European Parliament

Plenary round-up – Brussels, November I 2019

The November I plenary session highlights included statements and debates on the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and on the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Parliament also debated statements made by the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) on Turkish drilling activities in European Union waters in the Eastern Mediterranean, and on the situation in Bolivia and in Chile. Debates took place, inter alia, on Commission and Council statements on the international day to end impunity for crimes against journalists, on the resurgence of Ebola in East Africa, as well as on the situation of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the hotspots in Greek islands.

30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall

Parliament marked the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in the presence of Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the German Bundestag. The European Parliament of the time closely followed the swift reunification of the German nation, which took less than a year. The former German Democratic Republic was able to integrate into the European Economic Community through a special procedure. Parliament set up a Temporary Committee, which emphasised the opportunities of German reunification to foster greater European integration, to prevent the undermining of the single market, and to take the wider context of relations with central and eastern Europe into account, all of which remain key issues for the EU today.

Children's rights on the 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child

Members also marked the 30th anniversary (on 20 November) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, debating Council and Commission statements on EU action in this field (and will vote on a resolution during the November II session). The convention was the first international treaty to recognise children as human beings with innate rights, outlining universal standards for the care, treatment, survival, development, protection and participation of all children. Since entering into force in 1990, conditions for children have improved, but child poverty in the EU remains a reality, and the Europe 2020 strategy is helping to tackle this. Nevertheless, children's rights are a priority issue in EU external action, where pursuing the UN Sustainable Development Goals means emphasising healthy, well-nourished and protected children as the basis for a long-term sustainable society.

Situation of migrants in Bosnia

Members debated Council and Commission statements on the situation of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where around 8 000 people, originating from southern Asia and the Middle East are currently present, mainly in Bihać. Despite EU funds being available, the country has been unable to establish additional locations for temporary reception centres. Unable to cope, local authorities have restricted movement and forcibly transferred migrants to unsuitable sites, while neighbouring Croatia has allegedly pushed migrants back into Bosnia and Herzegovina, in violation of international norms on *non-refoulement*. Consequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina risks a serious humanitarian emergency in this winter.

Opening of trilogue negotiations

A Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee (LIBE) decision to enter into interinstitutional (trilogue) negotiations was confirmed. The LIBE committee may therefore begin negotiations on the proposal for a regulation concerning transfer of the False and Authentic Documents Online (FADO) system to Frontex.

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.

EN