

Plenary round-up – Strasbourg, May II 2018

The May II plenary session highlights were the debate on the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework and own resources in the context of the publication of individual proposals for spending programmes, and the debate on the future of Europe with the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Xavier Bettel. Alpha Condé, President of Guinea and the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, also addressed Parliament. VP/HR Federica Mogherini's statements on the situation in the Gaza Strip, the status of Jerusalem, and the situation in Nicaragua were also discussed. Debates followed on US tariffs in the steel and aluminium sector, the use of pre-accession funds in Turkey and the impact of delocalisation on workers and regions. Parliament approved the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive, and the modernisation of the Trade Defence Instruments Regulation (at second reading), and a multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea. Parliament voted, inter alia, on a number of own-initiative reports on implementation of the interinstitutional agreement on better law-making, odometer manipulation in motor vehicles, gender equality and women's empowerment, and minimum standards on rights, support and protection for victims of crime.

MFF and own resources

Many Members expressed disappointment following statements from the Council and Commission on the [Multiannual Financial Framework](#) for 2021-2027 and own resources, for which the Commission adopted [overarching proposals](#) on 2 May, and a first set of individual proposals for spending programmes this week. Parliament opposed any budget cuts over the 2021-2027 period that would change EU agricultural and cohesion policy objectives, in a resolution deploring the lack of an ambitious scale of appropriations, and opposing 15 % and 10 % reductions in the appropriations for agriculture and cohesion respectively. Parliament stresses the overall total in percentage of GNI terms is lower than the current MFF in real terms and underlines the need for the Parliament and Council to agree a clear methodology.

Multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea

Over 70 % of fish caught by EU fishermen in the North Sea, worth more than €850 million, are species that live close to the seabed, such as cod and haddock. Parliament is particularly concerned that fisheries measures should be taken based on the best available scientific advice, with a view to managing fishing stocks to secure the long-term sustainability of the North Sea fisheries, including joint management with third countries in the region. Members approved at first reading a text agreed with Council on a [multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks](#).

Posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services

Parliament debated the agreement reached with the Council on the [revision of the Posting of Workers Directive](#), which was adopted with a majority that exceeded expectations (456 votes for, 147 votes against and 49 abstentions). Posting of workers is increasingly common in the internal market, particularly in the services sector, but such workers often find themselves at a disadvantage compared to their peers in their host country, through receiving lower wages and in a lack of legal protection. The Commission's proposed revisions to the 1996 directive that currently governs the treatment of posted workers, aim at adapting them to today's labour market and the needs of firms, while ensuring fair social protection for workers.

Modernisation of Trade Defence Instruments

Parliament approved the International Trade Committee's recommendation for a second reading of the new regulation on the protection against dumped and subsidised imports from countries not members of the EU. [Modernising trade defence instruments](#), which allow countries to counter unfair trade practices under World Trade Organization rules, is needed to ensure Anti-Dumping and Anti-Subsidy Regulations are fit for the fast evolving global trade environment. Key issues are the proposal for partial waiver of the 'lesser duty rule' (LDR) for vulnerable countries, and the introduction of interested party status for trade unions.

South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

Members voted at first reading on a text on the transposition of [management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Convention Area of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation](#), making the measures applicable to EU fishing vessels that fish in the area, to, among other things, control the types of nets used, reduce seabird capture, and manage fishing affecting the sea bottom.

Proliferation of corruption and crime through golden visas

Members discussed [EU values and the proliferation of corruption and crime through 'golden visas'](#), a practice whereby some EU countries offer citizenship or residence to persons who bring funding into their country. As the former also automatically confers EU citizenship, the equity of such schemes, and their possible links to corruption and crime, as well as the effect on other Member States, cause concern.

Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making

Parliament adopted its report [on the interpretation and implementation of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making](#), in force since 2016. Through their commitment to greater simplicity, clarity and consistency in Union legislation, and better coordination and transparency in the legislative process, the EU institutions have issued annual joint declarations on legislative priorities and improved access to information in the preparation of delegated acts. However, the report deems progress on other issues, such as information flow from the Council, and lack of transparency in Member States regarding their 'gold-plating' of EU law to be unsatisfactory.

Minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime

Members debated and adopted a report assessing the implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive – legislation ensuring EU-wide [protection and support for victims of crime](#). Parliament has long supported ensuring minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime throughout the EU, aiming at better protection against domestic violence and crimes such as stalking. However, some Member States have delayed introduction of the legislation, leading to differences in the treatment of victims.

EU solidarity fund amendment to the EU budget

Parliament amended [the EU budget](#) in order to provide €97.6 million in EU Solidarity Fund assistance for Greece, Spain, France and Portugal to help with the recovery from natural disasters, earthquakes, hurricanes, and catastrophic fires suffered in the course of 2017.

Odometer manipulation in motor vehicles

Parliament adopted a report on [revising the EU legal framework on odometer manipulation in motor vehicles](#) – or tampering with the mileage gauge in cars – on Thursday. The practice is particularly prevalent in the very large EU second-hand car market and poses risks to consumers, who are often unaware of the fraud, and to road safety. The report proposes that hardware solutions are introduced to protect new vehicles, that mileage recordings are made mandatory, and that long-term solutions are explored, as well as making odometer fraud an offence.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

Members adopted a resolution concerning the implementation of the Gender Action Plan, and particularly [transforming the lives of girls and women](#) through EU external relations in the development sphere, by ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment, including within the EU institutions themselves.

Opening of trilogue negotiations

Parliamentary committees' decisions to enter into interinstitutional (trilogue) negotiations were [confirmed](#) on a common procedure for international protection in the Union (Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee); on EMIR and ESMA regulations (Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee); and on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community (Transport and Tourism Committee).

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](#).

