



Strasbourg Plenary 3-6 July: start of Finnish Presidency, CIA enquiry, €308bn on agenda

Finland's EU Presidency opens with a debate in Parliament between MEPs and Prime Minister Matti VANHANEN who will outline his country's objectives for the next six months. The session also sees a debate on an initial report about allegedly illegal activities by the CIA in Europe. MEPs will vote on the EU's €308bn structural funding package for the next seven years - if they vote yes, the money should be available from 1 January next year.

Monday 3 July 2006

The last plenary session before the summer break starts with a debate on the Equitable Life crisis. Diana WALLIS (ALDE, UK) will be tabling an interim report into the **crisis of the Equitable Life Assurance Society** which includes a request for a 3-month extension to its mandate to enable it to study the report by the UK Parliamentary Ombudsman due for publication in November.

Caroline LUCAS (Greens/EFA, UK) will be presenting her own-initiative report **on reducing the climate change impact of aviation** which fully endorses the Commission's intention to pursue the introduction of kerosene taxes, and urges it to begin immediately by requiring a tax on all domestic and intra-EU flights.

Parliament will also debate two conciliation agreements: one on more transparency for an environmentally-friendly Europe which means Europe's citizens will in future have easier access to information on the environment and be able to play a more active role in EU decisions in this area. The second conciliation agreement is on batteries which aims to protect nature and rubbish dumps from the often toxic substances contained in the tons of batteries utilised annually. In future waste batteries will have to be collected and recycled.

Tuesday 4 July 2006

On Tuesday, the plenary session starts with European Parliament President Josep BORRELL and the political group leaders making statements on "70 years after the coup by General Franco in Spain."

MEPs then turn their attention to the **EU cohesion policy and structural funds 2007-2013**. If approved, around €308bn - or 35.7 per cent of the total EU budget - will be available to spend from 1 January 2007.

On Tuesday at 3pm, is a debate with resolution on the economic and social consequences of the restructuring of businesses in Europe.

Wednesday 5 July 2006

At 9am, Finnish Prime Minister Matti **VANHANEN** will present **the priorities of the Finnish Presidency** to the European Parliament. MEPs will then debate these priorities with the participation of Commission President José Manuel **BARROSO**.

At 3pm, there will be Commission and Council statements, with a resolution, **on the surveillance of bank data transfers by the American secret services**.

Thereafter, **Wednesday afternoon is dedicated to the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transportation and illegal detention of prisoners**. MEPs will debate the interim report which says the CIA was "*directly responsible*" for extraordinary rendition, "*illegal seizure, removal, abduction and detention of terrorist suspects on the territory of Member States, accession and candidate countries*", all of which were violations of international law. MEPs have also criticised Member States for their inactivity or complicity regarding CIA activity.

On Wednesday evening, there will be a joint debate on comitology. Richard **CORBETT** (PES, UK) has two reports: Comitology: exercise of implementing powers conferred to the Commission and Implementing powers conferred on the Commission, Comitology. Interinstitutional agreement.

On Wednesday evening there will be a joint debate on visa policy towards the Western Balkan countries.

Also on Wednesday evening, after hearing a Commission statement, MEPs will then debate the issue of "AIDS - Time to deliver."

Thursday 6 July 2006

MEPs debate the issues of development and migration and fair trade development. Parliament will also vote on a report by Stephen **HUGHES** (PES, UK) **on protecting workers against the risk of infection from contaminated needles**. Every year around a million workers in Europe, mainly in the medical world, suffer injuries from used surgical needles. The consequences can be serious, including infections from HIV or hepatitis B or C. The EP Social Affairs Committee wants to improve existing EU legislation so as to give workers better protection.

The session ends, as usual, with three human rights debates and resolutions on the following subjects: **Somalia, Mauritania and Freedom of expression on the Internet**.

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