

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

LIBE has started the year where we left off in 2023, with agreements reached across a number of important files such as trafficking in human beings, gender based violence and advance passenger information. I'm grateful to colleagues and their teams for all their work in concluding these negotiations.

While the election period is fast approaching, LIBE continues its other scrutiny functions with working groups taking place and a number of committee meetings coming up where we will hear from national authorities, Commissioners and our relevant agencies, amongst many others. We will also of course have a number of important votes on the files that have recently been agreed.

I hope to be able to welcome you to one of our meetings soon!

***Juan Fernando López Aguilar***



## NEW PACT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

On 14 February, LIBE endorsed the provisional agreements reached on the so called 'New Pact on Migration and Asylum', which followed lengthy negotiations that concluded at the end of last year. The agreement covers five separate EU regulations, covering how to establish sharing responsibilities for the management of asylum and migration, a mandatory solidarity mechanism, as well as the rules around sudden migratory crises. The Pact also regulates arrivals at the EU's external borders, the processing of asylum claims, including border procedures, and, the identification of those arriving. A majority of LIBE members also endorsed three provisional agreements reached in December 2022, on the reception conditions, criteria to qualify for international protection and an EU resettlement framework.



The conclusion of the negotiations also marks the end of the Roadmap agreed in September 2022 where Parliament and five rotating Council Presidencies committed to work together to adopt the reform of the EU migration and asylum rules before the 2024 EU elections. [Read more.](#)

## SCHENGEN BORDERS CODE: BOOSTING FREE MOVEMENT



New rules aimed at strengthening free movement within the Schengen area, clarify rules and strengthen the framework for the reintroduction and prolongation of border controls inside the free movement zone were agreed last month by negotiators from Parliament and Council. Under the reforms to the Schengen Borders Code, Schengen states can respond to a serious threat to public policy or internal security, for example involving terrorism or organised crime, by authorising temporary border controls. MEPs secured a maximum limit of maintaining border controls for two years, with a possible further prolongation of one year. With the authorisation of the Commission, controls can also be introduced in the event of a public

health emergency concerning several Member States. [Read more](#)

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## ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION

Negotiators from Parliament and the Belgian Presidency have reached an agreement on two new EU laws reforming the collection and transfer of Advance Passenger Information (API) that aim to enhance security at the EU's external borders, and, boost the prevention of and fight against crime by making the collection of API data mandatory and consistent in all member states. The new rules will ensure that API data is transmitted uniformly and automatically through a single router, which will also eventually become the mandatory means of transmitting PNR data. Strict safeguards on fundamental rights have been introduced, as well as on the automated and manual collection of data to ensure that passengers aren't negatively affected by the new rules. [Read more](#).



## CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ONLINE: EXTENDING CURRENT RULES UNTIL APRIL 2026



In February, negotiators from Parliament and the Belgian Presidency reached an agreement to extend until April 2026 the validity of current rules (introduced in 2021) that provide an exemption to EU e-Privacy legislation in order to support the detection of child sexual abuse material online. The current exemption is due to expire on 4 August 2024 and is deemed necessary to prevent a legal vacuum in the absence of a permanent system to prevent and combat child sexual abuses material online that was proposed by the Commission in 2022. Having been adopted in LIBE, the agreement will pass to plenary for vote in April. [Read more](#).

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## JOINT PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY GROUP ON EUROPOL

The 14th JPSG on Europol was held in Ghent on 18th and 19th February, hosted jointly by the Belgian Parliament and the European Parliament. The meeting included sessions with the Europol Executive Director, the Chair of the Europol Management Board and the European Data Protection Supervisor. There were key note speeches from Annelies Verlinden, Belgian Minister of the Interior and Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, as well as scrutiny sessions on illegal weapons trafficking, and, combating trafficking in human beings.



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## FIRST EVER EU RULES ON COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



In February, negotiators reached a provisional deal on rules to combat gender-based violence and protect its victims, especially women and victims of domestic violence. The draft agreement includes measures to prevent rape and raise awareness on consent, adds female genital mutilation and forced marriage as crimes under EU law and introduces online rules for the non-consensual release of intimate material and “cyber-flashing”. Under the new rules there will also be specialised support for victims of sexual violence and improved procedures for victims’ safety and health, taking into account

intersectional discrimination and access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services. [Read more.](#)

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## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

A provisional deal has been reached by Parliament and Council to revise rules on preventing and combating human trafficking. The agreement will introduce new crimes at EU level such as on forced marriage, illegal adoption and surrogacy for reproductive exploitation, there will be a broader scope for law enforcement to dismantle criminal organisations and penalties will be introduced for companies convicted of trafficking.



There will also be more support to victims, guarantees regarding the rights of persons with disabilities and appropriate support, including appointing guardians or representatives, to unaccompanied children. [Read more.](#)

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## CLEARER RULES FOR TRANSFERRING CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS



Last week, negotiators from Parliament and Council reached an agreement on new legislation establishing clear EU rules for the transfer of criminal proceedings in cross-border cases, replacing the current varied measures for transferring procedures between member states. The new rules aim to speed up investigations, particularly into serious organised crime, which often takes place across borders as well as making the administration of justice more efficient, with no interference from conflicting procedural rules or a lack of coordination between EU countries. [Read more](#)

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## MIGRATION ON THE LIBE AGENDA

During its meeting of 14-15 of February, LIBE held a series of debates on migration related issues. Members heard from Mediciens sans Frontiers on their report on the medical consequences of migration policies and violent practices in the Greek islands. Then a discussion with relevant stakeholders regarding the situation and measures put in place in the aftermath of the tragic Pylos shipwreck followed.



Members also debated with stakeholders on the impact and consequences of an allegedly fraudulent visa scheme in place in Poland and its impact on the functioning of the Schengen, as well as on the implications of a migration and asylum Protocol signed between Italy and Albania.

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## KEEP IN TOUCH

[libe-secretariat@ep.europa.eu](mailto:libe-secretariat@ep.europa.eu) - [@EP\\_Justice](#) - [europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home/highlights](http://europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home/highlights)

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