
Newsletter

12-15 December 2016

Strasbourg plenary session

Yazidi advocates to receive 2016 Sakharov Prize at European Parliament

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MEPs to decide on EU trade deal with Ecuador

Parliament will debate whether to give its consent to an EU free trade deal with Ecuador on Tuesday and vote on it on Wednesday. It could save EU exporters at least €106 million, and their Ecuadorian counterparts up to €248 million, each year.

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Traders in textiles such as cotton or clothes will face fewer hurdles if MEPs back plans to add a textiles protocol to the EU-Uzbekistan agreement. Their demand that Uzbekistan eradicate the use of child labour to gather its cotton harvest has now been met, thus enabling MEPs to consider approving the protocol, notes the draft resolution,

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Over fifty years after the thalidomide tragedy, in which a morning sickness medicine for pregnant women caused malformations in their babies, victims are still fighting for fair compensation in several EU countries. On Wednesday MEPs, the Council and Commission will discuss the state of play on EU measures to ensure that all Thalidomide victims get fair support and compensation. A resolution will be voted on Thursday. 26

Plant pests: MEPs to demand tougher rules to protect EU citrus trees

A resolution calling for more stringent rules to help prevent the introduction into the EU of new pests that attack citrus plants and fruit will be put to a vote on Thursday. 27

Vote on €856,800 in EU job-search aid for 250 former car parts workers in Spain

Plans to grant Spain €856,800 in EU aid to help find new jobs for 250 former workers at 29 firms that made motor vehicle parts in the Valencia region will be put to a vote on Wednesday. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) aid also needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers, planned for 12 December. 28

Human rights and democracy resolutions

Other topics on the agenda

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2016-12-12>


Further information


[Draft agenda](#)
[Follow the plenary live](#)
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[EP Audiovisual website](#)
[EP Newshub](#)
[EPRS Plenary podcasts on key issues](#)

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Yazidi advocates to receive 2016 Sakharov Prize at European Parliament

Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar, public advocates for the Yazidi community in Iraq and survivors of sexual enslavement by the so-called Islamic State, will receive the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in a ceremony on Tuesday at noon.

A joint press conference with Parliament's President Martin Schulz will take place immediately after the award ceremony at 12.30.

Also shortlisted for the prize were Can Dündar, former editor-in-chief of the Turkish daily Cumhuriyet, and Mustafa Dzhemilev, former chair of Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars People (Tatar Parliament), a former Soviet dissident and a Ukrainian MP. They will both attend the ceremony.

Sakharov Prize

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, named after Soviet scientist and dissident Andrei Sakharov, was established in December 1988 by the European Parliament to honour individuals or organizations who dedicate their lives to the defence of human rights and freedoms, particularly the right to free expression.

Award of the Sakharov Prize

Award ceremony on Tuesday, 13 December 12.00

Press conference: Tuesday, 13 December 12.30-13.10

#SakharovPrize @NadiaMuradBasee #LamiyaAjiBashar #Yazidi

Further information

[Website of the Sakharov prize for freedom of thought](#)
[Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar winners of 2016 Sakharov Prize](#)
[Sakharov Prize 2016: discover the finalists](#)
[Sakharov Prize 2016: MEPs present their nominations](#)
[Top story: Sakharov Prize 2016](#)
[Audiovisual materials for Sakharov Prize 2016](#)
[Former laureates](#)

MEPs to vote on rules to boost rail travel

New rules to introduce bidding for public contracts to supply passenger rail services in EU countries and boost the development of new commercial services will be voted on Wednesday.

The new rules aim to boost passenger rail services, which are lagging behind other transport modes in numbers carried and have [mixed customer satisfaction results](#) across the EU.

They would work in two ways.

First, in cases where authorities award public service contracts to provide passenger rail services, bidding for public service contracts should gradually become the standard procedure for selecting service providers.

These contracts, which member states use to provide public passenger transport, account for about two thirds of passenger rail services in the EU. Inviting companies to bid for them should sharpen their customer focus and save costs for the public purse.

It would also be possible to award contracts directly, without bidding, but if this method is used it should offer improvements for passengers.

Second, any rail company would be able to offer commercial services on EU passenger rail markets. However, to ensure that services supplied under public service contracts continue, member states could restrict a new operator's right of access to certain lines.

Further information on the [rail market structure](#) across the EU the background information on the [rail reform package](#).

Procedure: Co-decision, second reading agreement

2013/0028(COD), 2013/0029(COD), 2013/0013(COD)

Debate: Monday, 12 December

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

#4thRail

Further information

[Draft second reading recommendation on public service contracts rules](#)

[Draft second reading recommendation on market opening and infrastructure governance](#)

[Draft second reading recommendation on the repeal of regulation on normalisation of accounts](#)

[EP press release on the agreement on the market pillar \(including lead negotiators' quotes\) \(20.04.2016\)](#)

[EP Research in depth analysis \(March 2016\)](#)

[Background note: 4th railway package](#)

[Eurobarometer: European's satisfaction with rail services \(2013\)](#)

[Rapporteur Wim van de Camp \(EPP, NL\)](#)

[Rapporteur David-Maria Sassoli \(S&D, IT\)](#)

[Rapporteur Merja Kyllönen \(GUE/NL, FI\)](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

MEPs to urge EU countries to stop inciting hatred of migrants and refugees

EU member states should “refrain from inciting fear and hatred in their citizens towards migrants and asylum seekers for political gain”, says a draft resolution on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU, to be voted on Tuesday.

The resolution, drafted by József Nagy (EPP, SK) addresses the key fundamental rights concerns in the EU in 2015, notably in the fields of migration, protecting children and the online environment. The rights to free movement and life-saving abortion are also stressed.

Human rights in the world

MEPs will also debate human rights and democracy worldwide in 2015, and EU policy in this area, with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday afternoon. Parliament's annual human rights and democracy report will be voted on Wednesday at noon.

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

[2016/2009\(INI\)](#) and [2016/2219\(INI\)](#)

Debate on Fundamental Rights in the European Union in 2015: Monday, 12 December

Vote: Tuesday, 13 December

Press conference: Tuesday 13 December at 14.30 with rapporteur József Nagy (EPP, SK)

Debate on 2015 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the world: Tuesday, 13 December

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

#fundamentalrights #HumanRights #democracy

Further information

[Draft resolution on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU 2015](#)

[Press release on committee vote on fundamental rights in the EU \(17.11.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur József Nagy \(EPP, SK\):](#)

[Procedure file on situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015](#)

[EP think tank: Fundamental Rights in the European Union - the role of the Charter after the Lisbon Treaty](#)

[Draft report on the Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015 2016/2219\(INI\)](#)

[Press release on committee vote on Annual report on human rights \(14.11.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur on 2015 Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world, Josef Weidenholzer \(S&D, AT\)](#)

[Procedure file on 2015 Annual Report on human rights and democracy in the world](#)

[Audiovisual material for professionals](#)

Vote on emergency brake rules for reimposing EU entry visas

New rules to allow the EU Commission and member states to reimpose visa requirements faster and more easily will be put to a vote on Thursday. Parliament and Council negotiators struck an informal deal on the legislation on 7 December.

The agreement on the suspension mechanism paves the way for granting visa-free access to Georgia and Ukraine. Under the new rules, visa requirements may be reintroduced if there is a substantial increase in irregular migration or unfounded asylum applications, lack of cooperation on readmission of migrants or threats to public or internal security.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative proposal, first reading agreement

[2016/0148\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

Vote: Thursday, 15 December

#visa #Ukraine #Georgia

Further information

[Visa suspension mechanism: Parliament and Council negotiators strike a deal \(Press release, 8.12.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra \(EPP, ES\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Pre-summit debate on Brexit, migration, security, Russia and investment in jobs

In preparation for the upcoming 15 December European Council summit of EU leaders, MEPs will debate the most pressing EU policy issues, including migration, security, the economy, jobs for young people, and external relations, with Council and Commission representatives on Wednesday morning.

The EU heads of state or government will meet in Brussels, where Parliament's President Martin Schulz will deliver his address at the start of the Council meeting at 12.30.

The 27 leaders (minus the UK) will hold an informal working dinner to set out how the "Brexit" process will be handled by the EU 27 once the UK has notified its intention to leave the EU.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

#euco #migrationEU #Russia

Further information

[Agenda of the European Council meeting](#)
[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Energy Union: first debate on the “clean energy” package on Tuesday

MEPs will discuss legislative proposals to ensure clean energy for all Europeans on Tuesday, with Commission Vice-President for the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič.

Energy Committee chair Jerzy Buzek welcomed the Commission presentation on 30 November, saying “The package should help us adapt the market to new trends in generation, consumption and saving of energy. It should also enable us to increase our independence and energy security by making efficient and sustainable use of all Europe’s indigenous energy resources, including renewable energy.”

Parliament called for clean energy legislation in a June resolution the [internal energy market](#) and a [September one on the future of renewables](#).

The “Clean Energy for all Europeans” package consists of several legislative proposals and three communications on the energy market, energy efficiency, renewables, eco-design and governance of the Energy Union.

Commission statement

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December

#EnergyUnion #EnergyEfficiency

Further information

[Statement of Industry Chair Jerzy Buzek \(EPP, PL\) on the presentation of the “Clean Energy for all Europeans” package](#)

[Video recording of statement by Jerzy BUZEK \(EPP, PL\)](#)

[Commission press release Clean Energy for All Europeans – unlocking Europe's growth potential \(30.11.2016\)](#)

[Audiovisual material for professionals and existing](#)

MEPs to call for visa-free access to US and Canada for all EU citizens

All EU citizens should have the right to travel to the US and Canada without a visa, just as US and Canadian citizens do when they visit the EU, say MEPs. They will ask the EU Commission on Wednesday what it plans to do to achieve full visa reciprocity with these two countries.

Canada imposes visa requirements on citizens of Bulgaria and Romania (though it has pledged to lift them by the end of 2017) and the US imposes them on citizens of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland and Romania. Recently passed US legislation could also affect citizens of all countries with certain dual nationalities.

Background

According to the visa reciprocity mechanism, which entered into force in January 2014, if a third country does not lift its visa requirements 24 months after being notified of non-reciprocity, the EU Commission must suspend the visa waiver for citizens of that country for 12 months, via a delegated act to which Parliament and the Council could object.

Following a notification of non-reciprocity on 12 April 2014, the Commission should have acted before 12 April 2016, but has yet to take any measures to reimpose visas on US and Canadian citizens.

Question for oral answer to the Commission

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

#visa

Further information

[Question for oral answer to the Commission](#)

[Abide by the rules and start pressing US for full visa reciprocity, MEPs ask the Commission \(EP Press release, 12.10.2016\)](#)

[Regulation 1289/2013 amending Regulation 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement](#)

[State of play and the possible ways forward as regards the situation of non-reciprocity with certain third countries in the area of visa policy \(Communication from the Commission, 13.07.2016\)](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

[EPRS: US Congress modifies Visa Waiver Program \(February 2016\)](#)

Key issues for citizens: EU institutions to pledge “substantial progress” in 2017

The EU Parliament, Council, and Commission will pledge to make “substantial progress” next year in key policy areas for EU citizens. The presidents of the three institutions will sign a formal joint declaration to this end on Tuesday.

The formal joint declaration will list 2017 priorities on which Parliament, the Council (EU ministers co-legislating with Parliament) and the Commission (proposing legislation) will work as a matter of urgency.

The three will pledge “substantial progress” on legislation in the areas of jobs, growth and investment; the social dimension of the EU; security; migration policy; Digital Single Market; and the Energy Union.

“European citizens (...) expect the European Union to make a concrete difference by helping to address the biggest” current “global, economic, environmental and societal challenges”, the declaration states.

This will be the first time that the EU institutions set a joint political agenda. Progress will be monitored throughout 2017, with the presidents of the three institutions meeting in March, July and November.

Procedure: Joint declaration

Signing: Tuesday, 13 December at 15.00

#EU2017

Slovak Presidency wrap-up: debate with Robert Fico and Jean-Claude Juncker

The achievements and shortcomings of the outgoing Slovak Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers will be debated by political group leaders with Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico and EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on Tuesday afternoon.

Slovakia took over the Council Presidency from the Netherlands in July and will hand it over to Malta in January.

The first-ever Slovak Council Presidency sought to **focus** its six-month mandate on achieving results in the areas of an economically strong Europe, a modern single market, sustainable migration and asylum policies, and a globally engaged Europe.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements

[2016/2790\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December

#EU2016SK @eu2016sk @SKPRES2016

Further information

[Website of the Slovak Council Presidency](#)
[Audiovisual material for media](#)

EU ports: clarifying rules on user fees and public subsidies

The fees that shipping lines pay for port services should become clearer thanks to new rules to be voted on Wednesday. These rules should also make public funding of ports more transparent and ensure high quality services for port users.

The lack of clear rules on public funding of port infrastructure and charges for using it holds back investment in ports, says the EU Commission. The new rules aim to make EU ports, which employ 470 000 people, more efficient and attractive to investors and turn sea transport into a competitive and sustainable alternative to congested roads for passengers and cargo along EU coasts.

Cargo handling and passenger services will also be subject to the financial transparency rules, but the organisation of these port services will remain subject to national law.

Background

These rules will apply to over 300 EU sea ports listed in the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). In total, 96% of all EU freight and 93% of all EU ship passengers transit through TEN-T ports. Three quarters of the EU goods imports from third countries and 37% of intra-EU freight traffic pass through European ports.

Procedure: co-decision, first reading agreement

[2013/0157\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 12 December

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

[#portservices](#)

Further information

[Draft report on a framework on market access to port services and financial transparency of ports](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(12.10.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Knut Fleckenstein \(S&D, DE\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EP Research: EU port cities and port area regeneration \(November 2016\)](#)

[EP Research: Liberalisation of port services \(December 2016\)](#)

[European Commission: One step closer to unleash full potential of seaports \(27.06.2016\)](#)

Vote on 800 meter deep-sea fishing limit in the North-East Atlantic

A ban on fishing below a depth of 800 meters in the North-East Atlantic will be put to a vote on Tuesday. Informally agreed with the Council in June, it would apply to bottom trawling, which often wrecks sea-bed habitats, and also restrict deep-sea fishing to the area where it took place between 2009 and 2011.

The regulation also lays down separate rules to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) at depths below 400 metres. If a catch were to exceed set amounts of VME indicator species, then the vessel would have to stop fishing immediately and resume only when it has moved at least five nautical miles away from where it encountered a VME.

Tougher on-the-spot checks and transparent data collection rules are included.

Background

Technological progress in the 1980s and 1990s contributed to [new forms of fishing](#) at previously unexplored depths, from several hundred to several thousand metres below the surface. But [deep-sea ecosystems](#) still remain largely unknown today. Some deep-sea fish species can live for a very long time (over a century in the case of the orange roughy), and some deep-sea corals can be thousands of years old. Very slow growing and late reproducing fish make such a stock highly sensitive to overfishing. Vulnerable marine habitats (of corals or sponges, for example) are also particularly sensitive to some fishing methods.

In view of the threats to deep-sea stocks, and recognising the fragility of deep-sea ecosystems, initiatives have progressively been developed, both globally (e.g. UN [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#)) and at regional level (e.g. [North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission](#) (NEAFC) to promote more responsible deep-sea exploitation.

Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary Legislative Procedure), second reading agreement

[2012/0179\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 12 December

Vote: Tuesday, 13 December

#CFPreality #deepsea #fishing

Further information

[Draft report on North-East Atlantic: deep-sea stocks and fishing in international waters](#)

[Press release on informal agreement with the Council \(30.06.2016\)](#)

[Profile of Isabelle Thomas \(S&D, FR\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[European Environment Agency research note on the North-East Atlantic Sea](#)

[EP Think Tank briefing note on Deep sea fishing](#)

[Eurostat: Fisheries Statistics](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

MEPs to decide on EU trade deal with Ecuador

Parliament will debate whether to give its consent to an EU free trade deal with Ecuador on Tuesday and vote on it on Wednesday. It could save EU exporters at least €106 million, and their Ecuadorian counterparts up to €248 million, each year.

The EU and Ecuador concluded talks in July 2014 for Ecuador to join the EU trade deal with Colombia/Peru. The European Parliament welcomed this in November 2015, but demanded that Ecuador address issues such as child labour, women's rights and deforestation before Parliament voted on the trade deal. Most of these issues were settled in Ecuador's sustainable development action plan, paving the way for the deal to be signed on 11 November 2016 in Brussels.

The agreement will eliminate tariffs on trade in all industrial and fisheries products, increase market access for agricultural products, improve access to public procurement and services, and further reduce technical barriers to trade.

Safeguards to protect EU banana growers

As Ecuador is the largest banana exporter to EU, supplying 26 percent of the EU's banana imports, the EU will apply a safeguard mechanism to protect EU banana growers against stiff competition. This mechanism is subject to a separate piece of legislation, which is currently being negotiated between the Council and the European Parliament.

Procedure: Consent

[2016/0092\(NLE\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

#EUtrade #Colombia #Peru #Ecuador

Further information

[Draft EP recommendation](#)

[EP rapporteur Helmut Scholz \(GUE/NGL, DE\)](#)

[Ecuador joins EU-Colombia/Peru trade agreement \(Commission information, 11.11.2016\)](#)

[EP resolution on the accession of Ecuador to the EU-Peru and Colombia trade agreement \(25.11.2015\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Vote to ease textiles trade with Uzbekistan

Traders in textiles such as cotton or clothes will face fewer hurdles if MEPs back plans to add a textiles protocol to the EU-Uzbekistan agreement. Their demand that Uzbekistan eradicate the use of child labour to gather its cotton harvest has now been met, thus enabling MEPs to consider approving the protocol, notes the draft resolution, to be debated on Tuesday and voted on Wednesday.

In December 2011 the European Parliament postponed its decision to approve plans to add a textiles protocol to EU and Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) pending an improvement in the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, particularly in the fields of child and forced labour in the annual cotton harvest.

European Parliament pressure helped reduce child labour

In their draft resolution, MEPs welcome the fact that Uzbekistan has almost fully eradicated child labour over the past three years. However, they also urge it to step up cooperation with the International Labour Organization in order to end adult forced labour (by students or public employees) during the annual cotton harvest.

Procedure: Consent, non-legislative resolution

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

#Uzbekistan #cotton #textile #childlabour

Further information

[Draft EP recommendation](#)

[Draft EP resolution on the conclusion of trade in textile protocol to EC-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement](#)

[EP rapporteur Maria Arena \(S&D, BE\)](#)

[December 2011 EP resolution to halt the consent textile protocol \(11.12.2011\)](#)

[Uzbekistan and the EU \(EEAS information, May 2016\)](#)

MEPs to review 2016 EU foreign policy: focus on Russia, Middle East and Africa

EU foreign policy should be based on three pillars - diplomacy, development and defence, MEPs will say in a debate with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday. In a resolution to be voted on Wednesday, they will advocate a more realistic strategy on Russia and a “less for less” policy towards countries that try to throw democracy into reverse.

In a draft annual resolution reviewing key EU foreign policy choices, MEPs stress that the EU is ringed by an “arc of instability” stretching from an aggressive Russia to proxy wars in the Middle East and North Africa. To respond and make EU a strong global player, the draft calls on EU member states to show unity and trust in one another and to speak with one voice.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

[2016/2036\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

#CFSP #Defence

Further information

[Draft resolution on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy](#)

[Press release on a committee vote \(24.11.2016\)](#)

[EP rapporteur Elmar Brok \(EPP, DE\)](#)

[EP Research Service note on Common Foreign and Security Policy \(April 2016\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Improving the transparency of MEPs' work

Members will vote on a general overhaul of Parliament's rules of procedure on Tuesday, to improve transparency. Changes will include a stricter code of conduct for members and tougher sanctions against disruptions of Parliament's work.

From 2017 on, mandates for negotiating first-reading compromises with the Council and Commission would need prior approval by the full Parliament. The revised rules would also allow rapporteurs to attach a "legislative footprint" to their reports to reflect input from third parties and lobbyists.

Under the revised code of conduct, MEPs would be required to provide more detailed and verified declarations of their financial interests.

The revised rules should enter into force on 16 January.

Procedure: Parliament's Rules of Procedure

[2016/2114\(REG\)](#)

Vote: Tuesday, 13 December

Press conference: Tuesday, 15.30

#EP

Further information

[Draft revised Rules of Procedure](#)

[EP Rules of procedure](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Rapporteur Richard Corbett \(S&D, UK\)](#)

Court of Auditors: MEPs to vote on Juhan Parts as member for Estonia

Parliament votes Wednesday on whether Estonia's former Prime Minister Juhan Parts should join the European Court of Auditors. The Budgetary Control Committee approved his nomination after a hearing on 5 December.

Mr Parts will take up his new duties in the Luxembourg-based court once his nomination is confirmed by Parliament's plenary vote and sealed by the Council.

Mr Parts, who has a degree in Law from the University of Tartu, was Auditor General of Estonia from 1998 to 2002, Prime Minister from 2003-2005, and has been Minister of Economy and Communications since 2007.

Background

The Court of Auditors has 28 members, one from each Member State. They are appointed for a renewable term of six years. The Council, after consulting the European Parliament, decides on the candidate presented by each country.

To prepare for a hearing in Parliament, a candidate is asked to answer a [questionnaire prepared by the Budgetary Control Committee](#). At the hearing, candidates may make a five-minute opening statement, followed by a question and answer session with committee members. The committee votes on the candidate in a secret ballot. If approved in committee, the nomination is then put to a vote by Parliament as a whole.

Procedure: Vote on an appointment of a Member of the Court of Auditors

[2016/0817\(NLE\)](#)

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

#Estonia @EUauditors

Further information

[Committee draft report on the nomination of Juhan Parts as a Member of the Court of Auditors for Estonia \(with Q&A\)](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(05-12-2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur : Bart Staes \(Greens/EFA, BE\)](#)

[Procedure file - appointment of an Estonian member](#)

EUROPOL data leak: MEPs to quiz Commission and Council

Following media reports that documents on international terrorism investigations by the European Police Office (EUROPOL), have been leaked, MEPs will debate data protection and security with Security Commissioner Sir Julian King and the Council on Wednesday.

The leak, disclosed by Dutch radio journalists, concerns documents on investigations that date back years, some to around a decade ago. Earlier this year, MEPs included stronger data protection safeguards and an enhanced democratic scrutiny role for the European Parliament and national parliaments in new rules taking effect on 1 May 2017.

Commission and Council statements

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

#dataprotection @EUROPOL

Further information

[Police cooperation: MEPs approve new powers for Europol to fight terrorism \(press release after Plenary vote 11.05.2016\):](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

MEPs to call for EU-wide support for Thalidomide victims

Over fifty years after the thalidomide tragedy, in which a morning sickness medicine for pregnant women caused malformations in their babies, victims are still fighting for fair compensation in several EU countries. On Wednesday MEPs, the Council and Commission will discuss the state of play on EU measures to ensure that all Thalidomide victims get fair support and compensation. A resolution will be voted on Thursday.

Thalidomide was used in the late 1950s and early 1960s in various European countries, before it turned out to have severe side-effects for pregnant women and cause malformations in their babies. The victims are still trying to find a solution to enable them to cover costs linked to their medical and physical condition.

Council and Commission statement with resolution

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

Vote: Thursday, 15 December

Plant pests: MEPs to demand tougher rules to protect EU citrus trees

A resolution calling for more stringent rules to help prevent the introduction into the EU of new pests that attack citrus plants and fruit will be put to a vote on Thursday.

The draft implementing rules, as proposed by the EU Commission, do too little to reduce the risk that imports into the EU could introduce alien pests such as citrus black spot and false codling moth, says a draft resolution tabled by Agriculture Committee MEPs. They argue that the rules should require more random checks, cold treatment to kill pest larvae and improved traceability of imported fruit.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

2016/3010(RSP)

Vote: Thursday, 15 December

#PlantPests #CitrusFruit

Further information

[Draft resolution](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(29.11.2016\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Audiovisual material](#)

Vote on €856,800 in EU job-search aid for 250 former car parts workers in Spain

Plans to grant Spain €856,800 in EU aid to help find new jobs for 250 former workers at 29 firms that made motor vehicle parts in the Valencia region will be put to a vote on Wednesday. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) aid also needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers, planned for 12 December.

Most of these redundancies - 215 out of 250 – were due to the bankruptcy and closure of Bosal S.A., whose core business was making motor vehicle parts and accessories.

The reason for the closure was the EU automotive industry's declining output and significant loss of market share over the past decade.

Background

The measures co-financed by the EGF aim to help the workers to find new jobs by providing them with active career guidance, job-search support, vocational training and training in transversal skills, plus promoting entrepreneurship and contributing to business start-ups.

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund contributes to packages of tailor-made services to help redundant workers find new jobs. Its annual ceiling is €150 million.

Procedure: Budgetary

[2016/2298\(BUD\)](#)

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

[#EGF](#) [#EUBudget](#) [#Spain](#)

Further information

[Profile of rapporteur : Esteban González Pons \(EPP, ES\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Human rights and democracy resolutions

Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following human rights and democracy topics on Thursday 15 December, at around 10.30, with the votes following at 12.00.

- The cases of the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy and of Ilham Tohti
- The situation of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar
- Mass graves in Iraq

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

Debates/votes: Thursday 15 December

#humanrights #democracy

Other topics on the agenda

Other topics for debate and vote include the following:

[Insolvency proceedings and insolvency practitioners \(COD\)](#) Tadeusz Zwiefka (EPP, PL) vote Wednesday

[Participation of Algeria in EU Programmes, \(non-legislative enactment\)](#) vote Tuesday

[Paediatric medicines](#), Oral question, *debate* Wednesday, *vote* Thursday

[Europol: Operational and strategic cooperation with Georgia \(CNS\)](#) Claude Moraes (S&D, UK) vote Wednesday

[Activities of the Committee on petitions 2015](#), (INI) Ángela Vallina (GUE/NGL, ES), *debate and vote* Thursday

[A coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries](#), (INI) Christian Ehler (EPP, DE) and Luigi Morgano (S&D, IT), *debate* Monday, *vote* Tuesday

Labour market reforms and labour relations in Greece, Council and Commission statement, *debate* Wednesday

[EU-Norway Agreement on reciprocal access to fishing in the Skagerrak \(resolution\)](#), Jørn Dohrmann (ECR, DK), *vote* Wednesday (2 reports)

Situation of the rule of law and democracy in Poland, Commission statement, *debate* Tuesday

Further information

[Jørn Dohrmann \(ECR, DK\)](#)