

## Plenary round-up – Strasbourg, July II 2019

The main highlight of the July II plenary session was the election of Ursula von der Leyen as President of the European Commission. Other highlights included a statement by Viorica Dăncilă, Prime Minister of Romania, on the outcome of that country's Council presidency, and by Antti Rinne, Prime Minister of Finland on the priorities for the current Finnish Council Presidency. Parliament also debated statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on implementation of the EU Global Strategy, and the situation in Venezuela (also adopting a resolution), in the Persian Gulf and in Moldova. Debates were also held on Council and Commission statements on humanitarian assistance in the Mediterranean and clean air zones in EU cities. Members also decided on the numerical strength of the interparliamentary delegations.

### Election of the President of the European Commission

Following a statement by the President-elect, Parliament elected Ursula von der Leyen as [President of the European Commission](#) (by 383 votes, 327 against and 22 abstentions – the minimum number required, an absolute majority of parliament's Members, was 374). Members will effectively have to confirm her appointment in October, when they vote on the full college of Commissioners, after hearings with each of the candidate Commissioners during which policy directions for the next five years can be assessed.

### Review of the Romanian Presidency of the Council

Prime Minister of Romania, Viorica Dăncilă, addressed the plenary to present the [outcomes](#) of the [Romanian Presidency of the Council](#). The Presidency programme focused on four core issues: European convergence; security; Europe's place on the world stage; and common values. The Presidency team were able to conclude about 80 files in key areas such as the banking union, justice and home affairs, and Brexit contingency planning. They also reached 10 common understandings on sectoral programmes under the EU's long-term budget for 2021 to 2027.

### Presentation of the programme of the Finnish Presidency of the Council

Antti Rinne, Prime Minister of Finland, presented the programme of activities of the incoming [Finnish Presidency of the Council](#). The priorities for this new presidency are: strengthening common values and the rule of law; making the EU more competitive and socially inclusive; strengthening the EU's position as a global leader in climate action; and protecting the security of citizens comprehensively.

### Humanitarian assistance in the Mediterranean

Recent loss of life in the Mediterranean reflects the need for concerted action at Member State level, and underlines the unsustainability of current arrangements. Tragedies continue to occur, despite the EU's increased commitment to saving lives and giving humanitarian assistance to migrants and asylum-seekers arriving by boat on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, through reinforcing EU operations. The Council and Commission made statements on their plans to tackle this issue. As proposals on reviewing the Dublin legislation and Common European Asylum system [remained blocked](#) at the end of the last term, this issue is sure to be high on Parliament's agenda in the coming months.

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](#).

