

## Plenary round-up – Brussels, January II 2019

Highlights of the January II plenary session included the Future of Europe debate with Juha Sipilä, Finland's prime minister, and the latest debate on the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Members also debated the rule of law and fundamental rights in Hungary, and how to combat the climate of hatred and physical violence against democratically elected office-holders. Parliament officially recognised Juan Guaidó, President of the Venezuelan National Assembly, as 'legitimate interim president' of Venezuela, as he has proclaimed himself. Debates on EU-US trade, China-Taiwan relations and gender balance were held, and Parliament also amended its Rules of Procedure, aiming to increase transparency on interactions between its Members and representatives of interest groups.

### International Holocaust Remembrance Day

During the January II part-session, a formal sitting was held to mark [International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#). In remembering the fate of the millions of Europeans who suffered between 1933 and 1945, Parliament has made its position clear that racism and xenophobia are not opinions but crimes. The worrying recent rise in anti-Semitism in Europe adds to the [difficult social conditions under which Holocaust survivors live](#), many of whom suffer physical and psychological consequences of their persecution. To alleviate this situation, the EU has decided on a common approach to protect [Jewish communities in Europe](#).

### Implementation and functioning of the .eu top level domain name

Members debated and approved the trilogue agreement on [new rules on the .eu top level domain \(TLD\)](#). It ensures greater promotion of EU data protection rules and values in the proposed revamping of the rules on domain names, as well as encouraging best practice and reorganising the management of domain names in the EU. It makes the registration of such domain names easier for all citizens of the European Union and European Economic Area countries, irrespective of where in the world they live. The new rules, with a few exceptions, will apply from 13 October 2022.

### Protection of EU financial interests and the fight against fraud

Parliament debated and adopted a Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) report on the [2017 annual report on the protection of EU financial interests, and the fight against fraud](#). The European Commission prepares an annual report, based on information provided by the Member States' authorities, who manage much of the actual expenditure. While the CONT committee acknowledges that irregularities decreased during the period, the amount of money involved actually increased. The report stresses the uneven geographical distribution of fraud, and decries the low average recovery rate.

### Overseas countries and territories

Members adopted by an overwhelming majority an opinion on the Commission's proposal to change the way EU [overseas countries and territories](#) are funded. The Development Committee proposed to increase the budget for the (non-UK linked) overseas territories plus Greenland to €669 million, and to include these territories in EU regional dialogues with their immediate neighbours. The measures also seek to reinforce environmental and human rights considerations, as well as the territories' competitiveness.

### Opening of trilogue negotiations

Seven committee decisions (from IMCO, TRAN, JURI, LIBE and PECH) to enter into interinstitutional (trilogue) negotiations were [confirmed](#). There were no requests for votes.

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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