



BACKGROUND GUIDE

# *WAMUNC XXIV*

European Union and Parliament

# COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

After the United Kingdom left the European Union at the end of January 2020, the number of MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) was reduced from 751 to 705. Every MEP has the same rights as "delegates" in traditional committees, including a seat, a voice, and a vote in Parliament. The European Union's Parliament is divided into seven political groups, each of which represents a political party in the European Union. These coalitions are usually made up of a small number of MEPs from smaller, mainly national parties, who are united in the supranational assembly by a set of core beliefs. This means that in Parliament, MEPs are divided into groups based on their political affiliation rather than their nationality.

By order of size, from largest to smallest, the European Parliament's political groups are the following as of February 2020:

1. European People's Party (EPP) 187 MEPs (26%)
2. Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) 148 MEPs (21%)
3. Renew Europe (Renew) 96 MEPs (14%)
4. Identity and Democracy (ID) 75 MEPs (11%)
5. Greens-European Free Alliance (Greens-EFA) 67 MEPs (9.5%)
6. European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) 61 MEPs (8.5%)
7. European United Left-Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL) 39 MEPs (6%)
8. Non-Inscrits 28 MEPs (4%)

Total = 701 (100%) 70 (100%)

## *Functions and Attributions of the European Parliament*

In this committee each Country of the European Parliament will have two MEPs representing their country, both from different parties. Each Delegation will be assigned a MEP, so remember you are not representing the country that your MEP represents! Your job as a delegate is not only to represent your character's views, but also to take into consideration what benefits your country alongside your party. You must understand your party's position and beliefs regarding the topic discussed at the moment. Each delegation's proposal should align with their party's political stand point while representing their MEP position.



# *LETTER FROM THE CRISIS*

## *DIRECTOR*

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the European Union Committee at WAMUNC XXIV! My name is Isabela Baerga, and I am looking forward to being your chair throughout this committee. I'm extremely excited to get to know you all and see your growth through the WAMUNC XXIV experience.

I am a Sophomore at The George Washington University, I'm a double majoring in Political Science and Philosophy. Therefore, I love to question the future utilizing the lens of Politics and Law. I hope to attend Law school in the near future with hopes to create my own law firm some day. Coming from a multicultural background I have always loved exploring the world. I was born in Mexico and when I turned five years old my parents got divorced resulting in me moving to Costa Rica with my mother and Sister. My mother has German parents, therefore I had a lot of European influence growing up from both of them. Regardless, When I turned 15 I decided to move To Puerto Rico with my father to finish high school there. My father was born in Spain but lived most of his life in Puerto Rico. From, Continents, to Countries all the way to colonies I'm happy to say I've experienced it all. The combination of all of this resulted in my passion for International affairs.

Just like all of you, I was once a WAMUNC delegate too, throughout all high school I was extremely involved with my MUN team. I found a lot of passion in the arts of debating, it created a spark in me like nothing else. I have staffed multiple high school conferences in the Congress league of Puerto Rico, I also staffed at MIMUN last year virtually! My co-chair and I are dedicated to make WAMUNC a safe comfortable space, that allows delegates to express their full ideas. Whether you are new to MUN

or an experienced delegate, we assure this committee will be a wonderful place for you to grow as a delegate. We can't wait to witness you debating about Europe's democratic future! One last time. I'm so delighted to be your Chair at WAMUNC XXIV, I can't wait to see you all kill it in debate!

Best Wishes,

Isabela Baerga



# *BACKGROUND GUIDE*

## Topic A: Strengthening Democracy through Design Thinking

### *Historical Background*

For a long time, design was thought to be an afterthought, occurring after the development of technology. Design, in this view, was restricted to styling, or the creation of an aesthetics of an item that provided new or better utilitarian utilities on its own. Until the systemic dimension of innovation was addressed in the 2005 edition of the Oslo Manual, which included a chapter on innovation linkages and their quantification. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental economic organisation, no longer viewed innovation as a simple and linear process that begins with technological advancement, but rather as a complex and systemic phenomenon. As a result of this perspective, the emphasis moves to other links and integrations. The new idea of re purposing technology for other areas such as de OECD did to sparked an interest in incorporating technology with politics to facilitate citizen engagement.

In 2013 the European Union formally addressed the role of design thinking innovation. The EU wanted to experiment with innovative approaches to increase the participatory interaction of the public, to make EU policies more inclusive and user-centric. The final initiative was mentioned in 2016- 2020 EU Government action plan. The Von der Leyen Commission also included a new dues for democracy in one of the six headlines outlining their political guideline proposal. The Commission President's mission letter to Vera Jourova, Vice-President for Values and Transparency, emphasized this issue even more. During her parliamentary session, Jourova emphasized the importance of digital tools for engaging citizens. This indicated the testing of Design thinking in the EU. They tested this in three different ways: informative websites, participatory platforms, and prize challenges. The purpose of this online platform was to aid in the development of future policies by facilitating the exchange of ideas. Different variables are incorporated into the platform, reflecting both emotive and rational perspective.

## *Current Issue:*

### Civic Engagement:

Democracy revolves around the people's voices, their wants, and most importantly their needs. Throughout the past years the European public has found a detachment between the administration, and their job in delivering their contributions. The relationship between citizens and the administration has been fractured due to failure of feedback and proper communication from the administrative side. The current Digital thinking strategies that were previously adapted by the EU aren't showing the necessary results to keep the Public happy. The European Parliament's Future of Europe discussions, took place from early 2018 to April 2019. The discussions emphasized the necessity for the creation of creative methods to increase the democratic engagement at the EU level. In an address to the Parliament in July 2019, the then Commission President-elect agreed to convene a conference on the Future of Europe in 2020, which would last two years. The aim of this conference was to look for long term reforms to better the future of EU institutions and policies.

The conference was going to offer a platform where residents had a place where they could express their main concerns via web, to potentially increase the engagement. Additionally, these concerns would be evaluated by the EU institutions and the civil society representative to conclude in the best way possible to address them. The EU website states that "The digital platform is the hub of the Conference: it is your way to get involved and speak up at the

Conference. Here you can share your thoughts on Europe and the changes which need to happen, see what others have to say, find events near you, organise your own event and follow the progress and the outcome of the Conference.". The EU put a lot of effort and dedication in the creation of this platform, regardless, with the new platform came new problems.

Legal challenges will necessitate proper safeguards to preserve residents' privacy while also ensuring inclusivity. In terms of ethics, it may be argued that incentivizing involvement through design thinking implies that there are weaker or simpler types of civic engagement alongside stronger, more complicated forms of civic engagement. Regulating the amount equal civic engagement will become a big issue when handling the platform. How will they ensure that about 446 million inhabitants have the same opportunities to access the platform. Taking into consideration the accessibility to wifi is a huge issue to this idea. About 20% of the EU live in poverty, and can't afford access to the wifi. A lot of citizens argue this approach is very elitist , as it infers that every citizen in the EU have access to media. They argue that not only do they need a device to connect to the media but the WIFI is also necessary. A huge controversy was born with this initiative, if they expect citizens to access media to increase the civic engagement, they must provide free WIFI for the EU. With this the EU started the WIFIEU initiative which allowed free access to WIFI for citizens in public spaces including parks, squares, public buildings, libraries, health centers, public spaces, and museums. Since October 1 2021 the EU has established more than 5000 WiFi4EU networks across the EU. This is also bringing furry to WIFI companies, and digital working companies. Also, this incentive is making citizens greedy wondering why they don't male free WIFI a law around Europe.



## Cyber Security:

Cyber security is another issue with design technology are all the safety precautions that come alongside it. It's been seen how past elections, federal documents, and confidential information have all been hacked with technology. How can the EU assure that the precautions they are using are being effective in protecting confidential information. The cybersecurity provided by the EU must be superior in order to prevent any hack from occurring. Russia's technological advancement created a huge threat to the EU as they have cyberattacks the EU multiple times. Russia posing the largest cyber threat world wide, makes combining politics with technology extremely scary.

Overall, If the EU wants to implement technology in real life, all of these issues must be discussed and well thought out. Transitioning to technology is going to be a challenge to everyone. Evolution has brought us to a new era that was dictated by technology, but it has also brought multiple issues connected to it. The future of Europe's Design thinking will be of great importance to assure the European Union's future to either succeed or fail.

### **Solutions:**

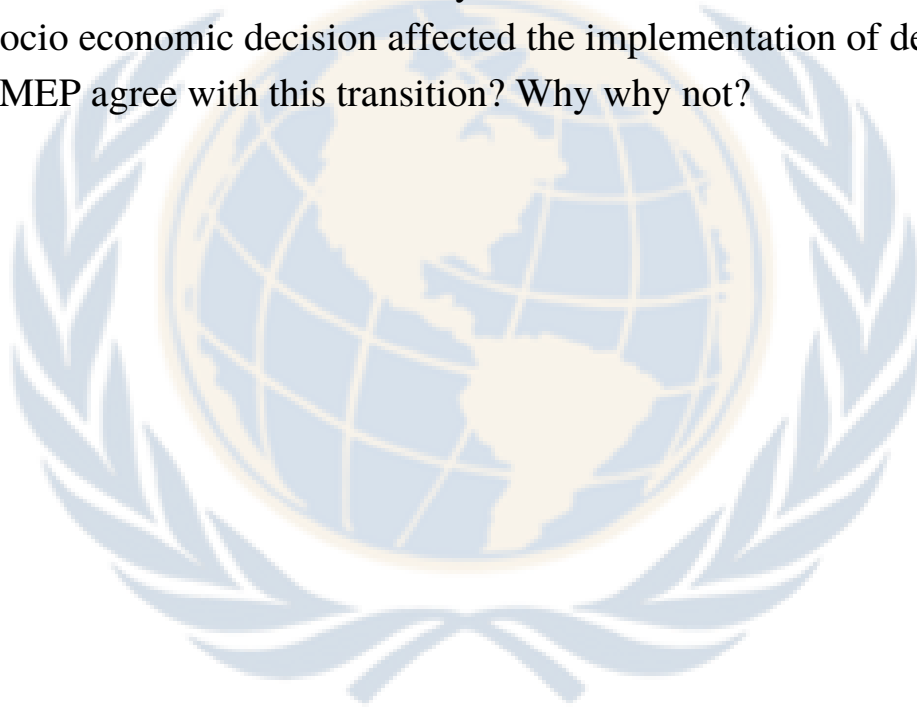
Due to how recently all of these ideas have been implemented in the EU, the EU is working with the issues alongside as they implement the new engaging system. They are exploring different ways to prevent cyber attacks and to overall strengthen the European Union's cyber security. The strategy has three areas of action:resilience, technical sovereignty and leadership, operational capacity to prevent, deter and respond, and cooperation to advance global and open cyberspace.

The EU also needs to start investigating different ways on how to target different publics in order to create more engagement. Right now their platform is extremely general and doesn't necessarily have components that target a specific audience. Implementing different techniques to attract different audiences is key when looking to increase engagement within a group of people. They also must address and consider different options regarding the accessibility to the resources needed to partake in the technological advancement.

Considering the reformation of certain ideas might be needed, or maybe additional support and more innovative ideas simply need to be added. Delegates must think outside the box to come up with solutions to ensure that the European Union's technological future is on the right path to succeed.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How does the implementation of technology assure more contribution and more policy participation within citizens of the EU?
2. What cybersecurity issues pose the biggest threat in the EU cyber platform? What can be implemented to better secure the Cyber data?
3. How has socio economic decision affected the implementation of design thinking?
4. Does your MEP agree with this transition? Why why not?



## Topic B: The UK Decision to Leave the EU (Brexit)

### *Historical Background*

In 1977, the UK sought the idea of exiting the European Community, but 67% of 25 voters chose to stay. In 2016 the British took a historical public decision, exiting the European Union through a referendum vote brought by the Prime Minister David Cameron. The percentages shifted completely from the ones in 1977 with a marginal 51.9% and 48.1% for a leave and remain vote respectfully. This resulted in May's government to formally bring about Article 50, causing Brexit negotiations to officially begin on June 19th, 2017. Although Euro-skepticism has always been present within the Conservative party, public opinion affected Cameron's decision to put forward the referendum to begin with. The rise in global populism has allowed leaders the manipulative advantage to alter the norms that are prevalent in the United Kingdom. Leaders have guided people towards more reserved and closed views, creating a foundation of praise in national patriotic superiority. Apart from Populism and racism other aspects have influenced Brexit.

The leave campaign emphasized the cost of membership and how the EU funds "should be spent on domestic priorities". The UK argues that the sovereignty was being violated from excess European integration, they expressed that when they joined the EU in 1969, they did not sign up for that. Nigel Farage, a MEP who was leader of the UK independence party from 2006 to 2016, and leader of the Brexit Party from 2019 to 2021 was a huge influence to the Brexit movement. Farage claims that the EU is responsible for changing EU identity and terrorism. He claims they are responsible for this because they allow people of different religions and cultures to reside in the EU. Alongside Farage other important individuals contributed to the Brexit such as former Prime minister Boris Johnson.

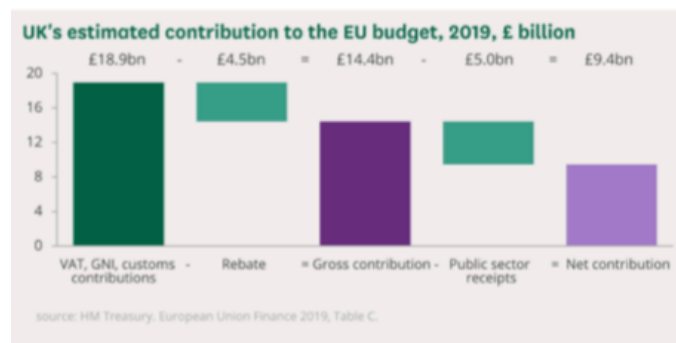
## Current issue:

### *Economical impact and Britain's Impact*

Europe has been Britain's biggest source of foreign investment and most significant export market. Britain's EU membership placed London in a position where they were considered a global financial center. Tax free exportation throughout Europe benefited Britain's economy massively. Multiple industries were impacted drastically for example the automakers who rely on suppliers across Europe faced a lot of complications. Completely opposite sectors like Musicians going on tour suddenly had to request multiple visas. Britain knew a backlash was going to happen therefore they reached an agreement with Brussels in late 2020. Which stated “zero tariffs and zero quotas on all goods that comply with the appropriate rules of origin.” Regardless, other challenges like new paperworks, less priority in delivery resulting in rotting cargoes. Most of the service sectors in Britain have to depend on the decisions of European regulators, without having a say in any of the outcomes. The Brexit analysis composed by the office for Budget Responsibility stated that “The new trading relationship will reduce long-run productivity by 4 per cent relative to remaining in the EU. This largely reflects our view that the increase in non-tariff barriers on UK-EU trade acts as an additional impediment to the exploitation of comparative advantage.”

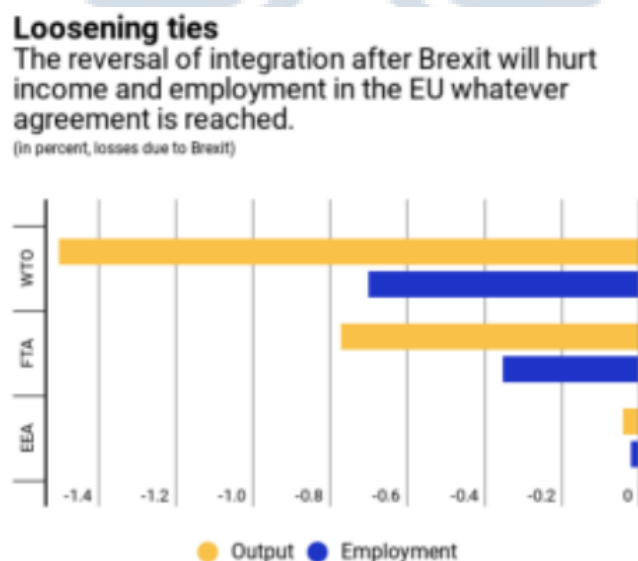
### *European Union Impact*

In 2019 there is an estimate that the UK had a gross contribution of £14.4 billion. £.5.0 billion of that contribution was given back to the UK to invest in the public sector, therefore the direct contribution to the EU resulted in a total of £9.4 billion. The graph better explains this.



Trade and exportation are also an area of impact. With new challenges such as creating new paperwork, dealing with new transportation regulations makes the whole process more complicated. Therefore delays have been very prominent between the EU and UK. This has cost companies millions of dollars. Britain's exports decreased 19.3 %, while imports dropped 21.6% according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This marked the largest monthly drop since 1997. Exports to non-EU member nations climbed modestly, while imports from non-EU members fell 8%. Since the new reform is extremely new Richard Hunter, head of markets at Interactive Investor, said “It is too early for a definitive read of the Brexit effect, with some evidence of stockpiling ahead of the deadline and signs of some recovery towards the end of the month indicating that the picture could be rather more positive after the initial dust has settled,”. Regardless, the International Monetary Fund stated that Brexit was going to hurt long term output and jobs in the European Union. It is estimated that with the standards of a free trade agreement where tariffs on goods are low while having higher non-tariff barriers will result in the EU-27 output to decrease by 0.8%, and employment by 0.3%. These percentages only are accurate if both parties decide to comply with the World Trade Organizations. If both parties fail to do this these percentages would increase, at 1.5% in the long run, and employment lowering by 0.7%.

The graph below better explains this.



Source: IMF staff estimates.

## *EU Future Membership*

The UK decision to leave the EU has brought a lot of questions throughout Europe. The biggest fear in the European Union is the probability of other countries following Britain steps. One of the main arguments that Brexit brought to the table was that UK had to break free from the EU as a ‘failing political project’ inciting that the EU will eventually collapse. If UK has a drastically successful future after exiting the EU, other big contributors might want to leave the EU, weakening the whole Union. The EU now more than ever needs to find ways to connect as a whole and increase unity in order for the EU to succeed.

## *How it affects the UN*

The European Commission is the biggest contributor on development, and humanitarian aid, and without Britain's contribution of \$2.2 billion the budget for these sectors drastically decreases. The UK position within the United Nations will be lower, despite its UNSC status. This is because it will stop making contributions to regional matters within the EU, whereas, France will have the ability to bend in a more prominent role due to their membership to both the EU and the Security Council.

## **Solutions:**

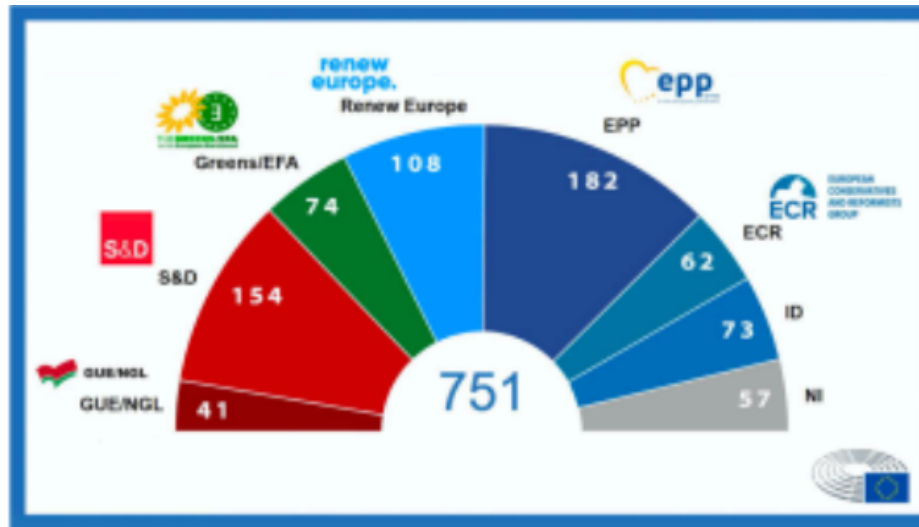
Since the new reform is extremely new, its future success is pending. Regardless, flaws can be found in the new agreement between the EU and UK. Reforms and sanctions to assure that both parties protect “ areas such as environmental protection, the fight against climate change and carbon pricing, social and labor rights, tax transparency and State aid, with effective domestic enforcement, a binding dispute settlement mechanism and the possibility for both parties to take remedial measures.”

How is each side going to stand accountable for following all the rules, and if not what will be the consequences. Implementation of an economical plan regarding all of Brexits impacts is needed to ensure a better future for the EU. Discussing different plans and ways to connect the European Union together to prevent another member from exiting the Union. Creating solutions for Britain critics like the alleged accusation that the EU is responsible for terrorism because it allow people of different religions and cultures to reside in the EU, could help the EU in the future. Analyzing these critiques and deciding as a committee if they are an issue or not, will be necessary in order to strengthen the European Union.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. What economical changes must be done in order to rehabilitate the EU after Brexit?
2. Does your MEP agree with Britain's claims? Why or why not?
3. How much was your MEPs country affected by Brexit? What needs to be done to help your country?
4. Should the British government pay the European Union an exit bill? If so, how much should be paid?
5. Should the status of EU residents living in the UK change? Should the status of British citizens living in the EU change?

## Bloc Positions



### **Austria**

1. Monica Vana (Greens/EFA)
2. Harald Vilmsky (ID)
3. Claudia Gamon (Renew Europe)

### **Belgium**

1. Assita Kanko (ECR)
2. Pascal Arimont (EPP)
3. Gerolf Annemans (ID)

### **Bulgaria**

1. Asim Ademov (EPP)
2. Iskra Mihaylova (Renew Europe)
3. Tsvetelina Penkova (S&D)

### **Croatia**

1. Biljana (S&D)
2. Tomislav Sokol (EPP)
3. Miroslav Kolakušić (Non-attached)

### **Cyprus**

1. Gorgeous Gorgeous (GUE/NGL)
2. Lefteris Christoforou (EPP)
3. Costas Mavrides (S&D)

### **Czechia**

1. Hynek Blasko (ID)
2. Markéta Gregorová (Greens/EFA)
3. Evžen Tošenovský (ECR)

### **Denmark**

1. Kira Marie Peter-Hansen (Greens/EFA)
1. Nikolaj Villumsen (GUE/NGL)
2. Margrete Auken (Greens/EFA)

### **Estonia**

1. Andrus Ansip (Renew Europe)
2. Jaak Madison (ID)
3. Marina Kaljurand (S&D)

### **Finland**

1. Silvia Modig (GUE/NGL)
2. Laura Huhtasaari (ID)
3. Henna Virkkunen (EPP)

### **France**

1. Andrieu Eric (S&D)
2. Stéphane Séjourné (Renew Europe)
3. Benoît Biteau (Greens/EFA)



## **Germany**

1. Manfred Weber( EPP)
2. Ismail Ertug (S&D)
3. Martin Buschmann (Non-attached Member)

## **Greece**

1. Vula Tsets (Greens/EFA)
2. Dimitris Papadimoulis (GUE/NGL)
3. Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)

## **Hungary**

1. Cseh Katalin (Renew Europe)
2. Andor Deli (Non-attached Member)
3. Attila Ara-kovács (S&D)

## **Ireland**

1. Micky Wallace (GUE/NGL)
2. Deirdre Clune (EPP)
3. Billy Kelleher (Renew Europe)

## **Italy**

1. Simona Bonafè (S&D)
2. Marco Zanni (ID)
3. Tiziana Beghin (Non-attached Member)

## **Latvia**

1. Dace Melbārde ( ECR)
2. Ivars Ijabs (Renew Group )
3. Inese Vaidere (EPP)

## **Lithuania**

1. Petras Austrevicius (Renew Europe)
2. Stasys Jakeliūnas (Greens/EFA)
3. Vlademar Tomaševski (ECR)

## **Luxembourg**

1. Charels Goerens (Renew Group)
2. Tilly Metz (Greens/EFA)
3. Marc Angel (S&D)

## **Malta**

1. Roberta Metsola (EPP)
2. Josianne Cutajar (S&D)
3. Alex Agius (S&D)

## **Netherlands**

1. Mohammed Chahim (S&D)
2. Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL)
3. Samira Rafaela (Renew Group)

## **Poland**

1. Marek Belka (S&D)
2. Antonio Ryszard (ECR)
3. Sylwia Spurek (Greens/EFA)

## **Portugal**

1. Paulo Rangel (EPP)
2. Pedro Marques (S&D)
3. Sandra Pereira (GUE/NGL)

## **Romania**

1. Vlad Gheorghe (Renew Group)
2. Eugen Tomac (EPP)
3. Maria Grapini (S&D)

## **Slovakia**

1. Eugen Jurzyca (ECR)
2. Vladimir Bilčík (EPP)
3. Milan Uhrík (Non-attached Member)

## **Slovenia**

1. Irena Joveva (Renew Group)
2. Tanja Fajon (S&D)
3. Milan Zver (EPP)

## **Spain**

1. Iratxe García Pérez (S&D)
2. Mazaly Aguilar (ECR)
3. Antonio Comín Ioliveres (Non-attached Member)

## **Sweden**

1. Helen Fritzon (S&D)
2. Peter Lundgren (ECR)
3. Alice Kuhnke (Greens/EFA)



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