

## Plenary round-up – Brussels, February II 2018

The session's highlights included debates on the humanitarian situation in Syria, the outcome of the informal European Council, and activation of Article 7 (1) with regard to Poland. The European Commission also made statements on UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2018, the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, its former President Barroso's lobbying activities, and removal of third countries from the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes. Among the votes held, Parliament agreed to set up a new special committee on tax questions (TAXE 3) and elected a new vice-president.

### Syria, European Council and Article 7(1) TEU procedure in respect of Poland

Members discussed the humanitarian situation in Syria following a statement by President Tajani. Debate on the [outcome of the informal meeting of the European Council](#) concentrated on institutional issues: the future composition of the Parliament; the *Spitzenkandidaten* process; and the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The third issue in the debate with the Commission concerned its statement on the decision to activate Article 7 (1) TEU due to the situation with [the rule of law](#) in Poland.

### Spirit drinks: Definition, presentation, protection of geographical indications

The Commission proposes to update legislation regulating the [spirit drinks](#) sector and providing protection for local specialities, to align it with the provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Parliament adopted amendments to the proposal, based on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee report, in particular aimed at retaining Parliament's role in the procedure, moving registration of geographical indications of spirit drinks to an electronic register, and limiting sweetener levels. Parliament then voted to authorise the ENVI committee to open trilogue negotiations.

### Mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation

[Mandatory automatic exchange of information](#) aims at fighting tax avoidance and aggressive tax planning by increasing transparency of tax advice. Following the report of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, Parliament adopted a resolution, under the consultation procedure, seeking to strengthen the Commission's proposal, particularly on reporting, and to clarify exemptions for providers (intermediaries).

### Banking Union – Annual report 2017

Parliament adopted its resolution on the [2017 annual report on EU banking union](#), covering the single supervisory mechanism, single resolution mechanism and European deposit insurance scheme: completing banking union requires greater cooperation of national authorities to face emerging challenges to euro stability.

### EU-US Agreement on prudential measures regarding insurance and reinsurance

Parliament gave its consent to EU ratification of the Council decision on the conclusion of the [EU-US bilateral agreement](#) on prudential measures regarding insurance and reinsurance removing barriers to trade with the US for EU insurers and reinsurers. It will enter into force five years from the date of ratification.

### Opening of trilogue negotiations

The IMCO and ITRE committees announced their decisions to enter into interinstitutional negotiations on six legislative files; all were [confirmed](#), except that of ITRE concerning the proposal on the European defence industrial programme, which will be the subject of a vote at the March session.

*This 'at a glance' note is intended to review some of the highlights of the plenary part-session, and notably to follow up on key dossiers identified by EPRS. It does not aim to be exhaustive. For more detailed information on specific files, please see other EPRS products, notably our 'EU legislation in progress' briefings, and the plenary [minutes](#).*

