

Plenary sessions

02-04-2019 - 16:18
Reference No: 20190401BRI34531



Newsletter 3-4 April 2019 Plenary session Brussels

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2019-04-03>

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Further information

[Final draft agenda](#)
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[Press conferences and other events](#)
[EP Multimedia website](#)
[EP Newshub](#)

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Brexit: Parliament debates latest developments

MEPs will discuss the UK's withdrawal from the EU, in a debate with President Juncker and State Secretary for European Affairs Ciot for the Council, on Wednesday at 14.00.

The UK is set to leave the EU on 12 April 2019.

The European Council scheduled an extraordinary meeting of heads of state and government on 10 April to consider the way forward, once this has been indicated by the UK.

The withdrawal agreement will have to be approved by the European Parliament, including setting the framework for the EU-UK future relationship.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements (without resolution)

Debate: Wednesday, 3 April

Further information

[Special European Council \(Art.50\) agenda](#)

[Background information and timeline \(Council\)](#)

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

Future of Europe debate with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

MEPs will exchange views on the future of Europe with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on Wednesday at 15.15.

This will be the nineteenth in a series of debates between MEPs and EU heads of state or government. Find out more about the previous ones [here](#).

Stefan Löfven is a Social Democrat and has been Prime Minister of Sweden since 2014.

Procedure: Future of Europe debate (without resolution)

Debate: Wednesday, 3 April

Further information

[CV and more information about Swedish PM Stefan Löfven](#)
[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)

Final vote on measures to reconcile work and family life

MEPs are set to endorse new rules on paternity leave and non-transferable parental leave, in a vote on Thursday.

The law, informally agreed with EU ministers, sets minimum requirements for all member states to implement, such as ten working days of paid paternity leave, two months of non-transferable paid parental leave and five days of annual carers' leave.

This would benefit children and family life, whilst reflecting societal changes more accurately, and promoting gender equality. It should also help to boost women's chances in the labour market.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, first reading agreement

[2017/0085\(COD\)](#)

Debate/vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Press release: Parliament and Council agree on measures to reconcile career and private life \(24.01.2019\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Rapporteur: David Casa \(EPP, MT\)](#)

[EP Research briefing on a new directive on work-life balance](#)

[EP Research briefing on Maternity and paternity leave in the EU](#)

[EP Research podcast on a new directive on work-life balance
New rules to improve parents' work-life balance](#)

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

Natural Gas: extending EU rules to pipes entering from non-EU countries

To ensure gas pipelines from non-EU countries are covered by EU rules and to create legal clarity for operators, new gas market rules will be put to a final vote on Thursday.

The amended rules, already informally agreed with member states, will create a fairer EU gas market by making sure that the pipelines entering EU territory are accessible to more than one operator and run with the same degree of transparency as the pipelines in the EU. This will create legal clarity for both existing and new gas infrastructure entering the EU.

Gas transmission infrastructure and gas supply must be owned by different entities under current EU competition rules. From now on, these rules will also apply to pipelines originating outside of the European Union, including Nord Stream 2.

Only the Commission would be entitled to grant exceptions, following a clear procedure, for new gas pipelines from non-EU countries.

Background

Over 70 % of natural gas sold in the EU is imported from non-EU countries, mostly through pipelines.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, vote on agreement

[2017/0294\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 3 April

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Press conference: Thursday 4 April 13.30- 14.00, with rapporteur

Further information

[Press release after the trilogue agreement](#)
[Procedure file EU gas market](#)

[EP Research briefing](#)
[Commission Q&A](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Jerzy Buzek \(EPP, PL\)](#)

Parliament to vote on road transport reform proposals

On Thursday, MEPs will vote on rules to tackle illegal practices in the road haulage sector and amend rules on drivers' rest time.

To allow for plenary to vote on the proposals, the EP Transport Committee was asked to filter some 1200 amendments introduced during March plenary session, in a vote on 2 April ([Rule 175](#)).

The proposals aim to improve enforcement of rules in the road transport sector to better tackle illegal practices, such as use of letterbox companies or illegally operating outside domestic markets.

They would also define for which transport operations the rules on posting of workers, such as those on minimum wage, should apply and they would amend drivers' rest time rules.

Procedure: ordinary legislative procedure, first reading

2017/0121(COD), 2017/0122(COD), 2017/0123(COD)

Debate: Wednesday, 27 March

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Mobility package: rapporteurs, procedure files and press releases](#)

[Debate on mobility package in plenary \(27.03.2019\)](#)

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

EU to grant visa-free access to UK nationals, if the UK reciprocates

UK nationals would be able to travel to the EU for up to 90 days without a visa after Brexit, as long as EU nationals also benefit from visa-free access to the UK.

MEPs are set to vote on Thursday on a draft law that will apply when the UK leaves the European Union. UK nationals who are British citizens will not need a visa for stays in the EU of up to 90 days in any 180-day period, for business, tourism or to visit relatives or friends. These conditions will not include those wishing to work.

The United Kingdom will be included in the list of more than sixty non-EU countries and territories whose nationals do not need to request a visa to enter the EU for short stays. The UK will have to grant the same rights to EU nationals wishing to enter the UK.

Prior to the vote in plenary, the Civil Liberties Committee MEPs will vote on the compromise reached with the Council on Wednesday morning.

Procedure: Codecision, first reading agreement

[2018/0390\(COD\)](#)

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Profile of rapporteur: Sergei Stanishev \(S&D, BG\)](#)

[Regulation 2018/1806 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](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre](#)

Assessing EU-China relationship before the summit

Less than a week before the annual EU-China summit, the plenary is to discuss EU-China trade relations with Council and Commission on Wednesday.

MEPs are expected to raise issues such as security, investments, and reciprocity in public procurement in a debate with Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen and the Romanian State Secretary Melania Ciot. The debate comes a day after the Commission presented its latest assessment of the [EU-China strategic outlook](#) in Parliament's Trade Committee.

The 21st annual [EU-China summit](#) on 9 April will aim to tackle bilateral trade and investment relations, including fair and non-discriminatory treatment of each other's companies. The parties will also discuss cybersecurity issues, such as the security of 5G networks.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements without resolution

[2019/2677\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 3 April

Further information

[European Commission: EU-China strategic outlook \(12.03.2019\)](#)

[European Commission's press release \(12.03.2019\)](#)

[Council: Agenda EU-China summit, 09.04.2019](#)

[Chinese investment on EU infrastructure: MEPs urge countries to act together \(12.09.2018\)](#)

[Parliament resolution the state of EU-China relations \(12.9.2018\)](#)

Citizens point out poor implementation of EU waste legislation

MEPs are set to call on member states to improve compliance with EU waste legislation and to increase reuse and recycling practices.

The draft resolution sums up some 60 citizens' petitions on health and environmental issues linked to inappropriate waste management in their member states, causing poor air quality, contamination of underground water resources, noise and odorous emissions.

The text calls on member states to clean up litter and improve waste management practices, through economic incentives, awareness raising campaigns, and by reducing municipal waste, in particular.

Background information

Over the past few years, Parliament's Committee on Petitions has received more than 60 petitions on waste management from Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and the UK. The committee undertook fact-finding visits related to alleged poor waste management in Bulgaria, Greece and Italy. The 2008 [EU Waste Framework Directive](#) sets out the requirements and basic waste management definitions in the EU.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

[2019/2557\(RSP\)](#)

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Draft motion for a resolution](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(21.03.2019\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

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

Member states jeopardising the rule of law risk losing EU money

MEPs will vote on Thursday to seal Parliament's position 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 state’s ability to manage EU funds, the Commission could suggest measures ranging from reducing pre-financing to suspending EU budget payments. Parliament and EU ministers would have to greenlight 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.

The vote will conclude Parliament’s first reading. It will be up to Parliament in its next term to negotiate the final wording of rules with EU ministers, who have not yet agreed on their common approach.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, first reading

[2018/0136\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 16 January

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Video recording of the plenary debate \(16.01.2019\)](#)

[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](#)

[Press release following the adoption of the negotiating mandate \(13.12.2018\)](#)

[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](#)

Final vote on first ever fish conservation measures for the Mediterranean

MEPs will adopt a multi-annual plan for the Western Mediterranean and more restrictive measures to protect swordfish, following informal agreements with Council.

The agreement on the multi-annual plan aims to ensure the exploitation of marine resources in a sustainable way from an economic and environmental perspective by developing the first EU-wide management measures for demersal species (i.e. those that live at the bottom of the sea) in the Western Mediterranean Sea.

The deal on swordfish will strengthen measures to help the recovery of Mediterranean swordfish by transposing into EU law the recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Procedure: ordinary legislative procedure

[2018/0050\(COD\)](#) and [2018/0109\(COD\)](#)

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Agreement on the multi-annual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Western Mediterranean Sea:](#)

[Agreement on the multiannual recovery plan for Mediterranean swordfish:](#)
[Press release on the committee vote: Western Mediterranean Sea plan \(10.01.2019\)](#)

[Press release on the committee vote: Recovery plan for Mediterranean swordfish \(21.11.2018\)](#)

[Procedure file: Western Mediterranean Sea plan](#)

[Procedure file: Swordfish recovery plan](#)

[Profile of the rapporteur on Western Mediterranean Sea plan: Clara Eugenia AGUILERA GARCÍA \(S&D, ES\)](#)

[Profile of the rapporteur on Swordfish recovery plan: Marco AFFRONTI \(Greens/EFA, IT\)](#)

[Committee for Fisheries](#)

[EP Research Briefing: Multiannual plan for demersal fisheries in the western Mediterranean](#)

[EP Research At a Glance: Mediterranean swordfish recovery plan](#)

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

Schengen: MEPs to adopt their position on temporary checks at national borders

MEPs want to set new time limits and conditions for internal border checks within the Schengen area.

The Schengen Borders Code, currently under revision, allows member states to temporarily carry out checks at internal borders of the [Schengen Area](#) in the event of a serious threat to the public order or to internal security.

Parliament will vote on Thursday to confirm its position that the initial period for border checks should be limited to two months (instead of the current six-month period) and a maximum of one year (instead of the current two-year limit). Parliament and Council negotiators started the talks on the revision of the rules earlier this year, but decided to suspend the negotiations after it became evident that a compromise was not feasible.

Background

Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway currently have internal border checks in place due to the exceptional circumstances resulting from the unprecedented migratory crisis that started in 2015. In addition, France has internal border checks in place because of a persistent terrorist threat.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure

[2017/0245\(COD\)](#)

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Draft report on the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders](#)

[Press release on the plenary mandate for negotiations \(29.11.2018\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur: Tanja Fajon \(S&D, SI\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[European Commission: list of current temporarily reintroduced border controls](#)

[Interview with the rapporteur](#)

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

More financial support for 2021-2027 EU fisheries

Parliament will adopt its position on the future European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, safeguarding sustainable fish stocks and fishermen's livelihoods.

MEPs will vote on a significant budget increase as compared to the Commission's proposal for the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund for the 2021-2027 period.

87% of the Fund's resources would be allocated for the management of fisheries, aquaculture and fishing fleets under so-called shared management (involving Commission and member states), while 13% would go to direct and indirect support (covering measures such as scientific advice, control measures, market intelligence, maritime surveillance and security).

Parliament is also expected to endorse specific amounts dedicated to outermost regions, protecting and restoring marine and coastal biodiversity, as well as improving safety, working and living conditions of the crew, training, social dialogue skills and employment.

Procedure: ordinary legislative procedure, first reading

[2018/0210\(COD\)](#)

Debate Wednesday, 3 April

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Draft resolution](#)

[Press release on the committee vote \(07.03.2019\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Rapporteur profile: Gabriel Mato \(EPP, ES\)](#)

[Committee for Fisheries](#)

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

MEPs to vote on common security features for ID cards

New rules to curb document fraud will be discussed in plenary session on Wednesday and put to the vote on Thursday.

With at least 86 different versions of identity cards and 181 types of residence documents in circulation in the EU, the aim of the new rules is to deter the use of fraudulent documents that can also be used by criminals to enter the EU.

The updated rules, already agreed by Parliament and Council negotiators in February, would set common minimum security features for ID cards in the EU and make a facial image and two fingerprints stored on a chip in the card mandatory.

ID cards that do not meet these requirements would stop being valid when they expire (i.e. would be renewed with the new format) or at the latest 10 years after the application of the new rules. ID cards that do not have a machine-readable zone, such as Greek ID cards, would expire within five years.

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure

[2018/0104\(COD\)](#)

Vote: Thursday, 4 April

Further information

[Agreed text on strengthening the security of identity cards of Union citizens and of residence documents](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(3.12.2018\)](#)
[Procedure file](#)

[Rapporteur Gérard Deprez \(ALDE, BE\)](#)
[EPRS Briefing: Security of ID cards and of residence documents issued to EU citizens and their families](#)

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

Other topics on the agenda

Other topics for debate and vote include the following:

- Pan-european personal pension products, *Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE, NL) (COD, final vote)*
- European Social Fund 2021-2027, *Verónica Lope Fontagné (EPP, ES) , (COD, first reading)*