

## Plenary round-up – Strasbourg, July 2018

The July plenary session highlights were: the continuation of the debate on the Future of Europe, this time with the Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, the discussion on the outcome of the European Council meeting of 28-29 June 2018, and the review of the Bulgarian and presentation of the activities of the Austrian Presidencies. The European Commission and Council participated in discussions on the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. VP/HR Federica Mogherini's statement on the migration crisis and humanitarian situation in Venezuela and at its borders was also discussed. Angola's President, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, addressed Parliament in a formal sitting. Parliament approved, inter alia, proposals for a European Travel Information and Authorisation System, a European Defence Industrial Development Programme, financial rules applicable to the general EU budget and two amending budgets for 2018. Parliament agreed on the conclusion of a partnership agreement between the EU and Armenia and approved the reform of the electoral law of the EU. Three reports on the social and market aspects of the first mobility package were rejected and sent back to the Transport and Tourism Committee.

### ETIAS

Parliament approved the trilogue agreement on proposals for a [European Travel Information and Authorisation System \(ETIAS\)](#) to manage information on third-country nationals travelling into the Schengen area. Parliament wants to ensure that the information used in the proposed online system to address the current lack of information about visa-exempt nationals travelling into Europe, is strictly relevant, and that the system is secure, transparent and accountable.

### Mobility Package

Parliament rejected the three reports, as amended, on postings, resting/driving times and cabotage (the [social and market rules in the mobility package](#)). Following a vote in the Transport and Tourism Committee (TRAN) on 4 June, and subsequent rejection of the negotiating mandates in plenary on 14 June, this new round of votes effectively returns the proposals to the committee.

While the majority of the TRAN committee voted in favour of enforcement requirements and specific rules for posting drivers in the road transport sector; and on daily and weekly driving times, minimum breaks and rest periods and positioning by means of tachographs, the Employment and Social Affairs Committee reintroduced its amendments to focus on drivers' working conditions in the road transport sector.

Members also largely approved a report on reducing charges on heavy-duty vehicles for the use of certain road infrastructure. This report is part of the mobility package and a special legislative procedure applies, in which Parliament is only consulted.

### Partnership Agreement between the EU and EAEC and Armenia

Parliament voted in favour of concluding the [Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and Armenia](#). Provisionally applied since 1 June 2018, the EU-Armenia Agreement was signed on 24 November 2017. In the non-legislative resolution adopted in parallel, Members considered the signature of this agreement to constitute an important step forward in EU and Armenia cooperation, and translates the commitment to deepening their political and economic relations.

### European Defence Industrial Development Programme

Members adopted (478 votes to 179, with 23 abstentions) the [European Defence Industrial Development Programme](#). Part of the European Defence Fund, where the EU has responded to increased security threats and key allies' withdrawal of support, by creating a €500 million envelope to fund development of defence equipment and technologies, and boost the competitiveness of the EU defence industry. The proposed programme tightens up eligibility criteria, notably for third-country entities participating in programme financed actions. Priorities are direct management and a greater emphasis on SME access to the market.

## Integrated farm statistics

Farm statistics provide evidence used to make decisions on where to allocate funding within the framework of the EU common agricultural policy. In line with its policy to update all its statistical data, the Commission proposes updating [integrated farm statistics](#) to make collection more flexible, detailed, and coherent, and to reduce the data collection burden. Parliament adopted the agreement on this draft regulation.

## Reform of the electoral law of the European Union

Members of the European Parliament approved, by a comfortable majority (397 votes to 207, with 62 abstentions) the [reform of the electoral law of the EU](#) ahead of the European elections of May 2019. Among other things, the reform introduces minimum thresholds for larger constituencies, although these will not be implemented until the 2024 EU elections. The reforms also include provisions on extending voting to different methods, and increased data protection. The idea of enabling EU citizens to vote from third countries was, however, not taken up by the Council.

## Financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union

Parliament discussed and approved the compromise agreed on the revision of the [financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union](#). The new revised Financial Regulation limits trust funds to external actions, retains the non-profit principle, and ends transfers from structural funding to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), as well as maintaining the competences of the budgetary authority. Reforms to the financial rules for five regulations in the common agricultural policy field were agreed in December.

## Amending budget No 2/2018: 2017 surplus

Parliament approved [Amending Budget No 2 to the 2018 EU budget](#), which moves the surplus from the 2017 EU budget to the 2018 budget. The sum involved, €555.5 million, will decrease Member States' contributions to the 2018 budget. The surplus is a result of a previous amending budget, plus the high level of competition fines feeding into the EU budget in 2017, as well as delays in spending.

## Amending budget No 3/2018: Extension of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey

Parliament approved an [amending budget](#) for €500 million in aid to be paid in 2018 as the second tranche of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. Parliament agreed to the funding for some 5 000 teachers providing education for over 300 000 refugee children in Turkey, on the condition that Parliament is fully associated in the decision-making process on the facility, when reviewed under the 2019 budgetary procedure.

## 2019 budget – trilogue mandate

Parliament also considered and adopted its [mandate for trilogue negotiations for the 2019 draft EU budget](#), its position for initial negotiations with the Council. Parliament's priorities for the 2019 budget are sustainable growth, innovation, competitiveness, citizenship, security, the fight against climate change, transition to renewable energy, migration, and young people.

## Statute for social and solidarity-based enterprises

Parliament adopted a legislative-initiative resolution on a [statute for social and solidarity-based enterprises](#), calling for a common definition, based on specific criteria, enabling enterprises with a positive social, environmental or community impact, that employ 14.5 million people, to overcome regulatory obstacles.

## Opening of trilogue negotiations

Two parliamentary committees' decisions to enter into interinstitutional (trilogue) negotiations were [confirmed](#): four reports on financial services proposals (ECON); and on the European citizens' initiative (AFCO). A confirmatory vote was held on the latter, allowing negotiations with the Council to begin. As for the proposal on copyright in the digital single market (JURI), the plenary voted against the decision to enter into interinstitutional negotiations, meaning the report will come back to the agenda for the September part-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](#).

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