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Further information

[Final draft agenda](#)
[Follow the plenary live](#)
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[Press conferences and other events](#)
[EP Multimedia Centre](#)
[EP Newshub](#)
[EPRS Plenary podcasts on key issues](#)

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Future of Europe debate with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez

MEPs will exchange views about the future of Europe with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and EU Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans on Wednesday at 10.00.

This will be the fifteenth in a series of debates between MEPs and EU heads of state or government.

Find out more about previous debates [here](#).

Born in 1972, Sánchez became Prime Minister in June 2018, following a vote of no confidence that ousted the Government headed by Mariano Rajoy.

A press conference by President Tajani and Prime Minister Sánchez is scheduled at 12.30.

Prime Minister of Finland Juha Sipilä will address MEPs at the January session in Brussels and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte at the February plenary session in Strasbourg..

Procedure: Debate (without resolution)

Debate: Wednesday, 16 January, at 10.00

Press conference: Wednesday, 16 January at 12.30

Further information

[Biography of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

MEPs to debate state of play on Brexit after UK House of Commons vote

At 8.30 on Wednesday, Parliament will debate the state of play of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, one day after the UK House of Commons' meaningful vote on 15 January.

The debate is scheduled to last ninety minutes, with one MEP speaking for each political group and interventions from the members of the European Parliament's [Brexit Steering Group](#)

Council and Commission statements - The UK's withdrawal from the EU

Debate: Wednesday, 16 January - 08.30-10.00

Further information

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

Review of Austrian presidency and debate on Romanian priorities on Tuesday

MEPs will discuss priorities of the incoming Romanian Council presidency with Prime Minister Dăncilă at 15:00, following a morning debate with Austrian Chancellor Kurz.

In a debate with the Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz at 10.30, Parliament and EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker will assess the Council presidency's achievements over the past six months and discuss progress made on long-term budget negotiations.

Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă will present the priorities of the incoming Romanian presidency at 15.00, focussed on cohesion and common values, safety and strengthening Europe as a global player.

A press conference by EP President Antonio Tajani and Prime Minister Dăncilă is scheduled at 17.00.

European Elections will be held 23-26 May, one month before Romania hands over the rotating Council presidency to Finland.

Council and Commission statements (without resolution)

Debate: Tuesday, 15 January

Press conference: Tuesday, 15 January, 17.00 with Parliament President Antonio Tajani and Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă of Romania

Further information

[Website of the incoming Romanian Council presidency](#)

[Website of the outgoing Austrian Council presidency](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

[- Future of Europe](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material: Austrian Presidency](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material: Romanian Presidency](#)

MEPs to debate EU summit and reform of EU asylum and migration policy

On Tuesday morning, MEPs will take stock of the results of the 13-14 December meeting of EU leaders, before debating the reform of the EU asylum and migration policy.

The main items on the agenda of the meeting of heads of state or government, on 13-14 December 2018 in Brussels, were the EU's long-term budget, external relations, migration and the single market. A separate meeting on 13 December, in EU27 format, was dedicated to Brexit.

Reforming EU asylum and migration policy

The stalemate in the reform of the common asylum system, particularly the lack of progress in updating the Dublin Regulation (which determines the country responsible for an asylum request) will also be the focus of a debate with the Council and the Commission.

Improving the management of migration flows into Europe, and the issue of responsibility-sharing among EU member states, will also be raised, in the context of the recent developments in the Mediterranean and the decision of some countries not to allow the disembarkation of rescued migrants and asylum-seekers.

European Council and Commission statements (without resolution)

[2018/2917\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 15 January

Further information

[European Council, meeting 13-14 December 2019](#)

[Outlook for the European Council and Euro Summit, 13-14 December 2018 \(EPRS briefing\)](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

Pesticides: a blueprint to improve EU approval procedure

Plans to boost trust in the EU approval procedure for pesticides, by making it more transparent and accountable, will be put to a vote on Wednesday.

Among many proposals, the report from the special committee on pesticides says that the public should be granted access to the studies used in the procedure to authorise a pesticide, including all the supporting data and information relating to the applications.

MEPs note that concerns have been raised about the right of applicants to choose a particular member state to report on the approval of an active substance to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), as this practice is seen as lacking in transparency and could entail a conflict of interest.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

[2018/2153\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Monday 14 January

Vote: Wednesday 16 January

Press conference Wednesday, 16 January, at 14.30

Further information

[Press release on committee vote \(06.12.2018\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Norbert Lins \(EPP, DE\)](#)

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

[Procedure file](#)

[EP Research: Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides](#)

[Guidelines for submission and evaluation of applications for the approval of active substances in pesticides](#)

[Chemicals and pesticides](#)

[Authorisation of pesticides in the EU: With a focus on glyphosate](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

Member states jeopardising the rule of law to risk losing EU money

MEPs will debate and vote on rules to freeze EU payments to member states which interfere with courts or which do not tackle fraud and corruption.

If the EU Commission established that “generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law” in an EU country threaten the management of EU funds, it could suggest measures ranging from reducing pre-financing to suspending EU budget payments. Parliament and EU ministers would have to approve any decision.

While broadly supporting the Commission’s proposal, Budgets and Budgetary Control Committee MEPs added safeguards to make sure governments would still have to make payments to final beneficiaries, like researchers or civil society organisations, even if EU funding is suspended.

Promoting democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights

MEPs will also debate and vote on increasing funding for the Rights and Values Programme for the period 2021-2027 up to 1.834 billion euros, almost triple the amount proposed by the European Commission (€642 million). This funding would go towards promoting democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights across the European Union, including providing financial support to civil society organisations working on these issues.

Civil Liberties Committee MEPs added provisions so that EU countries involved in rule of law proceedings may lose the right to manage the funds allocated to them for this purpose themselves. They also want a fast-track procedure to disburse funds to support democratic dialogue in member states where the EU’s founding values are at risk.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, first reading

2018/0207(COD) - Rights and Values Programme 2021-2027

2018/0136(COD) - Protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States

Debate: Wednesday, 16 January

Vote: Thursday, 17 January

Further information

[Draft report on the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States](#)

[Procedure file \(Protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States\)](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(13.12.2018\)](#)

[Profile of co-rapporteur Eider Gardiazabal Rubial](#)

[Profile of co-rapporteur Petri Sarvamaa \(EPP, FI\)](#)

[Legislative train schedule: Protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States](#)

[EP Research Service: Protecting the EU budget against generalised rule of law deficiencies](#)

[Draft resolution on the Rights and values programme 2021–2027](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(10.12.2018\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur: Bodil Valero \(Greens/EFA, SE\)](#)

[Procedure file \(Rights and Values Programme 2021-2027\)](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)

“InvestEU” programme: new boost for jobs, growth and investment

MEPs are set to approve a new EU programme to support investment and access to finance during 2021-2027. The aim is to trigger almost €700 billion in investments.

The “InvestEU” initiative should work like a launchpad for investments which otherwise would have been difficult. It follows and replaces the current [EFSI](#) (European Fund for Strategic Investments), set up after the financial crisis.

MEPs intend to improve the Commission’s proposal by increasing the EU guarantee (from €38 billion to €40.8 billion, to trigger €698 billion in investments), by introducing new objectives like employment and climate protection and by strengthening the accountability of the programme’s management.

More information is available in the [press release](#) issued after the recent vote in the Committees on Budgets and on Economic and Monetary Affairs.

A [dedicated “InvestEU” website](#) shows examples of projects supported by the EU.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure (1st reading)

[2018/0229\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 15 January

Vote: Wednesday, 16 January

Further information

[Draft report on the InvestEU Programme](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(13.12.2018\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Commission press release](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

Commemorating twenty years of the Euro in plenary

On 1 January 1999, the Euro was launched. To commemorate 20 years of its existence, the plenary will host a ceremony on Tuesday at 11.30.

European Parliament President Antonio Tajani will open the ceremony, followed by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, European Central Bank President Mario Draghi, Eurogroup President Mário Centeno, Chair of Parliament's economics committee Roberto Gualtieri, and former European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet.

There will also be an exhibition on the Euro within the premises of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Formal sitting Tuesday 15 January, 11.30

Further information

[Statements of Presidents Tajani, Juncker, Draghi and Centeno on the 20th anniversary of the Euro](#)

[Homepage, "The Euro at 20" -](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)

MEPs discuss ECB activities with Mario Draghi

MEPs will raise the priorities they wish to see addressed by the European Central Bank during a plenary debate with President Mario Draghi on Tuesday afternoon.

Following the debate, MEPs on Wednesday will vote on a resolution analysing the ECB's work over 2017 and looking ahead to its activities in 2019.

Procedure: own initiative

Procedure Code: 2018/2101(INI)

Debate: Tuesday 15 January

Vote: Wednesday 16 January

Further information

[Draft resolution on the ECB activities in 2017](#)

[Profile of rapporteur : Gabriel Mato \(EPP, ES\)](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)

Preferential tariffs to help Western Sahara to develop

A proposal to lower tariffs in the territory of Western Sahara to the same level as Moroccan tariffs will be put to the vote on Wednesday.

The Committee on International Trade gave the green light to extend the preferential tariff rates to the territory of Western Sahara after the European Commission and Morocco agreed on a traceability mechanism, which helps define the origin of products exported from the territory.

It backed the extension of preferential trade tariffs to allow the region to develop, even before there is a political solution to the status of Western Sahara.

The plenary will first vote on whether to seek the opinion of the European Court of Justice on the compatibility of the agreement with EU Treaties. If the answer is positive, the votes on Parliament's consent to the agreement and on the resolution will be adjourned to another plenary session. If the answer is negative, the votes go ahead.

Background

The European Commission liberalised trade with Morocco in 2013, but the decision ended up in court, as it covered the disputed territory of Western Sahara. The EU Court of Justice [ruled in December 2016](#) that no trade agreement could cover Western Sahara unless the people of the territory had consented to it and unless the territory was explicitly mentioned in the text of the agreement.

Procedure: consent

[2018/0256\(NLE\)](#)

Vote: Wednesday 16 January

Further information

[Draft recommendation on extending trade preferences to Western Sahara](#)

[Draft report on consent to extending trade preferences to Western Sahara](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(10.12.2018\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Marietje Schaake \(ALDE, NL\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Background \(European Commission, 11.06.2018\)](#)

Women's rights, rule of law, hate speech: MEPs assess fundamental rights in EU

MEPs will examine the situation of fundamental rights in the EU in 2017, pointing to women's rights violations, rule of law breaches and the rise of hate speech.

The draft text - to be debated on Wednesday afternoon and put to a vote immediately after - condemns gender violence and highlights the ongoing discrimination that women in Europe still face. It regrets that the EU institutions are not effective in protecting rule of law and European values.

MEPs are also concerned that freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are being increasingly restricted. They underline the need to combat hate speech, the rise of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, as well as the persistent discrimination against and stigmatisation of LGBTI people in the EU.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

[2018/2103\(INI\)](#)

Debate/vote: Wednesday, 16 January

Further information

[Draft report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU in 2017](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(03.12.2018\)](#)

[Profile of the rapporteur: Josep-Maria Terricabras \(Greens/EFA, ES\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#)

MEPs want to speed up driverless mobility in the EU

To stimulate innovation and take-up of autonomous transport means, the EU should speed up its progress on technical harmonisation and safety and liability rules.

The draft resolution to be put to the vote on Tuesday also urges the EU Commission to ensure sufficient support for the European industry to develop and invest in connected and automated mobility systems - be it on the road, on rail, in the air or water-borne.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

[2018/2089\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 14 January

Vote: Tuesday, 15 January

Further information

[Draft resolution on autonomous driving in European transport](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(22.11.2018\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Wim van de Camp \(EPP, NL\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: see photos, video and audio material](#)

MEPs want to invest more in future EU generations

MEPs will vote on Wednesday to increase the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and are set to make youth and children the main beneficiaries.

The Employment Committee proposes increasing [ESF+ funding in the EU 2021-27 long-term budget](#) by approximately 19% compared to the European Commission's proposal (from approximately € 89,6 billion to approximately € 106,8 billion in 2018 prices), of which €105,7 billion is to be managed jointly by the EU and member states.

MEPs want to see more resources devoted to youth employability and to ensure equal opportunities for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Background

The European Social Fund has been investing in citizens for over 60 years. It contributes to social inclusion, job opportunities, fighting poverty, education, skills and the employability of young people, as well as in better living conditions, health and fairer societies. The individual projects and programmes must contribute to improving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, mandate vote

[2018/0206\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 15 January

Vote: Wednesday 16 January

Further information

[Draft resolution on the European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#)
[Procedure file](#)

[Rapporteur profile: Verónica Lope Fontagné \(EPP, ES\)](#)

European Fund for Transition to support workers made redundant

MEPs will vote on Wednesday on a revision of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund supporting workers dismissed due to globalisation, technological or environmental changes.

The Employment committee wants the fund to also address the adverse effects of globalisation and technological transitions like digitisation, automation and the transition towards a resource-efficient economy.

In addition, MEPs are set to lower the threshold of eligibility, setting it at 200 lost jobs. They also want to change the name of the fund from European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to European Fund for Transition (EFT).

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, mandate vote

[2018/0202\(COD\)](#)

Specialist: Dorota

Debate: Tuesday, 15 January

Vote: Wednesday 16 January

Further information

[Draft resolution on the proposal for a regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund \(EGF\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Profile of the rapporteur: Maria Arena \(S&D, BE\)](#)

Challenges of multi-tier EU integration

Parliament is set to oppose 'Europe à la carte' and 'second-class membership', in a resolution to be put to the vote on Thursday.

MEPs will take stock of the differing levels of European integration among member states, commonly referred to as 'Europe à la carte', 'variable geometry', 'multi-speed Europe' or 'first- and second-class membership'. They intend to set prerequisites, so that differentiation serves the European project, rather than endangering it.

They are likely to adopt recommendations for any future treaty change aimed to 'bring order' to the current process of differentiation and call for an end to the practice of permanent opt-outs from EU law.

MEPs raised the issue of the challenges of differentiated integration as part of a broader debate on the [Future of Europe](#).

Background

Integrating into the EU can vary in pace, territorial scope and degree and may legally take various forms:

- enhanced cooperation among a group of countries (for example in divorce law)
- permanent structured cooperation (in security and defence)
- a few countries negotiated a permanent opt-out from EU legislation (for example Denmark opts out of the euro)
- transitional measures applied to new member states (Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification or temporary derogations).

How differentiation is perceived varies significantly depending on the national context. It may be positive, if seen as an opportunity to progress more rapidly in deepening integration, or negative, if seen as a path towards creating first- and second-class membership.

Procedure: Own-initiative

[2018/2093\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Thursday, 17 January

Vote: Thursday, 17 January

Further information

[Draft resolution on differentiated integration](#)

[Profile of rapporteur : Pascal Durand \(Greens/ALE, FR\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Parliament sets out its vision for the future of Europe \(press release 16.02.2017\)](#)

[Constitutional problems of a multitier governance in the European Union \(European Parliament resolution, 12 December 2013\)](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

Human rights and democracy resolutions

Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following human rights, democracy and rule of law topics on Thursday 17 January, at around 09.00, with the votes following at 12.00.

- Situation in Togo
- Azerbaijan, notably the case of Mehman Huseynov
- Sudan

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

Debate/vote: Thursday, 17 January

Further information

[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)

Other topics on the agenda

Other topics for debate and vote include the following:

- EU Special Envoy on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, *Grzyb, debate Mo, vote Tue*
- Use of vehicles hired without drivers for the carriage of goods by road, *Monteiro de Aguiar (COD), debate Mo, vote Tuesday*
- Implementation of the trade and association agreements in Latin America, *Fisas Ayxela, Böge, debate Tue, vote Wed.*
- EU Emergency Travel Document, *Gal, vote Wed*
- Establishing the "Fiscalis" programme for cooperation in the field of taxation, *Giegold, debate Wed, vote Thu*
- Annual Report 2017 on the control of the financial activities of the EIB, In the presence of Werner Hoyer, President of the EIB, *Pirinski, debate Wed*
- Customs Programme 2021-2027 + new Customs Control Equipment Instrument Grapini and Pospíšil, vote Tue reports (MFF related files)
- Combating late payment in commercial transactions, *Comi5, vote Thu*
- Comprehensive European education, research and remembrance of the totalitarian past, *Topical debate (Rule 153a), debate Wed*