

Plenary round-up – Strasbourg, November I 2018

The highlights of the November I plenary session were the debate on the future of Europe with Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, as well as the debate and vote on the interim report on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. Parliament also held debates on floods in Europe; regulating virtual currencies and initial coin offerings; and EU resilience in the face of foreign actors' potential attempts to influence the upcoming EP election campaign. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa addressed the Parliament in a formal sitting. Members debated HR/VP Federica Mogherini's statements on the future of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Central American migrants at the Mexican border, and the effects of US sanctions on Iran for European companies. Parliament voted on legislative proposals, inter alia, on energy efficiency; promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources; on the European Electronic Communications Code and BEREC; and on rail passengers' rights and obligations. Members adopted reports on the implementation of the EU Agreements with Georgia and Moldova, and voted on reports on humanitarian visas and on the implementation of the EU Common Position on arms exports. The 2018 Lux Prize, which promotes European cinema, makes promising films accessible to a wider audience and encourages debate on values and social issues across Europe, was awarded to 'Woman at war' (*Kona fer í stríð*), by Icelandic director Benedikt Erlingsson.

Interim report on the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027

Members discussed and adopted the interim report on the Commission's proposals for a [new multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027](#), which sets out the next EU budget. In the light of the commitments the EU has already undertaken, the report criticises the proposal to cut the EU's resources as a share of post-Brexit EU-27 GNI to 1.3 %. However, it also welcomes the opportunities to increase financial flexibility and the move towards ambitious reform of EU resources and revenue. On the basis of the position agreed during the session, Parliament is ready to begin negotiations with the Council with the aim of adopting the new MFF before the May 2019 elections.

Implementation of the EU-Georgia and EU-Moldova Association Agreements

During a joint debate, Parliament discussed and adopted two reports on implementation of the EU Association Agreements with [Georgia](#) and [Moldova](#). Parliament's Foreign Affairs (AFET) Committee reported that implementation of the 2014 Association Agreement with Georgia is largely positive. While dealing with some foreign interference from both Russia and Turkey, Georgia is nevertheless making good progress on rule of law and human rights issues, with some exceptions regarding high-level corruption and the protection of vulnerable groups. Moldova, a priority country for Parliament's democracy support within the Eastern Partnership, on the other hand, appears to be seeing some serious backsliding on democratic values and electoral reform.

Clean energy package

Preparing the governance of the energy union to face the challenges of climate change and meeting international commitments on reducing emissions was the subject of a joint debate on the [clean energy package](#) for the EU. Following negotiations between the EU institutions, Members approved compromise agreements regarding three proposals, which include a binding 32 % target for use of energy from renewable sources by 2030, indicative targets on national contributions and on a 32.5 % improvement in energy efficiency and the governance of the energy union.

The European Electronic Communications Code and BEREC

Parliament discussed and adopted a package of telecoms proposals to establish a [European Electronic Communications Code](#) and develop the mandate of the corresponding regulatory body, (known as [BEREC](#)). The proposed lighter regulatory regime seeks to boost investment in high-capacity networks, improve use of radio frequencies, and provide access to broadband services for all citizens, as well as reinforcing consumer protection. A cap on charges inside the EU has already been agreed.

Multiannual plan for Adriatic fisheries

Parliament adopted its position on a proposed [multiannual plan for Adriatic fisheries](#). Overfishing has exhausted anchovy and sardine stocks in the Adriatic, and current fisheries management is criticised as ineffective. Parliament's Committee on Fisheries (PECH) opposed Commission proposals for radical changes to setting allowable catches, preferring instead to strengthen current measures.

Rail passengers' rights and obligations

Members discussed a Transport and Tourism Committee (TRAN) report on Commission proposals to strengthen [rail passengers' rights and obligations](#) that deal with the difficulties of obtaining compensation when booking parts of a journey with different carriers, as well as others, such as accessibility and assistance. Carriers' rights to claim *force majeure* have been the subject of disagreement to date. As Members endorsed the report, backing strengthened passenger rights, higher compensation rates and better assistance to persons with reduced mobility, this fixes Parliament's position for interinstitutional negotiations, once Council reaches its position.

Mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund for Latvia

Parliament approved a decision on [mobilisation of the European Union Solidarity Fund to provide assistance to Latvia](#). The country will receive some €17 730 519 for reconstruction of the regions affected in floods in 2017, subsequently qualified as a 'major natural disaster'.

Implementation of the EU Common Position on arms export

Members adopted a resolution calling for strict interpretation and full [implementation of the EU Common Position on arms export](#). The EU's unique position ensures transparency and information-sharing on conventional arms exports by setting common minimum standards for Member States to assess export licence applications for military technology and equipment. The motion calls for increased parliamentary and public oversight of national arms exports from the EU.

Humanitarian visas

Members discussed a call for a Commission proposal on a system of [humanitarian visas](#) in the EU, to give people a clear procedure to follow when in need of international protection. Parliament voted 349 in favour of and 199 against (with 47 abstentions) the resolution, thus not reaching the absolute majority required by Article 225 TFEU. Despite protestations, the President rejected the request to re-run the vote.

Opening of trilogue negotiations

Four parliamentary committee decisions (from EMPL, ECON, IMCO, INTA) to enter into interinstitutional (trilogue) negotiations were [confirmed](#). Only one vote was held, on an EMPL committee report on transparent and predictable working conditions, where the committee's decision to enter into interinstitutional negotiations was approved.

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](#).

