



European Commission



A United Union based on solidarity

May 2019

TOWARDS A MORE UNITED, STRONGER AND MORE DEMOCRATIC UNION



'As candidate for President of the European Commission, I see it as my key task to rebuild bridges in Europe after the crisis. To restore European citizens' confidence. To focus our policies on the key challenges ahead for our economies and for our societies.'

Then candidate for European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, 15 July 2014

With Member States occasionally pulling in opposite directions, President Juncker and the Members of the College have acted in the European interest, bringing leaders together to broker agreements on complicated and emotional issues.

MANAGING CONFLICTS AND AVOIDING CRISES

Managing the Greek Eurozone crisis

President Juncker was central to **resolving the Eurozone crisis**, battling day and night to avoid a calamitous Greek exit from the single currency, and maintaining economic stability across Europe.

President Juncker maintained constant contact with the Greek Prime Minister, other EU leaders and the European Parliament to ensure that the Commission offered all possible technical and political support to resolving the crisis. He repeatedly stated his belief that Greece should not be pushed towards the exit door of the Eurozone, and that the unity of the single currency and the dignity of the Greek people should be preserved.

With the Eurozone crisis and Greek drama overcome, President Juncker's position has been vindicated. The situation in Greece is now even better than projected.

In 2016, the country dramatically outperformed its primary surplus target. The Greek economy is now predicted to grow at 2.5% in 2018 and 2019.



President Juncker, Euro Summit, 7 July 2015

Economic Forecast for Greece **2.5% growth** in 2018 and 2019



Migration crisis in the Western Balkans

In the Western Balkans, when relations were strained between neighbouring countries at the height of the 2015 migration crisis, the Commission called an extraordinary meeting of Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Hosted at the Commission's Berlaymont Headquarters, the meeting brokered agreements on information and responsibility sharing to effectively manage the multiple borders in the region and deal humanely with the arrival of vulnerable asylum seekers.

The Commission's coordinating role continues, with regular videoconferences organised at political level between the Commission and national contact points from the leaders' offices and operational departments.



Angela Merkel, Jean-Claude Juncker and António Guterres, 25 October 2015

The Almaraz Case

In 2017, Portugal and Spain were divided over the controversial construction of a nuclear waste landfill site near the Portuguese-Spanish border, at **Almaraz**. President Juncker brought the Portuguese and Spanish Prime Ministers together to reach an amicable settlement.



António Costa, Portuguese Prime Minister, Jean-Claude Juncker and Mariano Rajoy Brey, Spanish Prime Minister (from left to right), 29 April 2017 →

BOOSTING SECURITY

RescEU - A European system to tackle natural disasters

From floods and storms, to forest fires and earthquakes, recent years have been tragic for Europe with almost 100 people losing their lives due to natural disasters. Damaging homes and infrastructure, the economic costs of natural disasters are huge: close to €10 billion were recorded in 2016. Between 2016 and 2018, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated 78 times.

To better protect citizens from disasters and strengthen both response and preparedness, the EU adopted rescEU in March 2019. rescEU upgrades the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, establishing a new European reserve of capacities that initially includes firefighting planes and helicopters. RescEU also aims to respond to other emergencies in the future, such as medical emergencies, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies.

These EU resources will complement national assets and will be managed by the Commission to support countries hit by such disasters.



Between 2016 and 2018, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated 78 times.



Civil protection exercise 'EUrban Water Aid Project', Hungary, 5 April 2017

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The EU Solidarity Fund

When a Member State is hit by a natural disaster, the EU first gives a helping hand with its emergency response instruments and then with financial aid for reconstruction in the long term.

The EU Solidarity Fund can be used to support reconstruction efforts and cover some of the costs of emergency services, temporary accommodation, clean-up operations and protection of cultural heritage, in order to relieve the financial burden borne by national authorities.

Since the beginning of the Juncker Commission, €2 billion from the EU Solidarity Fund have been paid to disaster-stricken countries and regions.

Following the tragic earthquakes that hit central Italy in 2016 and 2017, the Commission mobilised a record €1.2 billion under the EU Solidarity Fund.

Emergency support for border management

In September 2016, President Juncker announced that the European Commission was fast-tracking requests from the Bulgarian authorities, and had decided to award **€108 million in emergency funding** to strengthen the management of migration flows.

The funding was used to increase reception capacities and the capacities of the asylum service as well as strengthen border surveillance and border control activities.

The Commission's rapid intervention showed our commitment to treating the external border of one Member State as the external border of all Member States.

Funding awarded to Bulgaria since this announcement now stands at over €150 million.



€150 million in emergency funding to strengthen the management of migration flows in Bulgaria

A Europe that protects - Systematic Schengen border checks



In April 2017 the EU introduced new measures for **systematic checks at the Schengen border**, in the interests of both security and migration management.

These commonly agreed rules were part of the legislative response to the Paris attacks and ensure that nobody can enter or leave the Schengen area without being checked against security databases.

Immediately after the new rules came into force, there were tensions at the Slovenian-Croatian border. President Juncker intervened to mediate. In the margins of the European Council, he spoke with the Prime Ministers of Slovenia and Croatia, Miro Cerar and Andrej Plenković, and they agreed that EU law reinforcing the controls at the Schengen borders and enhancing the security of our Union must be applied and implemented.

With Commission support, technical measures were proposed and a system put in place for targeted checks on specific occasions.

These measures helped to:



ease tensions



allow a smoother management of the border



less delays for travellers

Managing Denmark's Europol departure

Following the referendum in Denmark on **Europol** membership in December 2015, President Juncker worked closely with President Tusk and Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen to agree on operational arrangements to minimise the negative impact of Denmark's departure from Europol.

After the referendum, Denmark could no longer get access to Europol's data repositories, or participate in Europol's operational work and databases.

The agreement reached in April 2017 was for the mutual benefit of Denmark and the rest of the EU in combatting cross-border serious and organised crime and international terrorism.

President Juncker led the efforts to agree a tailor-made arrangement allowing for cooperation, including the exchange of operational data, deployment of liaison officers, and full alignment with European data protection rules.

Denmark now has a unique status which allows for much closer ties with Europol without membership.



Donald Tusk, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Jean-Claude Juncker, 3 December 2015

CONNECTING EUROPEANS

The European Solidarity Corps

Announced by President Juncker in September 2016, the **European Solidarity Corps** gives 18-30 year olds the opportunity to do volunteer or paid work helping the community and wider society, while at the same time gaining invaluable life experience and job skills.

Participants have the opportunity to get experience in confronting challenging situations – from rebuilding communities after natural disasters to helping tackle issues such as social exclusion or helping welcome and integrate refugees and migrants.

Since the launch in December 2016...

124,000
young Europeans
signed up



14,250
placements already
organised



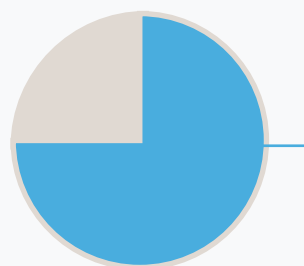
The Baltic Interconnector

The Baltic Interconnector gas pipeline is another example of the Juncker Commission uniting our nations around economic, strategic and citizen-friendly initiatives.

A first bidirectional gas pipeline is being built between Finland and Estonia thanks to grants of over €190 million from the Connecting Europe Facility, which will cover 75% of the project costs. This project will end the isolation of the Finnish gas market and boost the security of gas supply in the entire Eastern Baltic Sea region.

This is just one part of the strategic investment being supported in the region, which also includes the Gas Interconnector Poland–Lithuania (GIPL) and the Karksi project – the Estonia–Latvia interconnector – to which the Commission allocated a grant of €18.6 million.

Other projects include the strengthening of the transmission network between Lithuania and Latvia, the interconnector between Poland and Denmark (BalticPipe) and the expansion of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście, Poland. These projects are central to establishing a well operating gas market in the Baltic Sea region.



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