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*Plenary sitting*

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# **REPORT**

on connectivity and EU-Asia relations  
(2020/2115(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on connectivity and EU-Asia relations (2020/2115(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy of 28 June 2016,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 19 September 2018 entitled ‘Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy’ (JOIN(2018)0031),
- having regard to the Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure between the EU and Japan of 27 September 2019,
- having regard to the joint EU-US statement on the Asia-Pacific region of 12 July 2012,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 28 May 2018 on enhanced EU security cooperation in and with Asia,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 15 May 2019 on ‘The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership’ (JOIN(2019)0009),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 9 March 2020 entitled ‘Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa’ (JOIN(2020)0004),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 16 April 2019 on the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean: joining forces for a common future (JOIN(2019)0006),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 27 April 2016 on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic (JOIN(2016)0021),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 18 March 2020 entitled ‘Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: reinforcing resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all’ (JOIN(2020)0007),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 6 October 2020 on an Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans (COM(2020)0641),

- having regard to the Commission communication of 29 April 2020 entitled ‘Support to the Western Balkans in tackling COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery – Commission contribution ahead of the EU-Western Balkans leaders meeting on 6 May 2020’ (COM(2020)0315),
  - having regard to the Connectivity Agenda for the Western Balkans adopted in 2015,
  - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 7 June 2017 on ‘A Strategic Approach to Resilience’ (JOIN(2017)0021),
  - having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (2015),
  - having regard to the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment (2019) and Roadmap to Infrastructure as an Asset Class (2018),
  - having regard to the Commission communication of 29 January 2020 on ‘Secure 5G deployment in the EU – implementing the EU toolbox’ (COM(2020)0050),
  - having regard to the Chair’s statement at and the conclusions of the 13th Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers Meeting (ASEM), held on 20 and 21 November 2017,
  - having regard to Rules 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on International Trade and the Committee on Transport and Tourism,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0269/2020),
- A. whereas an expanded global Connectivity Strategy for the EU needs effective governance and broad involvement from the Member States as well as economic and societal stakeholders in order to effectively represent the EU’s fundamental values and shared interests;
  - B. whereas in an increasingly connected and global world, the EU needs to implement and demonstrate connectivity strategies in order to advance its interests, values and positions and strengthen cooperation with its partners in the digital field and the fields of health, security, the green transition, transportation, energy and, in particular, human networks; whereas considerable economic potential between Europe, Asia and other continents remains untapped owing to a lack of physical and digital infrastructure;
  - C. whereas 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; whereas the post COVID-19 economic stimulus provides a new opportunity and can be used as a turning point to make investments more sustainable, more digital and green, while boosting our connectivity agendas for greater resilience;
  - D. whereas a global Connectivity Strategy must utilise a sustainable and rules-based

approach and should serve the goals of the EU's key policies such as economic recovery, the European Green Deal, the digital transformation, and the global promotion of human rights and effective multilateralism; whereas regional and global security frameworks should contribute to creating a safe environment for the good functioning of relations between states; whereas these frameworks should build on Europe's strength in trade policy and diplomacy and address new and urgent challenges such as global health and security, hybrid threats, terrorism and poverty;

- E. whereas connectivity is already an essential component of a large number of EU strategies; whereas the coherence and visibility of all connectivity policies should be enhanced; whereas global connectivity has an impact on the competitiveness of Europe and of third countries, providing commercial opportunities for European and other companies, notably SMEs, to achieve common prosperity;
- F. whereas a sustainable Connectivity Strategy should serve the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- G. whereas the implementation of the EU's Connectivity Strategy will require dedicated public financial resources in the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF), the allocation of human resources and renewed efforts to facilitate private sector engagement, as explicitly stated in the 2018 joint communication on connecting Europe and Asia; whereas many regions in development require a substantial amount of rules-based investment to achieve a new economic dynamic, in particular after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- H. whereas for the EU, as one of the world's largest economies and a pioneer in regional cooperation and bringing people together, the global Connectivity Strategy has the potential to bring added value to the implementation and promotion of its global agenda, including the Team Europe approach and regional agendas such as the work on a European Indo-Pacific Strategy and cooperation within ASEM through synergies across the EU's key policies, thereby elevating the EU's role as a global actor;
- I. whereas the EU's free trade agreements with Japan and South Korea will generate more trade between Asia and Europe and require improvements to transport infrastructure;
- J. whereas the EU-Japan connectivity partnership of 2019 has given additional relevance to the Strategy; whereas partnerships with other Asian partners including India, as an emerging global player, should be established; whereas Africa and the European Neighbourhood should be designated as priority regions for connectivity;
- K. whereas the joint communication on relations between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean should also be factored into the Strategy;
- L. whereas the global Connectivity Strategy should be included in the Commission Work Programme for 2021;
- M. whereas it is essential to maintain the existing infrastructure for environmentally friendly modes of transport in Europe and beyond; whereas Europe needs to invest more in sustainable infrastructure such as a modern high-speed train network, which could replace some air transport routes in Europe; whereas experience has shown that

unsustainable projects generate a high level of debt and wasted resources, undermine the benefits of infrastructural investments for local communities, lead to increased pollution and do harm to the environment;

- N. whereas in recent years global actors have recognised the potential for transport connectivity and have taken the lead to pursue the strategic development of global infrastructure; whereas new opportunities for EU-Asian transport networks are arising, particularly in the rail and maritime sectors; whereas the COVID-19 crisis has shown that transport continuity with Asia has been essential to guarantee the supply chain for all types of goods; whereas EU-Asia transport excels on the global stage in terms of trade volumes and distances travelled; whereas it is necessary to guarantee the safety, security and ecological sustainability, with particular regard to greenhouse gas emissions, of all modes of transport used between the EU and Asia;

### *Principles of the Connectivity Strategy*

1. Highlights the fundamental role that 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 EU's approach to domestic and international challenges; points out that connectivity policies have been implemented successfully in the EU and that actions in the field of connectivity have increasingly been included in many of the EU's external relations;
2. Encourages 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 in order to align our connectivity philosophy and connectivity policies with the goal of strengthening the EU's role as a true and indispensable geopolitical and geo-economic actor with a single narrative and as a cross-cultural enabler, and to strengthen partnerships with democracies around the world which share our fundamental values; whereas specific regional priorities and policies like those of the Eastern Partnership, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the joint communication on relations with Latin America and the Caribbean and a future Indo-Pacific strategy should be aligned with the Strategy;
3. Insists that global challenges will be aggravated if the world fissures into adversarial camps or complete fragmentation; believes, therefore, that connectivity should be promoted as a principle that seeks cooperation wherever necessary and possible;
4. Highlights that connectivity should serve as a key priority of the EU's work with a view to confirming Europe's ambition, achieving a more proactive European position in global politics and setting the conditions for Europe to cooperate with other countries bilaterally and in multilateral fora in promoting connectivity that is fiscally, economically, socially and environmentally sustainable;
5. Expects the Strategy to contribute to implementing the EU's main framework policies of building a strong and fair Union, investing in peaceful and respectful international relations, contributing to sustainable economic and social progress, including on the basis of ambitious trade agreements driving the European Green Deal and the digital transformation, and promoting global justice;

6. Considers that fostering a sustainable form of globalisation will require working together with third countries in implementing the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals as core elements of the Strategy;
7. Takes the view that the Strategy must comprehensively address a broad spectrum of political, economic, cultural, sustainability and security dimensions based on the EU's fundamental values and its shared interests, must implement flagship projects that demonstrate our values of freedom, human rights, the rule of law, democracy, solidarity against discrimination, sustainability, inclusiveness, transparency on social justice, a level playing field, reciprocity and adherence to rules-based multilateralism, and must reinforce the EU's international role as a norm-setter; understands that adequate human and financial resources must be allocated for its implementation;
8. Invites economic and societal stakeholders and relevant experts in the field at EU level and in the Member States to participate in the development and implementation of the Strategy; calls on the Commission to create suitable forums for such involvement; insists that parliaments must play an active role in shaping and overseeing connectivity policy;
9. Recalls that in order to generate sustainable growth and jobs, connectivity investments are necessary; stresses that these investments should respect the public good, transparency, market efficiency, a level playing field, including fair access to procurement markets, and fiscal viability, while avoiding debt entrapment; highlights that such investments need to support economic resilience, a Paris-compatible decarbonisation of the economy, the development of new skills for the workforce and compliance with high environmental and biodiversity standards; stresses, moreover, that they need to adhere to strict EU standards on social and labour rights, transparency, human rights, due diligence, interoperability and good governance, and give a voice to the people affected by the projects on the basis of appropriate, inclusive and public stakeholder consultations and open access, including for local stakeholders such as SMEs;
10. Invites 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; encourages the UK to join forces with the EU in promoting strategic international connectivity, particularly in the light of the House of Commons' recent report on the future of the UK's international policy; is of the opinion that projects overseen by several European countries should be prioritised;
11. Attaches greatest emphasis to the need for fair cooperation with our partners and other respective countries and regions, while using soft powers to promote European values and to secure strong and durable partnerships; believes that the Strategy must create shared benefits, guarantee reciprocal market access, and prevent one-sided dependencies or debt traps, which jeopardise the autonomy of the participating countries, and should be conducted with mutual respect;
12. Highlights the crucial importance of the Western Balkans as a priority for the Strategy; believes that the Strategy can create positive synergies with other political and

economic processes in the region, notably regional integration; believes that existing infrastructure plans for the Western Balkan countries, such as the EU Connectivity Agenda for the Western Balkans, should be harmonised with the Strategy; welcomes the momentum for connectivity investment in the Western Balkans in the context of the Economic and Investment Plan for the region; highlights, moreover, the importance of the Eastern Partnership and the focus on connectivity as underscored in the joint communication of 18 March 2020;

### ***Governance of the Strategy***

13. Stresses that 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; takes the view that without active ownership by the Member States, the Strategy will be a car without wheels;
14. Underlines the multidimensional nature of the Strategy, which will require effective coordination of existing strategies, policies and projects for international connectivity and interoperability; expects existing coordination between the EEAS and the Commission Directorates-General to be enhanced and streamlined in this regard;
15. Underlines that the Strategy needs to have clearer leadership and a division of competences within the Commission at every respective level, including at the top; proposes, therefore, that the implementation of the Strategy be discussed regularly by the Commissioners' Group for a Stronger Europe, which should serve as a connectivity coordination body, co-chaired by the Vice-President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and a Commission connectivity coordinator, ideally an Executive Vice-President;
16. Recommends that the EEAS should provide the secretariat of the connectivity coordination body, while the corresponding working level should include all relevant Directors-General and be co-chaired by the Secretaries-General of the Commission and the EEAS in order to maximise synergies and efficiency;
17. Underlines the importance of involving Parliament, the Council, the Member States and national parliaments in the Strategy; insists that the Commission undertake regular reporting outlining the achievements in implementing the Strategy, to be discussed in detail by Parliament and the Council; encourages the appointment of national connectivity coordinators in the Member States' governments; takes the view that the creation of a dedicated Council working group could enhance connectivity coherence, operationalisation and ownership among the Member States; proposes that qualified majority voting should be used for connectivity, except in fields relevant or related to national security;
18. Believes that the exchange of information with and active involvement of relevant stakeholders, including the EU's financing institutions, is essential for the success of the Strategy, given the existing investment gaps in this area; recommends the creation of a high-level expert group on international connectivity as an advisory body to the Commission, including business representatives, as envisioned in the proposal for a



business advisory group outlined in the joint communication of 19 September 2018, plus civil society and other stakeholders, including from the fields of human rights, the environment and labour rights, and international financial institutions, with a particular emphasis on the European Investment Bank (EIB) as the EU bank and in accordance with the criterion of gender parity;

19. Strongly believes that European and Member States' development banks, investment agencies and export credit agencies should play a central role in managing investment in international connectivity projects, with particular regard to mobilising private sector participation in the financing and implementation of projects and providing advice on investment needs or existing frameworks, depending on the country's level of development; advocates the setting up of a one-stop interface for the private sector;
20. Envisages roles for the EIB and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in this context; strongly believes that actively promoting private sector involvement in bankable international connectivity projects must be a cornerstone of the Strategy; requests that the ongoing work on strengthening the European architecture for development finance be expedited with a view to potentially achieving a fully-fledged European development bank; is in favour of cooperation with other international financial institutions on the basis of European values and strategic interests;
21. Stresses that if the Strategy is to be credible, it needs to be equipped with the necessary tools and means to implement it on a scale that matches its ambition; commends the substantial amount of EU funding for international cooperation, not least the considerable size of grants in comparison to other major global powers, which amounted to EUR 345 billion between 2014 and 2018;
22. Criticises the fact that the public awareness and visibility of the EU's international contributions to the promotion and financing of connectivity policies has been underdeveloped and calls for adequate changes to be made without delay; underlines the need, moreover, to develop a dedicated communication policy for the Strategy and calls for a clearer and effective communication of the Strategy's benefits, achievements and goals in order to ensure the necessary support for its success; highlights the potential of flagship projects in this regard;
23. Considers that in order to achieve the goals of the Strategy, adequate public resources should be allocated under the 2021-2027 MFF; calls for the Strategy to be enshrined in the future regulations on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III, so as to enable the EU to achieve the objectives of the Strategy efficiently, using EU financial programmes such as InvestEU and, in particular, the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+), the External Action Guarantee and geographical investment facilities, such as the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF), the Investment Facility for Central Asia (IFCA) and the Asia Investment Facility (AIF); emphasises, furthermore, the option of helping partner countries to develop indigenous financing mechanisms;
24. Believes that while following a multi-dimensional approach, the Strategy should also be clearly focused on a definitive set of priorities; welcomes the notable inclusion of the

EU's connectivity agenda in the Trio Programme of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian European Council presidencies; emphasises the importance of identifying flagship projects for the relevant sectors, which should have strong European added value, represent a strategic public interest, and demonstrate the EU's unique values-based approach; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to propose criteria for identifying such projects;

25. Welcomes initiatives such as the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment and the resolution of the UN Environmental Assembly on sustainable infrastructure; encourages the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to promote the EU's strategic approach to international connectivity in all multilateral and plurilateral forums, such as the UN General Assembly, ASEM or the G7;

### ***Priorities of the Strategy***

#### *Green transition*

26. Highlights the role of the EU in the implementation of the Paris Agreement through the promotion of a circular economy and climate-resilient investments, among other initiatives; believes that the response to climate change, for the decarbonisation of economies and the preservation of biodiversity and the environment, should be an overarching priority of the Strategy, with particular regard to quality infrastructure development; points out that maintaining the existing infrastructure for environmentally friendly modes of transport in Europe and beyond is paramount; calls for a systematic greening of relevant connectivity investments; recommends, in this regard, that transparent tender criteria be set up on the lifecycle costs of products or services and compliance with EU standards and regulations; considers that the socially just and sustainable greening of development cooperation, infrastructure investment across the board and the energy dimension, in particular, are issues of high priority; regards cooperation on alternative energy sources and energy efficiency as key lighthouse projects; proposes that cooperation on developing renewable energy sources should be made a pillar of EU-African connectivity; regards capacity-building for sustainability as a core dimension; welcomes ambitious scientific cooperation to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation, protect biodiversity, and promote economic circularity, sustainable growth and a just transition;

#### *Transport*

27. Strongly encourages the adoption of a global, coordinated approach by working closely with third countries to restore and maintain connectivity, resilient transportation infrastructure and industry in support of global supply chains; welcomes the collaboration between the EU and Asia on initiatives such as the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) programme and the promotion of new sustainable transport initiatives with important Asian partners such as India and Central Asia;
28. Stresses that the EU should connect the well-developed TEN-T framework with networks in Asia, while completing its own TEN-T projects within the EU such as Rail Baltica and others; welcomes the adoption of the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and the ongoing extension of the TEN-T in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries, which should be considered a key element of the

Connectivity Strategy, given its geographical position; believes that a special TEN-T coordinator should be appointed for the enlargement and Eastern Partnership countries;

29. Highlights the importance of rail connections; points out the necessity of ensuring a unified legal regime for the carriage of goods by rail across the Eurasian continent; calls for the extension of the application of the EU's technical specifications, in particular safety standards for dangerous goods transport by rail and compliance with the corresponding OTIF<sup>1</sup> guidelines according to Annex 2 to the SMGS<sup>2</sup>, and for the creation of new economic prospects by opening up markets and promoting investment opportunities;
30. Stresses the importance of the ongoing negotiations of comprehensive air transport agreements with partner countries in Asia, in particular the agreement between the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which would create fair and transparent market conditions based on a clear regulatory framework and, in particular, on adherence to high European Union standards; highlights the importance of EU support for Asian countries in mitigating the impact of civil aviation on climate change;
31. Calls on the Commission to pursue further progress in its maritime transport initiatives to digitalise and simplify administrative formalities and strengthen maritime security at ports in Asia via the International Maritime Organization and maritime transport agreements; highlights the importance of further engaging with third countries in Asia through pertinent maritime transport agreements, which would help to regulate, facilitate and make more sustainable maritime traffic;
32. Stresses that the Strategy must ensure that hauliers from Asia must adhere to EU standards in the road transport sector; calls for cooperation between the Commission and Member States with regard to the enforcement of EU and national legislation in the sector;

#### *Digital transformation*

33. Places particular emphasis on the fact that digitalisation is a key dimension for the 21st century and underlines its impact on the everyday lives of every single person worldwide; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to step up their ambitions for the digital transformation; expects the EU to become a competitive global actor on a par with the US and China in digitalisation; considers, in this context, that the promotion of digital connectivity and digital access through very high capacity networks based on fibre and 5G is a matter of great priority for the EU; believes that the development of open strategic autonomy in this sector must include diversification of the supply chain of equipment manufacturers through the promotion of open and interoperable network architectures and digitalisation partnerships with third countries and regions who share our values and utilise technology in complete compliance with fundamental rights; urges the Commission to condition connectivity projects with third countries on the ethical use of technology both domestically and abroad; emphasises, in this connection, that the security aspect is paramount;

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail.

<sup>2</sup> Agreement on International Goods Transport by Rail of the Organisation for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD).

34. Underlines the fact that the EU, as a norm-setter, should strive for co-leadership in setting, defending and advancing international norms, standards and practices grounded in a peaceful, secure, rule of law-based and open ICT environment and sustainable and responsible digitalisation, while addressing cybersecurity threats and protecting human rights and freedoms online, including the protection of personal data;
35. Recommends that cooperation on data protection with ASEAN countries and with India, Japan, the US, Australia, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand and others be significantly ramped up in order to advance adequacy decisions for data flows; considers that provisions on e-commerce and digital trade in trade agreements should serve the objectives of the Strategy's digital pillar; notes, with regard to data flows, that the EU has already tabled proposals in several negotiations in line with data protection and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)<sup>3</sup>; notes that the adequacy decision on Japan sets an example for furthering digital integration; advocates linking the digital connectivity agenda to the forthcoming EU Global Digital Cooperation Strategy;
36. Stresses that 5G infrastructure is an element of Europe's strategic resilience; calls on the Commission to devise a plan for developing European 5G and phasing-out 5G technology built by third countries which do not share European values and standards; urges the Commission to strongly condition connectivity projects with third countries on the ethical use of technology, both domestically and abroad; welcomes the provisions for cybersecurity in the Digital Europe Programme as regards the tender process; advocates the inclusion of the 5G toolbox approach in the promotion of digital connectivity, given its possibilities for extraterritorial application; encourages the Commission to work towards replicating the EU's international mobile roaming agreements with connectivity partners; welcomes the Next Generation Internet initiative and investment in digital infrastructure projects, such as the Building Europe Link to Latin America (BELLA) deep sea cable; recommends that the Commission identify real needs for targeted digital Official Development Assistance (ODA); proposes that the Commission promote 6G development cooperation with like-minded countries as a flagship project;

#### *People-to-people*

37. Believes that the people-to-people dimension is a fundamental pillar of the Strategy and should be prioritised further; calls, in this regard, for reciprocal mobility opportunities between Europe and Asia; highlights the need for adequate public diplomacy financing;
38. Attaches great emphasis to the promotion of people-to-people contacts among students, vocational trainees, young professionals, academics, civil society, NGOs researchers and cultural fields, which is key to mutual understanding and respect; advocates such cooperation on the basis of inclusiveness, reciprocity and gender equality; calls, in particular, for the youth dimension to be strengthened through youth forums to mutually promote foreign language proficiency, student and academic exchanges, and the mutual recognition of diplomas; advocates, in this regard, the opening of the eTwinning platform for connectivity partner countries; recalls the opportunities for regional exchanges, such as between innovators and for city-to-city cooperation; highlights that connectivity opens up opportunities for Europe to be at the centre of the intersection

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<sup>3</sup> OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1.

between research, innovation and investment; takes the view that special attention to minority issues should be paid in the context of this pillar;

39. Commends the initiatives adopted for the Western Balkans aiming to promote youth cooperation and exchanges, as well as vocational education and training, and encourages offering similar programmes to other partners of the Strategy, starting with the Eastern Partnership countries; notes that connectivity between the EU and the Western Balkans is integral to the Strategy as the countries in the region are prospective members of the EU;
40. Commends the organisation of the EU-ASEAN Young Leaders Forum and Strategic Thinkers Forum in February 2018 and the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) Young Leaders Summits alongside ASEM Summits; proposes that these conventions should be held regularly and that similar annual forums should also be established as part of the EU-African Union relationship;
41. Calls on the Commission to align the Strategy with the forthcoming EU Strategy on Cooperation in Research and Investment; calls on the Commission to pursue its strategic approach to cooperation in research and innovation (R&I) by upgrading relations with like-minded partners, including by considering associated partner status, and by basing cooperation on such universal principles as academic freedom, open access, the protection of intellectual property, a level playing field, the integrity of research and the protection of personal data; encourages the adoption of country-specific research cooperation policies; highlights the importance of setting up criteria to identify sensitive sectors in the field of R&I, including in the area of dual-use technology;

*Trade, investment, competitiveness and standards*

42. Notes that the EU should strengthen its links with the host countries and present them with a credible and sustainable alternative offer for connectivity financing;
43. Believes that the people-to-people dimension is also essential for basing competitiveness on the EU's values and for effective European economic diplomacy;
44. Believes that trade policy should be instrumental in achieving the objectives of the Strategy by promoting fair and sustainable trade and investment; highlights the importance of strengthening economic resilience through the diversification of supply chains, as well as strengthening regional integration; stresses that the Strategy should go hand in hand with efforts to increase access to respective markets, including public procurement, and to promote an open and transparent investment environment, unlocking opportunities and contributing to global competitiveness; highlights the importance of cooperation on due diligence, intellectual property rights and geographical indications;
45. Stresses, in this connection, the central role of international environmental, sustainability and social standards in trade and investment agreements; recalls the review of the Commission's 15-point action plan and discussions in the Council on trade and sustainable development; calls on the Commission to implement trade defence instruments in full to ensure that European businesses are not subjected to unfair trading

practices, and to implement trade and sustainable development chapters effectively in line with the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and ILO conventions, with a view to developing the Strategy and pursuing sustainable integration; is of the view that the Commission and the EEAS should employ a more strategic approach to the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), including by stepping up action at the highest political level to strengthen its effectiveness vis-à-vis standards on human rights, international labour the environment and good governance;

46. Underlines the importance of the EU's strategic relationship and systemic rivalry with China and calls on the Member States and the EU institutions to address China with one voice and employ a coordinated approach; reiterates its call on China to move forward with an ambitious reform of the World Trade Organization, including comprehensive rules on industrial subsidies, and recognises the concerns over market-distorting practices by Chinese state-owned enterprises, forced technology transfers and data localisation, overcapacities and related dumped exports, and other unfair trading practices; believes that extending the level playing field to third markets is of paramount importance for the long-term opportunities of European businesses;
47. Emphasises the role of international trade agreements negotiated by the EU and the importance of their proper implementation; is of the view that connectivity should be included in the Commission communication on the trade policy review; emphasises international norms and transparent standards to promote quality infrastructure and network interoperability; calls on the Commission to make existing agreements more ambitious by systematically including standardisation policy in bilateral partnerships and trade agreements in order to promote multilateral standard setting and the broad uptake of internationally agreed standards and transparent regulatory cooperation in full compliance with the right to regulate;
48. Is of the view that the EU model of standardisation policy has the advantage of being innovative, open and inclusive, and must be enabled to continue to cope with the global competition between different standardisation paradigms; expects the Commission to play a proactive role in promoting standardisation policy; recommends, therefore, that coordinating responsibility for EU standardisation policy should be given to a high-ranking Commission official, ideally the Commissioner for the internal market; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to coordinate more closely with like-minded democratic partners in international standard-setting forums in order to promote international standards that support democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights;

### *Health*

49. Believes that the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the urgency of prioritising the health sector as a new crucial area for cooperation, in particular on the resilience of health systems, access to medicines, medical equipment and vaccines, reinforcing the strategic autonomy of the EU in the area of health, avoiding one-sided dependencies, and ensuring safe and diverse pharmaceutical and health-related industrial supply chains, the exchange of best practices in crisis management and pandemic prevention policies, and reciprocity in managing travel and open borders; proposes linking the efforts of the EU's health union with the Strategy and partnering with other regional mechanisms such as an ASEAN Infectious Disease Control Centre; emphasises that the



EU should use health connectivity to learn from successful examples of pandemic management by like-minded partners such as New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan;

50. Highlights the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic regarding the importance of coordinated measures to ensure that global transportation routes and supply chains remain open and secure;

### *Security*

51. Is convinced that the Strategy's security dimension must be urgently developed taking into account the risks that connectivity could be weaponised; emphasises the need for a geopolitical approach to global cooperation in order for the EU to successfully face up to the new security challenges, including cybersecurity, digital connectivity, critical infrastructure and the potential dual use of technology; underlines the seriousness of the terrorist threats; highlights growing security concerns in the European Neighbourhood; urges the EEAS and the Member States to play a more proactive role in these issues;
52. Emphasises the need to develop a stronger security dimension in our partnership with Africa; recalls the 2018 Council conclusions on enhanced EU security cooperation in and with Asia; takes note of the increasing relevance to the EU of security concerns in the Indo-Pacific region, as expressed in the Member States' Indo-Pacific strategies; supports the initiative of developing a common EU Indo-Pacific strategy and cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific region, including military-to-military exchanges; believes that openness, prosperity, inclusiveness, sustainability, transparency, reciprocity and viability should be guiding principles in the cooperation with the Indo-Pacific region;

### *Connectivity partnerships*

53. Strongly welcomes 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; hopes that 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;
54. Welcomes the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, which entered into force on 1 February 2019, and the increased coordination between the EIB, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), in particular on financing green connectivity; considers the Western Balkans and Southeast Asia as providing very good opportunities for Japan-EU connectivity cooperation with third partners; sees great potential for private sector involvement including SMEs; advocates, moreover, looking at security aspects of connectivity cooperation between Japan and the EU, including maritime security;
55. Strongly welcomes ongoing negotiations for building a connectivity partnership with India; hopes that the rotating European Council presidencies and the forthcoming Indian and Italian G20 presidencies will use their leverage to make progress; notes the South Asia Regional Infrastructure Connectivity Initiative; takes note of India's participation

in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC); considers, in view of the current circumstances, that India should play a greater role and that deeper cooperation between the EU and the South Asian states must be sought; advocates helping to coordinate the various connectivity strategies in Asia, of which the World Bank has counted 16 in total;

56. Recalls that both the Russian Federation and Turkey also have interests in becoming stakeholders in EU-Asia connectivity; is willing to partner with them where possible; recognises that countries in Central Asia have benefited significantly from greater integration in the global economy over the past two decades; is of the opinion that the EU should play a much bigger role and become one of the key players in the region, using trade and investment as a driver for shared prosperity; expresses concern that projects funded by China in Central Asia lack transparency; insists on prioritising high labour and environmental standards and ensuring debt sustainability;
57. Welcomes the exploratory exchanges between the EU and Korea on a connectivity partnership and hopes good headway will be made on this in 2021; advocates the establishment of an EU-ASEAN connectivity partnership in order to link with ASEAN's existing master plan on connectivity and project pipeline, among other objectives; recognises that as the ASEAN region is the EU's third largest trading partner after the US and China, there will be significant benefits to EU exporters of ensuring better market access and enhancing cooperation through comprehensive partnership agreements; advocates a regional EU-ASEAN free trade agreement; encourages the use of investments to reduce deforestation and diversify sustainable agriculture;
58. Takes note of Australia's regional connectivity policy initiatives and the EU's exchanges with Australia on connectivity in geographical areas of interest; urges closer cooperation with Australia in order to show solidarity between democracies; sees potential for cooperation with partners in the Mekong river basin;
59. Highlights the need for connectivity cooperation with Taiwan with a view to learning from its best practices in handling the COVID-19 pandemic, enhancing people-to-people contacts, narrowing the digital gap in the Southeast Asia region, and exploring the option of an EU-Taiwan investment agreement;
60. Calls on the Commission to assess the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement and China's role therein;
61. Expresses its firm belief that the EU should strengthen cooperation with the US; welcomes the US-initiated Blue Dot Network (BDN) concept; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to engage with the US on the BDN in order to strengthen transatlantic cooperation on rules-based and sustainable connectivity, while also highlighting concerns with regard to the latter; hopes for future cooperation with particular regard to upholding high quality standards for connectivity projects and fostering private sector involvement;
62. Endorses the commitments to strengthen the partnership between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean as highlighted in the 2019 joint communication, including on the digital economy and connectivity; stresses the importance of reinforcing the



partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean, which fully share European fundamental values and interests;

63. Points out that the EU has worked with China in the context of the EU-China Connectivity Platform, with moderate results; regards the Belt and Road Initiative as being at the centre of China's assertive foreign policy; is willing to consider a partnership with the Belt and Road Initiative in specific cases where this does not compromise core EU principles, where the initiative meets international standards, and where the projects involved are scrutinised by the Commission to ensure they comply with EU norms and standards such as social, environmental and fiscal standards and sustainability, transparency, inclusiveness, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and reciprocity in order not to increase international leverage for the strong-arming of third countries and in order to ensure the integrity of the common market and the political cohesion of the EU; considers, in this context, that focus should be placed on improving Eurasian transport infrastructure, in particular multimodal and sustainable transport;
64. Highlights the importance of the ongoing work of the EU-China Connectivity Platform in its efforts to explore opportunities for cooperation in the area of transport between the EU's extended TEN-T network and the Belt and Road Initiative; underlines the necessity of a global and comprehensive approach to ensure free and fair competition for businesses in the area of transport infrastructure development with China, including full transparency and a level playing field; underlines, in this connection, the need to make contractual clauses in this area as transparent as possible and to uphold the essential interests of the EU;
65. Notes that connectivity policies should reduce negative externalities, such as environmental impacts and pollution; highlights the importance of sustainability throughout the Strategy; encourages the EU to engage with Asian partner countries to make transport connectivity with Asia safer and more secure, not least in the field of data flows, mobility and cybersecurity;
66. Underlines the importance of Europe's outermost regions, especially those closer to Asia, and highlights their economic potential; encourages the Commission to facilitate investments in those territories in order to strengthen their connectivity and boost their economies;
67. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to develop robust monitoring capabilities in the connectivity strategies of other countries and regions, including as regards the financial resources actually deployed, the effects on financial stability, sustainable development, and adherence to human rights, the rule of law, good governance, and the principles of multilateralism; emphasises the potential of Team Europe in finding synergies in the EU and Member States' connectivity efforts; advocates working together with partner countries to monitor long-term effects on structural policies, industrial and economic improvements and the alleviation of poverty;

### ***Global connectivity***

68. Strongly emphasises 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; expects

these endeavours to reflect the EU's experience with policies promoting connectivity implemented in Africa through development cooperation; calls for this goal to be discussed with the African Union at a high level and for it to yield an EU-Africa connectivity partnership by the end of 2021;

69. Commends the Commission and the VP/HR for their willingness to put forward an Arctic strategy in 2021 and calls for the EU to be actively engaged in the Arctic; expresses its concern over the impact of climate change on this fragile region; takes particular note of the potential opening of a new shipping route to Asia due to the melting of sea ice, which could also be used for digital links such as fibre-optic cables, and takes note of China's Arctic Silk Road initiative; expects sustainable connectivity to be at the heart of these efforts;
70. Notes the success of the first Europa Connectivity Forum in 2019; regrets the cancellation of the forum in 2020 owing to COVID-19; looks forward to the next forum in 2021, pandemic permitting; is of the opinion that upcoming forums should be used to involve all Eurasian connectivity partners, including Russia and China, in multilateral discussions about their respective visions for the future economic, political and security order in Eurasia;
71. Expects the Commission to 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; strongly calls for a rebranding of the EU's Connectivity Strategy in clear and attractive language and terms that express the specific values-based European approach to connectivity, and a clear roadmap for implementing and achieving the Strategy;
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  - ◦
72. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States, and the EU's Connectivity Partners.

10.11.2020

## OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on connectivity and EU-Asia relations  
(2020/2115(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Seán Kelly

(\*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

### SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Acknowledges that Asia is home to the world's largest populations and fastest-growing economies; believes that trade policy should be instrumental in achieving the objectives of the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy and that the EU should prioritise increasing efficient and sustainable connectivity between the EU and Asia, with an open, fair, rules-based multilateral trading system that ensures a level playing field, sustainable development, multilateralism, transparency, international standards and reciprocity, which would play a key role in global stability, regional prosperity and mutual economic sustainable growth; considers, moreover, that beneficial integration is an important factor in the recovery from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic;
2. Regrets the fact that several countries in Asia still apply unjustified protectionist economic policies in certain sectors, creating an unfair playing field for European businesses; stresses that the Connectivity Strategy should go hand in hand with efforts to increase access to respective markets, including public procurement, and promote an open and transparent investment environment, unlocking opportunities and contributing to global competitiveness; notes that allowing free trade flows strengthens economic resilience and the availability of products through the diversification of supply chains, as well as strengthening regional integration; stresses the need to enhance cooperation on due diligence, intellectual property provisions and geographical indications (GIs); recalls that the EU and Asia are important partners on sustainable development, notably on the delivery of the UN 2030 Agenda, and that the promotion of efficient and sustainable connectivity is an essential element, together with trade, of a broader strategic partnership with Asian partners; notes that European and Asian countries should continue to pursue multilateral efforts and region-to-region dialogue where

possible in order to foster sustainable and rules-based economic networks in Eurasia; is of the view that the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) should employ a more strategic approach to the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), including by stepping up action at the highest political level to strengthen its effectiveness vis-à-vis standards on human rights, international labour the environment and good governance;

3. Believes that under the Commission's strategy of open strategic autonomy, supply chain resilience will be bolstered through a trusted network of actors who can be reliable partners to develop common risk coordination mechanisms, methods and standards for assessment, share information and expectations, and engage in active dialogue with governments, firms and investors; is of the opinion that efficient and sustainable connections and networks between Europe and Asia through priority transport corridors, including air, sea and land transport, and a high-capacity network of digital, energy and people-to-people tools, as well as more efficient and reliable customs procedures that build on digitalisation and administrative simplification, will increase trade flows and data transfers between the EU and Asia in a sustainable manner; considers that provisions on e-commerce and digital trade in trade agreements should serve the objectives of the digital pillar of the Connectivity Strategy; notes, with regard to data flows, that the EU side has already tabled proposals in negotiations with Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and Chile, which should also be building blocks for other plurilateral or multilateral initiatives in line with data protection and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); notes that the adequacy decision on Japan sets an example for furthering digital integration; acknowledges the existence of an investment gap in connectivity and recognises the need to mobilise and strengthen cooperation with private investors, national and international institutions, and multilateral development banks and other stakeholders, including with a view to identifying concrete flagship initiatives; stresses that facilitating trade between the EU and Asian partners through improved connectivity should also serve to strengthen customs performance and management, notably in enforcing intellectual property rights (IPR) as a tool to fight fraud and prevent counterfeit goods from entering the single market;
4. Is willing to consider, in some specific cases where EU principles are not compromised, cooperation with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in order to build connectivity across economic corridors, including engaging with China to ensure the BRI meets international standards; emphasises that it is vital to secure fair competition on third markets by upholding multilateral economic governance practices; is of the view that the Commission should further analyse the potential synergies with China and Japan in connecting their efforts with the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) corridor studies to prevent possible bottlenecks and transport constraints; underlines the importance of the EU's strategic relationship with China and calls on the Member States and EU institutions to address China with one voice and employ a coordinated approach; reiterates its call on China to move forward with an ambitious reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO), including comprehensive rules on industrial subsidies, and recognises the concerns over market-distorting practices by Chinese state-owned enterprises, forced technology transfers and data localisation, overcapacities and related dumped exports, and other unfair trading practices; believes that extending the level playing field to third markets is of paramount importance for the long-term opportunities of European businesses;

5. Recalls the potential of new Arctic shipping routes for reducing the time and distance between Europe and Asia by up to 40 % and creating new trading hubs, which could have a significant impact on trade flows; underlines that through a comprehensive Arctic Strategy, the EU must actively engage in the Arctic region while promoting sustainable development and environmental objectives, ensuring that new routes are in line with international rules and norms so as to prevent any additional pressure on the Arctic ecosystem;
6. Underlines the importance of the existing network of bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements and the bilateral cooperation between the EU and Asian partners, with successful examples of strategic partnerships in Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Singapore; recognises that as the ASEAN region is the EU's third largest trading partner outside Europe after the US and China, there will be significant benefits for EU exporters in ensuring better market access and enhancing cooperation through comprehensive partnerships agreements; welcomes the new GI Agreement and the possibility of developing stronger cooperation with China, such as through the Comprehensive Agreement on Investments; calls on the Commission to start its scoping exercise and impact assessments and open negotiations for a Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) with Taiwan; takes note of the decision to suspend the Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme with Cambodia and underlines its concern over the human rights situation in the country; calls on the Commission to come up with a clear strategy in this regard and urges Cambodia to engage with the Commission and address key areas of concern, with the aim of reinstating the country on the scheme;
7. Regrets the fact that the EU's Connecting Europe and Asia Strategy has not attracted the same attention as the BRI in Central Asia in terms of connectivity in the region; supports the Commission's efforts to dismantle trade barriers, which are underpinned by the pursuit of sustainable, rules-based connectivity and include tackling non-physical and regulatory barriers to movement as well as infrastructure; recognises that countries in Central Asia have benefited significantly from greater integration in the global economy over the past two decades; opines that the EU should play a much bigger role and become one of the key players in the region, using trade and investment as a driver of growth and contributing to shared prosperity; expresses concern that projects funded by China in Central Asia lack transparency as far as their bidding processes are concerned and are in the vast majority of cases completed by Chinese companies that are significantly less open to local or international companies; calls on China to increase reciprocity, in particular in the infrastructure sector, and to improve transparency, prioritise high labour and environmental standards and ensure debt sustainability;
8. Calls on the Commission to ensure that trade agreements are implemented properly and to make existing agreements more ambitious by strengthening provisions on standardisation with transparent regulatory cooperation and by promoting sustainable EU norms and international environmental, sustainability and social standards in light of the review of the Commission's 15-point action plan<sup>4</sup> and discussions in the Council on trade and sustainable development (TSD); calls on the Commission to implement trade defence instruments in full to ensure that European businesses are not subjected to unfair trading practices, to tackle distortions in prices and costs that are not a result of free market forces, and to implement TSD chapters effectively in line with the Paris

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<sup>4</sup>[http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/february/tradoc\\_156618.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/february/tradoc_156618.pdf)

Agreement, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and ILO Conventions with a view to developing the Connectivity Strategy and pursuing sustainable integration.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	10.11.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 39 -: 1 0: 2
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Barry Andrews, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Tiziana Beghin, Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Udo Bullmann, Jordi Cañas, Daniel Caspary, Miroslav Číž, Arnaud Danjean, Paolo De Castro, Emmanouil Fragkos, Raphaël Glucksmann, Markéta Gregorová, Enikő Győri, Roman Haider, Christophe Hansen, Heidi Hautala, Danuta Maria Hübner, Herve Juvin, Karin Karlsbro, Maximilian Krah, Bernd Lange, Gabriel Mato, Sara Matthieu, Emmanuel Maurel, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó, Samira Rafaela, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Massimiliano Salini, Helmut Scholz, Liesje Schreinemacher, Sven Simon, Dominik Tarczyński, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Jan Zahradil
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Marek Belka, Jean-Lin Lacapelle

**FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL  
IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION**

39	+
EPP	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Daniel Caspary, Arnaud Danjean, Enikő Győri, Christophe Hansen, Danuta Maria Hübner, Gabriel Mato, Massimiliano Salini, Sven Simon, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler
S&D	Udo Bullmann, Miroslav Číž, Paolo De Castro, Raphaël Glucksmann, Bernd Lange, Marek Belka, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt,
RENEW	Barry Andrews, Jordi Cañas, Karin Karlsbro, Samira Rafaela, Liesje Schreinemacher, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne
ID	Roman Haider , Herve Juvin, Jean-Lin Lacapelle
GREENS	Saskia Bricmont, Markéta Gregorová, Heidi Hautala, Sara Matthieu
ECR	Geert Bourgeois, Emmanouil Fragkos, Dominik Tarczyński, Jan Zahradil
NI	Tiziana Beghin, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó

1	-
ID	Maximilian Krah

2	0
GUE	Emmanuel Maurel, Helmut Scholz

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention



2.12.2020

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM**

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on connectivity and EU-Asia relations  
(2020/2115(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion (\*): Angel Dzhambazki

(\*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas global actors have recognised in recent years the potential of transport connectivity and have taken the lead in pursuing a strategic development of global infrastructure; whereas a first step in this regard at EU level was taken in autumn 2018 with the adoption of the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy;
- B. whereas contemporary transport is becoming increasingly multimodal and new opportunities for improving and further developing EU-Asia transport networks are arising, particularly in the rail and maritime sectors;
- C. whereas the COVID-19 crisis has shown that transport continuity with Asia has been essential to guarantee the supply chain for all types of goods during the pandemic;
- D. whereas the EU-Asia transport links are unequalled anywhere else in the world in terms of freight volumes and distances travelled and it is necessary to factor in the variety of territories crossed and their stability in order to guarantee the safety and security of whatever mode of transport is used;
- E. whereas the promotion of EU-wide rules, such as EU State aid control and procurement rules should be enhanced; whereas there is a need for reciprocity in the accessibility of public procurement across partners; whereas the EU should ensure that procurement processes are open and transparent in order for companies to enjoy a level playing field, regardless of their nationality;
- F. whereas, in view of EU green transition objectives, it is necessary to reflect on greenhouse gas emissions along EU-Asia transport routes; whereas the use of sustainable transport modes could have a considerable impact on these emissions given

the large volumes of freight; whereas in order not to hamper the efficiency of road transport connections, particular attention should be paid to the transition to alternative energy (electricity or hydrogen) for transport purposes;

1. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to ensure proper implementation of the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy following concrete policy proposals and initiatives to improve connections between Europe and Asia and by providing an effective political governance mechanism that could make the EU a rule setter in transport connectivity, while promoting EU principles such as transparency, good governance, sustainability, reciprocity and fair competition on a level playing field, democracy, and human rights; notes that Asia is the EU's biggest trade partner and that EU-Asia connectivity is therefore of economic as well as geopolitical importance; notes that China is a systemic rival of the European Union and that infrastructure projects have a role in China's long-term policy strategy; notes that the EU should continue to promote open and transparent procurement processes where all companies should enjoy a level playing field, regardless of their nationality;
2. Highlights the importance of the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore recognises the importance of a coordinated restoration of cross-border flows of goods, transport workers, services and capital to ensure that global transportation routes and supply chains remain open and secure; calls on the Commission to promote digitalisation and simplification of administrative procedures in order to enable interoperability of transport networks and trade across borders;
3. Strongly encourages a coordinated global approach by working closely with third countries to restore and maintain connectivity, resilient transportation infrastructure and industry in support of the global supply chain; stresses therefore that the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 should continue encouraging investments in connectivity with tools such as an investment framework for external action or geographical investment facilities, such as the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF), the Investment Facility for Central Asia (IFCA) and the Asia Investment Facility (AIF);
4. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to define and apply as an integral part of the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy a minimum set of standards on environmental, health and passenger rights issues, in order to ensure that the Union is a norm-setter; encourages the Commission to set specific rules to ensure that the principles of sustainability and comprehensive, rules-based connectivity are taken into consideration and respected by all the EU's partners; underlines that the EU and Asia could work better together in order to improve the regulatory environment, public financial management and the mobilisation of domestic resources; underlines the EU's commitment to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, including through the promotion of a circular economy and climate-resilient investments; welcomes collaboration based on these principles between different EU and Asian initiatives, such as the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), and welcomes furthermore the promotion of new collaboration initiatives in the field of sustainable transport with important Asian partners such as India and Central-Asia;
5. Welcomes the adoption of the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western

Balkans and the ongoing extension of the EU's Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries, which is to be viewed as a key part of the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy, given its geographical position; calls on the Commission to speed up the review process of TEN-T and its external dimension, to consider the appointment of a special TEN-T coordinator for the Enlargement and Eastern Partnership countries, and to come up with a comprehensive transport initiative to connect TEN-T with strategic networks in Asia;

6. Stresses the importance of vigilance regarding the use of EU funding for infrastructure projects that could be awarded to companies in third countries despite the closure of their own public procurement markets to their European counterparts, focusing also on environmental, economic and social sustainability and creating real added value; calls on the Commission to closely observe and coordinate countries' efforts to implement existing TEN-T extension plans;
7. Highlights the importance of rail connections and their future role in terms of investment perspectives; points out the necessity of ensuring a unified legal regime for the carriage of goods by rail across the Eurasian continent; calls for the extension of the application of the EU's technical specifications and for the creation of new economic prospects by opening up markets and promoting investment opportunities;
8. Calls on the Commission to propose EU co-financing possibilities for the installation and upgrading of transshipment terminals in order to increase capacity on the existing trans-Eurasian rail corridors; calls on the Commission to exploit the superior safety record of dangerous goods transport by rail and ensure that the Chinese authorities in particular confirm the opening of China-EU rail services for the transport of dangerous goods in line with the necessary safety measures and corresponding guidelines under Annex 2 to the SMGS<sup>0</sup> circulated by the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF); calls on the Commission, with the help of the European rail agency (ERA), to foster Euro-Asian rail transport by harmonising existing differences in legal rules for such transport;
9. Stresses the importance of the ongoing negotiations of comprehensive air transport agreements with partner countries in Asia, and of ensuring that these agreements address environmental concerns; calls in particular for a swift conclusion of the agreement between the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is expected to connect more than a billion citizens; recalls that the air agreement envisaged between the EU and ASEAN is not intended to lead to unfair competition between companies but to have the opposite effect – creating fair and transparent market conditions based on a clear regulatory framework and upholding, in particular, the EU's high standards as regards protection of air transport workers rights, safety, security, air traffic management, and social, consumer and environmental protection; strongly encourages further research and innovation in sustainable fuel for the aviation sector;
10. Notes that reciprocal overflight authorisations contribute to the fluidity of international trade; highlights the importance of EU support to Asian countries in mitigating the

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<sup>0</sup> Agreement concerning International Goods Transport by Rail of the Organisation for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD).

impact of civil aviation on climate change;

11. Calls on the Commission to pursue further progress in its maritime transport initiatives to digitalise and simplify administrative formalities and strengthen maritime security at ports in Asia via the International Maritime Organization and through maritime transport agreements; calls on the Commission to promote the use of alternative fuels in ports in Europe and Asia; highlights the importance of further engaging with third countries in Asia through pertinent maritime transport agreements, which would help to regulate and facilitate maritime transport and make it more sustainable;
12. Underlines that the EU is committed to freedom of navigation and sustainable governance of oceans and seas; highlights the importance of safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans around the world; calls for the EU to ensure that its Asian partners transition to sustainable blue economies that respect biodiversity and the environment;
13. Notes the dramatic situation of stranded sailors during the COVID-19 outbreak; regrets that political tensions or piracy in certain international maritime areas are jeopardising freedom of navigation on international routes;
14. Stresses that the connectivity strategy must ensure that hauliers from Asia must adhere to Union legislation in the road transport sector; calls for cooperation between the Commission and Member States with regard to enforcement of Union and national legislation in the sector;
15. Highlights the importance of the ongoing work of the EU-China Connectivity Platform in its efforts to explore opportunities for cooperation in the area of transport between the EU's extended TEN-T network and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); acknowledges the importance of working towards achieving full transparency, adherence to rules, reciprocity in market access and a level playing field; underlines the necessity of a global and comprehensive approach to ensure free and fair trade for businesses in the area of transport infrastructure development with China; welcomes collaboration based on these principles between different EU and Asian initiatives; looks forward to the implementation of the joint study to be launched by the Connectivity Platform on sustainable railway-based transport corridors between Europe and China;
16. Recognises the new assertive nature of Chinese foreign policy and the role of the BRI and its connectivity drive westwards; in the light of this, underlines the need to pursue a coordinated EU policy towards the BRI; notes the need for Europe to preserve its strategic infrastructure from foreign takeovers as a matter of sovereignty; underlines, in this connection, the need for contractual clauses in this area to be made as transparent as possible and to uphold the essential interests of the Union;
17. Encourages the Commission to take measures to concretely ensure fair and transparent competition between companies; stresses the need to ensure that Europeans can always access a large choice of operators and facilities; notes that connectivity policies should reduce negative externalities, such as environmental impact and pollution; highlights the importance of sustainability throughout this strategy;

18. Underlines the importance of digital infrastructure and high-capacity network lines for connectivity and the importance of data safety as the mobility of people and goods relies extensively on data transfer; calls for adequate security and cybersecurity in managing these flows; recalls that these challenges cannot be addressed solely through national policies; therefore calls for the EU to engage with Asian partner countries to make transport connectivity with Asia safer and more secure;
19. Underlines the importance of the EU's outermost regions, especially those that are closer to Asia, and highlights their economic potential; encourages the Commission to facilitate investments in those territories in order to strengthen their connectivity and boost their economy;
20. Calls for full transparency on the construction contract for the Budapest-Belgrade high-speed rail track; calls for the details of the contract and its awarding terms to be declassified and published.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	1.12.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 42 -: 1 0: 6
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Magdalena Adamowicz, Andris Ameriks, José Ramón Bauzá Díaz, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Marco Campomenosi, Massimo Casanova, Ciarán Cuffe, Jakop G. Dalunde, Johan Danielsson, Andor Deli, Karima Delli, Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Ismail Ertug, Gheorghe Falcă, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Mario Furore, Søren Gade, Isabel García Muñoz, Jens Gieseke, Elsi Katainen, Elena Kountoura, Julie Lechanteux, Bogusław Liberadzki, Peter Lundgren, Benoît Lutgen, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Tilly Metz, Giuseppe Milazzo, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Caroline Nagtegaal, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Philippe Olivier, Rovana Plumb, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Dominique Riquet, Dorien Rookmaker, Massimiliano Salini, Vera Tax, Barbara Thaler, István Ujhelyi, Petar Vitanov, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Lucia Vuolo, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Leila Chaibi, Anne-Sophie Pelletier, Markus Pieper

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

42	+
ECR	Peter Lundgren, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski
GUE/NGL	Leila Chaibi, Anne-Sophie Pelletier
NI	Mario Furore
PPE	Magdalena Adamowicz, Andor Deli, Gheorghe Falcă, Jens Gieseke, Benoît Lutgen, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Giuseppe Milazzo, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Markus Pieper, Massimiliano Salini, Barbara Thaler, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Renew	José Ramón Bauzá Díaz, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Søren Gade, Elsi Katainen, Caroline Nagtegaal, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Dominique Riquet
S&D	Andris Ameriks, Johan Danielsson, Ismail Ertug, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Isabel García Muñoz, Bogusław Liberadzki, Rovana Plumb, Vera Tax, István Ujhelyi, Petar Vitanov
Verts/ALE	Ciarán Cuffe, Jakop G. Dalunde, Karima Delli, Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Tilly Metz

1	-
NI	Dorien Rookmaker

6	0
GUE/NGL	Elena Kountoura
ID	Marco Campomenosi, Massimo Casanova, Julie Lechanteux, Philippe Olivier, Lucia Vuolo

### Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention





## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	10.12.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 54 -: 2 0: 12
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Alviina Alametsä, Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Lars Patrick Berg, Anna Bonfrisco, Reinhard Bütikofer, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Susanna Ceccardi, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Katalin Cseh, Tanja Fajon, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Kinga Gál, Sunčana Glavak, Raphaël Glucksmann, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Márton Gyöngyösi, Karol Karski, Dietmar Köster, Andrius Kubilius, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Nathalie Loiseau, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Jaak Madison, Claudiu Manda, Lukas Mandl, Thierry Mariani, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Sven Mikser, Francisco José Millán Mon, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Urmas Paet, Demetris Papadakis, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Manu Pineda, Kati Piri, Giuliano Pisapia, Jérôme Rivière, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Andreas Schieder, Radosław Sikorski, Jordi Solé, Sergei Stanishev, Tineke Strik, Hermann Tertsch, Hilde Vautmans, Harald Vilimsky, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz, Thomas Waitz, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Salima Yenbou, Željana Zovko
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Andor Deli, Markéta Gregorová, Bart Groothuis

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

54	+
EPP	Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Traian Băsescu, Andor Deli, Michael Gahler, Sunčana Glavak, Kinga Gál, Andrius Kubilius, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Lukas Mandl, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Radosław Sikorski, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Željana Zovko
S&D	Maria Arena, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Tanja Fajon, Raphaël Glucksmann, Dietmar Köster, Claudiu Manda, Sven Mikser, Demetris Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Kati Piri, Giuliano Pisapia, Isabel Santos, Andreas Schieder, Sergei Stanishev, Nacho Sánchez Amor
Renew	Petras Auštrevičius, Katalin Cseh, Bart Groothuis, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Nathalie Loiseau, Urmas Paet, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Hilde Vautmans
GREENS	Alviina Alametsä, Reinhard Bütikofer, Markéta Gregorová, Jordi Solé, Tineke Strik, Thomas Waitz, Salima Yenbou
GUE	Manu Pineda, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz
NI	Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Márton Gyöngyösi

2	-
ID	Lars Patrick Berg
NI	Kostas Papadakis

12	0
ID	Anna Bonfrisco, Susanna Ceccardi, Jaak Madison, Thierry Mariani, Jérôme Rivière, Harald Vilimsky
ECR	Anna Fotyga, Karol Karski, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Hermann Tertsch, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers

### Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention