

Plenary round-up – Strasbourg, November II 2019

The November II plenary session highlights included the vote on the new European Commission, agreement on the 2020 budget, and Parliament's declaration of a climate emergency. Parliament adopted positions on preparation for COP25, and on the Istanbul Convention, and also debated statements by the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) on Eastern Neighbourhood developments, on the situation in Israel and Palestine, and on the situation in the Middle East, including the crises in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon. Debates took place, inter alia, on Commission and Council statements on: the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution; on the EU response to the impact of extreme weather events; on discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people; on the World Trade Organization Appellate Body; as well as on the protection of forest and environmental defenders in the EU. The 2019 Lux Prize, which tells the story of a young woman's feminist struggle in conservative North Macedonian society, was awarded to *God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunija*, directed by Teona Strugar Mitevska.

Election of the European Commission

Following European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen's presentation of the full [College of Commissioners](#) and their programme, the confirmatory vote on the appointment of the new Commission to replace the outgoing Juncker Commission took place. Members approved the von der Leyen Commission by a large majority (461 votes in favour, 157 against and 89 abstentions). The new Commissioners will officially take office on 1 December, ready to begin work on their new [portfolios](#) under the President's agenda for a 'Union that strives for more', including a 'Green Deal' and a revitalised economy.

2020 budgetary procedure

Members approved the EU budget for 2020 by a large majority. As sought by Parliament, the approved conciliation agreement reverses most of the Council's cuts to the Commission's draft budget, and increases funding for some of Parliament's priority areas, leading to an overall increase of €400 million compared to the draft budget. With both Parliament and the Council having approved the joint text before 3 December, Parliament's President was able to sign the 2020 budget into law. This, the final budget of the 2014-2020 period, concludes the [budgetary cycle](#) and aims to prepare the transition to the 2021-2027 framework.

United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25)

Members held a joint debate on climate change and heard Council and Commission statements on the climate emergency, as well as their responses to oral questions on the actions undertaken to pursue the Paris Agreement's objectives. In a symbolic vote, Members declared a climate emergency, while Parliament also voted on a resolution on its position ahead of the [COP25 Climate Change Conference](#) in Madrid this year, which seeks to reinforce the EU's ambition for net-zero global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

EU accession to the Istanbul Convention

Members marked International Day for the elimination of violence against women with Council and Commission statements on EU action to tackle this violation of human rights. Parliament voted overwhelmingly (500 votes in favour, 91 against, 50 abstentions) in favour of a resolution calling on the Council to urgently conclude the EU's ratification, for which Parliament's consent is required, and to encourage the remaining seven Member States to ratify the [Istanbul Convention](#) without delay.

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](#).

