



Newsletter

13-16 February 2017

Strasbourg plenary session

CETA: Parliament's final vote on EU-Canada trade agreement

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Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to address Parliament

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Reforming the EU

To tackle major political challenges ahead, improve the EU's capacity to act, restore citizens' trust and make the euro zone economy more resilient to outside shocks, the EU needs first to make full use of the Lisbon Treaty and then possibly reform to enable itself to do even more. This is the key message of three resolutions exploring the future development of the European Union to be voted on Thursday.

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Parliament to set out its economic, social and single market priorities for 2017

The EU's economic, social and single market priorities for 2017 will be the focus of a debate with the EU Commission on "European Semester" economic policy coordination on Tuesday. MEPs are expected to comment on the implementation and social repercussions of the Stability and Growth Pact, and to urge member states to do more to exploit the single market's economic potential. They are to vote three separate resolutions on these issues on Wednesday.

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MEPs to call for fast-track approval of low-risk pesticides

Low-risk biological pesticides, which could replace those that may harm the environment and human health, cannot yet be as widely used as they should in the EU as arrangements for certifying them are too slow and complex, MEPs will point out in a debate on Monday. In a resolution to be voted on Tuesday, they will ask the EU Commission to propose a revision of the rules.

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Robots and artificial intelligence: MEPs to call for EU-wide liability rules

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MEPs to call for EU-wide protection for whistle-blowers without delay

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Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina: progress on EU-related reforms in 2016

Parliament will debate the 2016 reform efforts of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina with enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn on Tuesday, and vote two separate resolutions on them on Wednesday. It is likely to stress that credible judicial reform in Albania could prove to be a key to advancing its EU accession process. As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, MEPs are to urge it to overcome ethnic and political divisions in order to succeed in the EU membership application evaluation process.

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Israel up for a debate with Federica Mogherini

Prospects for resuming peace talks in the Middle East will be debated with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday afternoon. MEPs are likely to raise the Israeli government's recent decision to build 3,000 new houses in the West Bank and its so-called "Regulation Bill" - which would retroactively "legalize" several thousand settlements illegally built on Palestinian private land.

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Security situation in eastern Ukraine

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MEPs to quiz Commission on Germany's road toll plans

MEPs will ask the EU Commission to explain how its agreement on Germany's proposed road toll legislation removes discrimination based on nationality, which was its initial concern, in a debate on Thursday afternoon.

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MEPs set to approve €1.8m in EU aid for 800 former workers in the Netherlands

A proposal to grant EU job search aid worth €1,818,750 to 800 former retail workers in the Netherlands will be put to a vote on Tuesday. The workers were made redundant by six retail trade companies which recently went bankrupt in the Drenthe and Overijssel regions. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) aid, if adopted in plenary, still needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers on 17 February.

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Denmark - Europol: first step towards establishing a cooperation agreement

Parliament is set to recommend that Denmark be added to the list of countries with which Europol can conclude operational cooperation agreements. This is the first step towards setting up a cooperation agreement between Denmark and Europol in order to minimise the negative impact of Denmark's departure from Europol on 1 May 2017 and

avoid creating gaps in the joint fight against serious crime and terrorism. A resolution will be voted on Tuesday. 29

Human rights and democracy resolutions

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Other topics on the agenda

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2017-02-13>

Further information

[Draft agenda](#)

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[Press conferences and other events](#)

[EP Audiovisual website](#)

[EP Newshub](#)

[EPRS Plenary podcasts on key issues](#)

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CETA: Parliament's final vote on EU-Canada trade agreement

The European Parliament will debate and vote on the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) on Wednesday. The landmark deal, which aims to boost goods and services trade and investment flows, cannot enter into force without the European Parliament's approval.

The CETA would remove tariffs on most goods and services and open up Canada's public procurement market.

To allay citizens' concerns that the deal gives too much power to multinational companies, the EU and Canada explicitly confirmed states' domestic right to regulate.

In response to parliamentary pressure, the controversial investor-state-dispute settlement mechanism was replaced by the [Investment Court System](#) so as to ensure government control over the choice of arbitrators and enhance transparency.

EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement

MEPs are also set to give their consent to the conclusion of an EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). Complementing the CETA, this deal aims to step up EU-Canada bilateral cooperation on a wide range of non-trade issues such as foreign and security policy, counter-terrorism, fighting organised crime, sustainable development, research and culture.

Background

The CETA negotiations were launched in May 2009 and concluded in September 2014. The EU and Canada signed the agreement on 30 October 2016. In 2015 the EU imported goods from Canada worth €28.3 billion and exported goods to it worth €35.2 billion, a figure that is expected to rise by more than 20% when the agreement is implemented in full.

Procedure: consent

[2016/0205\(NLE\) - CETA](#)

[2016/0373\(NLE\) - SPA](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 15 February

Vote: Wednesday, 15 February

Press conference: Wednesday, 15 February 14.00-14.30 with CETA rapporteur Artis Pabriks (EPP, LV), Committee Chair Bernd Lange (S&D, DE) and Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström

#CETA

Further information

[Trade Committee MEPs back EU-Canada agreement - press release on committee vote \(24.01.2017.\)](#)

[Full text of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement \(CETA\)](#)

[Questions and answers by the European Commission \(April 2016\)](#)

[EPRS briefing: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement \(CETA\) with Canada \(January 2017\)](#)

[“This trade deal is based on best practices on both sides of the Atlantic” Facebook Live interview with rapporteur Artis Pabriks \(EPP, LT\) on 23 January 2017](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Artis Pabriks \(EPP, LV\)](#)

[Procedure file CETA](#)

[EP rapporteur Charles Tannock \(ECR, UK\)](#)

[Strategic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Canada, of the other part](#)

[Procedure file Strategic Partnership Agreement](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to address Parliament

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will deliver a formal speech to MEPs on the EU-Canada relationship on Thursday 16 February at 11.00 in the Strasbourg chamber. Mr Trudeau will be the first Canadian Prime Minister to address the European Parliament.

The visit is scheduled for the day after Parliament has its final say on the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Mr Trudeau is set to promote Canada's role as a leader on progressive trade and investment, including by highlighting how the implementation of the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will create jobs, bolster our shared prosperity, and help grow the middle class.

Formal address

Thursday, 16 February - 11.00-12.00

#Canada #CETA @CanadianPM@JustinTrudeau

Further information

[Prime Minister of Canada website](#)
[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Vote on new anti-terror law to stop foreign fighters and lone wolves

To counter the growing threats from “foreign fighters” travelling to and from conflict zones for terrorist purposes and “lone wolves” planning solo attacks, new EU counter-terrorism rules to be voted on Thursday will make it a crime to prepare acts of terrorism.

The new rules, informally agreed by Parliament and Council negotiators in November 2016, will criminalise "preparatory acts" such as travelling abroad to join a terrorist group and returning to the EU, recruiting for terrorism, training or being trained, publicly inciting terrorism or advocating it, whether directly or indirectly through the glorification of such acts, or by providing funds to commit them.

The law also includes provisions on the protection of victims of terrorism, to ensure that victims and their families receive help immediately in the event of an attack.

Parliament's negotiators also ensured that, for the first time, member states will be obliged to exchange information on criminal proceedings if it could be used to prevent future attacks or assist other ongoing investigations or proceedings.

Note to editors

The new directive on combatting terrorism will replace the 2002 Council framework decision ([2002/475/JHA](#)) to keep pace with new developments and emerging threats such as foreign fighters and lone wolves, and also ensure that member states comply with international obligations and standards such as [UN Security Council Resolution 2178](#) and the [Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism](#).

Member states will have 18 months to ensure that the new rules can be applied. The UK and Ireland will not be bound by them, but may notify the EU Commission of their intention to opt in, if they so wish. Denmark will not be covered by the directive.

Procedure: ordinary legislative procedure (COD)

[2015/0281\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 15 February

Vote: Thursday, 16 February

Press conference: Wednesday at 16.30 with the rapporteur, the Commission and the Maltese Presidency

#EU #Counterterrorism

Further information

[Draft report on combatting terrorism](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(05.12.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur: Monika Hohlmeier \(EPP, DE\)](#)

[Procedure file:](#)

[EP research briefing on the proposal for the directive on combatting terrorism \(February 2017\)](#)

[European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report \(TE-SAT\) 2016 \(Europol report\):](#)

Parliament set to back mandatory checks at EU external borders

All EU citizens and third country nationals entering or leaving the EU are to be checked against databases, e.g. of lost and stolen documents, under a draft regulation to be voted on Thursday. This regulation, already informally agreed with the Council, would also require EU member states to check that travellers do not represent a threat to public policy and internal security.

The proposed regulation, which would amend the [Schengen Borders Code \(SBC\)](#), was presented by the European Commission in December 2015. It is a response to terrorist threats in Europe, and in particular the phenomenon of “foreign fighters” from the EU seeking to join terror groups such as Daesh in Syria and Iraq.

Procedure: ordinary legislative procedure

[2015/0307\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 15 February

Vote: Thursday, 16 February

Press conference: Wednesday, 15 February, 14.30

Further information

[Press release on the Committee vote \(21.06.2016\)](#)

[Press release on the informal deal with the Council \(05.12.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Monica Macovei \(ECR, RO\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EC Briefing: systematic checks at external borders](#)

[EP Briefing: Schengen and the management of EU's external borders](#)

[EU external border checks tightened as security threat deterrent](#)

MEPs to vote on tougher greenhouse gas emission curbs

Plans to strengthen greenhouse gas emission curbs via the EU carbon market (EU Emissions Trading System) will be put to a vote on Wednesday. To raise the price of carbon, MEPs propose reducing the number of “carbon credits” (emission allowances) to be auctioned by 2.4% each year, and doubling the capacity of the 2019 market stability reserve (MSR) to absorb the excess of allowances on the market.

In their amendments, MEPs advocate increasing the so-called “linear reduction factor” - the yearly reduction of credits to be auctioned, in order to deliver on the carbon curbs - by 2.4%, as against the 2.2% proposed by the European Commission.

MEPs also want to boost the MSR's capacity to mop up excess credits on the market. When triggered, it would absorb up to 24% of excess credits in each auctioning year, for the first four years - double its current capacity. MEPs also agree that 800 million allowances should be removed from the MSR as of 1 January 2021.

Procedure: ordinary legislative procedure, first reading

[2015/0148\(COD\)](#)

Vote: Wednesday, 15 February

[#EUETS](#)

Further information

[Draft report on the proposal to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(15.12.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Ian Duncan \(ECR, UK\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen to address European Parliament

Austria's newly-elected President Alexander Van der Bellen will address MEPs in a formal sitting on Tuesday at noon. This will be his first official trip abroad.

Former Green party leader Alexander Van der Bellen, 73, ran as a nominally independent candidate and finished second out of six in the first round before winning the second round against Norbert Hofer, a member of the Freedom Party of Austria, on 4 December.

Mr Van der Bellen was born in Austria to Russian and Estonian parents who were refugees from Stalinism. He was a Professor of economics at the University of Vienna before he entered national politics.

Formal sitting: Tuesday, 14 February - 12.99-12.30

[@vanderbellen](#)

Further information

[Austrian presidency](#)

Greece: MEPs to debate the state of €86 billion bailout package

MEPs will discuss the state of Greece's €86 billion bailout, amid pressure for Europe's largest debtor and its creditors to overcome their differences over Athens' fiscal and reform plans.

One party to the bailout, the International Monetary Fund, recently issued a gloomy assessment of Greece's economy and its ability to repay its debts, without drastic debt restructuring. This prompted accusations from Brussels and Athens that the IMF was being "overly pessimistic".

The EU institutions are keen to obtain a settlement over the bailout before the Eurogroup meets on 20 February - one of the last gatherings of European finance ministers before elections in the Netherlands, and later in the year, France and Germany.

Procedure: Commission statement followed by debate

[2017/2529\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 14 February

#Greece

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Audiovisual material for professionals](#)

Reforming the EU

To tackle major political challenges ahead, improve the EU's capacity to act, restore citizens' trust and make the euro zone economy more resilient to outside shocks, the EU needs first to make full use of the Lisbon Treaty and then possibly reform to enable itself to do even more. This is the key message of three resolutions exploring the future development of the European Union to be voted on Thursday.

The first resolution, drafted by Mercedes Bresso (S&D, IT) and Elmar Brok (EPP, DE) focuses on making the most of the existing Lisbon Treaty. It points to the advantages of the Union's working methods over intergovernmental ones and suggests that the European Council (heads of state or government) should stick to its role of defining general political priorities and leave law making to the Council of Ministers and European Parliament.

The second, by Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE), notes that various crises have demonstrated the current EU's tendency not to respond effectively and quickly enough. It analyses the possibility of moving further than the current toolbox allows, by undertaking an in-depth reform of the Lisbon Treaty.

The third, by Reimer Böge (EPP, DE) and Pervenche Berès (S&D, FR) addresses the lack of convergence, political cooperation and policy "ownership" in the euro area. It proposes a convergence strategy to be focused on labour markets, investment, productivity and social cohesion and a specific euro area budget capacity for this purpose financed by its member states.

All these proposals are part of a package that aims to clarify Parliament's position on the future of the EU, in time for the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

[2014/2249\(INI\)](#)

[2014/2248\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 14 February

Vote: Thursday, 16 February

#EUnion #eurozone

Further information

[Draft report: Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty](#)

[Draft report: Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Elmar Brok \(EPP, DE\) - Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Mercedes Bresso \(S&D, IT\) - Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Guy Verhofstadt \(ALDE, BE\) - Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union](#)

[Procedure file: Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty](#)

[Procedure file: Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Parliament to set out its economic, social and single market priorities for 2017

The EU's economic, social and single market priorities for 2017 will be the focus of a debate with the EU Commission on “European Semester” economic policy coordination on Tuesday. MEPs are expected to comment on the implementation and social repercussions of the Stability and Growth Pact, and to urge member states to do more to exploit the single market’s economic potential. They are to vote three separate resolutions on these issues on Wednesday.

MEPs will probably welcome the European Commission’s Annual Growth Survey for 2017, which reaffirms the strategy of private and public investment, balanced structural reforms and responsible public finances. They will also urge member states to act on country-specific recommendations, so as to deliver on growth and jobs.

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

[*2016/2306\(INI\)- annual growth survey 2017*](#)

[*2016/2307\(INI\) - employment and social aspects*](#)

[*2016/2248\(INI\) - single market governance*](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 14 February

Vote: Wednesday, 15 February

#EuropeanSemester

Further information

ECON resolution: Profile of rapporteur Gunnar HÖKMARK (EPP, SE)

ECON resolution: Procedure file European Semester for economic policy coordination: Annual Growth Survey 2017

EMPL resolution: Profile of rapporteur Yana TOOM (ALDE, EE)

EMPL resolution: Procedure file Employment and social aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2017

IMCO resolution: Profile of rapporteur Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE (EPP, ES)

IMCO resolution: Procedure file Single Market governance within the European Semester 2017
European Semester: Main Steps at the EU Level

MEPs to call for fast-track approval of low-risk pesticides

Low-risk biological pesticides, which could replace those that may harm the environment and human health, cannot yet be as widely used as they should in the EU as arrangements for certifying them are too slow and complex, MEPs will point out in a debate on Monday. In a resolution to be voted on Tuesday, they will ask the EU Commission to propose a revision of the rules.

In their draft resolution, MEPs note that the use of conventional plant protection products is increasingly contentious, due to the risks that they pose for human health and the environment. However, only seven active substances classified as “low risk” alternatives have been approved for use in the Union.

They call on the Commission to propose draft legislation before the end of 2018 in order to fast-track the evaluation, authorisation and registration of low-risk pesticides.

Procedure: oral question with resolution

[2016/2903\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 13 February

Vote: Tuesday, 14 February

#pesticides

Further information

[EP Research - pesticide legislation in the EU: towards sustainable use of plant protection products](#)

[Renewal of the authorisation of the use of the herbicide substance glyphosate \(Ask EP, January 2017\)](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Robots and artificial intelligence: MEPs to call for EU-wide liability rules

EU-wide rules are needed for the fast-evolving field of robotics, e.g. to enforce ethical standards or establish liability for accidents involving driverless cars, say MEPs. A draft resolution will be debated on Wednesday and put to a vote on Thursday.

In their draft resolution, MEPs ask the EU Commission to propose rules on robotics and artificial intelligence, in order to fully exploit their economic potential and to guarantee a standard level of safety and security.

MEPs stress that draft legislation is urgently needed to clarify liability issues, especially for self-driving cars. They call for a mandatory insurance scheme and a supplementary fund to ensure that victims of accidents involving driverless cars are fully compensated.

They also ask the Commission to consider creating a European agency for robotics and artificial intelligence, to supply public authorities with technical, ethical and regulatory expertise.

Procedure: legislative resolution

[2015/2103\(INL\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 15 February

Vote: Thursday, 16 February

Press conference: Wednesday, 15 February at 15:30 with the rapporteur Mady Delvaux (S&D, LU)

#AI

Further information

[Draft report on Civil Law Rules on Robotics](#)
[Press release on committee vote \(12.1.2017\)](#)
[Profile of rapporteur: Mady Delvaux \(S&D, LU\)](#)
[Procedure file](#)
[EP Research: European Civil Law Rules in Robotics](#)
[EP Research: How will robots change our lives?](#)

MEPs to call for EU-wide protection for whistle-blowers without delay

An “effective and comprehensive European whistle-blower protection programme” to protect the EU’s financial interests should be proposed “immediately” by the EU Commission, MEPs urge in a draft resolution to be debated on Monday and voted on Tuesday.

This programme should include whistle-blower protection mechanisms for companies, public bodies and non-profit organisations, says the draft text. MEPs also advocate setting up an independent EU body, with offices in EU member states, to help internal and external whistle-blowers to use “the right channels to disclose their information on possible irregularities” affecting the EU’s financial interests.

Procedure: own-initiative procedure

2016/2055(INI)

Debate: Monday, 13 February

Vote: Tuesday, 14 February

#EUTransparency #lobbying

Further information

[Draft resolution on the role of whistle-blowers in the protection of EU’s financial interests](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(09-01-2017\)](#)

[Press release: “EU must provide legal protection to whistle-blowers, urge MEPs” \(Plenary debate, 07-07-2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Dennis de Jong \(GUE/NGL, NL\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina: progress on EU-related reforms in 2016

Parliament will debate the 2016 reform efforts of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina with enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn on Tuesday, and vote two separate resolutions on them on Wednesday. It is likely to stress that credible judicial reform in Albania could prove to be a key to advancing its EU accession process. As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, MEPs are to urge it to overcome ethnic and political divisions in order to succeed in the EU membership application evaluation process.

Albania has been an EU candidate country since June 2014, but it has yet to start EU accession negotiations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a potential EU candidate country, which submitted an application to join the EU in February 2016. The European Commission is evaluating it now.

The House will vote on the two separate resolutions on Wednesday at noon.

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

[2016/2313\(INI\) - Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

[2016/2312\(INI\) - Albania](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 14 February

Vote: Wednesday, 15 February

#Albania #BiH #EUenlargement

Further information

[Rapporteur on Albania Knut Fleckenstein \(S&D, DE\)](#)

[Rapporteur on Bosnia and Herzegovina Cristian Dan Preda \(EPP, RO\)](#)

[Procedure file on Albania](#)

[Procedure file on Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

[EU enlargement status \(European Commission information\)](#)

Israel up for a debate with Federica Mogherini

Prospects for resuming peace talks in the Middle East will be debated with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday afternoon. MEPs are likely to raise the Israeli government's recent decision to build 3,000 new houses in the West Bank and its so-called "Regulation Bill" - which would retroactively "legalize" several thousand settlements illegally built on Palestinian private land.

The construction of additional 3,000 settlement units in the West Bank is "posing a direct challenge to the prospects of a viable two-state solution", Ms Mogherini [commented](#) on the Israeli government announcement on 1 February.

The law passed by the Israeli Knesset on 6 February retroactively legalises the expropriation of privately owned Palestinian land scattered around the occupied West Bank. Under the law the original Palestinian landowners will be financially compensated or given alternative land.

UN Security Council Resolution [2334](#) of 23 December 2016 urged an end to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which it said constitute a "flagrant violation" of international law and have "no legal validity".

Statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission

[2017/2527\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 14 February

#WestBank #Palestine #Israel

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Israel and the EU](#)

[Statement by the HRVP Federica Mogherini on the most recent announcement of 3,000 new settlement units in the West Bank \(01.02.2017\)](#)

[UN Security council Resolution 2334 \(23.12.2016\)](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Security situation in eastern Ukraine

The deteriorating security situation in eastern Ukraine, where heavy fighting with pro-Russian rebels recently broke out in the government-controlled town of Avdiivka, will be debated by MEPs with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday afternoon.

Security and Defence Subcommittee MEPs were given a first-hand briefing on the latest developments by Ivanna Klymchuk-Tsintsadze, Ukraine's Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, in Brussels on 6 February. She informed them that on 29 January, pro-Russian rebels had violated the ceasefire and attacked the Ukrainian forces in Avdiivka using various types of weapons, including those prohibited by the Minsk agreements, such as Grad multiple rocket launchers.

In a [subcommittee debate](#) MEPs urged Russia to stop testing the West's reactions and to go on implementing the Minsk agreements.

*Statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Statement/Vice-President of the Commission*

Debate: Tuesday, 14 February

Further information

[Russian probing in eastern Ukraine must stop, say security and defence MEPs \(06.02.2017\)](#)

[Video of a debate in Subcommittee on security and defence \(06.02.2017\)](#)

[Audiovisual material on EU - Ukraine](#)

Regional policy funds: an investment tool to boost local growth and jobs

MEPs call on the EU Commission to table a plan to cut delays in EU-funded regional development projects, and stress that EU investment that spurs growth and creates jobs is needed now more than ever, in two draft resolutions to be debated on Wednesday and voted on Thursday.

In a resolution drafted by Iskra Mihaylova (ALDE, BG), MEPs call on the EU Commission to table a “cohesion acceleration plan” to cut delays in EU-funded projects aiming to reduce disparities among EU regions by stimulating growth and job creation.

EU regional (“cohesion”) policy investment drives development and delivers jobs, notes a resolution drafted by Lambert Van Nistelrooij (EPP, NL), which argues that these projects, as well as those financed by European Structural Investment Funds (ESIFs) should be made more visible.

Background information

With a budget of €454 billion for 2014-2020, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) are the EU's main investment policy tool, accounting for about one third of EU expenditure. Due to the financial crisis, public investment has declined substantially, leaving ESI Funds and co-financing by the member states as the main public investment tool in most member states. In some, ESI funding makes up 60-80% of total public investment.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution, [oral question](#) to the Commission with a resolution

[2016/2148\(INI\)](#)

[2016/30088\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday 15 February

Vote: Thursday 16 September

#CohesionPolicy #EUfunds

Further information

[Draft resolution on investing in jobs and growth](#)
[Procedure file](#)
[Profile of rapporteur Lambert Van Nistelrooij \(EPP, NL\)](#)
[Oral question on the delayed implementation of ESI Funds operational programmes](#)
[Procedure file](#)
[Profile of rapporteur Iskra Mihaylova \(ALDE, BG\)](#)
[Commission website on the European Structural Investment Funds](#)
[Common Provisions Regulation](#)
[Analytical data per country on the European Structural and Investment Funds](#)

MEPs to quiz Commission on Germany's road toll plans

MEPs will ask the EU Commission to explain how its agreement on Germany's proposed road toll legislation removes discrimination based on nationality, which was its initial concern, in a debate on Thursday afternoon.

A key Commission concern about the draft legislation was that it discriminated against foreign drivers, by allowing German residents to obtain a tax bill reduction corresponding to the exact amount of the toll, say the 43 MEPs putting the [question](#).

Following an agreement reached with Germany on 1 December 2016, the Commission has put its infringement procedure on hold, but Germany's amended proposal would mean that in practice, only foreign drivers would actually pay the toll, the MEPs add.

Procedure: question for oral answer to the Commission

Procedure Code:2017/2526(RSP)

Debate: Thursday, 16 February

Vote: in a future session

#Germany #EUTransport

Further information

[Question for oral answer to the Commission: Commission's approval of Germany's revised plan to introduce a road toll](#)

[Procedure file](#)

MEPs set to approve €1.8m in EU aid for 800 former workers in the Netherlands

A proposal to grant EU job search aid worth €1,818,750 to 800 former retail workers in the Netherlands will be put to a vote on Tuesday. The workers were made redundant by six retail trade companies which recently went bankrupt in the Drenthe and Overijssel regions. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) aid, if adopted in plenary, still needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers on 17 February.

The redundancies were due to the effects of the global financial and economic crisis, which EU Commission figures show have hit the retail sector more recently than some others. In both the Drenthe and Overijssel provinces, the retail sector is one of the biggest in the regional economy.

The proposed EGF aid will help to prepare 800 former workers at the six Dutch companies (Aktiesport, Dolcis, Manfield, Perry Sport, Scapino and V&D) for new job opportunities.

Background

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. The measures co-financed by the EGF include active career guidance, job-search support, vocational training and training in transversal skills, promoting entrepreneurship and contributing to business start-ups.

Procedure: budgetary procedure

[2017/2014\(BUD\)](#)

Vote: Tuesday, 14 February

#EGF #Netherlands

Further information

[Press release on committee vote \(09.02.2017\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur : Nedzhmi Ali \(ALDE, BG\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Denmark - Europol: first step towards establishing a cooperation agreement

Parliament is set to recommend that Denmark be added to the list of countries with which Europol can conclude operational cooperation agreements. This is the first step towards setting up a cooperation agreement between Denmark and Europol in order to minimise the negative impact of Denmark's departure from Europol on 1 May 2017 and avoid creating gaps in the joint fight against serious crime and terrorism. A resolution will be voted on Tuesday.

Procedure: consultation

[2016/0823\(CNS\)](#)

Vote: Tuesday, 14 February

@Europol

Further information

[Press release on committee vote - 09.02.2017](#)

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

[Procedure file](#)

[Joint declaration "to minimise the negative effects of the Danish departure from Europol, following the referendum in Denmark on 3 December \(press release from the Commission 15.12.2016\)](#)

[Council implementing decision amending decision 2009/935/JHA as regards the list of third States and organisations with which Europol shall conclude agreements \(21.12.2016\)](#)

Human rights and democracy resolutions

Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following human rights and democracy topics on Thursday 16 February, at around 10.30, with the votes following at 12.00.

- Situation of human rights and democracy in Nicaragua, the case of Francesca Ramirez
- Executions in Kuwait and Bahrain
- Guatemala, notably the situation of human rights defenders

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

Debates/votes: Thursday 16 February

#humanrights #democracy #Nicaragua #Kuwait #Bahrain #Guatemala

Other topics on the agenda

Other topics for debate and vote include the following:

- Aviation strategy for Europe, *Telicka (INI)*, debate Wednesday, vote Thursday
- Annual report on EU competition policy, *Szanyi (INI)*, debate Monday, vote Tuesday
- Annual report on Banking Union, *Hübner (INI)*, debate Tuesday, vote Wednesday
- EU-Mongolia Partnership agreement, *Scholz (CNS)*, vote Wednesday
- EU-Cook Islands Fisheries agreement, *Ferreira (CNS)*, vote Tuesday
- European cloud initiative, *Buzek (INI)*, debate Wed, vote Thursday
- Subjecting the new psychoactive substance methyl 2-[[1-(cyclohexylmethyl)-1H-indole-3-carbonyl]amino]-3,3-dimethylbutanoate (MDMB-CHMICA) to control measures, *Fontana*, vote Tuesday