

Plenary round-up – Strasbourg, October II 2017

The highlights of the October II plenary session included a debate on the conclusions of the last European Council meeting and the presentation of a new agenda for EU leaders, as well as the presentation of the 2018 Commission work programme. Members paid tribute to Daphne Caruana Galizia, the Maltese journalist killed in a car bomb explosion on 16 October.

October European Council meeting and the Leaders' Agenda

The European Council President, Donald Tusk, presented the [conclusions of the European Council meeting of 19 and 20 October 2017](#). The meeting focused on the continuing migration issue, action to progress the EU's digital agenda, major current problems in external affairs, and cooperation in relation to Europe's defence. President Tusk also put forward a new [agenda for EU leaders](#), aiming to stimulate faster decision-making in future on practical solutions to pressing EU issues.

Commission work programme 2018

The European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, presented its [2018 work programme](#), setting out the plans for completing work on his [ten political priorities](#) before the end of the current mandate, as well as a series of forward-looking initiatives for the future of Europe.

Protection of journalists and the defence of media freedom in Malta

The European Parliament paid special tribute to Maltese investigative journalist, blogger and anti-corruption campaigner, Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was killed in a car bomb explosion on 16 October. The Parliament observed a minute's silence in the presence of members of her family. President Tajani announced that the Parliament's press room in Strasbourg would be named after Caruana Galizia. He also urged the Maltese authorities to fully investigate the murder, and called for the involvement of Europol.

Combatting sexual harassment and abuse

Members adopted, by a large majority, a [resolution](#) on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU, in which they firmly condemn sexual harassment in general and at the European Parliament in particular.

CE-marked fertilising products

Modern, intensive farming methods rely on the use of fertilisers to improve crop yield, leading to increased international trade in phosphates. The Commission proposes to limit harmful substances in fertilisers, and to encourage the re-use of appropriate waste material to nourish crops. Parliament approved a report by the IMCO committee on [CE-marked fertilising products](#), granting a mandate to negotiate with the Council.

Drugs package: Tackling new psychoactive substances

Responding to the rapid spread of new psychoactive substances has become urgent. Completing five years' work on the ['drugs package'](#), after agreement with the Council, Parliament adopted amendments to the founding regulation of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, and to the directive setting common minimum rules on criminal acts and penalties in the field of illicit drug trafficking.

Renewing the approval for glyphosate

Members endorsed a motion for a resolution tabled by the ENVI Committee, rejecting the Commission proposal to [renew the approval of glyphosate](#), which is due to expire on 15 December, for a further period of ten years. Moreover, MEPs are calling on the Commission to propose a total ban on glyphosate from 15 December 2022, with a five-year transition period.



General budget of the EU for 2018

Planning for future EU action continues, and the Council has already discussed the European Commission's draft EU budget for 2018 – and proposed certain reductions to strategic investment programmes. Parliament adopted its amendments to the [2018 EU budget](#), proposing not only to reverse these cuts, but to increase spending on programmes in key areas such as jobs and growth, security, and tackling climate change.

Budget discharge 2015 – European Council and Council

Following the recommendation of the Budgetary Control Committee, the Parliament refused to grant [discharge for the 2015 budget to the Council and European Council](#). The committee insists that the Council must undergo the same scrutiny as other institutions. The committee report considered that the joint expenditure budget of the Council and European Council provided insufficient information on spending on building projects, among other issues on which the committee noted a lack of cooperation.

Entry/Exit System

Members adopted two proposals on the [EU Entry/Exit System](#), including amendments to the Schengen Borders Code. This will allow for faster, more efficient, border controls that record information on non-EU travellers entering and exiting the EU. However, information on travellers shared between Member States must also respect the right to private life and protection of personal data.

Protection of workers from risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens

The Commission has proposed to amend the current legislation on [protection of workers from carcinogens or mutagens at work](#) (specifically, exposure limit values). Parliament voted to approve the compromise text agreed with the Council, providing for Commission assessment of the threat posed by reprotoxins, and tighter limits on exposure to chromium VI, hardwood dust, and potentially also respirable silica.

Securitisation and prudential requirements

The development of a simple, transparent and standardised securitisation market is one of the five areas in which immediate action is needed to make the Capital Markets Union a reality. Parliament adopted two texts after agreements with the Council, on [common rules on securitisation and the proposed European framework for STS securitisation](#), maximising due diligence, risk retention, and transparency through a simple, transparent and standardised (STS) securities framework, and on consequences for the [prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms](#) in the EU.

Trade with Australia and New Zealand

Parliament adopted its position, pending Council adoption of a mandate for the Commission to open negotiations, on [two trade agreements](#), one with Australia, and the other with New Zealand. Parliament recalls that it will be required to give its consent to the future agreement and that its positions should therefore be duly taken into account at all stages.

Legitimate measures to protect whistle-blowers acting in the public interest

Members adopted an own initiative report from the Legal Affairs Committee on legitimate measures to protect whistle-blowers acting in the public interest when disclosing the confidential information of companies and public bodies. While the EU institutions themselves employ [measures to protect whistle-blowers](#), no legislation provides a minimum level of legal security and equal treatment for individuals who take considerable personal risks to expose such issues as the Panama Papers.

Opening of trilogue negotiations

The decision of the LIBE committee to enter into trilogue negotiations on the proposal regarding respect for private life and the protection of personal data in electronic communications was approved following a vote in plenary. Announcements of committee negotiating mandates on 13 further proposals were [unopposed](#).

This 'at a glance' note is intended to review some of the highlights of the plenary part-session, and notably to follow up on key dossiers identified by EPRS. It does not aim to be exhaustive. For more detailed information on specific files, please see other EPRS products, notably our 'EU legislation in progress' briefings, and the plenary [minutes](#).