

Words by the Chair



Dear colleagues,

During its second meeting this year, ITRE will be welcoming four Maltese ministers to present the priorities of the Maltese Presidency of the Council. Minister Emmanuel Mallia, and Parliamentary Secretary Chris Agius will present the priorities for the Digital Single Market and telecommunication policy and for space, research and innovation policies respectively. Ministers Chris Cardona and Konrad Mizzi, will then present the industrial and SME policy priorities and the energy policy priorities respectively.

Commission's Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič will be holding a very timely exchange of views with ITRE Members on the Clean Energy package and on the preparation for the annual State of the Energy Union Report, as part of the structured dialogue.

Participation of the Union in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) jointly undertaken by several Member States

Exchange of views

Rapporteur: [Sofia Sakorafa](#)

ITRE will be considering the draft report of Ms Sofia Sakorafa (GUE) on the establishment of the 'Partnership for research and innovation in the Mediterranean area' (PRIMA). The Rapporteur is supportive of the overall aim of PRIMA. In her report, she underlines the current sociopolitical situation in the Mediterranean and stresses the need to improve living conditions in the region. In this context, she considers access to food and water not only a basic human right but also as paramount to the political, social, and economic stability of the region. The rapporteur also acknowledges the potential role of PRIMA in offering short-term solutions for easing migration, as well as to address the root causes of migration and forced displacement. The rapporteur insists that PRIMA should focus exclusively on civil applications and that its R&I activities should respect the principles enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental rights and conform with international law and the UN Charter, in particular its Article 73 regarding non self-governing territories.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

- *Deadline for tabling amendments: 9 February 2017*
- *Vote in ITRE: 22-23 March 2017*
- *Vote in plenary: tbc*

Digitising European industry

Exchange of views

Rapporteur: [Reinhard Bütikofer](#)

ITRE will be considering the draft report of Mr. Bütikofer (Greens) on the forthcoming report on "Digitising European Industry". In his draft report, the ITRE rapporteur, focuses on four main aspects: 1) the development of an integrated industrial digitalisation strategy where the EU governance for the digitalisation is discussed; 2) the creation of conditions for a successful industrial digitalisation regarding infrastructure, investment and innovation; 3) the reinforcement of the European technology leadership and security touching upon topics such as mergers and acquisitions, cybersecurity, data sovereignty and standardisation; and 4) the social dimension where the issues of digital skills, education and social innovation are addresses.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

- *Deadline for tabling amendments: 30 January 2017*
- *Vote in ITRE: 25 April 2017*
- *Vote in plenary: tbc*

Legislative work will continue with debates on the draft reports on the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) on the Digitising European Industry and on the geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination on customers' nationality, residence and place establishment. We will vote on the successful outcome of two trilogue negotiations finalised at the end of last year, namely the intergovernmental agreements in the field of energy and the use of the 4770-790MHz frequency band in the Union.

During the second day, ITRE will hold its first public hearing of the year. It will focus on "The Review of the Framework for Electronic Communications" and will engage a panel of five experts representing various stakeholders.

Last but not least, the Committee will hold a joint meeting with the CULT Committee on the own-initiative report on "Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market: Opportunities and Challenges for Europe".

Jerzy Buzek

Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market: Opportunities and Challenges for Europe

Joint exchange of views ITRE/IMCO

Rapporteur: [Henna Virkkunen](#)

On 26 January ITRE and IMCO will hold a joint committee meeting on the own-initiative (INI) Report "Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market: Opportunities and Challenges for Europe". Co-rapporteurs Ms. Virkkunen (ITRE EPP) and Mr. Juvin (IMCO EPP) will lead the first exchange of views (without document) on this important topic. This report will be the basis for the Parliament's response to the Commission communication of the same name. Online platforms play a key role in innovation and growth in the Digital Single Market. The growing importance of the digital economy, linked with the diversity and fast changing nature of platform ecosystems, also raise new policy and regulatory challenges. Creating the right framework conditions and the right environment is essential to retain, grow and foster the emergence of new online platforms in Europe. The consideration of the draft report will take place on 20 March 2017.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

- *Consideration of draft report: 20 March 2017*
- *Deadline for tabling amendments: 23 March 2017*
- *Consideration of amendments: 24 April 2017*
- *Vote ITRE/IMCO: 11 May 2017*
- *Vote in plenary: tbc*

Use of the 470-790 MHz frequency band in the Union

Vote on the text agreed during interinstitutional negotiations

Rapporteur: [Patrizia Toia](#)

On Wednesday 25 January, ITRE will vote on the agreement on spectrum that was reached with the Slovak Presidency in the first trilogue on 14 December 2016. The new regulation, which aims to coordinate the use of the 700 MHz band for mobile services, will enter into force between 2020 and 2022. This piece of legislation is extremely important for the digital economy and it will improve internet access for all Europeans and help develop cross-border applications.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

- *Vote in plenary: March 2017*

Establishing an information exchange mechanism with regard to intergovernmental agreements and non-binding instruments between Member States and third countries in the field of energy and repealing Decision No 994/2012/EU

Vote on the text agreed during interinstitutional negotiations

Rapporteur: [Zdzisław Krasnodębski](#)

ITRE will be a voting on the outcome of the informal trilogues on the IGA file, for which Mr. Krasnodębski (ECR) is the ITRE rapporteur. In total, three trilogues took place between November and December 2016. Once the Committee adopts the outcome, the vote on Parliament's first reading is expected to take place during the first March Plenary in Brussels. The IGA decision will be the first piece of legislation to be adopted under the Energy Union.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

- *Vote in plenary: 1 March 2017 (mini-session)*

NEWS FROM THE POLICY DEPARTMENT A

Recent publications:

Study on "Cyber Security Strategy for the Energy Sector"

In-Depth Analysis on "European Leadership in 5G"

Study on "Boosting Building Renovation: What Potential and Value for Europe?"

Briefing on "Digital Union"

Briefing on "Energy Policy"

At a glance on "Energy Union: Key Decisions for the Realisation of a Fully Integrated Energy Market"

Workshop on "Bringing EU-Turkey Trade and Investment Relations Up to Date?"

NEWS FROM THE AGENCIES

The Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)

The Agency published today a "European Energy Regulators' Overview Paper Initial Reactions to the European Commission's proposals on Clean Energy" [More](#)

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The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)

BEREC key priorities 2017 [More](#)

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Next ITRE meeting:
6 February 2017, Brussels

Addressing geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment within the internal market

Adoption of [draft opinion](#)

Draftsperson: [Eva Kaili](#)

ITRE will vote on the draft opinion on the proposal for a regulation on geo-blocking. 164 amendments have been tabled to the Commission's proposal. In addition 20 compromise amendments have been proposed.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

- *Vote in plenary: tbc*

Rules for wholesale roaming markets: Feedback from ongoing negotiations

The second informal trilogue on the proposed Wholesale Roaming Regulation took place on 18 January. From 15 June 2017, retail roaming surcharges will be abolished in the EU, meaning that citizens will be able to use their mobile phones in other EU countries without paying extra for the service. The purpose of the proposed 'Wholesale Roaming Regulation' is to make changes to the rules for wholesale roaming markets, to make sure that the abolition of retail surcharges works in practice. There is still disagreement between Parliament and Council on how much mobile operators should be allowed to charge roaming providers for accessing their networks. A third trilogue is planned for the end of January.

Exchange of views with Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič on the Clean Energy Package and preparations for the annual State of the Energy Union Report, as part of the Structured Dialogue

On 25 January, ITRE will hold a debate with Commission Vice-President for Energy Union, Maroš Šefčovič, on recent major developments in EU energy policy. Firstly, Mr. Šefčovič will present the "Clean Energy for all Europeans" package adopted by the Commission on 30 November 2016, which comprises key proposals to implement the Energy Union, including 8 legislative proposals covering the areas of energy efficiency, electricity market design, renewable energy and governance. Secondly, he will inform ITRE Members about the state of play with regard to the preparations of the annual State of the Energy Union Report, which the Commission is expected to adopt on 1 February 2017 to take stock of the progress made towards building the Energy Union.

Presentation of STOA study "Language equality in a digital age - towards a Human Language project"

ITRE, together with CULT, will hear the presentation of a STOA study on "Language equality in a digital age - towards a Human Language project". The author of the study will give an overview of the current status and trends of Human Language Technologies and the specificities and challenges of the European HLT sector. This is an important topic for Europe, with more than 60 national and regional minority languages. Lowering language barriers will foster a common identity, increase citizens' engagement in the European construction and benefit the economy.

Presidency of the Council of the European Union: Visit of Mr. Emmanuel Mallia, Maltese Minister for Competitiveness and Digital, Maritime and Services Economy, Mr. Chris Agius, Maltese Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport, Mr. Chris Cardona, Maltese Minister for the Economy, Investment and Small Business and of Mr. Konrad Mizzi, Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister

During its next meeting, ITRE will welcome four Maltese Ministers who will present the Presidency priorities in the Committee's policy areas. Mr Emmanuel Mallia, Minister for Competitiveness and Digital, Maritime and Services Economy will present the priorities for the Digital Single Market and the telecommunication policy, Mr. Chris Agius, Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport, will present the Presidency priorities for space policy and for research and innovation, Mr Chris Cardona, Minister for Economy and Investments, will cover the priorities in the industrial and SME policies while Mr. Mizzi, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, will present the energy policy priorities.

There are several important dossiers in these areas that ITRE will be dealing with over the next half a year, including the new energy package, PRIMA, the telecoms code and roaming.

Public Hearing on "The Review of the Framework for Electronic Communications"

On 26 January, ITRE is organising a public hearing on the review of the framework for electronic communications, in the context of its work on the Commission proposals for a European Electronic Communications Code (EECC), BEREC, "WiFi4EU" and the so-called Gigabit society and 5G. The ITRE Rapporteurs are Ms. del Castillo Vera (EPP) for EECC, Mr. Tošenovský (ECR) for BEREC and Mr. Boni (EPP) for Gigabit society and 5G. The hearing will address the main issues at the core of the proposals, investment, digital divide and 5G over three sessions, focusing on networks, services and governance.

With this hearing the European Parliament wishes to engage in a multi-stakeholder dialogue on overcoming the barriers to a better integrated and improved European communication society.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

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