

Newsletter

9-12 February 2015

Strasbourg plenary session

Counter-terrorism measures: MEPs to debate priorities ahead of EU summit

MEPs will give their input on possible EU counter-terrorism measures in a debate with the Council and Commission on Wednesday at 09.00 and a resolution, also to be voted on Wednesday. This issue will top the agenda at an informal meeting of EU heads of state on government in Brussels on 12 February.

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CIA use of torture and role of EU countries: MEPs to call for an end to impunity

MEPs are to call for an end to impunity in a resolution on US Senate revelations of the CIA's use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the alleged or acknowledged complicity of some EU member states. The vote takes place on Wednesday.

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Debate on humanitarian crisis in Syria and Iraq

The grave humanitarian crisis in Syria and Iraq, aggravated by the violence of the so-called Islamic State, will be debated with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Wednesday. Over 7.6 million Syrians have been displaced inside the country, and 3.8 million more have fled to neighbouring ones. In Iraq, over 2.1 million people were displaced in 2014 and the UNHCR estimates that some 330,000 refugees face a winter living in sub-standard shelters. A resolution will be voted on Thursday.

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Monitoring democracy and fundamental rights in the EU

Ideas for an "EU framework for democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights", to assess whether EU member states live up to their obligations in these areas, will be debated with Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans and the Latvian Presidency on Wednesday evening.

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Debate on EU agencies dealing with external borders, migration and asylum

The roles, resources and capabilities of the EU border agency Frontex and the European Asylum Support Office will be debated with the Council and Commission on Wednesday evening.

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Country of origin labelling of meat in processed foods

Meat used as an ingredient in processed foods, such as lasagne, should be made subject to country of origin labelling rules similar to those for fresh beef, MEPs will urge in a debate on Monday evening. A resolution to be voted on Wednesday is likely to urge the Commission to table legislation to this end.

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Access to innovative and affordable medicines

Concerns that patients may be deprived of innovative medicines due to their cost will be back on Parliament's agenda in a debate with Council and the Commission on Wednesday. The high prices of new treatments for diseases such as Hepatitis C recently prompted MEPs and certain EU member states to reopen the debate on possible EU-wide measures to help patients to access affordable and innovative therapies.

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Further information

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Counter-terrorism measures: MEPs to debate priorities ahead of EU summit

MEPs will give their input on possible EU counter-terrorism measures in a debate with the Council and Commission on Wednesday at 09.00 and a resolution, also to be voted on Wednesday. This issue will top the agenda at an informal meeting of EU heads of state on government in Brussels on 12 February.

The EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) proposal, preventing radicalisation, improving information exchange and stepping up checks at the external borders of the Schengen area are likely to be among the issues MEPs raise in Wednesday's debate.

The resolution to be voted on Wednesday will wrap up Parliament's 28 January plenary debate on how best to tackle terrorism.

Developments in Ukraine and EU Economic and Monetary Union are also likely to be debated at the summit.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements + resolution

[2014/2940\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 11 February (on summit) and 28 January (Plenary debate on anti-terrorism measures)

Vote: Wednesday, 11 February

#euco #antiterrorism #PNR #Schengen

Further information

[VOD of the Plenary debate on anti-terrorism measures \(28.01.2015\)](#)

[Civil Liberties Committee's "counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation roadmap" upcoming meetings and activities\)](#)

[Background note - EU Passenger Name Record \(PNR\) proposal: What's at stake](#)

CIA use of torture and role of EU countries: MEPs to call for an end to impunity

MEPs are to call for an end to impunity in a resolution on US Senate revelations of the CIA's use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the alleged or acknowledged complicity of some EU member states. The vote takes place on Wednesday.

Calls for a full investigation into member states' alleged participation in the CIA operations and a democratic oversight of intelligence services were made by MEPs in a debate last December. Those responsible for torture and other illegal practices must face justice, they said.

The alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transportation and illegal detention of prisoners was also investigated by a European Parliament temporary committee set up in 2006.

Procedure: Non-binding resolution

[2014/2997\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 17 December 2014

Vote: Wednesday, 11 February

#CIA #TortureReport

Further information

[Video of the debate in plenary on 17.12.2014](#)

[European Parliament resolution on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transportation and illegal detention of prisoners \(14.02.2007\)](#)

[European Parliament resolution on alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA: follow-up of the European Parliament TDIP Committee report \(11.09.2012\)](#)

[European Parliament resolution on alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA \(10.10.2013\)](#)

[Report released by the US Senate](#)

Debate on humanitarian crisis in Syria and Iraq

The grave humanitarian crisis in Syria and Iraq, aggravated by the violence of the so-called Islamic State, will be debated with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Wednesday. Over 7.6 million Syrians have been displaced inside the country, and 3.8 million more have fled to neighbouring ones. In Iraq, over 2.1 million people were displaced in 2014 and the UNHCR estimates that some 330,000 refugees face a winter living in sub-standard shelters. A resolution will be voted on Thursday.

The Kurdistan region of Iraq alone is hosting over 900,000 displaced people.

In a debate with Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs on 2 February, UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, argued that the "horrible aspect" of the arrival of IS offered an opportunity to find a solution to the Syrian conflict.

Procedure: Statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (with resolution)

Debate: Wednesday, 11 February

Vote: Thursday, 12 February

#Syria #Iraq #IS

Further information

[Videorecording of the debate with UN Special Envoy for Syria in the Foreign Affairs Committee \(02.02.2015\)](#)

[Iraq – UNHCR webpage](#)

[Syria – UNHRC webpage](#)

Monitoring democracy and fundamental rights in the EU

Ideas for an "EU framework for democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights", to assess whether EU member states live up to their obligations in these areas, will be debated with Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans and the Latvian Presidency on Wednesday evening.

EU candidate countries are expected to live up to the "Copenhagen" criteria in areas such as press freedom, equal rights for minorities or independence of the judiciary.

But there is no regular assessment of the performance of EU member states themselves in these areas and the European Commission only has limited tools to enforce sanctions against breaches. The previous Parliament voted several resolutions calling for better monitoring.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements

Debate: Wednesday, 11 February

#fundamentalrights #ruleoflaw

Further information

[EP resolution on fundamental rights in the European Union calling for better monitoring of fundamental rights in the EU \(27.01.2014\):](#)

Debate on EU agencies dealing with external borders, migration and asylum

The roles, resources and capabilities of the EU border agency Frontex and the European Asylum Support Office will be debated with the Council and Commission on Wednesday evening.

Tackling problems in the Mediterranean, improving the management of migration flows prompted by a mix of motives, ensuring surveillance of EU's external borders, saving migrants in distress at sea and supporting EU countries whose asylum and reception systems are under particular pressure are among the issues at stake.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements followed by debate

[2015/2527\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 11 February

#migration #asylum #Frontex

Further information

[Website of Frontex](#)

[Website of the European Asylum Support Office \(EASO\)](#)

[EPRS note - Frontex – Management of Europe's borders](#)

[EPRS note - European Asylum Support Office \(EASO\)](#)

Country of origin labelling of meat in processed foods

Meat used as an ingredient in processed foods, such as lasagne, should be made subject to country of origin labelling rules similar to those for fresh beef, MEPs will urge in a debate on Monday evening. A resolution to be voted on Wednesday is likely to urge the Commission to table legislation to this end.

MEPs will stress the need for efforts to rebuild consumer confidence in the wake of the horsemeat scandal and other food fraud cases.

Over 90% of respondents to consumer surveys in 2013 said that the origin of meat used in processed foods should be stated on the label, so as to enable them to make informed choices, says a Commission report.

Procedure: Question for an oral reply to the Commission (with resolution)

[2014/2875\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 9 February

Vote: Wednesday, 11 February

#countryoforigin #processedfood #labelling #CountryOfOrigin #horsemeat

Further information

[Press release on committee vote \(21.01.2015\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[European Commission report regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for meat used as an ingredient](#)

[EP Research Briefing note on country of origin labelling for meat in processed foods](#)

Access to innovative and affordable medicines

Concerns that patients may be deprived of innovative medicines due to their cost will be back on Parliament's agenda in a debate with Council and the Commission on Wednesday. The high prices of new treatments for diseases such as Hepatitis C recently prompted MEPs and certain EU member states to reopen the debate on possible EU-wide measures to help patients to access affordable and innovative therapies.

This plenary debate follows another last September, which was by a question tabled for an oral reply. In it, MEPs highlighted the need for more transparency on pharmaceutical pricing, particularly in view of the budgetary pressures on national health systems.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements followed by debate (without resolution)

[2015/2528\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 11 February

#medicines

Further information

[Debate on access to life-saving medicines \(16.09.14\)](#)

[Oral question](#)

MEPs to call for crackdown on female genital mutilation

MEPs will quiz the European Commission on the progress of efforts to stamp out female genital mutilation (FGM) in the EU in a debate on Tuesday. They are concerned at the lack of deadlines for enforcing the actions set out in the Commission's November 2013 action plan entitled "Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation". They are also concerned that national legislation in this area is proving difficult to enforce.

A recent study shows that half a million women in the EU live with consequences of FGM and that there are victims or potential victims in at least 13 EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK.

Procedure: Question to the Commission for an oral reply (without resolution)

[2014/2988\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 10 February

#FGM #FGM x2

Further information

[EP Research Briefing note on Zero tolerance for female genital mutilation](#)

[Oral question to the Commission](#)

[Communication from the commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation"](#)

[EP Think Tank: Zero tolerance for FGM:](#)

[Zero tolerance for FGM: recording of discussion in the FEMM Committee \(20.1.2015\):](#)

Youth Employment Initiative: debate on plan to make €1 billion available in 2015

The latest plan to make €1 billion in Youth Employment Initiative YEI funding – i.e. one-third of the total for 2014-2020 - available in 2015 alone will be debated on Tuesday morning with Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility oMarianne Thyssen. This plan could deliver a thirtyfold increase in the funding that EU member states receive in 2015 to help their efforts to get 650,000 young people into work.

Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) funding tops up European Social Fund (ESF) money in member states with regions where youth unemployment exceeds 25%.

Parliament and the Council would need to amend ESF rules to allow the plan to front-load YEI funding in 2015 to be put into effect.

NOTE FOR EDITORS

Youth Guarantee measures in in EU member states aim to reduce youth unemployment by accelerating the transition from school to work and helping to create jobs.

The YEI budget for 2014-2020 is €3.2 billion, to be matched by at least €3.2 billion from member states' European Social Fund allocations. The proposal would increase the YEI pre-financing rate in its 2015 budget allocation from 1-1.5% to up to 30%.

Member states benefiting from this initiative (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK) could therefore receive a third of the €3.2 billion allocation immediately after the relevant dedicated operational programmes are approved

Procedure: Commission statement followed by debate

Debate: Tuesday, 10 February

#YouthEmployment #YEI #ESF

Further information

[European Commission: Legislative proposal amending regulation on the ESF as regards pre-financing of YEI programmes \(EN, FR, DE only\)](#)

[EP Resolution on Youth Employment \(17.07.2014\)](#)

[EPRS: Youth Employment Initiative](#)

[European Commission: Youth Employment Initiative infographic](#)

Extending international child abduction convention to eight new states

EU member states should accept the accession of Gabon, Andorra, the Seychelles, Russia, Albania, Singapore, Morocco and Armenia to the Hague Child Abduction Convention, MEPs are likely to say in a debate on Tuesday and resolution to be voted on Wednesday. This would allow the convention to enter into force between these eight states and the EU and thus help to ensure the prompt return of abducted children.

The 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction governs cooperation among the contracting states to settle international child abduction cases, including a system to ensure the immediate return of abducted children to their country of habitual residence, so as to allow the judicial authorities of that country to solve the case.

All EU member states have ratified the convention.

Procedure: Consultation

2011/0441(NLE) Gabon; 2011/0443(NLE) Andorra; 2011/0444(NLE) the Seychelles; 2011/0447(NLE) Russia; 2011/0448(NLE) Albania; 2011/0450(NLE) Singapore;

2011/0451(NLE) Morocco;2011/0452(NLE) Armenia.

Debate: Tuesday, 10 February

Vote: Wednesday, 11 February

#ChildAbduction #HagueConvention

Further information

[EP research: International parental child abduction](#)
[1980 Hague convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction:](#)
[EP Research Briefing note on cross-border parental child abduction](#)
[Profile of rapporteur Heidi Hautala \(Greens/EFA, FI\)](#)
[Draft report: Accession of Gabon](#)
[Draft report: Accession of Andorra](#)
[Draft report: Accession of the Seychelles](#)
[Draft report: Accession of the Russian Federation](#)
[Draft report: Accession of Albania](#)
[Draft report: Accession of Singapore](#)
[Draft report: Accession of Morocco](#)
[Draft report: Accession of Armenia](#)

Keeping the internet open and free

A call to keep the internet open and ensure that all internet data and service providers are treated equally (“net neutrality”) will be voted on Wednesday. The draft text, to be debated on Monday, regrets that some states, citing security concerns, are restricting their citizens' internet access or subjecting them to online surveillance. It also underlines the need to involve not only governments, but also NGOs and the private sector, in the debate on future governance of internet.

MEPs are set to urge strong EU support for the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and ask that its mandate be prolonged after the end of 2015. The Internet Governance Forum, founded in 2006, brings together delegates from civil society, governments, industry and international organisations, including the European Parliament. It meets annually, this year in João Pessoa, Brazil, in November.

Procedure: Commission statement followed by debate (with resolution)

[2015/2526\(RSP\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 9 February

Vote: Wednesday, 11 February

#netneutrality #internet

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Webpage Internet Governance Forum](#)

MEPs to debate developments in Ukraine with Ms Mogherini

Developments in Ukraine will be debated by MEPs with the EU's Foreign Affairs chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday afternoon. The debate is likely to focus on results of the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council held on 29 January, which was convened following the attacks in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol.

Debate: Tuesday, 10 February

Procedure: Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Debate: Tuesday, 10 February

#Ukraine #Russia #Mariupol

Further information

[Remarks by Ms Mogherini following the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on Ukraine \(29.01.2015\)](#)

Facilitating cross-border tracking of traffic offenders

Revised rules on the cross-border sharing of traffic offenders' data, so as to help ensure that drivers who commit offences while abroad do not escape fines, will be put to a vote on Wednesday. These rules, which are also designed to ensure equal treatment of drivers and help improve road safety across the EU, are to be extended to the UK, Ireland and Denmark within two years.

The draft directive on cross-border exchange of information on traffic offences, already informally agreed by Council and Parliament negotiators, amends the legal basis of existing data exchange rules as required by the European Court of Justice annulment decision of 6 May 2014. The Court allowed one year to make the necessary changes.

The cross-border traffic information exchange rules give EU member states access to each other's national vehicle registration data in order to track down persons liable to fines for the following safety-related offences:

- speeding,
- not using a seatbelt,
- failing to stop at red lights,
- drink driving,
- driving under the influence of drugs,
- motorcyclists not wearing a safety helmet,
- using a forbidden lane, and
- illegally using a mobile phone, or any other communications device, while driving.

Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary Legislative Procedure), 1st reading agreement

[2014/0218\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 10 February 2015

Vote: Wednesday, 11 February 2015

#crossborder #roadsafety #traffic #transport

Further information

[Draft report on facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offences](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(20.01.2015\)](#)

[Inés Ayala Sender \(S&D, ES\)](#) [Inés Ayala Sender \(S&D, ES\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EPRS: EU-wide information exchange on traffic offences](#)

[ECJ press release \(06.05.2014\)](#)

Combating paedophilia on the Internet

The worrying rise of child sexual abuse on the Internet, and notably growing demand, increasing violence and the use of social media for online luring, will be debated with the Commission on Thursday. A possible revision of the 2011 directive on combating the sexual abuse of children, the conditions for lawful interception online and measures to strengthen cooperation with Internet access providers will also be discussed.

According to Europol, 10% of Internet paedophilia victims are under two years old.

Procedure: Commission statement followed by debate

Debate: Thursday, 12 February

#paedophilia #childabuse #internet

Further information

[2011 directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography](#)

Human rights and democracy resolutions

Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following human rights and democracy topics, on the morning of Thursday, 12 February, followed by votes on resolutions at 11.00.

- Burundi, the case of human rights defender and journalist Bob Rugurika
- Saudi Arabia, the case of Raif Badawi
- Mass graves of the missing persons of Ashia at Ornithi village in the occupied part of Cyprus.

Debates and votes: Thursday, 12 February

Procedure: Statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission, non-legislative resolutions

#humanrights #democracy

Other topics on the agenda

Other topics for debate and vote include the following:

Role of Commission's group of experts on the enforcement of intellectual property rights, *Oral question, debate Monday*

Debate on situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Statement by High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP), *debate Tuesday*

Debate on the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, *statement by HR/VP, debate Tuesday*

Right to strike (ILO) - *debate Tuesday*

Situation in Yemen, *Statement by HR/VP, debate Wednesday*