

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2020/2115(INI)	Procedure completed
Connectivity and EU-Asia relations		
Subject 3.20.15 Transport agreements and cooperation 6.40.08 Relations with Asian countries		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	 BÜTIKOFER Reinhard	02/04/2020
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 DELI Andor	
		 OLEKAS Juozas	
		 KYUCHYUK Ilhan	
	 MARIANI Thierry		
	 DZHAMBAZKI Angel		
	 VILLANUEVA RUIZ Idoia		
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Transport and Tourism (Associated committee)	 DZHAMBAZKI Angel	11/09/2020
	 International Trade (Associated committee)	 KELLY Seán	02/07/2020

Key events			
17/09/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/09/2020	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
10/12/2020	Vote in committee		
17/12/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0269/2020	Summary
19/01/2021	Debate in Parliament		

21/01/2021	Results of vote in Parliament		
21/01/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0016/2021	Summary
21/01/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2020/2115(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54; Rules of Procedure EP 57
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/9/03574

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE660.104	28/10/2020	EP	
Committee opinion	INTA	PE657.395	11/11/2020	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE661.782	24/11/2020	EP	
Committee opinion	TRAN	PE657.369	02/12/2020	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0269/2020	17/12/2020	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0016/2021	21/01/2021	EP	Summary

Connectivity and EU-Asia relations

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Reinhard BÜTIKOFER (Greens/EFA) on connectivity and EU-Asia relations.

The report noted that considerable economic potential between Europe, Asia and other continents remains untapped owing to a lack of physical and digital infrastructure. The importance of an effective EU Connectivity Strategy has been further underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made both the weaknesses and strengths of the European and global connectivity networks clear to see.

Principles of the Connectivity Strategy

Connectivity plays in the geopolitical relations of the EU and its Member States and underlines the fact that connectivity, as a fundamental orientation of the European Union, is deeply ingrained in the EUs approach to domestic and international challenges.

Members urged the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to create a global EU Connectivity Strategy as an extension of the current EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy with the goal of strengthening the EUs role as a true and indispensable geopolitical and geo-economic actor.

The Strategy must comprehensively address a broad spectrum of political, economic, cultural, sustainability and security dimensions based on the EUs fundamental values.

Members invited all European countries to join the EUs Connectivity Strategy, including countries in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Western Balkans and the European Neighbourhood, and to functionally integrate the different developing regions. The UK is also encouraged to join forces with the EU in promoting strategic international connectivity.

Governance of the Strategy

The Strategy must be monitored and coordinated with the pursuit of internal connectivity within the EU and between the EU and its prospective members, such as through the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) or the Three Seas Initiative, strengthening shared values, standards and interests, and providing shared ownership of the Strategy for EU institutions and the Member States.

Stressing the multidimensional nature of the Strategy, which will require effective coordination of existing strategies, policies and projects for international connectivity and interoperability, Members expect existing coordination between the EEAS and the Commission Directorates-General to be enhanced in this regard. Moreover, Parliament, the Council, the Member States and national parliaments should all

be involved in the Strategy.

European and Member States development banks, investment agencies and export credit agencies should play a central role in managing investment in international connectivity projects.

For the Strategy to be credible, it needs to be equipped with the necessary tools and means to implement it on a scale that matches its ambition. Adequate public resources should be allocated under the 2021-2027 MFF.

Priorities of the Strategy

The Strategy should also be clearly focused on a definitive set of priorities such as, inter alia: green transition, transport, digital transformation; health, trade, investment and security.

Connectivity partnerships

The committee strongly welcomed the establishment of the EU-Japan Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure, with its focus on sustainable connectivity with the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Indo-Pacific and Africa. It hopes the EU and Japan will actively promote the connectivity partnership among relevant target groups and manage to kick-start the operationalisation of the partnership in the first half of 2021.

Both Russia and Turkey also have interests in becoming stakeholders in EU-Asia connectivity. Members are willing to partner with them where possible. They regretted however that projects funded by China in Central Asia lack transparency.

Members considered that the EU should strengthen cooperation with the US.

Global connectivity

Members strongly emphasised the fact that the Strategy must pay particular attention to connectivity with the European Neighbourhood and with the neighbouring continent of Africa, given its increasingly geopolitical relevance for several global actors.

Lastly, the Commission should present a new communication approach with a clear narrative in order to create adequate visibility and sufficient accountability for EU connectivity policies and their results.

Connectivity and EU-Asia relations

The European Parliament adopted by 526 votes to 43, with 119 abstentions, a resolution on connectivity and EU-Asia relations.

Members noted that considerable economic potential between Europe, Asia and other continents remains untapped owing to a lack of physical and digital infrastructure. The importance of an effective EU Connectivity Strategy has been further underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made both the weaknesses and strengths of the European and global connectivity networks clear to see.

Principles of the Connectivity Strategy

Parliament encouraged the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to develop an EU Global Connectivity Strategy, which would be an extension of the current EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy. This strategy would strengthen the EU's role as a key geopolitical and geo-economic actor and set the conditions for Europe to cooperate with other countries bilaterally and multilaterally to promote fiscally, economically, socially and environmentally sustainable connectivity.

The Strategy should comprehensively address a broad spectrum of political, economic, cultural, sustainability and security dimensions based on the EU's fundamental values.

Members invited all European countries to join the EU's Connectivity Strategy, including countries in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Western Balkans and the European Neighbourhood, and to functionally integrate the different developing regions. The UK is also encouraged to join forces with the EU in promoting strategic international connectivity.

Governance of the Strategy

The Strategy should be monitored and coordinated with the pursuit of internal connectivity within the EU and between the EU and its prospective members, such as through the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) or the Three Seas Initiative, strengthening shared values, standards and interests, and providing shared ownership of the Strategy for EU institutions and the Member States.

Parliament proposed to open a regular dialogue on the implementation of the strategy within the Commissioners Group for a stronger Europe, which would act as a coordinating body for connectivity. In addition, Parliament, Council, Member States and national parliaments should all be involved in the strategy. The Commission should produce regular progress reports on the implementation of the strategy.

European and Member States development banks, investment agencies and export credit agencies should play a central role in managing investment in international connectivity projects.

For the Strategy to be credible, it needs to be equipped with the necessary tools and means to implement it on a scale that matches its ambition. Adequate public resources should be allocated under the 2021-2027 MFF.

Strategy's priorities

The Strategy should also be clearly focused on a definitive set of priorities such as, inter alia: green transition, transport, digital transformation; health, trade, investment and security.

Connectivity partnerships

Parliament welcomed the establishment of the EU-Japan Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure, with its focus on sustainable connectivity with the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Indo-Pacific and Africa. It also welcomed the ongoing negotiations to establish a connectivity partnership with India. It expressed support for a connectivity partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Both Russia and Turkey also have interests in becoming stakeholders in EU-Asia connectivity. Members are willing to partner with them where possible. They regretted however that projects funded by China in Central Asia lack transparency.

Members considered that the EU should strengthen cooperation with the US.

Global connectivity

Parliament strongly emphasised the fact that the Strategy must pay particular attention to connectivity with the European Neighbourhood and with the neighbouring continent of Africa, given its increasingly geopolitical relevance for several global actors.

Lastly, the Commission should present a new communication approach with a clear narrative in order to create adequate visibility and sufficient accountability for EU connectivity policies and their results.