

# Plenary sessions

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## Newsletter

### 13-16 January 2014

### Strasbourg plenary session

#### **Greece takes over EU Presidency from Lithuania**

Parliament will discuss the programme of the incoming Greek Presidency of the Council with Prime Minister Antonis Samaras in the week's key debate, which starts at 9 a.m. on Wednesday and will be followed by a press conference. In a separate debate, on Tuesday, MEPs will review the outgoing Lithuanian Presidency with President Dalia Grybauskaitė.

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#### **Freedom of movement for EU citizens**

MEPs will debate the fundamental right to freedom of movement in the EU with Commission and Council representatives from 15.00 on Wednesday. The last remaining restrictions on access to the labour markets of some member countries for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens expired on 31 December 2013.

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#### **Public services: better value for money**

Rather than just accepting the lowest bid when procuring works, goods or services or concluding concession contracts, public authorities will have more scope to pick the offer they consider most suited to their purpose, thereby ensuring better use of taxpayers' money, under new EU rules on public procurement and concessions to be voted on Wednesday.

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#### **CO2 emissions: cleaner vans by 2020**

The CO2 emissions limit for new light commercial vehicles sold in the EU is to be reduced from 203 g/km today to 147 g/km by 2020, under draft legislation to be voted on Tuesday. The text, already informally agreed with EU ministers, also paves the way for achieving further reductions after 2020, and provides for the introduction of a new test protocol.

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#### **A European strategy for plastic waste**

MEPs will call for a European strategy to reduce the amount of plastic waste in the environment in a resolution to be adopted on Tuesday. They want the most dangerous plastics banned by 2020, along with certain additives and certain plastic bags.

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#### **EU passports for sale?**

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MEPs will debate the controversial Maltese citizenship scheme with the Commission and Council on Wednesday afternoon and vote a resolution on Thursday. Under the "individual investor programme", foreigners would be able to buy a Maltese passport subject to certain conditions but without having to be a resident of Malta. Some MEPs are expected to argue that the scheme must be based on investment and residence. 11

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### **Serbia, Kosovo and Iceland: progress reports on EU integration**

MEPs will back the launch of accession talks with Serbia and acknowledge Kosovo's success in holding its first ever country-wide local elections last year, in a debate on Wednesday. They await the Icelandic government's decision regarding a referendum on EU accession talks. They will vote on non-binding resolutions on Thursday. 12

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### **MEPs oppose market authorisation for GM maize**

MEPs are likely to ask the Commission not to allow the genetically modified maize crop Pioneer 1507 onto the EU market. This insect-resistant crop could be dangerous to harmless butterflies and moths, says a resolution to be voted on Thursday. MEPs want the Commission to wait until risk assessment methods have been improved before proposing or renewing authorisations of any GMO varieties. 13

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### **Should GM pollen in honey be labelled?**

MEPs will debate on Tuesday whether draft rules on honey should define pollen as an ingredient of honey, ensuring that if genetically modified pollen makes up more than 0.9% of the total amount of pollen it has to be labelled. They will vote on a resolution on Wednesday. 14

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### **Horse meat scandal showed up weak link in the food chain**

Recent cases of food fraud, including the marketing of horse meat as beef, highlight the need for the EU to review the functioning of the food chain, step up controls and update labelling rules, says a non-binding resolution to be passed on Thursday. 15

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### **Cracking down on criminal exploitation of wild animals and plants**

MEPs will call on Monday for tougher measures against trophy hunting, the online ivory trade, trafficking in endangered species and other kinds of organised "wildlife crime". They want an EU-wide system for training prosecutors and a specialised Wildlife Crime Unit at Europol. They will also call for wildlife crime to be discussed with international partners like the African Union and the US. 16

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### **Parliament to call for EU-wide strategy for the homeless**

MEPs will again press the Commission for a European strategy for the homeless in a debate on Thursday. It will adopt a resolution the same day, following a similar appeal to the Commission in a resolution in 2011 and a written statement in 2010. 17

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### **Carbon capture and storage projects should be encouraged**

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects have the potential to allow the EU to meet its low-carbon goals, in particular for decarbonizing high CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting industries, and should receive more support from member states and the EU, says a resolution to be voted on Tuesday. 18

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### **Improve social protection for self-employed workers**

Adequate social protection must be provided for the growing numbers of self-employed workers in the EU, stress MEPs in a resolution to be voted on Tuesday. 19

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### **MEPs want tougher labour inspections to crack down on social dumping**

MEPs will call on the Commission for new laws and other measures to tackle social dumping, in a resolution on labour inspections to be voted on Tuesday 20

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### **EP to approve smart tachographs in trucks and coaches**

New trucks and coaches will be fitted with digital tachographs to improve the enforcement of driving and rest times for drivers, under rules to be endorsed by Parliament on Wednesday. The new devices will be more user-friendly for drivers and the authorities and more resistant to tampering and fraud. 21

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### **Data protection: what future for Safe Harbour deal after NSA affair?**

MEPs will debate the future of the EU-US Safe Harbour agreement in the wake of the NSA spying affair with the Commission and Council on Wednesday. The agreement laid down voluntary data protection standards for US companies when transferring EU citizens' data to the US. 22

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### **Helping EU firms compete for public contracts abroad**

Non-EU firms could be barred from bidding for big public procurement contracts in the EU if their home countries do not allow reciprocal access for EU firms, under proposals for an innovative tool to create a level playing field for EU firms bidding for contracts abroad. 23

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### **Vote on woman candidate from Germany for ECB board**

Parliament votes on Thursday on the candidate nominated for a vacant seat on the executive board of the European Central Bank. Sabine Lautenschläger, from Germany, will be the only woman member of the ECB board if she is approved. 24

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### **Human rights and democracy resolutions**

Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following topics relating to human rights and democracy, in the morning on Thursday 16 January at 15.00 with the votes following at around 16.00. 25

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### **Other topics on the agenda**

Other topics for debate and vote include the following: 26

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2014-01-13>

## Further information

[Draft agenda](#)  
[Follow the plenary live](#)  
[EuroparlTV](#)  
[Press conferences and other events](#)  
[EP Audiovisual website](#)  
[EP Newshub](#)

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## Greece takes over EU Presidency from Lithuania

**Parliament will discuss the programme of the incoming Greek Presidency of the Council with Prime Minister Antonis Samaras in the week's key debate, which starts at 9 a.m. on Wednesday and will be followed by a press conference. In a separate debate, on Tuesday, MEPs will review the outgoing Lithuanian Presidency with President Dalia Grybauskaitė.**

The priorities for the Greek Presidency's six-month term are: jobs, economic and social cohesion and structural reforms; further integration of the EU; completion of economic and monetary union; tackling external challenges, including EU enlargement; and maritime policy.

***Debates: Tuesday, 14 January (review of the Lithuanian Presidency) and Wednesday, 15 January (programme of the Greek Presidency)***

***Procedure: Council and Commission statements followed by debate***

***Press Conference: President Schulz, President Grybauskaitė and President Barroso on the review of the Lithuanian Presidency, Tuesday, 14 January, 12.00 - 13.00***

***President Schulz, Prime Minister Samaras and President Barroso on the priorities of the Greek Presidency, Wednesday, 15 January, 12.00 - 13.00***

***#GreekPresidency, #gr2014eu, #EU2013LT, #LithuanianPresidency***

### **Further information**

[Website of the Greek Presidency](#)

[Website of the Lithuanian Presidency](#)

[Audiovisual material](#)

## Freedom of movement for EU citizens

**MEPs will debate the fundamental right to freedom of movement in the EU with Commission and Council representatives from 15.00 on Wednesday. The last remaining restrictions on access to the labour markets of some member countries for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens expired on 31 December 2013.**

Nationals from Bulgaria and Romania were subject to temporary labour market restrictions imposed by some member countries when they joined the EU in 2007.

*Debate: Wednesday, 12 January*

*Procedure: Statement by Commission and Council*

*#freemovement*

### **Further information**

[Commission MEMO on end of restrictions on free movement \(01.01.2014\)](#)

[Audiovisual material](#)

## Public services: better value for money

**Rather than just accepting the lowest bid when procuring works, goods or services or concluding concession contracts, public authorities will have more scope to pick the offer they consider most suited to their purpose, thereby ensuring better use of taxpayers' money, under new EU rules on public procurement and concessions to be voted on Wednesday.**

Public procurement accounts for some 19% of EU GDP, making it a powerful lever for achieving specific societal goals. The provisional deals struck with Council in July 2013 on three directives on "classic procurement", "utilities" and "concession contracts" will enable authorities to take environmental or social benefits into account as well as the cost. For example, a contracting authority might want to ensure that high-quality food is served in a kindergarten or hospital, or undertake to buy from a firm that employs people with disabilities.

MEPs also added a new procedure to encourage bidders to offer innovative solutions by enabling authorities to call for tenders targeted at solving a specific problem while leaving both the bidder and the contracting authority room for manoeuvre to develop new solutions together.

The new laws will also cut red tape for bidders and ease access to tenders for smaller firms as well as including tougher rules on "abnormally low" bids and subcontracting, so as to ensure compliance with labour laws and collective agreements. Water will be excluded from the scope of the concessions directive owing to its special importance as a public good.

On Wednesday, MEPs will also adopt Parliament's negotiating position on the new international public procurement instrument which seeks to open up non-EU countries' procurement markets to EU bidders by seeking mutual access from the EU's trading partners.

***Debate: Tuesday, 14 January***

***Vote: Wednesday, 15 January***

***Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary Legislative Procedure), 1st reading agreement***

***Press conference: Wednesday, 15 January 15h00***

***#publicprocurement #concessions***

## Further information

[Press release on committee vote \(05.09.2013\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Marc Tarabella \(S&D, BE\) \(Public Procurement and Utilities\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Philippe Juvin \(EPP, FR\)](#)

[Procedure file Public Procurement](#)

[Procedure file Utilities](#)

[Procedure file Concession Contracts](#)

[Background note on Concession Contracts](#)

[Audiovisual material](#)



## CO2 emissions: cleaner vans by 2020

The CO2 emissions limit for new light commercial vehicles sold in the EU is to be reduced from 203 g/km today to 147 g/km by 2020, under draft legislation to be voted on Tuesday. The text, already informally agreed with EU ministers, also paves the way for achieving further reductions after 2020, and provides for the introduction of a new test protocol.

The 147g/km by 2020 target represents the maximum average emissions authorised for manufacturers registered in the EU of vans weighing up to 2.610 tonnes unladen and 3.5 tonnes laden. It will apply to manufacturers producing more than 1,000 vehicles per year.

### Cars are next

Future CO2 emissions limits for cars will be debated and voted at the February II plenary.

**Debate: Monday, 13 January**

**Vote: Tuesday, 14 January**

**Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary Legislative Procedure), 1st reading agreement**

**#co2 #vans**

### Further information

[Modalities for reaching the 2020 target to reduce CO2 emissions from new light commercial vehicles](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(05.11.2013\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Holger Krahmer \(ALDE, DE\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Audiovisual material](#)

## A European strategy for plastic waste

**MEPs will call for a European strategy to reduce the amount of plastic waste in the environment in a resolution to be adopted on Tuesday. They want the most dangerous plastics banned by 2020, along with certain additives and certain plastic bags.**

The resolution, which follows up a Commission green paper, calls for single-use, non-reusable, non-biodegradable and non-compostable plastic bags to be phased out. It also wants a ban by 2020 on the landfill disposal of recyclable or reusable waste.

In 2010, 95.5 billion plastic bags were put on the EU market. The sector employs a million and half people in Europe but there is no accurate data on the waste it gives rise to. Global production of plastic could triple by 2050, according to the Commission.

***Vote: Tuesday, 14 January***

***Procedure: Non-legislative resolution***

***#plasticwaste #Environment***

### **Further information**

[Draft resolution on plastic waste in the environment](#)  
[Profile of rapporteur Vittorio Prodi \(S&D, IT\)](#)  
[Procedure file](#)

## EU passports for sale?

**MEPs will debate the controversial Maltese citizenship scheme with the Commission and Council on Wednesday afternoon and vote a resolution on Thursday. Under the "individual investor programme", foreigners would be able to buy a Maltese passport subject to certain conditions but without having to be a resident of Malta. Some MEPs are expected to argue that the scheme must be based on investment and residence.**

*Debate: Wednesday, 15 January*

*Vote: Thursday, 16 January*

*Procedure: Council and Commission statements followed by debate with resolution*

*#EUCitizenship #EUpassport*

### **Further information**

[Audiovisual material](#)

## Serbia, Kosovo and Iceland: progress reports on EU integration

**MEPs will back the launch of accession talks with Serbia and acknowledge Kosovo's success in holding its first ever country-wide local elections last year, in a debate on Wednesday. They await the Icelandic government's decision regarding a referendum on EU accession talks. They will vote on non-binding resolutions on Thursday.**

The Commission's 2013 progress report on Serbia, the 2012 progress report on Iceland and the European integration process of Kosovo will be debated with the Commission and Council.

***Debate: Wednesday, January 15***

***Vote: Thursday, January 16***

***Procedure: Non-legislative resolution***

***#Serbia, #Kosovo, #Iceland #Balkans***

### **Further information**

[Press release on committee vote \(05.12.2013\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur for Serbia: Jelko Kacin \(ALDE, SI\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur for Kosovo: Ulrike Lunacek \(Greens/EFA, AT\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur for Iceland: Cristian Preda \(EPP, RO\)](#)

[Procedure file Serbia](#)

[Procedure file Kosovo](#)

[Procedure file Iceland](#)

## MEPs oppose market authorisation for GM maize

**MEPs are likely to ask the Commission not to allow the genetically modified maize crop Pioneer 1507 onto the EU market. This insect-resistant crop could be dangerous to harmless butterflies and moths, says a resolution to be voted on Thursday. MEPs want the Commission to wait until risk assessment methods have been improved before proposing or renewing authorisations of any GMO varieties.**

The resolution says the Commission would be exceeding its powers under EU rules on the deliberate release into the environment of GMOs if it authorizes Pioneer 1507 and calls on the Council to block it.

***Vote: Thursday, 16 January***

***Procedure: non-legislative resolution***

***#GMO #maize***

### **Further information**

[Commissions Q&A on GMO \(06.11.2013\)](#)

# Should GM pollen in honey be labelled?

**MEPs will debate on Tuesday whether draft rules on honey should define pollen as an ingredient of honey, ensuring that if genetically modified pollen makes up more than 0.9% of the total amount of pollen it has to be labelled. They will vote on a resolution on Wednesday.**

The Commission proposed to define pollen as a natural constituent of honey which does not therefore need to be labelled. However, the environment committee voted to amend the Commission draft and define pollen as an ingredient, in line with a Court of Justice ruling.

***Debate: Tuesday , 14 January***

***Vote: Wednesday, 15 January***

***Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary Legislative Procedure), 1st reading***

***#honey #GMO***

### **Further information**

[Draft report on Honey](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Julie Girling \(ECR, UK\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

## Horse meat scandal showed up weak link in the food chain

**Recent cases of food fraud, including the marketing of horse meat as beef, highlight the need for the EU to review the functioning of the food chain, step up controls and update labelling rules, says a non-binding resolution to be passed on Thursday.**

MEPs will call for a harmonised definition of food fraud at EU level and ask the Commission to strengthen the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), which carries out inspections. They want a European anti-food-fraud network to be established and propose making DNA testing a standard procedure in order to prevent species fraud.

MEPs recommend that member states set penalties for food fraud equivalent to at least twice the estimated profit that is sought and impose criminal sanctions where public health is endangered.

***Vote: Thursday, 16 January***

***Procedure: Non-legislative resolution***

***Press conference: Wednesday, 15 January***

***#horsemeat #foodfraud #foodchain***

### **Further information**

[Draft resolution on the food crisis, fraud in the food chain and the control thereof](#)  
[Profile of rapporteur Esther de Lange \(EPP, NL\)](#)  
[Procedure file](#)

# Cracking down on criminal exploitation of wild animals and plants

**MEPs will call on Monday for tougher measures against trophy hunting, the online ivory trade, trafficking in endangered species and other kinds of organised "wildlife crime". They want an EU-wide system for training prosecutors and a specialised Wildlife Crime Unit at Europol. They will also call for wildlife crime to be discussed with international partners like the African Union and the US.**

Europol estimates the revenues from trafficking in endangered species within the EU alone at between €18 billion and €26 billion a year. Parliament will debate the issue on Tuesday and vote on a resolution on Tuesday.

***Debate: Monday, 13 January***

***Vote: Tuesday, 14 January***

***Procedure: Oral question to the Commission (with resolution)***

**#poaching #wildlife**

## **Further information**

[Motion for a resolution on wildlife crime](#)

[Oral question](#)

[Procedure file](#)



# Parliament to call for EU-wide strategy for the homeless

**MEPs will again press the Commission for a European strategy for the homeless in a debate on Thursday. It will adopt a resolution the same day, following a similar appeal to the Commission in a resolution in 2011 and a written statement in 2010.**

**Debate: Thursday, 16 January**

**Vote: Thursday, 16 January**

**Procedure: Commission statement followed by debate (with resolution)**

**Press conference: Wednesday, 15 January**

**#Homelessness**

# Carbon capture and storage projects should be encouraged

**Carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects have the potential to allow the EU to meet its low-carbon goals, in particular for decarbonizing high CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting industries, and should receive more support from member states and the EU, says a resolution to be voted on Tuesday.**

The EU passed laws providing a framework for CCS development in 2009. For a number of reasons (including lack of finance for technological development), the EU is losing its technological lead in the area, say MEPs.

***Debate: Monday, 13 January***

***Vote: Tuesday, 14 January***

***Procedure: non-legislative resolution***

***#CCS #carboncapture***

## **Further information**

[Draft resolution on developing and applying carbon capture and storage technology in Europe](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Chris Davies \(ALDE, UK\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

# Improve social protection for self-employed workers

**Adequate social protection must be provided for the growing numbers of self-employed workers in the EU, stress MEPs in a resolution to be voted on Tuesday.**

They also want better coordination between EU countries of social security schemes for self-employed workers as they have different statuses in different member states and this restricts their freedom of movement as workers.

*Debate: Monday, 13 January*

*Vote: Tuesday, 14 January*

*Procedure: Non-legislative resolution*

*#selfemployed*

## Further information

[Draft report on Social protection for all, including self-employed workers](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Vilija Blinkevičiūtė\(S&D, LT\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

# MEPs want tougher labour inspections to crack down on social dumping

## MEPs will call on the Commission for new laws and other measures to tackle social dumping, in a resolution on labour inspections to be voted on Tuesday

The staff and resources needed for labour inspections in the member states should be beefed up rather than scaled back for budgetary reasons, say MEPS. They point to the role of these inspections in detecting undeclared work, bogus self-employment and social dumping.

**Debate: Monday, 13 January**

**Vote: Tuesday, 14 January**

**Procedure: Non-legislative resolution**

***#labour #WorkingConditions***

### **Further information**

[Draft report on Effective labour inspections as a strategy to improve working conditions in Europe](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Jutta Steinruck \(S&D, DE\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

# EP to approve smart tachographs in trucks and coaches

**New trucks and coaches will be fitted with digital tachographs to improve the enforcement of driving and rest times for drivers, under rules to be endorsed by Parliament on Wednesday. The new devices will be more user-friendly for drivers and the authorities and more resistant to tampering and fraud.**

Parliament will vote to approve the informal agreement reached with the Council in May 2013 and endorsed by the transport and tourism committee in December 2013.

***Debate: Tuesday, 14 January***

***Vote: Wednesday, 15 January***

***Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary legislative procedure), second reading agreement***

***#tachographs #roadtransport***

## **Further information**

[Draft recommendation to approve the informal agreement in TRAN committee](#)  
[Text agreed by Council and TRAN Committee](#)  
[Press release on committee vote \(18.06.2013\)](#)  
[Profile of rapporteur Silvia-Adriana Ţicău \(S&D, RO\)](#)  
[Procedure file](#)

# Data protection: what future for Safe Harbour deal after NSA affair?

**MEPs will debate the future of the EU-US Safe Harbour agreement in the wake of the NSA spying affair with the Commission and Council on Wednesday. The agreement laid down voluntary data protection standards for US companies when transferring EU citizens' data to the US.**

In the preliminary findings of its inquiry into US and EU countries' mass surveillance programmes, the civil liberties committee said the Commission should suspend the Safe Harbour standards and re-negotiate new, appropriate data protection safeguards.

*Debate: Wednesday, 15 January*

*Procedure: Council and Commission statement, followed by a debate*

*Hashtags: #SafeHarbour #EPinquiry #NSA #EUdataP*

*#Harbour*

## Further information

[Press release on EP inquiry's preliminary conclusions \(18.12.2013\)](#)

[Profile of EP inquiry rapporteur Claude Moraes \(S&D, UK\)](#)

[Procedure file - EP inquiry](#)

[Audiovisual material for professionals on NSA surveillance](#)

# Helping EU firms compete for public contracts abroad

**Non-EU firms could be barred from bidding for big public procurement contracts in the EU if their home countries do not allow reciprocal access for EU firms, under proposals for an innovative tool to create a level playing field for EU firms bidding for contracts abroad.**

Parliament's negotiating position for talks with EU governments on the draft international public procurement law will be debated on Tuesday and voted on Wednesday.

***Debate: Tuesday, 14 January***

***Vote: Wednesday, 15 January***

***Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary legislative procedure)***

***#PublicProcurement***

## **Further information**

[Access of third-country goods and services to the Union's internal public procurement market](#)  
[Trade MEPs back tool to open up non-EU public procurement markets to EU firms](#)  
(28.11.2013)

[Profile of rapporteur Daniel Caspary \(EPP, DE\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

# Vote on woman candidate from Germany for ECB board

**Parliament votes on Thursday on the candidate nominated for a vacant seat on the executive board of the European Central Bank. Sabine Lautenschläger, from Germany, will be the only woman member of the ECB board if she is approved.**

The economic and monetary committee will hold a hearing with Ms Lautenschläger on Monday, before the full Parliament votes on Thursday.

Parliament issues a non-binding recommendation for candidates for the executive board after which the European Council adopts a final decision.

***Vote: Thursday , 13 January***

***Procedure: Non-binding opinion***

***#Lautenschlaeger @ECB***

## **Further information**

[Press Release "Men only ECB rejected by MEPs" \(25.10,2012\)](#)



## Human rights and democracy resolutions

**Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following topics relating to human rights and democracy, in the morning on Thursday 16 January at 15.00 with the votes following at around 16.00.**

- Situation of rights defenders and opposition activists in Cambodia and Laos
- Recent elections in Bangladesh
- Recent moves to criminalise LGBTI people

***Procedure: Non-legislative resolutions***

***Debate/vote: Thursday, 16 January***

# Other topics on the agenda

## Other topics for debate and vote include the following:

- Non-discrimination in the framework of sexual and reproductive health and rights, debate Thursday, Commission statement
- Consumer program 2014-2020, debate Mon, vote Tue (Rochefort)
- Reindustrialisation of Europe, debate Tue, vote Wed (Bütikhofer, INI)
- Renewal of EU-Russia agreement on Technology and Science, vote Wed (Sartori)
- Political dialogue and cooperation agreement EU-Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, vote Thu
- Regional branding for agricultural products, vote Tue (Andrieu, INI)
- EP calendar 2015, vote Wed
- Geographical indications for aromatised wine, vote Tue, (Bartolozzi)
- Future of EU-ASEAN relations, vote Wed (Bütikhofer, INI)
- Situation in South Sudan (with resolution), debate Wed, vote Thu
- Trade agreements with Mexico and Chile, joint debate Wed
- Authorising France to apply a reduced rate of certain indirect taxes on 'traditional' rum produced in Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique; vote Thu (Hübner)