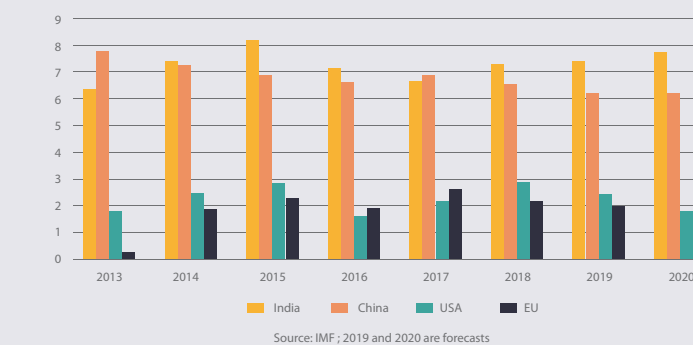
From 11 April to 18 May 2019, 900 million Indians were invited to take part in the world's biggest democratic event: the election of the 543 members of the Lok Sabha (lower chamber). The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi obtained an absolute majority and Narendra Modi won a second term of office. Enjoying a strong and undisputed mandate already in 2014, Modi had generated expectations that the country's economic potential would be unleashed and had adopted many flagship initiatives in a bid to change the country. In the last five years, India has overtaken China as the fastest-growing economy, becoming the world's sixth-biggest economy and a space power. Doing business in the country has become easier. Poverty has been reduced. The government has succeeded in introducing a major tax reform and a new law on bankruptcy. It failed, however, to create the necessary stock of jobs for young people or to promote long-awaited labour reforms. The situation for farmers has worsened and an overnight demonetisation hindered progress among small businesses and rural communities, while failing to bring real advances in the fight against corruption. State banks hold large stocks of bad loans and the government has increased pressure on the central bank and on its independence. Hindu nationalism and religious intolerance, the caste system and resulting discrimination on grounds of caste, pressure on freedom of expression, possible State intrusion into privacy, citizenship issues and other issues have been matters for concern in the area of human rights, although the country remains a robust democracy governed by the rule of law. Modi has increased the country's presence in the global arena, although the framework of India's Relations with the major powers has not changed.

The current Relations EU-India Relations are based on the 1994 Cooperation Agreement. During the 2005 EU-India Summit, leaders adopted the EU-India Joint Action Plan (JAP), which defines common objectives and identifies a wide range of supporting Activities in the areas of political, economic and development cooperation. India is the world's fastest growing economy, and the EU-India partnership offers substantial opportunities for the EU as well as for the development of India. EU-India trade in goods and services is worth €100 billion per year or €275 million per day. Around 6,000 European companies have set up shop in India, creating five million jobs across the country, as well as benefiting EU growth and European consumers. Indian companies are doing the same in Europe. Nevertheless, not much progress has been made on the negotiations of a free trade agreement (FTA).

The EU-India strategic partnership promotes trade and economic cooperation. Following two summits in 2016 and 2017, the EU and India have embarked on the road towards cooperation on non-trade issues. Trade has meanwhile stagnated and little progress has been made in negotiations on a trade and investment agreement. A EP resolution of 13 September 2017 on the EU's political

Relations with India recommended the preparation of a new, consistent EU strategy for Relations with India, with clear priorities. At the 2017 EU-India Summit, a joint statement reaffirmed the parties' shared commitment to strengthening the EU-India strategic partnership. Foreign and security policy, migration, trade, climate, research and innovation were also discussed. India has huge potential for economic growth and as a major international strategic player. India is carrying out political and economic reforms focused on modernising the administration, good governance, fighting corruption with demonetisation and transparency programmes, tackling social problems, developing the economy with the 'Make in India' and 'Invest India' initiatives, and imposing a nationwide goods and services tax. The EU-India Agenda for Action 2020, adopted at the 2016 summit, sets up fora for foreign policy and security consultations.

GDP % growth in India, China, the US and the EU, 2013-2020



Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-in/home)

Members of the Delegation for Relations with India travelled to Delhi and Jaipur from 16 to 18 March 2015 and from 20 to 22 February 2017 for meetings in Delhi and Bangalore. The speaker of the Lok Sabha (Lower House) of the Parliament of India, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, visited the EP in Brussels on 23-24 June 2015, accompanied by 6 Members of both Houses of Parliament.

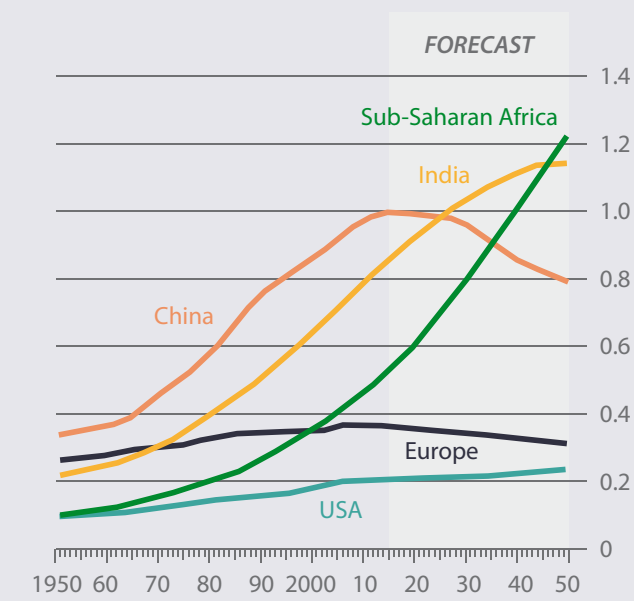
The February 2017 visit coincided with important Indian State elections and the presence in India of a US Congress delegation, which was the first such visit after the election of the new US President. Nevertheless, the EP visit attracted broad and positive press interest. There was keen interest in Brexit and the need for continuing global economic stability, as well as in Member's views on Kashmir and on immigration, regional and global security issues, and on EU-India trade negotiations. Notable on the economic front were pronouncements from the Finance Minister that globalisation should not be seen as a threat, but rather as 'the greatest source of poverty alleviation' and that ideology 'is no longer a constraint'. On the Indian domestic front, the most remarkable observation was that the demonetisation campaign had not apparently cost the ruling party and Prime Minister Modi seriously in terms of credibility, as demonstrated by positive State election results for the BJP. The policy change is largely seen as aiding in 'leap frogging' to electronic payments (of government benefits in particular) and diminishing the shadow economy.

The February 2015 visit, on the other hand, was overshadowed by the fact that the EU-India Summit, which was scheduled to take place in April later that year, was cancelled briefly before the delegation travelled to India. Formally, the Indian side cancelled but this was a response to what they regarded as unacceptable delays on the part of the EU. The Chairman contacted Mrs Mogherini expressing disappointment at the turn of events at a time when the EU should have been making every effort to intensify bilateral Relations. He asked about the reasons for the cancellation and to know when the Summit would take place. In a meeting with the High Representative, she mentioned that the date proposed was also when one of the Italian marines awaiting trial in India was due to be sent back to India when his clemency on medical grounds expired. She also explained that the responsibility for scheduling lay with President Tusk.

The controversy over the cancellation of the summit attracted substantial media attention at press points in the Lok Sabha and at the final press conference in the EU Delegation in Delhi (25 journalists, 3 TV networks and radio stations) and the views expressed by the EP delegation were duly reported. Following the visit, the Chairman wrote to President Tusk to explain that the Summit cancellation had become the main focus of media interest in the visit and to reiterate the importance of rescheduling in a timely manner. In a response on 5 May, Mr Tusk assured the Chairman that the EU was looking for appropriate dates for the Summit, which finally took place in March 2016.

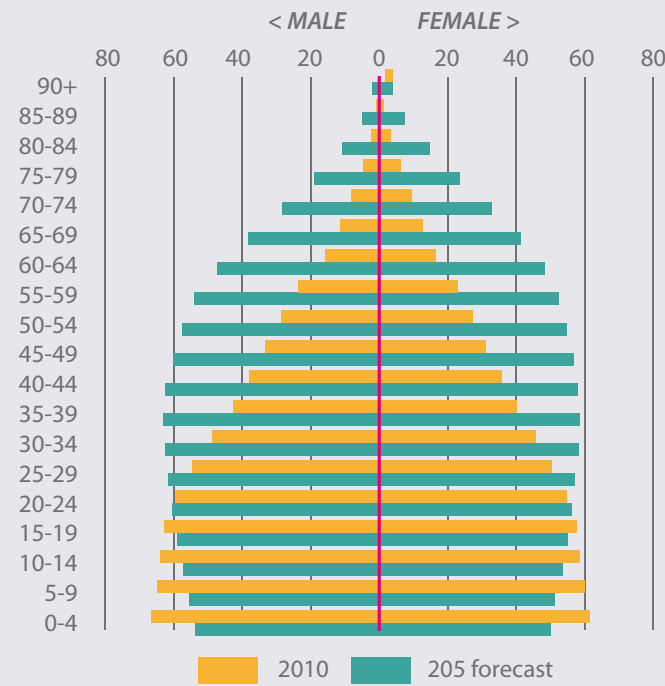
Population and demographics

Working-age population, bn
(15-to 64-year-olds)



Source: UN Population Division

India's population by age, group and sex



Source: <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2013/05/10/indias-moment>

EPP Group Position

As an important regional and global actor, India is a strategic partner for the EU. With regards to the FTA negotiations between the EU and India, both sides are aiming to find results which are mutually acceptable, so as to achieve an ambitious outcome which would give an important boost to trade. The EPP Group is seeking to see results in the contentious areas of market access for services and investment, public procurement, enforcement of protection of IPR (generic medicines) and the unrestricted supply of raw materials and energy. The EPP Group considers it equally essential that all the objectives of the FTA be fulfilled , such as the promotion of stability, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance; cooperationon fighting poverty, inequality, social exclusion, sustainable development, environmental protection and climate change, and enhancing economic interaction and securing a strengthened international economic order.

The EPP Group also considers it essential to fight against caste discrimination, which affects especially hundreds of thousands of almost exclusively female Dalits and indigenous Adivasi. In the context of the urgency resolution on India in January 2013, the EPP Group highlights that the legal protection alone will not be enough to end the violence against women and girls. We believe that it also requires a societal change both in India and around the world.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN (D-AF)



Population: 34,940,837 (July 2018 est.).
GDP (PPP): \$69.45 billion, **per capita (PPP):** \$2,000 (2017 est.).
Ethnic groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, other (includes smaller numbers of Baloch, Turkmen, Nuristani, Pamiri, Arab, Gujar, Brahui, Qizilbash, Aimaq, Pashai, and Kyrgyz) (2015).
Political system: presidential Islamic republic. President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf GHANI Ahmadzai (since 29 September 2014). Bicameral National Assembly consists of 'Meshrano Jirga' or House of Elders (102 seats; 34 Members appointed by district councils to serve 3-year terms, 34 appointed by provincial councils to serve four-year terms, and 34 appointed by the President of whom 17 must be women, 2 must represent the disabled, and 2 must be Kuchi nomads; Members nominated by the president serve five-year terms). 'Wolesi Jirga' or House of People (249 seats; Members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote to serve five-year terms). Next presidential elections to be held in September 2019.
EPP Group adviser: L. Stenlund

Background and EU Relations

Following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, an international coalition led by the US declared war on Afghanistan. The UN SC authorised the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2001, which became a NATO-led mission in 2003. In June 2011, following the killing of Osama Bin Laden, President Obama announced the withdrawal of US troops by the end of 2014. As the Taliban violence intensified afterwards, the international community decided to extend its military presence in order to contain the Taliban threat, and better train and support Afghan Armed Forces. Operation Resolute Support in January 2015, a training and support mission rather than a peacekeeping force, which in February 2019 included approximately 17,000 troops, replaced ISAF. While President Trump at first increased the number of US troops in Afghanistan, he reversed that decision and it is expected US military presence will further decrease in 2019-2020.

The EU Strategy for Afghanistan, adopted in 2017, aims to strengthen the country's institutions and economy, provides the basis for developing a mutually beneficial Relationship in several areas such as the rule of law, health, rural development, education, science and technology, and the fight against terrorism, organised crime and narcotics. At the October 2016 Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, the EU and its Member States pledged €5billion out of a total €13,6billion in support for Afghanistan in the period 2016-2020. Furthermore,



See links to media backgrounder on "[NATO-Afghanistan relations \(February 2019\)](#)" and to media backgrounder on the [ANA Trust Fund](#).

March 2019

Source:https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_03/20190305_2019-03-RSM-Placemat.pdf

at the Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan in 2018, the EU announced a financial package worth €474 million in support for State building and public sector reforms, health, justice and elections. Since 2002, the EU has provided €3.66billion in development and humanitarian aid, making it the fourth largest donor. Afghanistan is also the largest beneficiary of EU development assistance. Together with its Member States, the EU contributes more than €1billion in development assistance a year to Afghanistan.

The Council discussed the situation in Afghanistan in April 2019, during which foreign ministers focused on current peace efforts. The Council adopted conclusions on the peace process, whereby it reaffirmed its political commitment and long-term support for the people of Afghanistan on their path towards peace, security and prosperity. The EU encourages the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban to intensify their efforts towards a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict through direct negotiations. The EU stands ready to support the following aspects of the process: making the peace process inclusive; assisting with reforms, including security sector reform; acting as a guarantor of a peace process, if requested by the parties; assisting with reintegration of fighters and their families; and promoting regional trade and connectivity.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-af/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

Marking the willingness of the EP to strengthen nascent democratic institutions in the country, a fully-fledged Delegation for Relations with the Afghan Wolesi Jirga (lower house) was constituted immediately after the 2009 European elections. Despite the reduction in the international military presence in Afghanistan and ongoing fighting with Taliban forces, the Delegation managed to hold two interparliamentary meetings in the last legislature. It was a step forward from the seventh legislature, during which the majority of interparliamentary exchanges had taken place mainly by video-conference.

The Fourth EP-Afghanistan IPM (February 2017) was hosted in Kabul, in which members discussed a number of issues, i.e. the security situation, outcome of Brussels Donor Conference, reconciliation process, migration issues, business and education opportunities. In the joint declaration, the delegation welcomed “the signing of the EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD) and calls for its quick ratification”, in order to upgrade the political and economic Relations between the EU and Afghanistan.

The Fifth EP-Afghanistan IPM (December 2018) took place also in Kabul, during which:

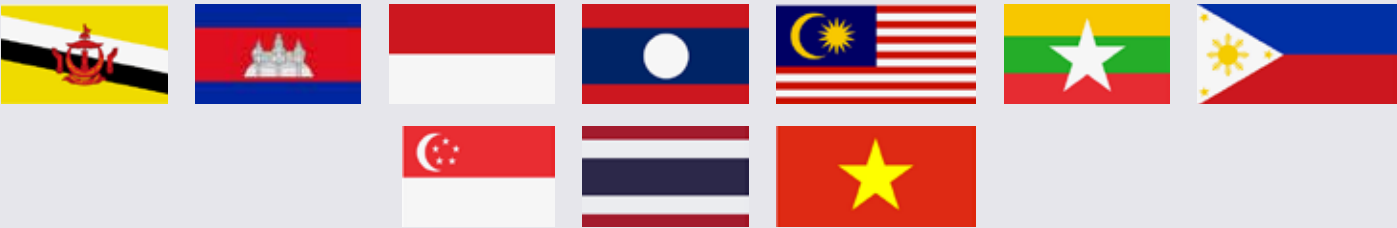
- The parliamentarians expressed their support for an inclusive and Afghan-led reconciliation process, based on the respect of rule of law and human rights and that aims to reach a sustainable peace and development for the country.
- Parliamentarians discussed the common agenda of Afghanistan and the EU, covering issues such as the fight against corruption and impunity, sound coordination of donors, drug production, fighting extremism, tackling climate change and the regional implications of the Afghan situation.
- The two parties believe that the Afghanistan/EU Cooperation Agreement and Partnership and Development will be a cornerstone in further strengthening mutual Relations.

The ordinary meetings in Brussels consisted of regular exchanges of views between MEPs and representatives from other EU institutions (EEAS and EC), NATO, UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC), international charities (Amnesty International and Oxfam) and academics. On 13 March 2019, a total of 513 MEPs backed the EU-Afghanistan CAPD, taking the agreement one step closer to ratification. The agreement should apply from December 2019, if it is fully ratified by the national and certain regional parliaments of the EU Member States. At the same time, the EP has also passed a resolution expressing concern over the “fragility and instability” of the Western-backed government in Kabul and the “lack of control it exerts in much of the country”. The vote took place the day after Taliban and US negotiators concluded another round of talks in Qatar aimed at ending the nearly 18-year war in Afghanistan (half of which is reportedly controlled by the militant group).

EPP Group Position

We believe that, while it should be recognised that military forces are currently needed, the conflict cannot be won solely by military means. Hence, a good balance between civil and military capabilities must be found. Failure is not an option since a return to power of the Taliban would not only restore Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists, but would also send a devastating message to other conflict areas throughout the world. Efforts to train the local police and army, as well as programmes to train the judiciary and public administration must therefore be further extended. This will be even more necessary after the withdrawal of international troops. The EPP Group also believes that an improved cooperation with Pakistan is essential in order to work for stability in Afghanistan.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (D-ASE)



BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



Government type: absolute monarchy or sultanate.
Population: 450,565.
GDP: \$33.87 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$78,900.
Religions: Muslim (official) 78.8%, Christian 8.7%, Buddhist 7.8%, other (includes indigenous beliefs) 4.7%.
EPP Group Adviser: M. Arens

CAMBODIA



Government type: parliamentary constitutional monarchy.
Population: 16.4m.
GDP: \$64.21 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$4,000.
Religions: Buddhist (official) 96.9%, Muslim 1.9%, Christian 0.4%.

INDONESIA



Government type: presidential republic.
Population: 262.7m.
GDP: \$3.25 trillion, **GDP per capita:** \$12,400.
Religions: Muslim 87.2%, Protestant 7%, Roman Catholic 2.9%, Hindu 1.7%, other 0.9% (includes Buddhist and Confucian), unspecified 0.4%.

LAOS



Government type: presidential republic
Population: 7.2m.
GDP: \$49.34billion, **GDP per capita:** \$7,400.
Religions: Buddhist 64.7%, Christian 1.7%, none 31.4%, other/not stated 2.1%.

MALAYSIA



Government type: federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy.

Population: 31m.

GDP: \$933.3 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$29,100.

Religions: Muslim (official) 61.3%, Buddhist 19.8%, Christian 9.2%, Hindu 6.3%, Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions 1.3%, other 0.4%, none 0.8%, unspecified 1%.

MYANMAR (BURMA)



Government type: parliamentary republic.

Population: 55.6m.

GDP: \$329.8 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$6,300.

Religions: Buddhist 87.9%, Christian 6.2%, Muslim 4.3%, Animist 0.8%, Hindu 0.5%, other 0.2%, none 0.1%.

PHILIPPINES



Gouvernement type: presidential republic.

Population: 105.8m.

GDP: \$877.2 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$8,400.

Religions: Roman Catholic 80.6%, Protestant 8.2% (includes Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches 2.7%, National Council of Churches in the Philippines 1.2%, other Protestant 4.3%), Muslim 5.6%, tribal religions .2%, other 1.9%.

SINGAPORE



Government type: parliamentary republic.

Population: 5.9m.

GDP: \$528.1 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$94,100.

Religions: Buddhist 33.2%, Christian 18.8%, Muslim 14%, Taoist 10%, Hindu 5%, other 0.6%, none 18.5%.

THAILAND



Government type: constitutional monarchy;

note - interim military-affiliated government since May 2014.

Population: 66.6m.

GDP: \$1.23 trillion, **GDP per capita:** \$17,900.

Religions: Buddhist 94.6%, Muslim 4.3%, Christian 1%.

VIETNAM



Government type: communist State.

Population: 97m.

GDP: \$648.7 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$6,900.

Religions: Buddhist 7.9%, Catholic 6.6%, Hoa Hao 1.7%, Cao Dai 0.9%, Protestant 0.9%, Muslim 0.1%, none 81.8%

Background and Relations with the EU

Singapore: Trade and investment negotiations with Singapore were launched in 2010 and completed in 2012, with the exception of provisions on investment protection, which were finalised in 2014 and subsequently amended in 2017 to bring them in line with the EU's new approach to investment protection and dispute resolution. Following the European Court of Justice Opinion 2/15 (issued on 16 May 2017), the architecture of the agreement was adjusted to create two standalone agreements: a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and an Investment Protection Agreement (IPA).

The draft trade and investment agreements were signed on 19 October 2018 and received the consent of the EP on 13 February 2019. Following the EP's consent, the FTA (covering only matters of EU-exclusive competence) should enter into force once Singapore concludes its own internal procedures and both sides complete the final formalities. The IPA (covering some matters of shared competence between the EU and Member States) will need to be ratified by all EU Member States in accordance with their own national procedures before it can enter into force.

Malaysia: Trade and investment negotiations with Malaysia were launched in 2010 and, after seven rounds of negotiation, put on hold in April 2012 at the request of Malaysia. Following the conclusion of TPP negotiations in October 2015, Malaysia expressed its wish to resume FTA negotiations with the EU and both sides agreed to explore jointly whether sufficient common ground existed to resume the negotiations. In 2016, a stocktaking exercise was initiated to assess the prospect of resuming negotiations.

In March 2018, Commissioner Malmström and then Minister Mustapa agreed, in principle, on the resumption of negotiations after the general elections of 9 May 2018. However, there is little certainty at this stage when Malaysia may take a decision on the resumption. The ball is now in the hands of the Malaysian cabinet, which has still to take a decision. This is also allegedly linked to Malaysia's concerns related to future market access to the EU for palm oil and, in particular, palm-based biofuels in light of the new requirements set in the recast of the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (REDII) and its Delegated Act, which identifies palm oil as the only high ILUC-risk feedstock. Malaysia considers this approach discriminatory and has threatened to take the EU to WTO.

Before resuming negotiations, it is important that the EU and Malaysia see eye-to-eye on the level of ambition of a future agreement. The EU is looking for a comprehensive and ambitious agreement, equivalent to the ones it has reached with Singapore and Vietnam.

Vietnam: Trade and investment negotiations with Vietnam were launched in 2012 and completed in December 2015. Following the European Court of Justice Opinion 2/15 and, similarly to what had been done with the EU-Singapore agreements, the result of negotiations with Vietnam was adjusted to create a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and an Investment Protection Agreement (IPA).

The draft trade and investment agreements were presented to Council on 17 October 2018 together with proposals for Council decisions for their signature and conclusion. The Council jurist-linguists are currently reviewing the agreements in preparation for their signature, which is foreseen to take place before the end of June. Following signature, the EP will be seized for its consent. The FTA could then enter into force once Council has approved its conclusion, while the IPA will follow its ratification procedure also at Member State level.

Thailand: The Council endorsed the launch of negotiations on an FTA with Thailand in February 2013. The talks were officially launched in March 2013 and four rounds took place with the last one held in April 2014. Since the military takeover in Thailand in May 2014, no further FTA rounds have been scheduled.

The conclusions adopted by the Council in December 2017 proposed a gradual re-engagement as regards the overall EU-Thailand Relationship. With regard to trade, the resumption of FTA negotiations may be pursued only after a democratically elected civilian government is in place in Thailand. Elections took place on 24 March 2019 – the first fully contested parliamentary elections in Thailand

since 2011. The EU looks forward to the announcement of the election results, scheduled for 9 May (after the King’s coronation) and, thereafter, to the formation of a government that reflects the will of the electorate. Thailand’s new parliament has elected military government chief Prayuth Chan-ocha as the country’s prime minister, completing a transition from coup leader to head of a civilian government in a system seen tilted in his favour. The military-backed Palang Pracharat Party that nominated him as their prime ministerial candidate finished second in the March 24 general election. Prayuth’s appointment becomes official when it is endorsed by King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

Indonesia: Negotiations on an FTA with Indonesia were launched on 18 July 2016. The first round of negotiations took place in September 2016 in Brussels. The last round of negotiations took place from 11 to 15 March 2019 in Brussels. The next and eighth round of negotiations will be held before the summer. The date has yet to be confirmed. This is also allegedly linked to concerns related to future market access to the EU for palm oil and, in particular, palm-based biofuels in light of the new requirements set in the recast of the EU’s Renewable Energy Directive (REDII) and its Delegated Act, which identifies palm oil as the only high ILUC-risk feedstock.

Philippines: Trade and investment negotiations with the Philippines were launched in December 2015. The first round of negotiations took place in May 2016 in Brussels and the second round was held in February 2017 in Cebu City (Philippines). No date has been set yet for the next round of negotiations. While the EU remains committed in principle to the FTA, the EU’s trade agenda cannot act in isolation of the EU’s broader values agenda.

Myanmar/Burma: Negotiating directives for an investment protection agreement were adopted in March 2014. The EU sent its text proposal in December 2014. Five rounds of negotiations have taken place so far. Good progress has been made, but discussions will have to continue. No date has been set yet for the next round of negotiations. The EU is committed to the conclusion of an ambitious agreement. However, this cannot happen in isolation of the broader context, in particular our serious concerns on human rights. In the present context, the conclusion of the investment agreement is not likely.

ASEAN: A formal FTA process was launched in 2007. In March 2009, it was mutually agreed to take a pause in the regional negotiations. In March 2017, the Economic Ministers of the ASEAN and the Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström tasked officials on both sides to form an ASEAN-EU Joint Working Group to look anew at the possible parameters of a future FTA. In March 2018 in Singapore, the Ministers agreed that more efforts were needed, including through continued domestic consultations and engagements in experts’ dialogues. This work is on-going.

Unfortunately - due to the new rules regarding the work of delegations - the ASEAN-Delegation was not able to visit all Member States of the ASEAN in the last five years. The EPP Group will have to try once again to find a solution in relation to the difficulties – in the light of the Parliament’s rules - faced by those delegations, which are responsible for several countries (especially if they are geographically distant from Europe).

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dase/home)

Last year’s Asean InterParliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in Singapore could mark a milestone in the Relations between the EP and parliamentarians from the 10 Member States of ASEAN. A draft for a “Declaration of Intent” was negotiated by both sides in Singapore in September 2018. The intent of this paper is to intensify the Relations between parliamentarians.

This goal should be achieved by one additional annual meeting between Parliamentarians from both regions alternating between Asia and Europe. The long-term goal should be to establish a Joint EP-AIPA Interparliamentary Forum. The delegation elaborated in April 2019 with Singapore, the ASEAN country coordinator for Relations with the EU, this idea and other initiatives on how to strengthen the Relations between the EU and the ASEAN during the upcoming legislature.

Another historic moment in the work of the ASEAN-Delegation was the visit to Malaysia on the eve of the election day in September 2018. The democratic decision of the Malaysian people on a new government needs now our support (e.g. in terms of economic Relations and here especially on the questions related to the renewable energy directive).

Since the last election, the ASEAN Delegation unfortunately also experienced many unpleasant developments in the 10 Member States of ASEAN. For example, the presidential elections in the Philippines (and the war against drugs as carried out by President Duterte), the difficult democratic process in Myanmar (and the situation of the Rohingya refugees, especially the unacceptable reaction of the military against them), the decline of democratic culture in Cambodia (and the critical situation on human rights, freedom of expression and democratisation, and especially free and fair elections), the unacceptable human rights situation in Lao PDR, questions concerning the religious freedom in Indonesia and the military regime in Thailand.

Many of those “events” have been the subject of urgency resolutions of the EP. During meetings with representatives of the governments of the Member States of ASEAN, the Members of the ASEAN Delegation made clear that the EP - as co-legislator in budget and trade matters - could deliver further help and support to the ASEAN countries only when progress is made in the fields outlined.

During the 22nd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting, which took place in Brussels on 22 January 2019, ASEAN and the EU agreed on an in-principle upgrade of ASEAN-EU Relations to a Strategic Partnership, as a signal of the longstanding and comprehensive cooperation between the two regions. Due to the ongoing dispute on the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) and the use of Palm oil, Indonesia and Malaysia blocked the agreement.

In a changing geostrategic environment between China and the United States and with the South China Sea conflict, international trade benefits the European Union in a globalised world. The Member States of ASEAN are potential trading partners and markets for the European Union and our industries.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group attaches great importance to the deepening and extension of the Relationship with ASEAN. The partnership has great potential for benefits for both the EU and ASEAN. The EPP Group will endorse the efforts to create an EP-AIPA-Interparliamentary Forum. The EPP Group is closely following the negotiations on bilateral agreements and support a region-to-region Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE KOREAN PENINSULA (D-KOR)
Strategic partner (SK)

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (NORTH KOREA)



Political system: dictatorship; official state ideology of “Juche” or “national self-reliance”.
Population: 25.610 million (UN World Population statistics for 2018).
GDP per capita: \$1013 (UN statistics for 2015).
Religions: traditionally Buddhist and Confucianist, some Christians and syncretic Chondogyo.
Cities: Pyongyang (capital), Hamhung, Ch’ongjin, Namp’o, Kaesong, Wonsan.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH KOREA)



Political system: presidential Republic.
Population: 51.164 million (UN World Population statistics for 2018).
GDP per capita: \$32,774 (IMF statistics for 2018).
Religions: Protestant 45%, Buddhists 35%, Roman Catholic 18%, Others 2%, None 56% (Korea.net statistics).
Cities: Seoul (capital), Pusan, Taegu, Incheon, Kwangju, Suwon, Ulsan.
EPP Group Adviser: Romain Strasser

Background and Relations with the EU

In 1948, after the end of the Second World War (and the defeat of Japan, which had colonised Korea for 35 years), Korea was split into a pro-Soviet communist North, and a pro-Western South at the 38th parallel. In 1950, the Korean War broke out when North Korean forces, led by President Kim Il-sung, tried to unite the country under his leadership. In 1953, after more than two million casualties, the war ended in an armistice but not a formal peace treaty. Since then, the North Korean regime has maintained very aggressive language towards its neighbours, namely South Korea and Japan, and massively invested in its military. As a consequence, the country today is home to a paradox of having one of the biggest armies in the world, while simultaneously being unable to feed its people, not to mention its poor human rights record.

The situation has improved since 2017 when the new South Korean President Moon stated he intended that his administration would inherit the Sunshine Policy: his pledge to reopen and expand the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) has been an area of concern. One year later, Kim Jong Un showed the first signs of willingness to enter into negotiations with his southern neighbour and the United States. Initial efforts included the sending a high-profile North Korean delegation to South Korea for the Winter Olympics and sending of an invitation to visit North Korea to South Korean President Moon. This was followed by the third (and the first in eleven years) inter-Korean summit, which took place on 27 April 2018 on the South Korean side of the Joint Security Area and was largely hailed as a major milestone in the reconciliation process between the two Koreas. The summit produced the Panmunjom Declaration, in which both leaders made significant pledges, including denuclearisation of the Peninsula. Moon and Kim also agreed to convert the existing armistice agreement, which still formally marked the end of Korean War after 65 years, into a full-fledged peace treaty. A North Korean delegation flew to the United States with an official invitation for President Trump. Shortly thereafter, the news broke through that a US and DPRK summit would take place either in late May or in June. Several events took place before the Summit’s eventual cancellation and reinstatement, such as three-way preparatory talks between the DPRK, ROK and US delegations in Finland, while Kim embarked on what was his first known out-of-country excursion since taking power when he visited China’s leader Xi Jinping, who stated that DPRK was “ready for denuclearisation”. Kim and Xi met again on 7 May 2018. Singapore was chosen as the place for the historic summit between Trump and Kim which took place on 12 June and culminated in a joint declaration, in which the following was reaffirmed:

The 27 April 2018 Panmunjom Declaration: the DPRK commits to work towards the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. However, no time plan was established.

The Summit received positive review worldwide, through criticisms were aimed at the vague wording of the joint statement.

A second summit between Trump and Kim took place in Hanoi on 27-28 February, 2019. However, due to the maintenance of US sanctions against North Korea, Kim was not willing to discuss further giving up his nuclear programme and indicate a timetable for dismantling his nuclear facilities. The Summit was terminated early and no joint declaration was signed.

In September 2018, both Korean leaders held another Inter-Korean Summit in Pyongyang, which resulted in the “Pyongyang Joint Declaration” and “Agreement on the Implementation of the Historic Panmunjom Declaration in the Military Domain”, which expanded the cessation of military hostility in regions of confrontation, such as the DMZ. On 26 December 2018, North and South Korea successfully held a ground-breaking ceremony for inter-Korean road and railway projects in Kaesong. High-ranking officials from both Koreas attended the ceremony, as well as several senior officials from China and Russia. However, the ceremony is largely symbolic since the two Koreas cannot move the project much further along without the removal of US sanctions against Pyongyang.

EU-Relations with North Korea

The EU has always supported the resumption of the stalled Six-Party Talks to achieve complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. In addition to the sanctions under UN Security Council resolutions, the EU has also applied autonomous measures against North Korea to prevent further development of a nuclear weapons programme. The EU adopted new sanctions in October 2017, thereby imposing a total ban on EU investment in North Korea in all sectors and a total ban on the sale of refined petroleum products and crude oil. There is still no EU Delegation in Pyongyang but the EU is represented, on a six-months rotating basis, by one of the seven EU Member States present there (Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany and Bulgaria).

Next to the issue of non-proliferation, the EU is keen to improve the human rights situation and to provide food assistance to the starving population in North Korea. Since 1995, the EU has provided over €135.3 million in aid in the form of food aid, medical, water and sanitation assistance and especially agricultural support. The EU has regularly raised the human rights situation in North Korea bilaterally and through UN bodies, including by co-sponsoring country resolutions. For example, the EU along with other countries presented the resolution to the UN Human Rights Council concerning the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the grave and persistent violations of human rights there. The resolution was adopted by consent on 21 March 2013. In February 2014, the Commission findings reported grave human rights violations and urged the referral of the situation, as well as KIM Jong-un himself, to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

EU-Relations with South Korea

The two sides are major trading partners and, given their shared values and understanding of democracy and human rights, are natural partners. In 2010, the EU and South Korea upgraded their Relationship to a Strategic Partnership, ensuring a high level of commitment from both sides. Since 2002, nine EU-South Korea Summits have taken place, the last of which was held in October 2018 in Brussels. Consultations on human rights were also held for the first time in October 2013 in Brussels.

The EU-South Korean Relations are governed by three key agreements:

1. **The EU-South Korea Framework Agreement (FA):** Signed in 2010 and officially entered into force in June 2014, the FA sets the framework for bilateral Relations, including strengthened political cooperation on major political and global issues, such as for instance the joint promotion of human rights, counter-terrorism, climate change, development cooperation and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
2. **The EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** Signed in 2010, applied since July 2011 and officially ratified in October 2015, the FTA was the first to have been submitted to the EP for consent under the Lisbon Treaty and by then the most ambitious trade deal ever implemented by the EU. Between 2011 and 2016 EU exports of goods increased overall by 55%,

generating a trade surplus for the EU. In 2015, EU exports of goods to South Korea amounted to €47.9 billion, whereas imports from South Korea totalled €42.3 billion. South Korea is the EU's ninth largest export destination for goods, whereas the EU is South Korea's third-largest export market. Furthermore, the EU is by far the largest foreign investor in the country. The FTA is also the EU's first trade deal with an Asian country.

3. **The Framework Participation Agreement on Crisis Management (FPA):** Signed in 2014, the FPA provides the basis for South Korea to announce concrete contributions to EU military operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy, making it the first East Asian country to step up security cooperation and thereby completing all three fundamental bilateral agreements with the EU.

On 18 May 2017, the EP adopted a resolution to take stock of the first five years of implementation of the FTA between the EU and South Korea.

On inter-Korean Relations, the EU supports critical engagement with North Korea and actions for improved crisis management on the Korean Peninsula. The EU also agrees on the need for dialogue and cooperation, with the perspective that peaceful reunification on the Peninsula would contribute greatly to the peace and prosperity in the region and the world.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dkor/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

In the previous legislation period (2014-June 2019), the Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula had a full agenda. It held eighteen normal delegation meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg with the participation of various interlocutors including representatives from the EEAS, the Ambassadors of South Korea, North Korea, the People's Republic of China, Japan, the deputy Ambassador of Russia, the US special envoy for North Korean Human Rights issues, the acting Minister Counsellor for Political Affairs in the US Mission to the EU, a researcher from the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique of Paris, and the South Korean Unification Minister. Furthermore, 4 IPMs took place (3 with SK: 2 in Brussels and 1 in Seoul) and 1 with NK in Pyongyang. Three joint meetings were organised with the Delegation for Japan-Australia/New Zealand, the subcommittee on Human Rights and the INTA committee.

With South Korea

Between 2014 and 2019, three IPMs took place with members of the South Korean National Assembly. The Delegation also had meetings in Seoul with South Korean government members including the Prime Minister and Ministers (Foreign Affairs, Trade, Unification and Education, Science and Technology) and the leaders of the ruling and main opposition parties in the country. The main issues addressed in the meetings included the three current fundamental agreements governing EU-South Korea Relations, the political and economic situation of both sides, inter-Korean Relations and the nuclear issue.

With the North

Between 2014-2019, one IPM took place in Pyongyang with members of the North Korean Supreme People's Assembly, including the Speaker. Other meetings also included Vice-Ministers (Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Agriculture), EU Ambassadors and chargés d'affaires posted in Pyongyang, representatives from the Central Committee of the Workers' Party, as well as visits to EU-funded projects. Despite the fact that the EP's Relations with North Korea are rather limited, it is believed that the dialogue with North Korea has to be maintained and pursued. Issues discussed mainly related to the North's provocative behaviour towards its neighbour(s): missile launches, nuclear tests, uranium-enrichment programmes. Other issues addressed were the EU contributions to humanitarian aid, food security and agricultural development, the investments by EU enterprises in a country where freedom of movement is not permitted, very limited Internet access and the necessary securities and guarantees not given, the appalling human rights situation that makes the North Korea one of the most inhuman countries worldwide, and the refugee issue.

Four IPMs (3 with South Korea: 2 in Brussels and 1 in Seoul) and one with North Korea (in Pyongyang) took place. In addition, there were three joint meetings with the Delegations for Japan - Australia/New Zealand, the Sub-Committee on Human Rights and the INTA Committee.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group calls on North Korea to completely and verifiably abandon all nuclear weapons and terminate its nuclear programme. This is the only way to reach a lasting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. In order to achieve this, the EPP Group calls on North Korea to return to the Six Party Talks immediately. Unless progress is made in the disarmament of the North Korean nuclear programme, all aid to the North, with the exception of humanitarian aid and food assistance, should be disrupted.

The EPP Group thus calls on North Korea to enter a genuine process of change at all levels with the view to bringing about economic and social reforms that will lead to the improvement in the living conditions of its people and respect for human rights. Finally, the EPP Group highlights the necessity to keep channels of communication open. While opposing the government's policies, it is important to stay informed and in touch with the decision-makers.

The EPP Group is keen on fostering Relations with South Korea. In addition to strengthening and developing a Strategic Partnership with a like-minded country, the EPP Group is ready and willing to support South Korea in the difficult situation with its neighbour. It supports the efforts by the South to achieve long-term stabilisation and eventual unification. Furthermore, the EPP Group is seeking ways to increase cooperation and mutual benefits in the political, economic, social, cultural, educational, industrial and research areas.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND (D-ANZ)

AUSTRALIA



Political system: parliamentary democracy (Federal Parliament) under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm.
Population: 23.4m.
GDP: \$1.24 trillion **GDP per capita:** \$50,400.
Religions: Protestant 23.1%, Roman Catholic 22.6%, other Christian 4.2%, Muslim 2.6%, Buddhist 2.4%, Orthodox 2.3%, Hindu 1.9%, other 1.3%, none 30.1%, unspecified 9.6%.
EPP Group Adviser: Joanna Warchol

NEW ZEALAND



Political system: parliamentary democracy (New Zealand Parliament) under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm.
Population: 4.5m **GDP:** \$136 billion, **GDP per capita:** \$30,400.
Religions: Christian 44.3%, Hindu 2.1%, Buddhist 1.4%, Maori Christian 1.3%, Islam 1.1%, other religion 1.4% no religion 38.5%, not stated or unidentified 8.2%, objected to answering 4.1%.

Background and Relations with the EU

Despite their distant geographical location, both Australia and New Zealand share deep ties with the Western world. Yet, due to their geographic location, both countries are eager to foster regional integration in the Asia-Pacific area. In this light, both are founding members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the East-Asia Summits and seek closer Relations with ASEAN. Furthermore, both are OECD members and Australia, as a major world economy, is part of the G20. On the other hand, New Zealand, together with Brunei Darussalam, Chile and Singapore is part of the so-called P4, which form a free trade agreement (FTA) called the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership. Australia (and, among others, the United States and Japan) are currently negotiating their accession. As from 2018, Australia and New Zealand are partners within the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The

CPTPP is a free trade agreement (FTA) between Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam and Brunei Darussalam. The CPTPP was signed by the 11 countries on 8 March 2018 in Santiago, Chile, and entered into force on 30 December 2018. The CPTPP ensures that the substantial market access package secured in the original TPP is maintained (i.e. covering goods and services market openings and commitments on regulations on foreign investment). This market-access package will be implemented among the CPTPP Parties, delivering major new opportunities for Australian and New Zealand exporters, investors and firms engaged in international business. The CPTPP recognises the challenges facing Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in establishing export markets and includes outcomes to help make this task easier in the CPTPP region. Despite their economic integration, differences remain between both countries, which nevertheless are over 1490 km apart from each other (which is similar to the distance between Berlin and Ankara).

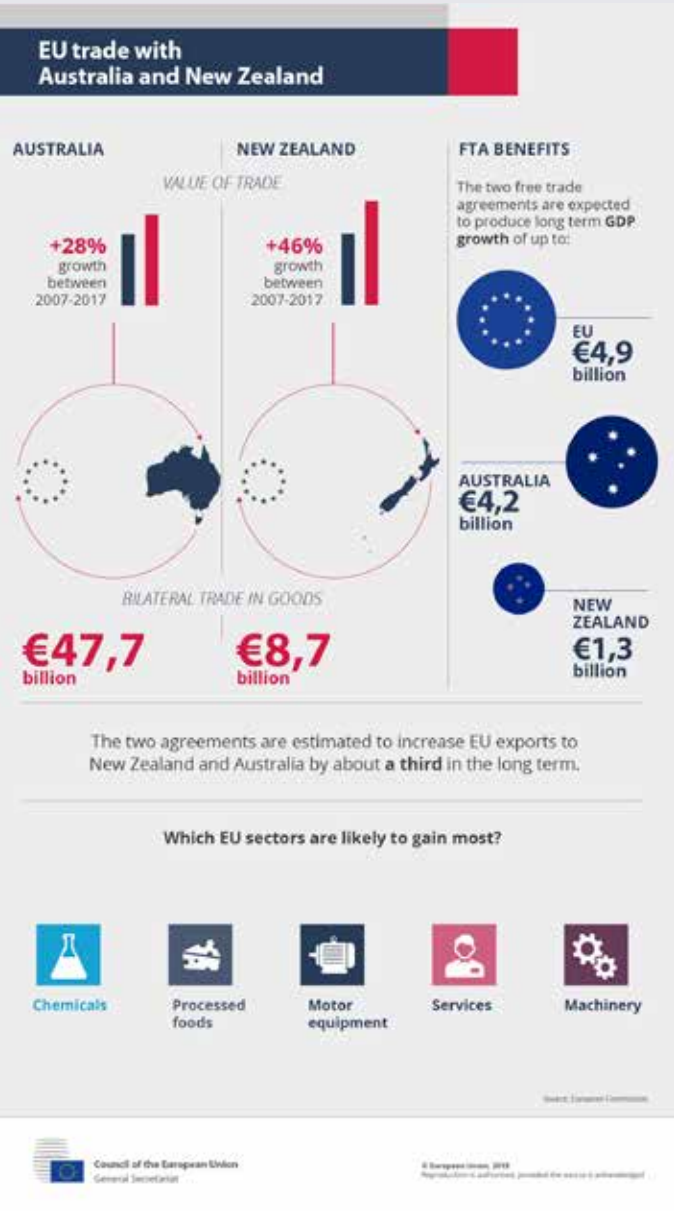
While Australia’s population is mainly made up of former European emigrants, New Zealand has a significant population of Pacific peoples, in particular the Maori, who make up about 7% of the population and have founded their own political party, which is represented in the national parliament. In this context, it has to be mentioned that in 2008 the then Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a formal apology for the past wrongs caused by successive governments to the indigenous Aboriginal population. Another similarity, however, is the fact that both States have been among the pioneers granting women the right to vote and the right to stand to be elected as members of parliament.

The EU maintains deep Relationships with both countries sharing similar values and cultures with Europe. Relations with Australia are governed through the 2008 EU-Australia Partnership Framework and the EU-New Zealand Joint Declaration on Relations and Cooperation was adopted in 2007. Both partnerships envisage regular consultations of ministers and, in addition to economic cooperation, include close dialogues on other sectors of mutual interest, such as multilateralism, world trade, security issues, climate change, promotion of human rights and the protection of biodiversity.

The EU and Australia opened negotiations on a treaty-level Framework Agreement on 31 October 2011. Negotiations began in December 2011 and were successfully concluded with the initialling of the Agreement on 5 March 2015. The treaty is intended to provide a strong basis for further developing cooperation on foreign and security policy, sustainable development, aid delivery, economic and trade matters, justice, research and innovation, education and global challenges including climate change, migration and public health.

A milestone towards closer economic and partnership cooperation between the EU and Australia and New Zealand was reached in 2016. The Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by EPP Group in the Committee on International Trade (INTA) that recommended the opening of FTA negotiations with Australia and New Zealand on 25 February 2016.

The Parliament called on the EU, Australia and New Zealand to engage in plurilateral negotiations to liberalise trade in green goods (Environmental Goods Agreement) and trade in services (TISA) further. Following the EP resolution, the Council decided to publish the mandates given to the EC to negotiate trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand (the so- called negotiating directives). The European Commission officially launched the trade negotiations with Australia and New Zealand on 18 and 21 June 2018, respectively.



Trade agreements with both countries would aim primarily at further reducing existing barriers to trade, removing custom duties on goods and giving better access for services and public procurement in Australia and New Zealand. The sectors likely to benefit the most from the FTAs are motor equipment, machinery, chemicals, processed foods and services. The negotiating directives are particularly concerned to protect vulnerable sectors, such as agriculture, by maximising the benefits of market opening without harming local producers. The mandates do not envisage full liberalisation of trade in agricultural products, which are foreseen as benefiting from specific treatment. The mandates also provide for a comprehensive and modern framework, based on the highest standards of labour, safety, environment, climate and consumer protection.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/danz/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

Australia: During the past legislature, three Interparliamentary Meetings (IPMs) between the EU and Australia took place, alternatively in Australia and Strasbourg. The 39th EU-Australia IPM took place in October 2018 in Sydney and Brisbane. The Rapporteur of the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) and the Rapporteur for the envisaged bilateral Free Trade Agreement from INTA joined seven MEPs from the Delegation for Relations with Australia and New Zealand. While discussions in Sydney focused on the bilateral political and commercial Relationship, meetings in Brisbane dealt with agricultural issues, climate change and the conditions of Australia’s indigenous people.

The 38th EU-Australia IPM took place on 4 to 5 October 2017 in Strasbourg. The topics of discussion included trade Relations, the fight against climate change and terrorism, data protection and Brexit.

The 37th EU-Australia IPM was held on 9 to 11 February 2016 in Canberra and Perth. The topics of discussion included economic and trade Relations, counter-terrorism, migration, Australia in the regional context and climate change. Furthermore, many internal meetings of the Australian Delegation took place in the EP, with the involvement of proactive EPP Group Members encouraging the opening of the trade negotiations and afterwards to foster and monitor progress of the ongoing free trade agreement talks.

New Zealand: During the past legislature, two Interparliamentary Meetings (IPMs) between the EU and New Zealand took place, both in Brussels and in New Zealand.

The 21st EU-New Zealand IPM meeting was held on 23 March 2017 in Brussels. The topics of discussion included data protection, counter-terrorism and migration, environmental policies in the EU and New Zealand, the economic situation and ongoing trade discussions.

The 20th EU-New Zealand IPM took place on 17 to 19 March 2015 in Wellington and Auckland. The topics of discussion included bilateral political Relations with a focus on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, bilateral economic Relations and prospects for the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and New Zealand, the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, cooperation in the Southern Pacific and the fight against terrorism. Furthermore, many internal meetings of the New Zealand Delegation in the EP took place, with the involvement of proactive EPP Group Members encouraging the opening of the trade negotiation and afterwards to foster and monitor progress of the ongoing free trade agreement talks.

EPP Group Position

In view of a proactive EPP Group strategy for the Pacific area (e.g. ASEAN countries), the EPP Group welcomes the recent start of negotiations and calls for comprehensive and balanced free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand to be swiftly finalised to promote a better access for European companies and the elimination of non-tariff barriers.

The EPP Group is eager to foster global partnerships with countries that share our convictions in matters of fundamental values, such as democracy, the rule of law and the universal respect for human rights. Thus, the EPP Group naturally sees Australia and New Zealand as core partners for jointly tackling the challenges of the globalised world.

The EPP Group, furthermore, is cooperating with a number of universities in Australia and New Zealand.

In the light of the increased trends towards regional integration in Oceania and in the Pacific area, in particular with China, the EPP Group is eager to ensure that the cooperation with Europe does not fall behind these newly established regional partnerships. Both Australia and New Zealand benefit from a very strategic geographical Position, which makes them key players in the security landscape.

The CPTPP as agreed between 11 countries ensures that the substantial market-access package secured in the original TPP is maintained (i.e. covering goods and services market openings and commitments on regulations on foreign investment) in the Pacific and Oceania region. Therefore, the successful conclusion of the FTA negotiation with both countries Australia and New Zealand remains a key priority for the EPP Group as adopted and highlighted in the EPP Group Position Paper on International Trade - EU Trade Policy in a Global Context.

DELEGATION TO THE EU-KAZAKHSTAN, EU-KYRGYZSTAN, EU-UZBEKISTAN AND EU-TAJIKISTAN PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEES (PCC), AND FOR RELATIONS WITH TURKMENISTAN AND MONGOLIA (D-CAS)

EPP Group Adviser: Gabriela Virostkova



KAZAKHSTAN (PCC)



Political system: In December 1991, the Republic of Kazakhstan became the last of the former Soviet republics to declare its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The parliament approved amendments to the 1995 constitution in 2007, aimed at redistributing the balance of power away from the presidency in favour of the legislature. The President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, was first elected in December 1991 (term extended following referendum in 1995). Re-elected in January 1999, December 2005, April 2011 and April 2015. As of March 2019, incumbent President is Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Population: 18m.

GDP per capita: \$ 26,300.

Ethnic groups: Kazakh (Qazaq) 63.1%, Russian 23.7%, Uzbek 2.9%, Ukrainian 2.1%, Uighur 1.4%, Tatar 1.3%, German 1.1%, other 4.4% (2009 est.).

Religions: Muslim 70.2%, Christian 26.2% (mainly Russian Orthodox), other 0.2%, atheist 2.8%, unspecified 0.5%.

KYRGYZSTAN (PCC)



Political system: The Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic declared its independence in August 1991 and changed its name to the Kyrgyz Republic. A referendum in December 2016 approved constitutional amendments that shifted significant powers from the Presidency to the Parliament and Prime Minister. Head of State - Mr Soornbai Zheenbekov.

Population: 5.8m.

GDP per capita: \$ 3,700.

Religions: Muslim 75%, Russian Orthodox 20%.

TAJIKISTAN (PCC)



Political system: On 31 August 1991 the Soviet Socialist Republic of Tajikistan was renamed the Republic of Tajikistan. Constitutional amendments were passed in May 2016 by popular referendum; these allow Imomali Rahmon to rule indefinitely, make him and his family immune from prosecution and lower the eligibility age for the Presidency from 35 to 30. The president, Imomali Rahmon (formerly Rahmonov), was first elected on 5 November 1994 and was re-elected for a fourth term on 6 November 2013.

Population: 8.6m.

GDP per capita: \$3,200.

Religions: Muslim 96.7%, Christian 1.6%, unaffiliated 1.5%, other .2%.

TURKMENISTAN (IPM)



Political system: Turkmenistan became a constituent republic of the Soviet Union in 1924 and independent in December 1991; a new constitution came into effect in May 1992. The president is Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov.

Population: 5.4m

GDP per capita: \$18,200

Religions: Muslim 89%, Eastern Orthodox 9%

UZBEKISTAN (PCC)



Political system: The Soviet republic of Uzbekistan declared its independence on 1 September 1991, after the failure of the Moscow coup. A new constitution was adopted on 8 December 1992, declaring Uzbekistan a multiparty democracy and a presidential republic. Shavkat Mirziyoyev won a tightly-controlled presidential election in December 2016, formally confirming his takeover as the country's leader following the death of Islam Karimov in September 2016.

Population: 30m.

GDP per capita: \$6,900.

Religions: Muslim 88%, Eastern Orthodox 9%.

MONGOLIA (IPM)



Political system: Republic. The president, Khaltmaagiin Battulga, of the Democratic Party (DP). The last parliamentary and presidential elections were held in June 2016 and June - July 2017, respectively. The next elections are due in June 2020 (parliamentary) and June 2021 (presidential).

Population: 3m.

GDP per capita: \$13,000.

Religions: Buddhist Lamaist 53%, Shamanist and Christian 5.1%, Muslim 3%.

Background and Relations with the EU

Central Asia, located at the centre of the Eurasian continent and straddling the borders of some of the world's most pressing hot spots, offers economic opportunities and natural resources but also remains insecure and a source of tension. For the European Union, the region has gradually become of a higher importance due to the increasing presence of other international players' strategic projects.

On 15 May 2019, a new EU strategy for the region was adopted in order to take account of recent developments in the region. Since 2016, Uzbekistan's more conciliatory foreign policy and domestic reforms have opened the door to more regional cooperation on shared challenges. A second major factor is China's growing influence in Central Asia and the need to respond to its Belt and Road Initiative. The new strategy is likely to build on the EU document "Connecting Europe and Asia", emphasising a transparently-managed, sustainable connectivity. Afghanistan is likely to feature much more prominently in the 2019 version.

Over the last eight years, the EU has successfully established several institutionalised mechanisms for strengthening Relations and working with Central Asian governments, including an increased presence on the ground. At the regional level, the EU also holds annual meetings between the High Representative and the five Central Asia foreign ministers. In 2005, the EU also appointed its first Special Representative to Central Asia; a post currently held by Slovak diplomat, Peter Burian.

Soon after the 1991 break-up of the Soviet Union, the EU began negotiating partnership and cooperation agreements (PCAs) with the newly independent countries. These have since come into force with all Central Asian countries except Turkmenistan. In March 2019, the EP adopted the interim report on the PCA with Turkmenistan. It has also approved the Enhanced PCA (EPCA) with Kazakhstan in December 2017, the EPCA with Kyrgyzstan in January 2019 and the recommendation to the Council on the EPCA with Uzbekistan in March 2019. The agreements envisage wide-ranging cooperation in areas, such as trade, investment, energy, transport, environmental matters, education, foreign policy, democracy and human rights.

In real terms, the volume of trade is stagnating (16% for 2007 to 2017, far behind the 39% increase achieved by EU trade with the rest of the world during the same period). Despite that, the EU remains Central Asia's biggest economic partner; EU trade and investment is concentrated overwhelmingly in Kazakhstan, in country's oil sector. China's trade with the region has grown tenfold since 2000. Beijing is the main trading partner of Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan but, at regional level, it comes a distant second to the EU, with 20% of foreign trade, followed by Russia in third place (slightly under 20%).

The authorities have dealt with the threat of radicalisation by clamping down on religious freedoms. Abroad, over 4,000 Central Asians are believed to have fought alongside ISIS/Daesh in Iraq and Syria, and others have carried out lethal attacks in New York, Stockholm and St Petersburg. External threats to Central Asian security come mainly from Afghanistan. The EU has human rights dialogues with each of the five countries, with annual meetings at which human rights concerns are discussed. Although the human rights situation remains very difficult, the EU has helped to bring about several positive changes. For example, the Rule of Law Initiative supported Kazakhstan's efforts to bring its criminal justice system in line with international standards. Central Asian countries now regularly submit draft legislation for review to the Venice Commission. Finally, EU pressure played a big role in persuading Uzbekistan to end the use of child and forced adult labour in its cotton harvest. The EU aid for Central Asia has increased over the years. For 2014-2020, Development CooperationInstrument grant funding is €1.1 billion, 62% up from the previous programming period.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dcas/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

Kazakhstan: The 16th EU-Kazakhstan IPM took place on 31 January 2019 in Brussels. The discussions covered all issues from economic reforms, corruption, environmental issues and infrastructural projects to human rights.

Kyrgyzstan: The 13th EU-Kyrgyz Parliamentary CooperationCommittee meeting was held in Brussels on 3 May 2018. The discussions included the political situation in Kyrgyzstan and overall bilateral Relations with the EP, as well as the developments in the regional policy of Central Asia and the role of Kyrgyzstan. The EU, the economic situation and progress in the economic reforms and their implementation and investment climate in Kyrgyzstan, human rights and rule of law and social policies in Kyrgyzstan were also debated. The 12th EU-Kyrgyz PCC meeting took place in February 2017 in Bishkek.

Tajikistan: Two PCC meetings took place with Tajikistan during the past legislature, alternatively in Brussels and Dushanbe. The Sixth EU-Tajikistan PCC meeting took place on 2 and 3 November 2017 in Dushanbe. Discussions included political situations in Tajikistan and the EU, and the progress in bilateral Relations with the EP, the economic and social situation, human rights and rule of law in Tajikistan. The Fifth EU-Tajikistan PCC was held on 1 December 2016 in Brussels. Some of the topics discussed during the PCC included the political situation in the EU and Tajikistan, the fight against terrorism, extremism and the impact of the situation in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria on Tajikistan and the EU, recent developments in the Central Asia region and the impact on Tajikistan, and assessment of the implementation of the EU-Tajikistan Multiannual Indicative Program 2014-2020.

Turkmenistan: During the past legislature, only one Interparliamentary Meeting took place, namely the Fourth IPM in April 2017 in Ashgabat. There were particularly intense discussions about the human rights situation in Turkmenistan, the need to strengthen cooperationin the fight against terrorism and radicalism, and the positive role played by Turkmenistan in the region, the emphasis on the relaunching of regional cooperationon infrastructure projects, migration and environmental policies, and the priority to be given to the rapid completion of alternative and efficient routes for easing European access to Turkmen gas. The EU's Liaison Office in Ashgabat will become a fully-fledged delegation, planned for mid-2019.

Uzbekistan: During the past legislature, two PCCs took place with Uzbek parliamentarians, alternatively in Tashkent and Brussels. The 13th EU-Uzbekistan PCC meeting took place on 30 November 2017 in Brussels. There were particularly intense discussions about the political situation in Uzbekistan, the development in the regional policy of Central Asia and the role of Uzbekistan and the European Union, with a particular focus on security and the fight against terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, and environmental policy and water resources management. The exchanges on experience in the field of agriculture and rural development, human rights, rule of law and social policies in Uzbekistan, were also the focus of discussion with emphasis on the strengthening of the role of the Parliament, empowerment of civil society and fundamental freedoms, the labour conditions in the cotton fields and the rights of people with disabilities. The 12th EU-Uzbekistan PCC meeting was held on 1 - 3 November 2016 in Tashkent. Discussions during the PCC meeting related to regional security issues, the deepening of trade, economic and investment cooperationbetween Uzbekistan and the EU, and the state of EU-Uzbekistan development cooperation.

MAJOR INTERNATIONAL RAIL ROUTES IN CENTRAL ASIA, 2019

Major international rail routes in Central Asia, 2019



Central Asia is becoming increasingly important as a transit region for Europe-China traffic

Belt and Road Initiative corridors based on [OBOReurope](http://OBOReurope.eu).

Source: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637891/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)637891_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637891/EPRS_BRI(2019)637891_EN.pdf)

Mongolia: Three IPM meetings took place during the past legislature, namely the 10th EU-Mongolia IPM in February 2015 in Ulaanbaatar; and the 11th IPM on 7 December 2017 in Brussels, and the 12th EU-Mongolia IPM on 19 to 21 November 2018 in Ulaanbaatar. The discussions centred on the economic situation and challenges faced by Mongolian, the political situation in Mongolia and the European Union, security and other regional issues, and the state of EU-Mongolia cooperation: the prospects for the EU-Mongolia Partnership and CooperationAgreement, EU cooperation with Mongolia and future EU-Mongolia interparliamentary cooperation.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group pays particular attention to the Central Asia region, provided its growing geopolitical importance. We believe that more engagement, via for example the Enhanced Partnership CooperationAgreements (EPCA), is crucial to bring about necessary change in the region. There is still room for improvement, mainly in the field of human rights. The EPP Group was in lead when negotiating EPCAs with all Central Asian countries and actively contributed to all EP Activities in this field. When it comes to Relations with Turkmenistan, the most closed country out of all five Central Asian ones, the EP adopted the ad interim Partnership CooperationAgreement, subject to many human rights conditions. The Group believes that the real PCA with Turkmenistan should be implemented as soon as possible; otherwise, the situation will not change any time soon and will affect the whole region. Thanks to the EPP Group initiative, the EU Delegation in Ashgabat will be opened in 2019.

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA (D-SAS)



BANGLADESH



Population: 159m.
GDP: \$690.3 billion
GDP per capita: \$4,200.
Religions: Muslim 89.1%, Hindu 10%, other 0.9%.
EPP Group Adviser: Gemma Roig

BHUTAN



Population: 766,397.
GDP: \$7.2 billion
GDP per capita: \$9,000.
Religions: Lamaistic Buddhist 75.3%, Indian- and Nepalese-influenced Hinduism 22.1%, other 2.6%

MALDIVES



Population: 392,473.
GDP: \$6.9 billion
GDP per capita: \$19,200.
Religions: Sunni Muslim (official).

NEPAL



Population: 27m.
GDP: \$79 billion
GDP per capita: \$2,700.
Religions: Hindu 81.3%, Buddhist 9%, Muslim 4.4%, Kirant 3.1%, Christian 1.4%, other 0.5%, unspecified 0.2%

PAKISTAN



Population: 207m.
GDP: \$1.06 trillion.
GDP per capita: \$5,400.
Religions: Muslim (official) 96.4% (Sunni 85-90%, Shia 10-15%), other (includes Christian and Hindu) 3.6%.

SRI LANKA



Population: 22.5m.
GDP: \$275.8 billion
GDP per capita: \$12,900.
Religions: Buddhist (official), 70.2%, Hindu 12.6%, Muslim 9.7%, Roman Catholic 6.1%, other Christian 1.3%, other 0.05%.

Background and Relations with the EU

The countries in the South Asia delegation represent a diverse background, ranging from big and densely populated countries, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh to islands and mountainous countries, such as the Maldives or Nepal. Despite their different geographic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the issue of poverty reduction remains one common challenge for all countries. The situation is further complicated by natural disasters continuing to hit the region, such as the tsunamis of 2004 and 2006 which severely affected the Maldives and Sri Lanka, or, in particular, the 2010 flooding in Pakistan, which paralysed the nuclear power plants for weeks.

The EU's Relations with the six countries are based on different legal frameworks, which reflect diverse patterns of trade, investment, development cooperation, technical assistance and cultural links. The EU has "CooperationAgreements" with Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. While these do not all spell out a formal forum for interparliamentary exchanges, political dialogue is part of the agreement. The intensity of bilateral exchanges between the EU and the countries has generally varied depending on developments. Parliamentary diplomacy has become an important instrument in Relations with the countries of South Asia and MEPs have been keen to enhance the EU's engagement when political, human rights and economic developments have required their efforts.

The EU actively supports the development process in all six countries. Most EU programmes focus on poverty reduction, the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals, education, rural development and the promotion of good governance. The detailed EU engagement is laid out in the EU's Country Strategy Papers for each of the six countries. Sri Lanka in 1995, Bangladesh in 2001 and Pakistan in 2004 have concluded CooperationAgreements with the EU. Next to development aid, the EU has been a supporter of democratic transition in both Bhutan and Nepal.

The EU works closely with Bangladesh within the framework of the EU-Bangladesh CooperationAgreement, concluded in 2001. This agreement provides broad scope for cooperation, extending to trade and economic development, human rights, good governance and the environment. The EU is Bangladesh's main trading partner, accounting for around 24% of Bangladesh's total trade in 2015. In 2015, Bangladesh was the EU's 35th largest trading partner in goods.

The EU is Pakistan's most important trading partner, accounting for 12.8% of Pakistan's total trade in 2015 and absorbing 23.7% of Pakistan's total exports. In 2016, Pakistan was the EU's 41th largest trading partner in goods accounting for 0.3% of EU trade. From 2006 to 2016, EU28 imports from Pakistan have almost doubled from €3,319 to €6,273 million. The growth of imports from Pakistan has been particularly fast since being granted the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) (€5,515 million in 2014).

The EU is Sri Lanka's second-largest trading partner after India but its main export destination, absorbing 31% of Sri Lankan exports in 2015. In 2016, Sri Lanka was the EU's 62nd largest trading partner in goods accounting for 0.1% of EU trade. Sri Lanka's exports to the EU are dominated by textiles and clothing, accounting for 82% of Sri Lanka's total exports to the EU in 2016. Textiles and clothing are followed by food products representing 12.3% of export in 2016. EU28 imports from Sri Lanka have been relatively stable between 2007 and 2016, increasing only from €2,087 to €2,225 million.

The EU Bhutan Relations date back to the 1980s. The EU-Bhutan Multi-Indicative Plan (MIP) for 2014 to 2020 totals €42 million – triple the sum for the previous period. Its main objective is to strengthen Bhutan's democracy. The MIP also supports sustainable agriculture and forestry: the country has limited land available for agriculture and therefore faces food security issues that make it dependent on food imports from India. The EU is providing €4 million for the three-year EU-Bhutan Trade Support Project signed in May 2018 aimed at diversifying the country's exports. Additional support has been provided to combat climate change. Including the new planned trade project for €4 million, the total support for Bhutan's development efforts stands at €48 million. At the regional level, Bhutan also benefits from projects in many areas, such as disaster risk management, climate change and sustainable consumption.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dsas/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

The EP created a separate Delegation for Relations with the countries of South Asia (DSAS) in 2007. Since then, the Delegation has developed Relations with its six partner countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka - according to each country's specificities.

The DSAS Delegation also works with the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation(SAARC), the intergovernmental organisation that brings together the Delegation's six partner countries, as well as India and Afghanistan. In order to foster cooperation in 1985, together with India, the six countries founded the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation(SAARC), with Afghanistan becoming a full member in 2007. Since the Fourteenth SAARC Summit in New Delhi in 2007, observers have been invited to participate in the inaugural and closing Sessions of SAARC Summits.

Bangladesh: Two EU-Bangladesh IPMs have taken place during the last legislative period in February 2016 and February 2018. The Sixth EU-Bangladesh IPM took place on 10 - 12 February 2016 in Dhaka, after the IPM held in the Maldives. The delegation addressed the topics of human rights and freedom of expression, independence of the judiciary and corruption in both countries. The EP's Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South Asia paid an official visit to Bangladesh on 12 - 14 February 2018. The objective of this mission was threefold. Firstly, to meet in the capital Dhaka with interlocutors in the parliament of Bangladesh, on the occasion of the Seventh EU-Bangladesh IPM, and with representatives of the government and civil society. Secondly, to visit the refugee camps in the area of Cox's Bazar and get first-hand information on the conditions faced by the Rohingya people that have had to flee from Myanmar. Thirdly, to express support for the Government of Bangladesh and international agencies in the management of the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Bhutan: Bhutan adopted its first constitution and held its first elections in 2008, making it one of the youngest democracies in the world. The EP Delegation participated in the sixth interparliamentary dialogue with the National Assembly of Bhutan on 24 May 2017. This visit aimed to deepen the knowledge of the country, including political and social developments, assess and exchange views on cooperation between Bhutan and the EU, and the impact of EU support to Bhutan, with a view to strengthening the EU-Bhutan Partnership. Democratisation, climate change and human rights were also part of the discussions. The most recent elections took place on April 2018. DNT party leader, Lotay Tshering, became Prime Minister in November 2018.

Maldives: The Fifth EU-Maldives IPM took place on 8 - 9 February 2016 in Male. The visit was very timely, as the islands have in recent years started moving back towards a more authoritarian regime, as seen notably in 2015 with a six-day-long state of emergency and the arrest of several prominent political opposition leaders, as well as members of the government, e.g. two vice-presidents. This is all the more regrettable as the Maldives are still a relatively new democracy, which started only in 2008 to hold democratic elections. The Delegation enquired about the quality and the transparency of the judiciary. One main focus of the talks was on the EP resolution from December 2015 and March 2018 putting forward the possibility of targeted sanctions if the situation did not improve. High on the agenda was also the call for free and fair elections in 2018.

Delegation members raised their concerns about the increasingly shrinking space for political dialogue in the Maldives. With all main opposition leaders in prison or in exile, there is a general climate of fear within the Maldivian society. The delegation sought to promote a genuine interparty dialogue in order to move towards greater democracy and included an offer - if necessary - of third party help, either from the EU, the Commonwealth or the UN.

Nepal: The Ninth EU-Nepal IPM took place on 8 - 10 April 2015 in Kathmandu. During the mission, the talks gravitated mainly around the political stalemate witnessed in the country. After the first Assembly had failed to deliver on the Constitution, the second Constituent Assembly faced the same hurdles and this had an impact on the transitional process of democratisation of Nepal. Nepali society, however, wanted to move on and was becoming increasingly critical of the lack of agreement between the political leaders, which was seen as exacting a toll on the development of the whole country. Violations in issues, such as caste discrimination, minorities' rights, rape or bonded labour were openly discussed and addressed in a cross-cutting approach. Most human rights defenders agreed that there was, in general, good cooperation during the past years, leading to a broadly satisfactory legal framework (however still lacking in effective and full application).

Pakistan: The 11th EU-Pakistan IPM took place in Islamabad on 29 - 30 October 2018. MEPs met with the new Parliament and the new Government, following the elections of 25 July 2018, and held meetings with civil society. Subsequently, MEPs paid a visit to Karachi, during which they had meetings with the Sindh Authorities, NGOs and business community representatives. The 10th EP-Pakistan IPM was held on 16 - 20 February 2015 in Islamabad and Lahore. Discussions were focused on human rights, the death penalty, the democratic process in Pakistan, and the situation in the FATAS (Federally Administrated Tribal Areas).

Sri Lanka: The eighth EP-Sri Lanka IPM took place on 31 October to 3 November 2016 in Colombo. Since January 2015 and the defeat of former President Rajapaksa, a number of positive developments have taken place and been undertaken by the government. The 19th Amendment (19A) to the Constitution of Sri Lanka was passed on 28 April 2015. The amendment was a result of promise made by President Maithripala Sirisena leading up to the 2015 Presidential Election. The main impact of the amendment was to repeal the 18th Amendment which gave the President extreme powers and thereby reinforced democracy in the country. On the economic side, the EU granted Sri Lanka better access to the EU for its exports on 19 May 2017. It did so under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+). Being able to export more to the EU will help Sri Lanka's economy develop and create more and better jobs for its people. In a long-term perspective, the ambition is to transform Sri Lanka into the gateway to the South Asian market, similar to Singapore today.

EPP Group Position

The EU Relations with these countries, while still developing, are based on different legal grounds, reflecting diverse patterns of intensity in commercial exchanges, investment flows, development cooperation, technical assistance or cultural links. The EPP Group has focused on respect for democracy and the human rights, and also in the fight against the climate change in the region.

The EPP Group is interested in further deepening and consolidating its Relations with the countries in South Asia. As such, the EPP Group is supportive of the EU's engagement in the area and will continue to strive for an improved partnership with each of the countries, as well as through the regional organisation of SAARC. Due to its geostrategic location between China to the East and Iran to the West, the region serves as an important bridge between two strategic centres, namely the Middle East and Eastern Asia. Thus, its development is directly linked to a variety of converging interests, which again explains the particularity of the region and is another reason for the EPP Group to stay actively involved.



VIII. AFRICA

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT (D-PAP)



Population: 1.2 billion (about 17% of the world's population).
GDP: \$6.36 trillion.
Religions: 45% Muslim, 40% Christian, 15% traditional African religions.
EPP Group Adviser: B. Oppermann

Background and Relations with the EU

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is the legislative body of the African Union (AU). Its inaugural session took place in 2004 and was held in Midrand (South Africa), where the PAP has its seat. In September 2009, the EP opted to create a permanent interparliamentary delegation for Relations with the PAP to strengthen parliamentary ties.

The Plenary is the main decision-making body of the PAP and consists of the delegates from the 55 AU Member States. The PAP is presided by Roger Nkodo DANG since 2015. The PAP has 235 representatives that are elected or designated by their respective National Parliaments, rather than being directly elected in their own capacity. Each Member State sends a delegation of five parliamentarians to the Parliament. In addition to the condition on women's representation, the membership of each Member State must reflect the diversity of political opinions in the respective Member State.

In 2007, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) was adopted at the Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon. It provides the overarching framework for Africa-EU Relations. The JAES is implemented through jointly identified priorities, which are based on common interests. Within each area of cooperation, the focus is on actions at the global, continental or cross-regional levels. The JAES strives to bring Africa and Europe closer together through the strengthening of economic cooperation and the promotion of sustainable development, with both continents living side by side in peace, security, democracy, prosperity, solidarity and human dignity. Ten years after the adoption of the JAES, the Fifth Africa-EU Summit was held in Abidjan in 2017 under the motto "Investing in youth for a sustainable future". A joint declaration was adopted outlining priorities for the future partnership, namely Investing in People – education, science, technology and skills development, Strengthening Resilience, Peace, Security and Governance, Migration and mobility, as well as Mobilising Investments for African structural and sustainable transformation.

In his 2018 State of the Union speech, President Jean-Claude Juncker announced a proposal for a new 'Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs', which includes an External Investment Plan of up to €44 billion. The alliance will reinforce the Africa-EU partnership further through key actions, such as boosting strategic investment, investing in people and strengthening the business environment and investment climate. In addition, over the coming years, the EU will focus on the negotiations and implementation of the post-2020 Cotonou agreement, the framework for EU-ACP Relations. Given that the large majority of ACP countries are on the African continent, this should lead to an increased focus on AU-EU Relations. The goal is to develop a true continent-to-continent Relationship of equals.

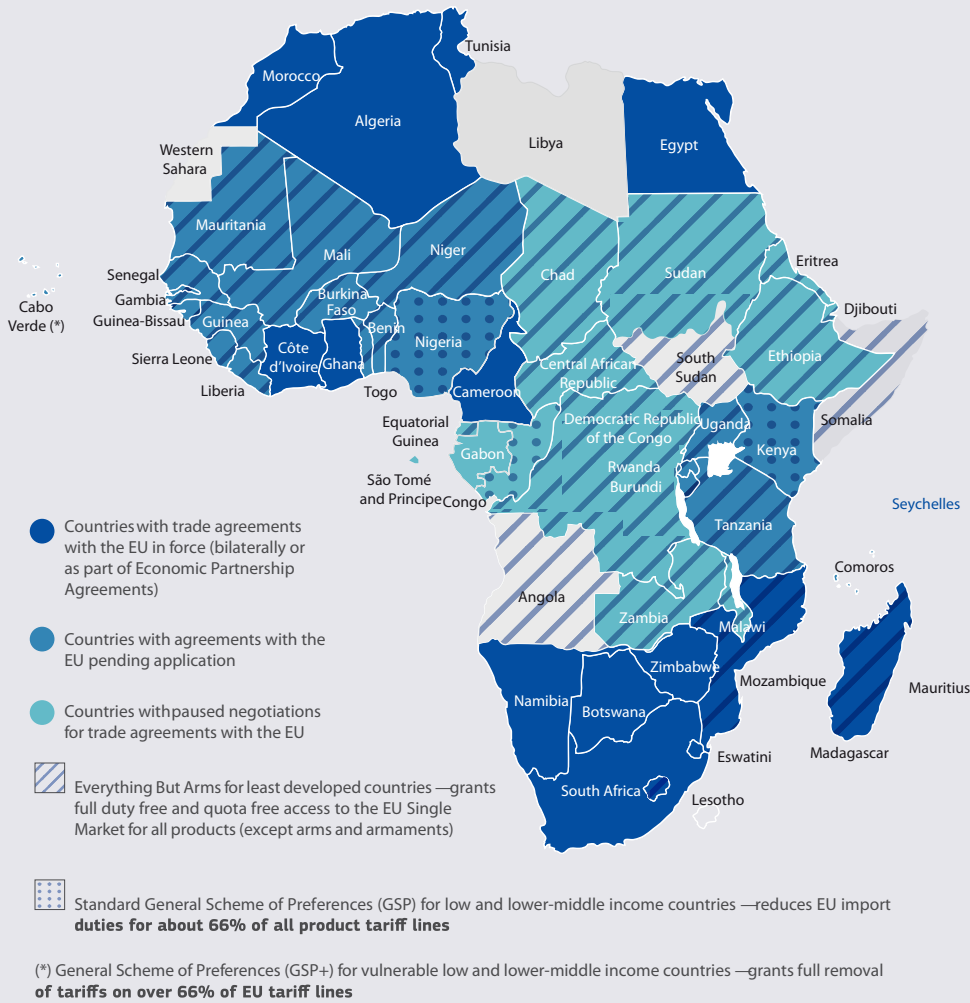
In 2019, EU-Africa trade amounts to €248 billion, accounting for 36% of all African trade. The EU, with €291 billion (40% of the total), is the largest source of both foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development aid (ODA) with €22.66 billion (55%). Currently, 52 African countries benefit from a trade agreement, an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) or a trade arrangement (Everything But Arms, Standard Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and GSP+). To advance intercontinental trade, the EU supports the African Continental Free Trade Agreement of 44 AU Members, which entered into force on 30 May 2019. Once fully implemented the agreement aims to provide opportunities for the African continent and its young and expanding population to enable further economic growth and development.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dpap/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

The last EP-PAP meeting took place in Midrand in the context of the PAP’s regular session in May 2018. Furthermore, an ad hoc delegation met in Abidjan in 2017 prior to the EU-AU Summit. Here, Members of the EP and PAP passed a joint resolution entitled the “Abidjan Appeal”. Among other issues, it focuses on youth, the empowerment of women, migration, peace and security, trade, climate, democracy and human rights. Furthermore, ad hoc meetings and training sessions for PAP staffers were organised.

Trade agreements, arrangements and schemes in place between Africa and the EU

Currently, 52 African countries benefit from a trade agreement, an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) or a trade arrangement (Everything But Arms and the two Generalised Scheme of Preferences, Standard GSP and GSP+) with the EU to grant privileged access to its market. These countries pay fewer or no duties on exports to the EU, giving them vital access to the EU market and contributing to their growth.



Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/factsheet-africaeuropeallianceprogress-18122018_en.pdf

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group is interested in a strong partnership with the African Union. We support efforts to institutionalise intra-African cooperation and see the AU as our natural partner. Given our firm belief in parliamentary democracy, we see the PAP as our interlocutor when discussing joint challenges, such as the management of natural resources, trade and economy, migration, security and questions related to good governance, democracy and human rights. We aim to further intensify this dialogue during the 2019-2024 EP term.

DELEGATION FOR THE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA (D-ZA)



Strategic partner

Population: 55,380,210 (July 2018 est.).
Size: 1,219,090sq km.
GDP: \$767.2 billion (2017 est.), **GDP per capita:** \$13,600 (2017 est.).
Ethnic groups: black African 80.9%, coloured 8.8%, white 7.8%, Indian/Asian 2.5% (2018 est.) note: coloured is a term used in South Africa and in the national census, for persons of mixed-race ancestry.
Religions: Christian 86%, ancestral, tribal, animist, or other traditional African religions 5.4%, Muslim 1.9%, other 1.5%, nothing in particular 5.2% (2015 est.).
EPP Group Adviser: Catarina Caldeira da Silva

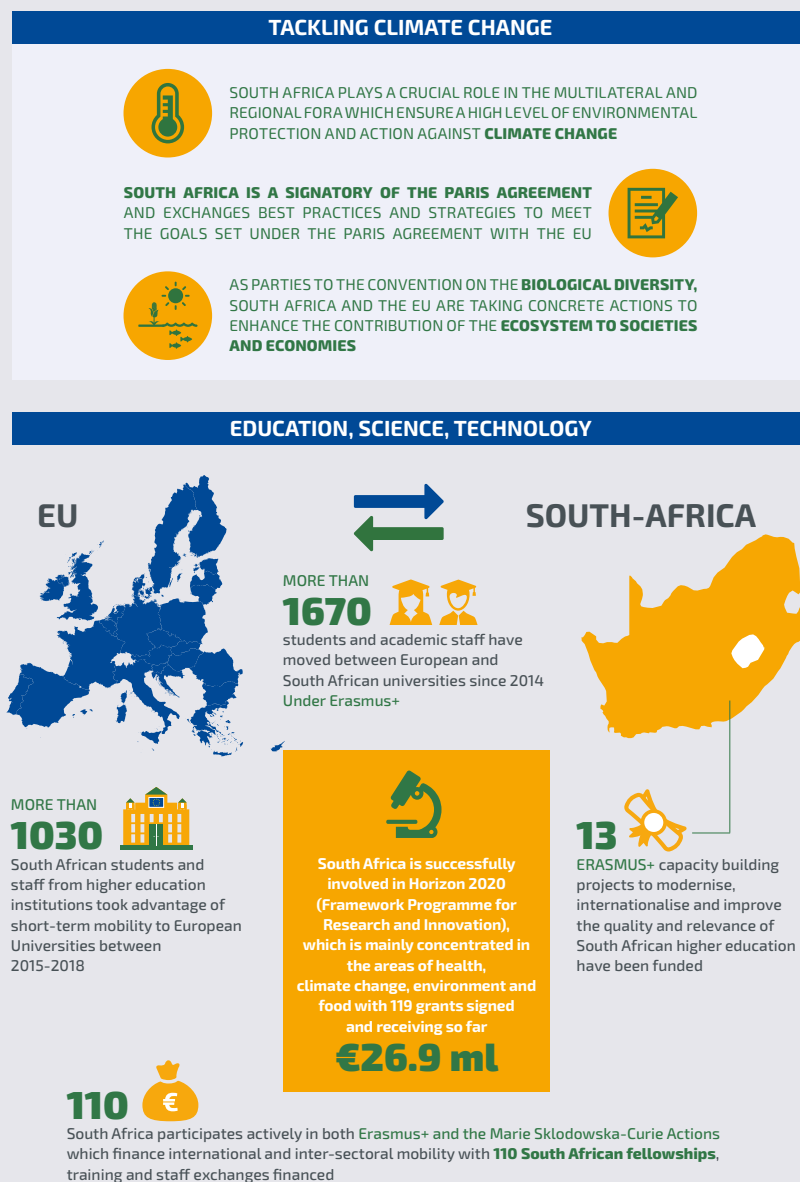
Background and Relations with the EU

South Africa is the biggest African economy and is one of the most developed countries on the continent. As a key regional power, the Rainbow Nation is influential in a number of areas, such as conflict mediation and trade negotiations, but also through its significant direct investments in other African countries. Until the election of Nelson Mandela as president in 1994, the country was held back for decades by the apartheid regime.

From April 2009 until February 2018, President Jacob Zuma has governed a tripartite alliance. However, within this alliance, his African National Congress (ANC), as the almost monopolistic force in South Africa’s political life, is facing more and more tensions with its two other partners. Although in the 2014 general election, ANC remained victorious, the party suffered a decline in support, partly due to growing dissatisfaction with Zuma as president. In December 2017, Jacob Zuma was replaced by Cyril Ramaphosa as a new President of the ANC. Soon after Zuma faced growing pressure to resign as President of South Africa, culminating in the ANC “recalling” him as President of South Africa. Facing a motion of no confidence in parliament, Zuma announced his resignation on 14 February 2018 and was succeeded by Ramaphosa the next day.

South Africa continues to be one of the EU’s 10 strategic partners. In recent years, the EU and South Africa have deepened cooperation through twenty policy dialogues in areas, such as climate change, natural resources, science and technology, research and innovation, employment, education and training, including digital skills, health, energy, macro-economic policies, human rights and peace and security. In November 2018, Brussels hosted the EU-South Africa Summit, in the communiqué of which both partners recommitted themselves “together to support multilateralism, democracy and the rules-based global order, in particular at the United Nations and global trade fora, to jointly promote development, security and human rights for all”. This was important given the South Africa’s upcoming term in 2019/2020 as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council.

South Africa remains the only African member of G20 with the ambition of asserting itself as a key player representing African interests in the international fora, especially regarding the reform of global governance. Since 2011, South Africa has been included in the so-called BRICS Group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). South Africa hosted Fifth and Tenth BRICS Summit in Pretoria (March 2013) and Johannesburg (July 2018) respectively.



Source: https://ceas.europa.eu/sites/ceas/files/eu-south_africa_factsheet.pdf

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-za/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

Over the course of the eighth legislature, Members of the D-ZA engaged in five Interparliamentary Meetings (IPM) with Members of the South African Parliament. They were held in a spirit of constructive dialogue, fostering understanding and promoting joint action.

- 22nd EU-South Africa IPM meeting, 22-24 July 2015, Johannesburg-Pretoria-Cape Town
- 23rd EU-South Africa IPM meeting, 13-14 April 2016, Strasbourg
- 24th EU-South Africa IPM meeting, 19-20 April 2017, Cape Town
- 25th EU-South Africa IPM meeting, 18-19 April 2018, Strasbourg
- Jointly with INTA Delegation: 26th EU-SA IPM meeting, 31 October-1 November 2018, Cape Town.

The agendas covered matters related to the following:

Trade Opportunities. South Africa highlighted the critical relevance of trade for the country's development, peace and stability. Both sides agreed that trade irritants should be resolved and the focus on the potential of a comprehensive and ambitious trade agenda.

Education. This is a policy area where EU assistance is of the highest importance. This includes supporting initiatives that tend to develop

the right skills for people (education as a means to access the job market), as well as programs that target illiteracy (fight poverty), student exchange (Erasmus Mundi), teacher training (uphold teaching quality), special needs schooling; high levels of school dropouts at an early age, gender balance and basic infrastructure.

Regional Integration. The legacy of infrastructure in Africa (colonial/apartheid) does not align with a functional regional integration goal. The continent's infrastructure reflects a well-crafted fracture. This impediment needs to be overcome through the design of a smart infrastructure grid that will foster the free flow of people, skills, business, goods and services.

R & D and Innovation. The EU has been a formidable partner and South Africa hopes that the new Horizon Europe program will sustain and amplify this effort and collaboration. South Africa is seeking partnerships in a series of areas including space industry, raw materials and technology. New financial instruments and facilities need to be explored with the view of facilitating access to EU funding.

Land Reform. The dialogue focussed upon the process not the next steps or political argument. The President is leading the reform process within the Constitutional Review, ensuring that the process is transparent, inclusive, responsible and accountable and will not disrupt farming and food security.

Other issues explored were **peace, stability** and the potential to promote **social cohesion, internal market and infrastructure, migration, climate change and water management**.

During the 26th IPM, the opportunity for collaboration at the UN Security Council from 2019 on, when SA becomes a non-permanent member, attracted great attention and consideration, as well as the reform of the global institutions from a perspective of preserving and reinforcing the global order, which the SA considers of paramount importance and recognises is under fierce attack.

All South African interlocutors, both in Parliament (MPs and Speaker) and Government (Deputy Minister for Foreign Relations and Deputy Finance Minister) underlined the **historical importance of the SA-EU Relationship during the transition period from apartheid to a free and democratic SA** and reiterated at length their recognition for that “old friendship.” They also conveyed clearly that they hope and expect that our current partnership can develop and deepen in the very same spirit.

EPP Group Position (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-za/Activities/inter-parliamentary>)

South Africa is currently going through a period of major challenges that are felt on a variety of fronts: political, social and economic. The current domestic political situation is very much a reset of the trajectory of the country and the ANC as a party and governing actor. It is also a unique opportunity for the future of EU-South African Relations.

The election of Cyril Ramaphosa has enabled the start of a new narrative, a new vision and a new ambition for South Africa's democracy, economic development and diplomatic Relations. The President's agenda is an urgent one if the ANC is to uphold its core political goals, after the transition from apartheid to a democracy, thus delivering on the promises of a better future for all South Africans and the elimination of poverty and inequality. His priorities are the fight against corruption, the restoration of the institutions' prestige and independence, the establishment of sound economic governance, the reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality, resetting international Relations and attracting foreign investment. **The President needs the support and understanding of the Europeans as much as European investment through this journey.** Europe should support this effort for the sake of South Africa's stability and Europe's geostrategic goals.

Recent political debate has been dominated by the question of land reform - “expropriation without compensation” - that symbolises a broader demand for inclusive change and reconciliation. President Ramaphosa has defended land transfer as part of a broader agriculture reform programme, which must not hurt economic growth, agriculture production or food security. This reform would finally enable deprived communities to participate fully in the South African economy and secure jobs and income, thus reducing poverty, hunger and crime. The reform is an imperative as it is part of an unfinished reconciliation process. According to many, it is the only way to overcome the racial and socio-economic fracture and put the country on a new path.

President Ramaphosa also needs to rehabilitate the trust in institutions, particularly an effective judiciary (criminal justice), to deal with the corrupt legacy of State capture and widespread corrupt practices across the different levels of government.

South Africa has lost its unique regional prominence but remains undoubtedly the regional trade and financial locomotive. Following the 26th EU-SA IPM, President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the EP in Strasbourg in a formal sitting. EU-South Africa strategic Relations and cooperation, peace, sustainable development, economic prospects for Africa and migration were among other issues of his address. He said, “**Africa and the EU are all bound by the shared values of democracy and respect for human rights.**”

IX. MULTILATERAL ASSEMBLIES

DELEGATION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (PA-UfM)

EPP GROUP ADVISER: ALEXANDRA ENTRENA ROVERS

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), the UfM’s parliamentary wing, holds at least one plenary session a year and comprises 280 members, equally distributed between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. The northern members are representatives from the EU national parliaments and the EP, as well as from four non-EU Members.

Northern partners	EU	EU national parliaments (28)	81	140
		EP	49	
	Non-EU	Albania Bosnia-Herzegovina Monaco Montenegro	10	
Southern partners		Algeria Egypt Jordan Israel Lebanon Mauritania Morocco Palestine Syria - suspended Tunisia Turkey	140	

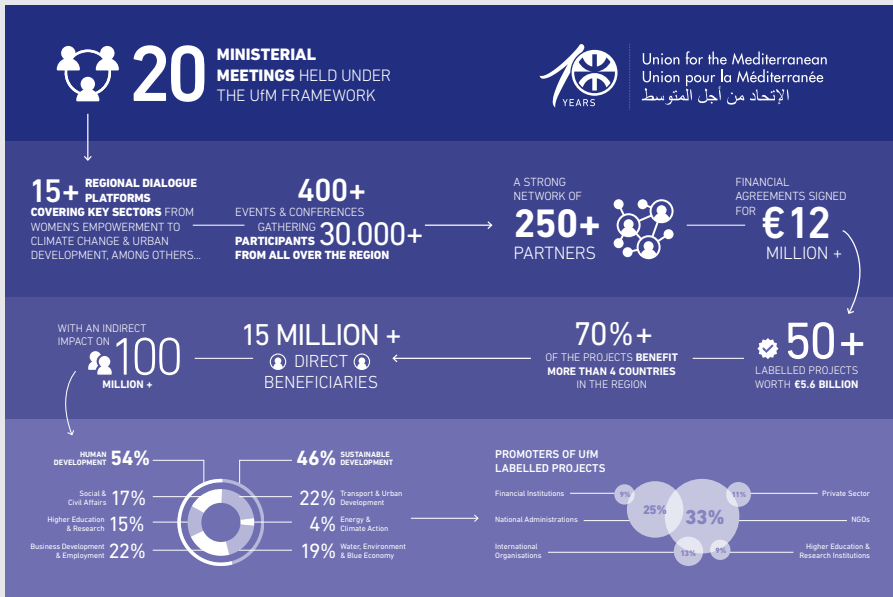
The PA-UfM is one of the few institutions where Israelis, Palestinians and other Arab elected representatives join to debate subjects of common interest. The Arab Interparliamentary Union, Libya, the EU Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee are among its permanent observers.

The annual PA-UfM Presidency is held in rotation by each of the four members of the Bureau, ensuring parity and alternation between south and north chairs. The work of the PA-UfM is coordinated by its Bureau, which also represents the PA-UfM, composed of four members designated for a four-year term: two appointed by the Southern Mediterranean partner countries, one appointed by the EU national parliaments and one appointed by the EP.

Five standing committees and two working groups work within the PA-UfM:

- Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights
- Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education;
- Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture;
- Committee on Women’s Rights in Euro-Mediterranean Countries;
- Committee on Energy, Environment and Water.
- Working Group on Financing of the Assembly and revision of the Rules of Procedure;
- Working Group on Palestine.

The PA-UfM adopts resolutions or recommendations – though these are not legally binding – by consensus on all aspects of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation that concern the executive organs of the UfM, the Council of the EU, the European Commission and the national governments of partner countries.



Source: https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/annual_report_2018.pdf

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dmed/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

During the eighth legislature of the EP, the Plenary sessions of the PA-UfM were dedicated to the following subjects:

- The challenges of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean (Strasbourg, 2019),
- Countering Terrorism in the Euro-Mediterranean Region (Cairo, 2018),
- Employment, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in the Euro-Mediterranean Region (Rome, 2017),
- Together for a Common Future of the Euro-Mediterranean” (Tangier, 2016),
- Immigration, asylum and human rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Region (Lisbon, 2015).

From 2014 to 2019, EP Delegation to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Parliamentary Assembly meetings focused on how to address the migration crisis in the Mediterranean through the cooperation between UfM Member States, on the one hand, as well as on the work and the reform of the PA-UfM, on the other hand. Other important topics discussed include security and terrorism, intercultural trends and social change in the Euro-Mediterranean region, but also presentations of the UfM-labelled projects (such as the desalination plant in Gaza or projects to promote youth employability in the Southern Mediterranean), exchanges of views about missions to the southern partner countries, among others.



Furthermore, these meetings offered the opportunity to meet with Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the European Commission, and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and co-President of the UfM, Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement negotiations and UfM’s Secretary General, Nasser Kamel. One of the main purposes of the EP’s Delegation to the PA-UfM is to prepare the PA-UfM plenary sessions, in order to ensure good representation, but also coordination and cooperation of the MPs of this Euro-Mediterranean assembly. In this sense, during the last five years, MEPs have discussed the EP’s Position in the PA-UfM Committees, Bureau and Working Group meetings and on the priorities and Activities of the EP’s PA-UfM Presidency (2018).

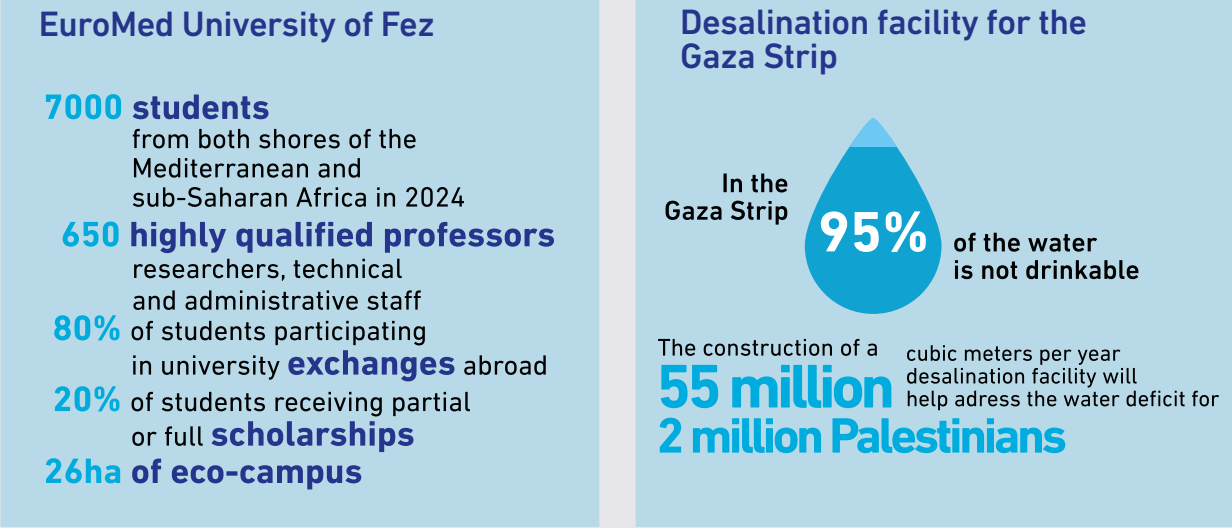
EPP Group Position

Our political family has been **at the forefront of action to revitalise the role of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean** as the Union’s parliamentary wing and to step up the role of its committees and working groups.

Our Group believes that new life should be breathed into Relations between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries, building on achievements, such as the PA-UfM, which brings together the 28 EU Member States and the Mediterranean countries, including all the parties involved in the Middle East peace process and all the countries which have been gripped by revolutions.

Moreover, the **EPP Group has lead an initiative to create in the 9th legislature a Plenary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean for the youth**, or an extension of the European Youth Event to the students of the Southern Mediterranean Countries as a result of its mission to the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez, in March 2019.

Key figures



Source: https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/The-UfM-since-the-adoption-of-the-Roadmap_EN.pdf

The EP Presidency of the PA-UfM from April 2018-February 2019 centred the work of the Committees and the Summit of Speakers on finding common Positions on the migration crisis and the status of refugees in the Mediterranean region. It was also during the EP Presidency that the a Permanent Secretariat, which has been requested for a long time by the EPP Group, was established in Rome (chosen unanimously by the Bureau from a shortlist of three Mediterranean cities: Istanbul, Marseille and Rome). This decision is supposed to reactivate the work of this Parliamentary Assembly by giving continuity to the yearly presidency and coordinating the different committees of the PA-UfM.

In the Lisbon, Tangier, Rome, Cairo and Strasbourg plenary sessions held in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively, EPP Group demonstrated its commitment to work with our Mediterranean partners participating actively in the different Plenary Sessions, Committees and Working Groups enabling the PA-UfM to raise its profile.

DELEGATION TO THE EURO-LATIN AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (D-LAT)



Population: 1.1 billion (estimate).

Size: 25,400,000sq km (estimate).

EPP Group Advisers: J. Salafranca, P.G. Rizza, A. Gieseemann, A. Glogowski

Background and Relations with the EU

Due to the strong historical, cultural and economic ties, the EU has a long partnership with the Latin American countries. In addition to bilateral Relations, the EU, and in particular the EP, is closely involved in maintaining cooperation with a variety of regional organisations, such as Mercosur or the Andean Community. For the first time, a summit between the EU and all Latin American countries was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1999. During this summit, the Bi-regional Strategic Association between Europe and Latin American was agreed upon. Furthermore, it was decided to hold summits bi-annually at the level of Heads of State and Governments of the EU and of the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries. In the alternate years to the EU-LAC Summit, meetings take place at ministerial level between the EU and the CELAC (former Rio Group), which is a regional bloc of Latin American and Caribbean states. Its aim is to deepen Latin American integration and to reduce the once overwhelming influence of the United States on the politics and economics of Latin America (an alternative to the Organization of American States). Bi-regional Relations have flourished within the framework of the EU-LAC Foundation¹⁷, created in 2010 by the Sixth Summit of Heads of State and Government, which aims to contribute to the strengthening of the EU-LAC bi-regional partnership process by involving the participation and inputs from civil society.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dlat/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

During the 8th Legislature, the following EuroLat meetings were held: Plenary sessions in Brussels (2-5 June 2015), Montevideo (19-22 September 2016), San Salvador (18-21 September 2017), Vienna (17-20 September 2018) and Committee meetings in Panama City (16-19 March 2015), Lisbon (16-18 May 2016), Florence (22-24 May 2017) and Panama City (3-6 April 2018). The Executive Bureau and Working Group on Migration met in Riga, Latvia (15-16 May 2015) and the Executive Bureau and Committee on Political Affairs in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (27-28 February 2019)

The Assembly organised during the eighth legislature four High-Level Seminars: EU and Latin America: Common Challenges and Opportunities (28 May 2015); The future is today: The EU and the Americas facing a unique opportunity (6 November 2017); Startup Europe Latin America (19 March 2018); Twenty years of EU-Latin America Relations. Building a future (18 February 2019).

In September 2016, the Executive Bureau in Montevideo decided to create a new Working Group on Security, Organised and Transnational Crime, and Terrorism in place of the Working Group on Migration. The purpose of the Working Group is to analyse the different aspects related to security and in particular transnational organised crime and terrorism.

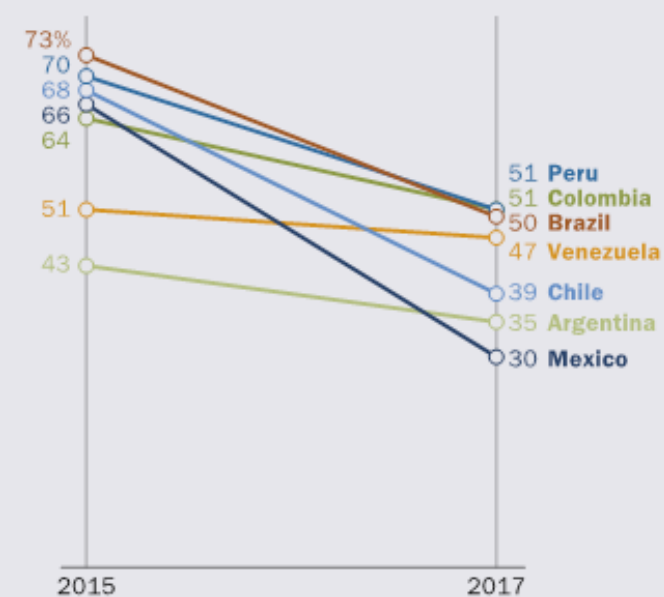
The EuroLat Members adopted at the last Assembly plenary session in Vienna a record number of 12 reports in the plenary session and discussed issues that are highly relevant for bi-regional Relations with eminent experts in the various standing committees and other bodies. Discussions took place on the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the digital platforms in the modern economy and scrutiny by parliamentarians of trade negotiations and agreements, cooperation in cases of international parental child abduction, the protection of children, the fight against tuberculosis and higher education.

The EuroLat Assembly also adopted by an overwhelming majority a modification of the rules of procedure endorsing an EP component proposal, this in order to bring the Rules of Procedure closer to the recently updated changes in the EP Rules of Procedure.

¹⁷ 2010 [Madrid Action Plan](#) - Action Plan/ Final Declaration of the Sixth EU - LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government. 2013 [Santiago Action Plan](#) - Action Plan/Final Declaration of the First EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government. [Joint Statement](#) – Seventh EU- Brazil Summit in 2014.

Positive views of the U.S. down across most of Latin America

Favorable views of the U.S.



Note: Colombia favorability ratings are from 2014.

Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: https://www.pewglobal.org/2018/04/12/fewer-people-in-latin-america-see-the-u-s-favorably-under-trump/commentary_summit_011/

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group devotes great attention to deepening its ties with Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, the work of EUROLAT is a priority for the EPP Group. Due to our close cultural and social ties, EUROLAT is a natural partnership, from which both sides mutually benefit.

In the ever-more globalised world, it is important for the EU to seek closer partnerships with like-minded countries and regions around the world. With some exceptions, the EU and the Latin American countries have a common set of values, such as the respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Thus, the EPP Group sees the Latin American countries, which together with the EU, constitute about one sixth of the world's population and territory, as natural partners in jointly tackling the challenges and achieving greater global prosperity and security.

In the trade aspects of the EU-Latin American Relations, it is important to highlight two agreements signed between the EU and Central America: those with Colombia and Peru and the subsequent accession of Ecuador, in the process of which the EPP Group played a significant role. On 28 June 2019 the EU and Mercosur countries were finally able to reach a political agreement for the conclusion of the negotiations of a trade agreement. The Group strongly supports this agreement that will create a very large market for goods with a strong potential for growth of both parties. The undergoing modernisation of existing agreements with Mexico and Chile will pave the way to further mutual benefits. The new Association Agreement with Mexico has been concluded politically and should be adopted in the next semester.

Politically, EuroLat has been a useful tool, in which the EPP Group has been playing a leading role in denouncing the shortcomings and violations of human rights and defending democracy and rule of law over the LATAM region. The cases of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela have been consistently raised via the EPP Group initiatives.

DELEGATION TO THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (D-EPA)

EPP GROUP ADVISER: SYLWIA KOSINSKA, ROBERT GOLANSKI, OLIVIER LE SAEC, BOGDANA DEPO

Background and Relations with the EU



The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly was set up in the framework of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative, which was launched at the Prague Summit in May 2009. It was the EPP Group that, since 2007, has been calling for the establishment of closer Relations and an ambitious partnership with the EU’s Eastern neighbours.

The main aim of the Assembly is to gain an additional channel of cooperation and dialogue between the EP and its Eastern Neighbourhood partners. It is in our interest to maintain good neighbourhood Relations with the region, as it is a matter of stability, security, promotion of democratic reforms, human rights, good governance, rule of law, economic prosperity, support to civil society, mobility and people-to-people contacts.

Delegation Activities (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/depa/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

The assembly is composed of 60 members elected in six Eastern countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and 60 MEPs. Places attributed to Belarus remain vacant until the OSCE recognises Belarusian elections as fair and free.

The work in EURONEST PA is organised in the Bureau of the assembly, four committees and three working groups:

- Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy;
- Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU Policies;
- Committee on Energy Security;
- Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society;
- Working Group on Rules of Procedure;
- Working Group on Association Agreement countries;
- Working Group on Belarus.

There were one constituent and seven ordinary sessions of the EURONEST PA held to date:

- The constituent session was held in May 2011 in Brussels;
- The first ordinary session was held in September 2011 in Strasbourg;
- The second was held in April 2012 in Baku (Azerbaijan);
- The third was held in May 2013 in Brussels;
- The fourth was held in March 2015 in Yerevan (Armenia);
- The fifth was held in March 2016 in Brussels;
- The sixth was held in October-November 2017 in Kiev (Ukraine);
- The seventh was held in June 2018 in Brussels.

20 DELIVERABLES FOR EAP COUNTRIES FOR 2020, STATE OF PLAY MARCH 2019:

CROSS CUTTING DELIVERABLES		STATUS	CHANGE?
1.	More engagement with civil society organisations	++	~
2.	Increase gender equality and non-discrimination	++	~
3.	Strengthen strategic communications and supporting plurality and independence of media	+++	~
STRONGER ECONOMY			
4.	Improve the Investment and business environment and unlock Small and Medium-sized Enterprises' (SMEs) growth potential	+++	~
5.	Address gaps in access to finance and financial infrastructure	+++	~
6.	Create new job opportunities at the local and regional level	+++	~
7.	Harmonise digital markets	+++	↑
8.	Support intra-regional trade among partner countries and the EU	+++	~
STRONGER GOVERNANCE			
9.	Strengthen the rule of law and anti-corruption mechanisms	++	~
10.	Support the implementation of key judicial reforms	++	~
11.	Support the implementation of public administration reform	+++	↑
12.	Stronger security cooperation	+++	~
STRONGER CONNECTIVITY			
13.	Extend the TEN-T core networks, transport	+++	~
14.	Increase energy supply security	+++	~
15.	Enhance energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy; reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions	++	~
16.	Support the environment and adaptation to climate change	++	~
STRONGER SOCIETY			
17.	Progress on Visa Liberalisation Dialogues and Mobility Partnerships	+++	~
18.	Strengthen investment in young people's skills, entrepreneurship and employability	+++	~
19.	Establish an Eastern Partnership European school	+++	↑
20.	Integrate Eastern Partnership and EU research and innovation systems and programmes	+++	~

+++ - completed; ++ - on track; + - moderate progress;

~ - no change; ↑ - improved;

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/nea/files/20_deliverables_for_2020_monitoring_state_of_play_2019.pdf

Following reports were adopted by the Assembly since 2011:

In the Political Affairs Committee:

- Security challenges in the EaP countries and enhancing the role of the EU in addressing them;
- Ensuring media freedom and integrity in the EU and Eastern European partners;
- Common Positions and concerns of the EU Member States and EaP partner countries about foreign policies and external threats to their security;
- Engaging in a stronger partnership between the EU and Eastern European partner countries through the European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014-2020;
- Regional security challenges in Eastern European partner countries;
- Challenges for the future of democracy, including the question of free and independent media in EaP and EU countries.

In the Economic Affairs Committee:

- Foreign direct investment in the EU Member States and Eastern Partner countries;
- Overcoming the impact of the economic crisis on youth unemployment in the EU and EaP countries;
- EU multiannual financial perspectives and their impact on economic cooperation among EaP countries;
- Infrastructural cooperation between the EU and EaP countries: joint road, rail and air transport projects;
- Approximation of the national legislation of EaP countries with EU legislation in the economic field;
- Trade agreements between the EU and the Eastern European Partners, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, and the EU assistance in this field.

In Energy Committee:

- Development of energy efficiency and energy sustainability in the EU and EaP Partners;
- Enhancing energy cooperation within the EaP, towards the implementation of 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement;
- Policy development on unconventional gas and potential impact on energy markets in the EU and the Eastern European partner countries;
- Challenges, potential and new engagement in cooperating on energy efficiency and renewable sources within the EaP;
- Energy security in connection with the energy market and harmonisation between the Eastern European partner and the EU countries;
- Energy security, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy infrastructure: developments in the EaP and in the EU countries.

In the Culture Committee:

- Tackling informal and undeclared labour and enhancing the social security of employees in the European Union and Eastern Partner countries;
- The situation of women in the labour market in the EaP countries;
- Mutual recognition of professional qualifications work experience and the university diplomas within the Bologna process;
- Culture and intercultural dialogue in the context of the EaP;
- Combating poverty and social exclusion in the Eastern Partner countries;
- Strengthening of civil society in the EaP Countries, including the question of cooperation between government and civil society, and the question of the reforms aimed at the empowerment of civil society.

In addition to its interparliamentary activity, the EURONEST PA delegation has met regularly on its own in Brussels and Strasbourg. The delegation has also organised several conferences related to its area of focus.

EPP Group Position

The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly remains one of the priorities for the EPP Group.

The EPP Group holds 16 out of the 60 EP’s places in the assembly, one place in the Bureau, two co-chairs in the Committees, and three co-chairs in the Working Groups, which enables EPP Group to influence substantially the work of the Assembly.

Moreover, the EPP Group holds regular preparatory meetings during EURONEST plenary sessions with its sister parties from the EaP countries. It has proved to be one of the most efficient ways of creating synergy and establishing a common EPP Group position between the Group and our EaP Partners, which allows the EPP Group to play a dominant politic role in the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and its Bodies.

It is also the EPP Group that initiates urgent resolutions on the most politically important issues:

- Urgent resolution on the situation of Yulia Tymoshenko (2012);
- Urgent resolution on the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the urgent need for a peaceful resolution of the conflict (2015);
- Urgent resolution on the Nadiya Savchenko case (2016);
- Urgent resolution on deterioration of the human rights situation in the regions of Transnistria, Abkhazia, Tskhinvali Region/ • South Ossetia, Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts (2017);
- Urgent resolution on The Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia, notably Oleg Sentsov (2018).

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY - (D-NAT)

Creation of NATO PA: 18-22 July 1955.
President: Madeleine Moon - UK 2018.
Number of Countries: 29 Countries
(266 parliamentarians - 53 delegates associated).
Population: 1.1 billion (estimation).
Size: 25,400,000sq km (estimation).
EPP Adviser: Olivier Le Saëc



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Background

The NATO PA is an interparliamentary body composed of legislators from 29 member countries of the Alliance and 13 associate members, including the EP. It grants special status to the EP, the representatives of which (up to 10 delegates disposing two seats on each NATO AP committee) are entitled to attend plenary sittings of the Assembly, seminars and meetings of the Assembly’s committees, may speak and propose the texts but may not vote or move amendments.

The Assembly is mainly a forum for discussion of key security issues and challenges faced by the transatlantic partnership. It aims to enhance coordination between Member States and help define a common Position on policies and strategies to be adopted. The Assembly’s creation reflected a desire on the part of legislators to give substance to the premise of the Washington Treaty that NATO was the practical expression of a fundamentally political transatlantic alliance of democracies.

The first “Conference of Members of Parliament from the NATO Countries” was held at NATO Headquarters in Paris on 18-22 July 1955, bringing together 158 parliamentarians from 14 NATO countries. The creation of an ‘Associate Status’ in 1991 for the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe allowed their integration into assembly Activities before the establishment of formal ties with NATO itself. The Assembly became actively involved in the process of NATO enlargement as a substantial majority of the members consistently demonstrated their support for the “open door” policy. In parallel, aspirant countries used the Assembly as a channel to build support for their integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. The Assembly was directly concerned in assisting in the process of ratification of the Protocols of Accession signed at the end of 1997, which culminated in the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to the Alliance in March 1999. The Assembly was renamed the “NATO Parliamentary Assembly” in 1999 to take into account the profound transformation it had undergone since its creation. At the Annual Session in November 2004 in Venice, Italy, which marked the beginning of celebrations of the Assembly’s 50th Anniversary, the entire North Atlantic Council joined members of the Assembly for the first time for a special plenary meeting.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dnat/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

The EP Delegation for Relations with the NATO PA was set up on 12 December 2001 to put forward the Position and defend the views of the EP, as regards the EU-NATO Relationship. It has a sui generis status, which allows its members to speak in the sessions of the Assembly and present reports. The Delegation has the possibility to participate actively to the work of the Assembly. The delegation’s 10 members are all drawn from the Parliament’s Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE). The DNAT delegation joined the Assembly for various Activities, including two annual sessions in the spring and autumn. The EP delegates have participated in all the sessions of the NATO AP during the eighth legislature. Four NATO PA Annual Sessions and Four NATO PA Spring Sessions have taken place.

- 2018 Annual Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 16-19 November 2018, Halifax;
- 2018 Spring Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 25-28 May 2018, Warsaw;
- 2017 Annual Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 6-9 October 2017, Bucharest;
- 2017 Spring Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 26-29 May 2017, Tbilisi;
- 2016 Annual Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 18-21 November 2016, Istanbul;
- 2016 Spring Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 28-30 May 2016, Tirana;
- 2015 Annual Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 9-12 October 2015, Stavanger;

• 2015 Spring Session NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 15-18 May 2015, Budapest.

In Brussels, the [EP Delegation](#) also organised a series of hearings related to the [EU – NATO Relations](#) in order to better prepare the NATO PA sessions. The meetings were held either jointly with the NATO PA delegates or with the experts from NATO, the US and EU:

- [4 June 2018](#): Exchange of views was held on “Countering new threats together - A new era of EU-NATO cooperation” with Paolo ALLI, President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly; Pedro SERRANO, Deputy Secretary General for CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) and Crisis Response at EEAS, Rose GOTTEMOELLER, Deputy Secretary-General of NATO, Lieutenant General Jan BROEKS, Director-General of the NATO International Military Staff, and Philipp FLURI, Assistant Director, Head Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, Central Asia Division, The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).
- [24 April 2018](#): Exchange of views on “EU-NATO cooperationon cyber defence” with Miroslavas TRIBOCKIS - Policy officer, Cyber Sector, Security Policy and Space Policy, European External Action Service, Neil ROBINSON - Officer, Cyber Defence Policy, Emerging Security Challenges Division, NATO, and Vasileios TSIAMIS, Strategy & Policy Division, European Defence Agency; Bruno LETE, The German Marshall Fund of the United States.
- [27 September 2017](#): Jointly with the Delegation for Relations with the United States, an exchange of views will be held on the “Transatlantic security cooperation- the US perspective” with Adam Shub, Chargé d’Affaires a.i., US Mission to the EU and Julie Fisher, Deputy Permanent Representative and Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Mission to NATO.
- [3 May 2017](#): Exchange of views was held on “NATO-EU cooperation: Implementation of the 2016 Joint Declaration and the common set of proposals”, with Gábor Iklódy, Director of Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), European External Action Service. The delegation also discussed preparations for the NATO PA Spring Session in Tbilisi in the presence of David Hobbs, Secretary-General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.
- [9 November 2016](#): Exchange of views on “Overview of NATO Missions and Operations”, with Mihai Carp, Deputy Head of Section, Operations Division, NATO and Bruno Lete, Transatlantic Fellow for Security and Defence Policy, The German Marshall Fund of the United States.
- [13 November 2014](#): Exchange of views on “NATO Parliamentary Assembly – the parliamentary dimension to strengthen the Alliance” with David Hobbs, NATO Parliamentary Assembly Secretary-General.
- [9 October 2014](#): Exchange of views “NATO after Newport: the Alliance’s role in the world” with H. E. Ambassador Thrasyvoulos Terry Stamatopoulos, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, NATO.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group has always actively advocated a strong EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The Group is in favour of the transatlantic dialogue and the development of EU-NATO Relations, while affirming the independent nature of both the organisation and the increasing role of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. Moreover, our Political group firmly believes that greater substance must be given to the European defence policy to protect our citizens from instability and threats both within and outside the EU. Therefore, EU and NATO must continue to deepen their common efforts. Their mutual commitment is crucial for the EU’s future security efforts and in order to be able to respond to major international crisis. Finally, through the Delegation for Relations with the NATO PA, the EP voices the EU Positions in terms of security and defence in Europe and in an ever-changing world.

DELEGATION TO THE ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (D-ACP)

EPP GROUP ADVISER: A. BYCZEWSKA, J. KRAFT, F. SOLOFOSON

Background and Relations with the EU

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) was created out of the common desire to bring together the elected representatives from the European Union - Members of the EP - and from the African, Caribbean and Pacific States that have signed the Cotonou Agreement. This is the only assembly of this kind.

The representatives of 78 ACP States, which under the Cotonou Agreement, must be members of the parliament, meet their 78 counterparts from the EP twice a year within the framework of the JPA’s plenary session. One meeting is organised in Europe, usually in the country that holds the EU presidency, while the second takes place in an ACP country. Additionally the three standing committees of the Assembly meet twice a year.

Originally, EU-ACP Relations were limited to trade and the provision of the EU aid. They were managed through the Yaounde Convention signed in July 1963 and subsequently the Lome Convention signed in 1975. The first meeting of the Joint Assembly took place in Inverness (Scotland) in 1985 composed of MEPs on the EU side and the Ambassadors on the ACP side. Its 30th meeting was convened in Abudja (Nigeria) in March 2000. In 2000, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement transformed the Joint Assembly into the Joint Parliamentary Assembly composed of the parliamentarians from 78 AP states and 78 MEPs.

The ongoing negotiations on the post-Cotonou partnership between the EU and ACP States pave the way for further improvements in the political dialogue between the parties. It is broadly supported by the Members of the JPA and the view is that all three regions must be equally involved in the partnership. At the same time, there is currently an ongoing reflection on how to streamline the works of the Assembly.

Delegation Activities (www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/dacp/Activities/inter-parliamentary)

Role of the EPP in the ACP-EU JPA

Ten JPA plenary sessions were held during the eighth legislative term of the EP, seven regional meetings and three fact-finding missions (Mauritania, Cameroun and Togo). The 37th and last session of this term took place in Bucharest from 18-20 March 2019. During this legislature, the EPP Group confirmed its role as the leading force on the EU side and secured a number of successes through an effective coordination during the votes as well as cooperation with our partners. A number of Positions were defended on critical issues throughout the legislature, notably on challenges that are key priorities for the Group:

Rule of law

The EPP Group recalled the urgent need to boost the capacities of developing countries and the cooperation between the EU and ACP in the areas of good governance, accountability, transparency and the promotion of the rule of law. The adherence to the rule of law should remain an essential element in the overarching framework of the post-Cotonou agreements. The separation of powers and non-partisan role of police, judiciary, security services and other State institutions are essential for upholding human and civic rights. Clear and transparent law-making in the economic sphere, coupled with an independent judiciary would enhance investors’ confidence and considerably contribute to the sustainable economic development.

Climate change

EU and ACP governments need to address the lack of awareness and data to make full use of existing environmental and other laws rigorously. Customs programmes that provide a coordinated approach to sea, ground, and air freight profiling, targeting and examination should be strengthened. The private sector can play an important role in protecting the environment.

Strategic dimension of the ACP-EU partnership

The negotiations of the post-Cotonou Partnership Agreement offer the possibility to consolidate Relations between the ACP States and the EU. In a challenging context for multilateralism, the ACP and EU Member States share sustainable development goals and the desire to promote a set of shared values including the rule of law, democracy and the protection of human rights. We believe that the negotiations should lead to the establishment of an overarching, legally binding ACP-EU framework for the future partnership.

The fight against populism

The recent rise of populism, particularly in the EU countries, takes its roots in socio-economic difficulties, promoting nationalism and protectionism and capitalising on people’s fears. Populism undermines democracy and poses a threat to political and civil life. The EPP Group insists on taking action against populism, including all forms of authoritarian governance, extremism and discrimination, including with regard to social media. In order to avoid divisions in our societies, it is important to continue to defend multilateralism, inclusive societies, multiculturalism and solidarity.

The fight against terrorism

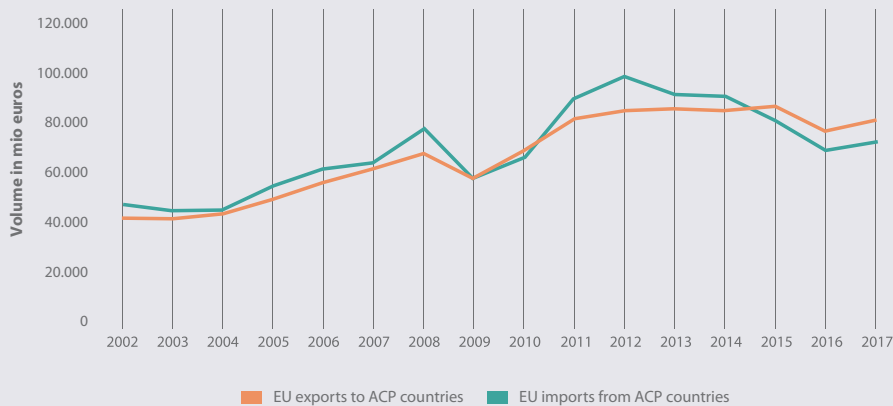
Terrorist acts continue to claim numerous lives in several ACP and EU countries and constitute a common challenge for our partnership. Terrorism and violent extremism cannot be eradicated by military force alone. A global approach is needed that addresses their root causes and combines crisis management and prevention, mediation and political dialogue, capacity-building and development efforts. It is essential to engage with civil society and local communities, particularly in the prevention of radicalisation and when it comes to tackling the financing of terrorism.

The role of SMEs in the EU and ACP countries

The private sector is the engine of wealth creation and economic growth both in the EU and ACP, generating the bulk of jobs and income. The EPP Group stresses that particular attention should be paid to SMEs and small and medium industries, which constitute the backbone of the world economy, and also that private investment in developing countries can contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Source: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2017/february/tradoc_155300.pdf

Trade in goods between the EU and ACP countries



Possibilities of renewable energies

In most ACP countries, an overwhelming majority of people, especially in remote areas, do not have access to electricity. There is an urgent need to reverse this situation by ensuring the access to sustainable energy, especially for vulnerable populations. It is important that a coherent policy apply when it comes to access to affordable energy and an increase in renewable energy generation and efficiency. We consider it important that the development of small-scale energy projects serving individuals and communities be supported.

EPP Group Position

The EPP Group is naturally supportive of the EU-ACP cooperation. We believe that, by closely engaging with the countries in the region, the EU is strengthening the objectives of multilateralism and regional cooperation.

The equality and universality of fundamental freedoms are values on which all EPP Group policies are based. It includes a principle of solidarity and a moral responsibility for the preservation of human rights and dignity across the borders and an obligation to act whenever and wherever these rights are disregarded. This is why the first priority for the EPP Group in the development cooperation is to take an effective action to fight poverty. We fully and wholeheartedly subscribe to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, contrary to some Political Groups, we believe that traditional development aid is not enough to put an end to poverty.

We are convinced that good governance is a key prerequisite for development. In this regard, the measures to tackle poverty and hunger, disease, exclusion, inequality and lack of education can only be sustainable in a climate of peace and sustainable economic growth. Therefore, apart of the SDGs, development cooperation must also prioritise, on the one hand, actions that promote peace, freedom and justice and, on the other hand, measures that promote economic growth and the spirit of entrepreneurship in partner countries. The private sector plays an essential role in this regard. For this reason, fostering investment and mobilising private finance is a priority for the EPP Group.

Windhoek Dialogue

The Windhoek Dialogue is the EPP Group’s African policy initiative. It aims at developing cooperation with our African partners and like-minded African political parties by providing the forum where our MEPs and African partners can meet and exchange ideas and good practices.

Launched originally with five African parties from English-speaking countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, the Windhoek Dialogue led to the creation of the fully-fledged umbrella organisation for the African like-minded parties - UPADD (Union of African Parties for Democracy and Development). After years of cooperation, the developments on the African continent, notably the emergence of new political parties, encouraged the Group to reform the Dialogue’s structure.

In 2015, in close cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Robert Schuman Foundation, the New Windhoek Dialogue was launched with the aim of reaching out to new partners beyond the UPADD. Two meetings were held during the EP’s eighth legislative term: in Windhoek, Namibia, and in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.

In order to ensure the continuity of the contacts, the EPP Group reaches out to our African partners also within the ACP- EU Assembly by organising informal Windhoek Dialogue working lunches on the Tuesdays of the JPA plenary sessions.

X. ANNEXES



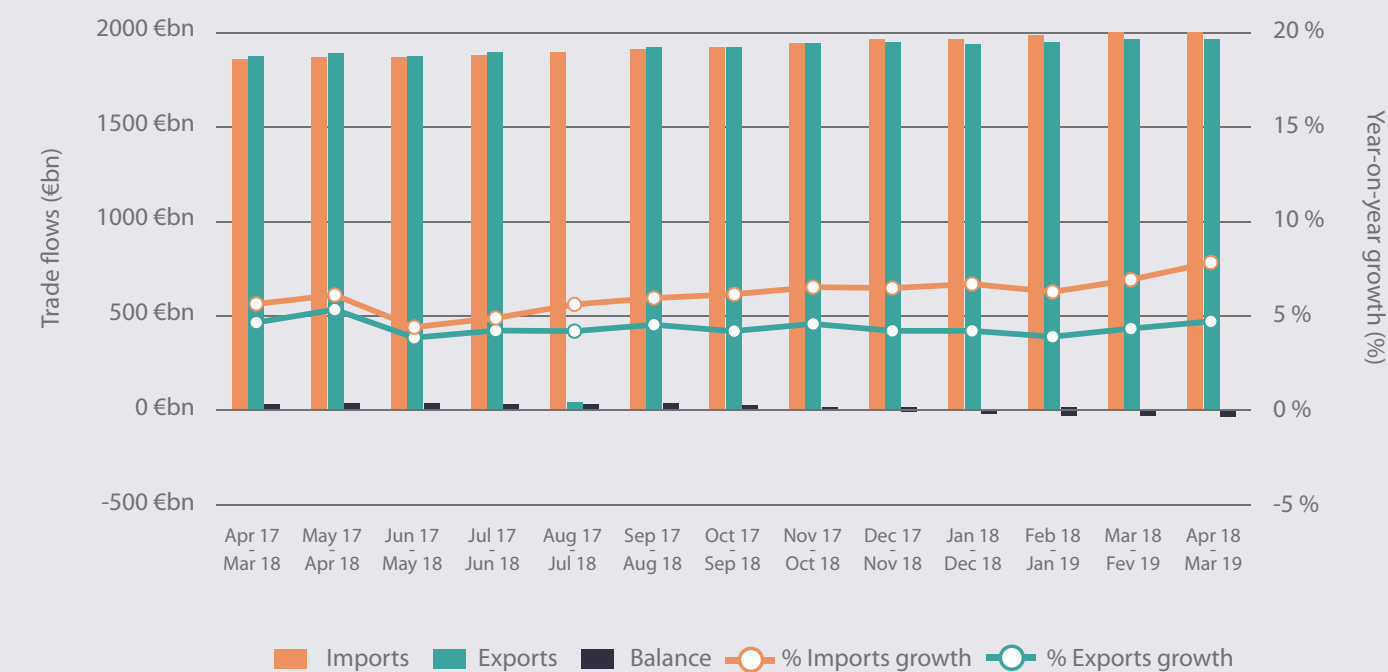
Laureates of Sakharov and Nobel Peace Prize from last 10 years		
Year	NOBEL PEACE PRIZE	SAKHAROV PRIZE
2018	Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad “for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict”	Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov. He is one of the approximately 70 Ukrainian citizens illegally arrested and given long prison sentences by the Russian occupation forces in the Crimean peninsula
2017	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)	Democratic opPosition of Venezuela for their courageous struggle against a brutal regime
2016	Juan Manuel Santos “for his resolute efforts to bring the country’s more than 50-year-long civil war to an end”	Yazidi survivors and public advocates Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar for their fight against the hardship and brutality perpetrated by this so-called Islamic State
2015	National Dialogue Quartet “for its decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011”	Saudi blogger, Raif Badawi for his fight for the freedom of speech and thought in Saudi Arabia
2014	Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai “for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education”	Dr Denis Mukwege from Democratic Republic of Congo
2013	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) “for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons”	Pakistani campaigner for girls’ education Malala Yousafzai
2012	European Union (EU) “for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe”	Iran, Nasrin Sotoudeh and Jafar Panahi
2011	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work”	Arab Spring, Razan Zaitouneh (Syria), Ali Farzat (Syria), Ahmed al-Zubair alSanusi (Libya), Asmaa Mahfouz (Egypt), Mohamed Bouazizi (Tunisia, posthumously)
2010	Liu Xiaobo “for his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China”	Cuba, Guillermo Fariñas
2009	Barack H. Obama	Russia, Memorial

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EU TRADE FIGURES WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

EU28 merchandise trade with Extra-EU28



Source: ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/eu-position-in-world-trade/statistics/

European
Commission



Directorate General
for Trade

Client and Supplier Countries of the EU28 in Merchandise Trade (value %) (2018, excluding intra-EU trade)											
Source: Eurostat (Comext, statistical regime 4)						Last update: 15-Mar-2019					
N°	Total EU Trade with...	million euro	share (%)	EU Imports from...	million euro	share (%)	EU Exports to...	million euro	share (%)	EU trade balance with...	million euro
	Extra EU28	3 936 107	100.0	Extra EU28	1 980 361	100.0	Extra EU28	1 955 746	100.0	Extra EU28	-24 615
1	USA	673 642	17.1	China	394 698	19.9	USA	406 372	20.8	USA	139 102
2	China	604 604	15.4	USA	267 270	13.5	China	209 906	10.7	Switzerland	47 504
3	Switzerland	265 464	6.7	Russia	168 280	8.5	Switzerland	156 484	8.0	United Arab Emirates	26 782
4	Russia	253 542	6.4	Switzerland	108 980	5.5	Russia	85 263	4.4	Hong Kong	26 767
5	Turkey	153 409	3.9	Norway	83 837	4.2	Turkey	77 270	4.0	Australia	24 370
6	Norway	137 704	3.5	Turkey	76 139	3.8	Japan	64 754	3.3	Stores and provisions - Ex	20 455
7	Japan	135 225	3.4	Japan	70 471	3.6	Norway	53 867	2.8	Singapore	16 008
8	South Korea	100 339	2.5	South Korea	51 089	2.6	South Korea	49 250	2.5	Mexico	13 381
9	India	91 528	2.3	India	45 827	2.3	India	45 702	2.3	Egypt	10 715
10	Canada	72 343	1.8	Vietnam	38 157	1.9	Canada	41 355	2.1	Canada	10 366
11	Mexico	65 386	1.7	Brazil	31 733	1.6	Mexico	39 384	2.0	Morocco	7 187
12	Brazil	65 317	1.7	Canada	30 988	1.6	United Arab Emirates	37 837	1.9	Israel	7 134
13	Saudi Arabia	61 033	1.6	Saudi Arabia	30 607	1.5	Singapore	37 079	1.9	Lebanon	6 709
14	Singapore	58 150	1.5	Taiwan	30 417	1.5	Hong Kong	36 622	1.9	Gibraltar	5 979
15	Taiwan	51 858	1.3	Mexico	26 002	1.3	Australia	35 963	1.8	Ukraine	4 127
16	Vietnam	49 265	1.3	Malaysia	25 629	1.3	Brazil	33 584	1.7	Oman	3 794
17	United Arab Emirates	48 891	1.2	South Africa	24 070	1.2	Saudi Arabia	30 426	1.6	Serbia	3 735
18	South Africa	48 260	1.2	Thailand	22 853	1.2	South Africa	24 190	1.2	Togo	3 594
19	Australia	47 555	1.2	Nigeria	22 532	1.1	Morocco	23 260	1.2	Qatar	3 407
20	Hong Kong	46 477	1.2	Singapore	21 071	1.1	Ukraine	22 128	1.1	Jordan	3 269
21	Ukraine	40 130	1.0	Algeria	21 047	1.1	Taiwan	21 441	1.1	High seas	3 071
22	Algeria	39 952	1.0	Kazakhstan	20 825	1.1	Israel	20 736	1.1	Senegal	2 858
23	Malaysia	39 784	1.0	Ukraine	18 002	0.9	Stores and provisions - Ex	20 455	1.0	Kuwait	2 360
24	Morocco	39 332	1.0	Not specified - Extra EU	17 858	0.9	Egypt	19 218	1.0	New Zealand	2 229
25	Thailand	38 000	1.0	Bangladesh	17 848	0.9	Algeria	18 905	1.0	Uzbekistan	2 120
26	Not specified - Extra EU	36 431	0.9	Libya	16 789	0.8	Not specified - Extra EU	18 573	0.9	Belarus	1 984
27	Nigeria	34 465	0.9	Indonesia	16 541	0.8	Thailand	15 148	0.8	Marshall Is.	1 942
28	Israel	34 337	0.9	Iraq	16 352	0.8	Serbia	14 742	0.8	Cayman Isles	1 910
29	Egypt	27 721	0.7	Morocco	16 073	0.8	Malaysia	14 155	0.7	Cuba	1 861
30	Kazakhstan	26 647	0.7	Israel	13 602	0.7	Nigeria	11 932	0.6	Brazil	1 851
31	Indonesia	26 196	0.7	Australia	11 593	0.6	Tunisia	11 676	0.6	Panama	1 799
32	Serbia	25 749	0.7	Azerbaijan	11 503	0.6	Vietnam	11 109	0.6	Chile	1 539
33	Tunisia	21 855	0.6	United Arab Emirates	11 054	0.6	Qatar	10 663	0.5	Tunisia	1 497
34	Bangladesh	21 401	0.5	Serbia	11 007	0.6	Chile	9 977	0.5	Georgia	1 460
35	Libya	21 308	0.5	Tunisia	10 179	0.5	Indonesia	9 655	0.5	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1 454
36	Stores and provisions - Ex	20 455	0.5	Hong Kong	9 855	0.5	Argentina	9 337	0.5	Albania	1 438
37	Iraq	19 966	0.5	Iran	9 466	0.5	Iran	8 917	0.5	Ethiopia	1 401
38	Chile	18 416	0.5	Egypt	8 503	0.4	Philippines	7 696	0.4	Andorra	1 209
39	Iran	18 382	0.5	Chile	8 439	0.4	Lebanon	7 222	0.4	Turkey	1 131
40	Qatar	17 919	0.5	Argentina	8 384	0.4	Belarus	6 459	0.3	Dominican Republic	1 116
41	Argentina	17 721	0.5	Philippines	7 930	0.4	Gibraltar	6 146	0.3	Mali	1 054
42	Philippines	15 627	0.4	Qatar	7 256	0.4	Bosnia-Herzegovina	6 083	0.3	Montenegro	1 017
43	Azerbaijan	14 195	0.4	Pakistan	6 881	0.3	Colombia	6 010	0.3	Argentina	952
44	Pakistan	12 541	0.3	Peru	6 157	0.3	Kazakhstan	5 822	0.3	Kosovo	944
45	Colombia	11 095	0.3	Cambodia	5 360	0.3	New Zealand	5 702	0.3	Colombia	925
46	Belarus	10 934	0.3	Colombia	5 085	0.3	Pakistan	5 660	0.3	Moldova	880
47	Bosnia-Herzegovina	10 712	0.3	North Macedonia	4 928	0.2	Kuwait	5 644	0.3	Kenya	773
48	North Macedonia	10 492	0.3	Bosnia-Herzegovina	4 629	0.2	North Macedonia	5 564	0.3	New Caledonia	759
49	Peru	9 888	0.3	Belarus	4 475	0.2	Oman	4 542	0.2	Macao	741
50	New Zealand	9 176	0.2	Ivory Coast	4 404	0.2	Libya	4 519	0.2	Bahrain	730
51	Kuwait	8 928	0.2	Angola	3 701	0.2	Peru	3 731	0.2	Not specified - Extra EU	714
52	Lebanon	7 736	0.2	New Zealand	3 474	0.2	Togo	3 677	0.2	Secret - Extra EU	656
53	Ivory Coast	7 145	0.2	Iceland	3 418	0.2	Iraq	3 614	0.2	French Polynesia	650
54	Iceland	7 031	0.2	Kuwait	3 284	0.2	Iceland	3 613	0.2	Bahamas	640
55	Angola	6 982	0.2	Ghana	3 126	0.2	Jordan	3 569	0.2	North Macedonia	635
56	Gibraltar	6 313	0.2	Ecuador	3 032	0.2	Bangladesh	3 553	0.2	Sudan	635
57	Cambodia	6 133	0.2	Sri Lanka	2 812	0.1	Senegal	3 413	0.2	Benin	616
58	Ghana	5 951	0.2	Costa Rica	2 689	0.1	Angola	3 281	0.2	Ceuta	594
59	Ecuador	5 386	0.1	Myanmar	2 295	0.1	Albania	3 195	0.2	El Salvador	587
60	Oman	5 289	0.1	Moldova	1 877	0.1	High seas	3 135	0.2	Guinea	581
61	Albania	4 952	0.1	Mozambique	1 867	0.1	Ghana	2 824	0.1	Syria	548
62	Moldova	4 634	0.1	Cameroon	1 778	0.1	Moldova	2 757	0.1	Burkina Faso	530
63	Sri Lanka	4 370	0.1	Albania	1 757	0.1	Ivory Coast	2 742	0.1	Melilla	524
64	Senegal	3 968	0.1	Uruguay	1 693	0.1	Cayman Isles	2 732	0.1	Armenia	491
65	Jordan	3 869	0.1	Venezuela	1 688	0.1	Azerbaijan	2 692	0.1	Brunei	483
66	Togo	3 761	0.1	Trinidad and Tobago	1 547	0.1	Panama	2 527	0.1	Cape Verde	413
67	Costa Rica	3 735	0.1	Congo (Dem. Rep.)	1 487	0.1	Ecuador	2 353	0.1	Tanzania	410
68	Bahrain	3 620	0.1	Bahrain	1 445	0.1	Uzbekistan	2 283	0.1	Yemen	409
69	Cayman Isles	3 553	0.1	Equat. Guinea	1 401	0.1	Marshall Is.	2 238	0.1	Mongolia	374
70	Kenya	3 401	0.1	Kenya	1 314	0.1	Bahrain	2 175	0.1	British Virgin Islands	346

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