

Newsletter

11-14 April 2016

Strasbourg plenary session

Data protection package up for final vote

MEPs will vote on Thursday on new rules on data protection. The aim of the reform is to put internet users in control of their personal data and to regulate data transfers to third countries. The reform also sets high standards on use of data for policing and judicial purposes. Parliament and Council negotiators reached a provisional agreement on both the regulation and the directive last December. Plenary will hold a joint debate on Wednesday and vote Thursday.

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Final vote on the EU Passenger Name Record (PNR)

MEPs will vote on Thursday on the EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) directive, which will oblige airlines to hand EU countries their passengers' data in order to help authorities to fight terrorism and serious crime. Plenary will hold a debate on the subject Wednesday afternoon, after a discussion on the data protection package.

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EU-Turkey deal up for a debate

The agreement to return migrants and asylum seekers from the Greek islands to Turkey, reached at the meeting of heads of state or government on 18 March in Brussels, will be at the centre of a debate with Council President Donald Tusk and Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on Wednesday morning.

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EP to call for centralised EU asylum system and legal ways to migrate

A centralised asylum system would allow the EU to better manage the increasing flows of migrants and asylum seekers, according to a draft resolution MEPs will debate and vote on Tuesday. The text advocates safe and lawful ways for third-country nationals to enter the Union without risking their lives and resorting to criminal smugglers.

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"Panama Papers" tax scandal debate

The "Panama Papers" revelations about more than 200,000 offshore companies and their secret owners, including many politicians and celebrities, will be debated with the Commission and Council on Tuesday afternoon. The key question: Are existing EU measures against tax evasion and money laundering working?

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New counterterrorism strategies following recent attacks

Recent terrorist attacks and existing and new measures to fight terrorism will be debated on Tuesday at 15.00 with Commission and Council. MEPs are likely to reiterate their urgent call on member states to step up information-sharing and ensure that all existing legislative instruments are fully implemented and operational.

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Calls for an EU-wide ban on glyphosate herbicide

As long as serious concerns remain about the carcinogenicity and endocrine disruptive properties of the herbicide glyphosate, which is widely used in farming, forestry and gardening, the EU Commission should not renew its market authorisation, says a non-binding resolution to be put to a vote on Wednesday.

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MEPs to approve extra funds for refugee aid and fighting terrorism

Parliament is set to give the go-ahead for 2016's first draft amending budget, to provide for €100 million of emergency support for refugees within the EU as well as €2 million to hire new staff at EUROPOL's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC). Given the urgency, MEPs fast-tracked the procedure to be completed in just over a month.

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Shaping the future of EU foreign policy

Stabilising Europe's neighbourhood, keeping up EU's enlargement and integration commitments, and earmarking at least 2% of EU member states' GDP for defence expenditure are among MEPs' suggestions for the upcoming EU global strategy to be debated on Tuesday and voted on Wednesday. MEPs will also scrutinise last year's common foreign and security policy choices in a debate with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.

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Trade secrets

Draft rules to help businesses obtain legal redress against the theft or misuse of their trade secrets are up for final vote on Thursday. MEPs inserted safeguards to ensure that new rules will not restrict the work of journalists or deter whistle-blowing. The vote confirms an informal agreement with Council, reached in December 2015.

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Rule of law in Poland: MEPs to vote on resolution

MEPs are set to vote on a non-binding resolution on the situation in Poland wrapping up the plenary debate of 19 January with Poland's Prime Minister Beata Szydło and Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans.

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Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa to address the European Parliament

Portugal's new President, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, elected on 24 January 2016, will deliver a speech in the European Parliament on Wednesday at 12.00. The 30th anniversary of Portugal's EU membership, the migration and refugee crisis and the current terrorism challenges are expected to be among the topics addressed. Portugal joined the European Communities on 1 January 1986.

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Albania and BiH: 2015 progress reports on EU integration

Parliament will debate the 2015 reform efforts of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina with Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn on Wednesday. It is likely to call on Albania to intensify its reform efforts in key priority areas, such as the rule of law or the

fight against corruption, needed to start EU accession talks. MEPs are also likely to welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent EU membership application. 19

Erasmus+ also for travelling apprentices in the EU

MEPs will vote Tuesday on a resolution asking that the Erasmus+ funding programme be better used to increase mobility of young apprentices and students in vocational education. Mobility strategies and partnerships between local and regional authorities and businesses, chambers of commerce, trade unions and other organisations should be put in place to promote, plan and manage apprentices' professional training schemes abroad, says the draft resolution. 20

Ways out of the agricultural crisis

MEPs will quiz EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan, on Tuesday, on details of the Commission's latest aid package to help EU farmers cope with combined impacts of falling prices, costly inputs and the Russian embargo on EU foodstuffs, inter alia. They will also assess the effectiveness of the 2015 package and present their ideas about an efficient response to the ongoing agricultural crisis. 21

MEPs to approve EU support for 500 former truck industry workers in Sweden

Parliament will vote on a proposal to grant €1,793,710 in EU aid to Sweden to help find new jobs for 500 workers made redundant by Volvo Trucks, mainly in the Umeå plant, and four suppliers and downstream producers. 22

Fighting poverty: help poor families to cut heating bills

EU member states should impose a moratorium on winter heating disconnections, so that no household can be cut off from energy in the cold, says a draft resolution to be put to a vote on Thursday. To step up the fight against poverty in the EU due to growing household costs, MEPs call for more support for poor families and further investment in energy efficiency projects to reduce utility bills. 23

Parliament to give its verdict on six nominees to the European Court of Auditors

Parliament will vote on Wednesday on the nominations of auditors to the European Court of Auditors from Slovakia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Poland, Malta and Slovenia on the basis of recommendation from the Budgetary Control Committee. The final decision on appointments to the Luxembourg body will be taken by the EU Council of Ministers. 25

International fisheries: stricter rules for fish products and vessels

The EU fisheries agreement with Mauritania should serve as a role model for transparency and enforcement, says a draft resolution on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) to be debated on Monday and voted on Tuesday. MEPs will call for stricter rules on imported fish products and sanctions against non-complying vessels. 26

New five-year EU-Greenland fisheries agreement

Under a new five-year-deal to be approved in plenary on Tuesday, EU vessels targeting mainly prawn, halibut, cod and redfish would be allowed to continue to fish in

the waters of the Greenlandic Exclusive Economic Zone. In return, the EU would pay Greenland a financial contribution of €17.8 million per year. This Protocol follows the expiry of the 2013-2015 Protocol. 27

Debate on Nagorno-Karabakh

The recent resurgence of the 22 years old frozen-conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in Azerbaijan that declared its independence in 1991 backed by Armenia, will be debated with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday to see how the EU could help in mitigating the crisis. 29

EU-Cuba deal up for a debate

The EU-Cuba political and cooperation agreement, and how it will enhance EU-Cuba relations, will be discussed on Tuesday afternoon with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini. 30

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2016-04-11>

Further information

[Draft agenda](#)
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[EP Audiovisual website](#)
[EP Newshub](#)

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Data protection package up for final vote

MEPs will vote on Thursday on new rules on data protection. The aim of the reform is to put internet users in control of their personal data and to regulate data transfers to third countries. The reform also sets high standards on use of data for policing and judicial purposes. Parliament and Council negotiators reached a provisional agreement on both the regulation and the directive last December. Plenary will hold a joint debate on Wednesday and vote Thursday.

The Council of Ministers is expected to formally adopt the data protection package (regulation and directive) by Monday 11 April to enable the Civil Liberties Committee to hold a vote on its second reading recommendations to plenary on Tuesday 12 April.

Procedure: Codecision (ordinary legislative procedure), 2nd reading agreement

Debate: Wednesday, 13 April

Vote: Thursday, 14 April

Press Conference: Tuesday 12 April at 12.00

#dataprotection

Further information

[Questions and answers on data protection \(European Commission\)](#)

[Press releases after committee vote \(17.12.2015\):](#)

[New data protection standards to ensure smooth police cooperation in the EU](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Jan Albrecht \(Greens, DE\) \(data protection regulation\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Marju Lauristin \(S&D, Estonia\) \(data protection directive\)](#)

Final vote on the EU Passenger Name Record (PNR)

MEPs will vote on Thursday on the EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) directive, which will oblige airlines to hand EU countries their passengers' data in order to help authorities to fight terrorism and serious crime. Plenary will hold a debate on the subject Wednesday afternoon, after a discussion on the data protection package.

Parliament negotiators reached an agreement with Council on the PNR directive last December, which was endorsed by the Civil Liberties Committee that same month.

MEPs sought to ensure, in three-way talks ("trilogues") with the Council and Commission that the draft law complies with the proportionality principle and includes strict personal data protection safeguards.

PNR data is information provided by passengers and collected by air carriers during reservation and check-in procedures, such as travel dates, travel itinerary, ticket information, contact details, baggage information, payment information, etc.

Procedure: Codecision (ordinary legislative procedure), 1st reading agreement

[2011/0023\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 13 April

Vote: Thursday, 14 April

Press Conference: Wednesday, 13 April at 14.00

#PNR

Further information

[Draft text on PNR as agreed with the Council](#)

[Press release after committee vote \(10.12.2015\): EU Passenger Name Record \(PNR\): Civil Liberties Committee backs EP/Council deal](#)

[Procedure file \(PNR\)](#)

[Background note on PNR](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Timothy Kirkhope \(ECR, UK\)](#)

EU-Turkey deal up for a debate

The agreement to return migrants and asylum seekers from the Greek islands to Turkey, reached at the meeting of heads of state or government on 18 March in Brussels, will be at the centre of a debate with Council President Donald Tusk and Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on Wednesday morning.

Under the new agreement, all people arriving irregularly from Turkey to the Greek islands are to be returned, and the EU is to take in one Syrian refugee for each Syrian sent back. Once irregular crossings from Turkey have been substantially reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated. The deal also opens up prospects for faster visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens traveling to the EU, provided Ankara complies with the requirements.

Turkey's 2015 reform efforts under scrutiny

Following the first debate, Parliament will also discuss the **2015 reform efforts of Turkey towards EU membership** with Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn on Wednesday and vote on a resolution on Thursday.

The draft says that EU-Turkey cooperation on migration should be uncoupled from the EU accession negotiating process and flags areas that are lagging behind in the reform process, such as the rule of law, freedom of expression and fundamental values.

Procedure: European Council and Commission statements; non-binding resolution on progress report

Debate: Wednesday, 13 April - 09.00-12.00

Vote: Thursday, 14 April

#euco #EUTurkey #refugeecrisis

Further information

[European Council conclusions 17-18 March 2016](#)

[EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016 \(Council\)](#)

[EU-Turkey agreement: Questions and Answers \(European Commission 19 March 2016\)](#)

[Press release on committee vote on 2015 Progress report \(15.03.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Kati PIRI \(S&D, NL\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[European Commission - Fact Sheet: Key findings of the 2015 report on Turkey](#)

EP to call for centralised EU asylum system and legal ways to migrate

A centralised asylum system would allow the EU to better manage the increasing flows of migrants and asylum seekers, according to a draft resolution MEPs will debate and vote on Tuesday. The text advocates safe and lawful ways for third-country nationals to enter the Union without risking their lives and resorting to criminal smugglers.

The draft resolution, prepared by Roberta Metsola (EPP, MT) and Kashetu Kyenge (S&D, IT) demands a radical overhaul of the so-called Dublin rules (which determine the member state responsible for processing an asylum application) to ensure shared responsibility, solidarity and quicker processing of asylum claims. It also calls on member states to honour their commitments regarding relocation of refugees and insists on the need for a binding EU resettlement scheme.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

[2015/2095\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 12 April - 08.30

Vote: Tuesday, 12 April

#refugeecrisis #asylum #migration

Further information

[Draft resolution on “The situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration”](#)

[Press release after committee vote \(16.03.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur, Roberta Metsola \(EPP, MT\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur, Kashetu Kyenge \(S&D, IT\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EPRS on migration and refugees](#)

"Panama Papers" tax scandal debate

The “Panama Papers” revelations about more than 200,000 offshore companies and their secret owners, including many politicians and celebrities, will be debated with the Commission and Council on Tuesday afternoon. The key question: Are existing EU measures against tax evasion and money laundering working?

The Panama Papers were revealed by the International Consortium for Investigative Journalism, the organisation behind the so-called “Luxleaks” corporate tax scandal of 2014. “LuxLeaksdrew up a [long list of legal recommendations for fairer and more transparent tax policies](#) in the EU.

Registering beneficial ownership

Thanks to Parliament, mandatory registration of beneficial owners of companies became part of the [Anti-Money Laundering Directive](#) which Parliament approved in May 2015 (deadline for transposition is 26 June 2017). Although not public, this information must be made accessible for competent authorities (tax, law enforcement) and “persons with a legitimate interest”.

Background on Panama Papers

The Panama Papers are a leaked set of 11.5 million confidential documents that provide detailed information about more than 214,000 offshore companies listed by the Panamanian corporate service provider Mossack Fonseca, including the identities of shareholders and directors of the companies. The documents show how wealthy individuals, including public officials, hide their money from public scrutiny.

Procedure: Commission and Council statements

Debate: Tuesday, 12 April

#PanamaPapers #LuxLeaks #TaxTransparency #TaxFairness

Further information

[Press release: "Tougher rules on money laundering" \(20.05.2015\)](#)

[Text of the Anti-Money Laundering Directive](#)

[Storify](#)

[EP Research Study: New EU tools to fight money laundering](#)

[Press release after adoption report Special Committee on Tax Rulings I \(25.11.2015\)](#)

[Press releases on legal recommendations for fairer, more transparent tax policies in the Economic and monetary Affairs Committee \(16.12.2015\)](#)

New counterterrorism strategies following recent attacks

Recent terrorist attacks and existing and new measures to fight terrorism will be debated on Tuesday at 15.00 with Commission and Council. MEPs are likely to reiterate their urgent call on member states to step up information-sharing and ensure that all existing legislative instruments are fully implemented and operational.

The European Parliament is currently working on a range of counter-terrorism measures to ensure the safety of EU citizens. The Council and Parliament have already worked out agreements on EUROPOL, cyber security and data transfers for law enforcement purposes.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements

Debate: Tuesday, 12 April

#terrorism #Brussels

Further information

[Press release \(24.03.16\) Fight against terrorism: EU and all Member States must use all available means to deliver, Parliament says](#)

Calls for an EU-wide ban on glyphosate herbicide

As long as serious concerns remain about the carcinogenicity and endocrine disruptive properties of the herbicide glyphosate, which is widely used in farming, forestry and gardening, the EU Commission should not renew its market authorisation, says a non-binding resolution to be put to a vote on Wednesday.

The EU Commission should launch an independent review and disclose all the scientific evidence that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) used to assess glyphosate, the text says, rather than renewing its market approval for another 15 years without any restrictions.

Note for editors

The decision on authorisation has to be taken by national experts sitting in the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (Phytopharmaceuticals Section). It can adopt or reject the Commission proposal by qualified majority. If there is no such majority, it is up to the European Commission to decide.

Glyphosate is an active substance widely used in herbicides. Patented in the early 1970s, it introduced to the consumer market in 1974 a broad-spectrum herbicide. Since its patent expired in 2000, glyphosate has been marketed by various companies and several hundred plant protection products containing glyphosate are currently registered in Europe for use on crops.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

2016/2624(RSP)

Vote: Wednesday, 13 April

#glyphosate

Further information

[Press release on committee vote \(22.03.2016\)](#)

MEPs to approve extra funds for refugee aid and fighting terrorism

Parliament is set to give the go-ahead for 2016's first draft amending budget, to provide for €100 million of emergency support for refugees within the EU as well as €2 million to hire new staff at EUROPOL's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC). Given the urgency, MEPs fast-tracked the procedure to be completed in just over a month.

The €100 million for humanitarian aid, in view of the current influx of refugees and migrants into the Union, is the first slice of the new €700m Emergency Assistance instrument proposed by the Commission on 2 March. The funds could be used for: food assistance, emergency healthcare, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, protection, and education.

In the light of recent terrorist attacks, a further €2 million would be made available to reinforce staff at the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC), established at EUROPOL on 1 January 2016, which is expected to be the central hub in the fight against terrorism in the EU.

The funds for providing humanitarian assistance to refugees within the EU are redeployed from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and those for Europol from the Internal Security Fund (ISF), thus not taken from existing external humanitarian aid programmes outside the EU.

Procedure: Budgetary

[2016/2037\(BUD\)](#)

Vote: Wednesday, 13 April

[@Europol #refugeecrisis #EUBudget #EPonTerror](#)

Further information

[Committee draft report \(BUDG committee will vote on 11 April in Strasbourg\)](#)

[Press release on debate in committee \(16.03.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur José Manuel Fernandes \(EPP, PT\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Shaping the future of EU foreign policy

Stabilising Europe's neighbourhood, keeping up EU's enlargement and integration commitments, and earmarking at least 2% of EU member states' GDP for defence expenditure are among MEPs' suggestions for the upcoming EU global strategy to be debated on Tuesday and voted on Wednesday. MEPs will also scrutinise last year's common foreign and security policy choices in a debate with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.

The debate and the resolution will set out MEPs' input to EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy to be presented by Ms. Mogherini by June 2016.

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (with [non-legislative resolution](#))

[2015/2272\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Tuesday, 12 April

Vote: Wednesday, 13 April

[#EUGlobalStrategy](#)

Further information

[Draft resolution on the EU in a changing global environment](#)

[EP rapporteur Sandra Kalniete \(EPP, LV\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Trade secrets

Draft rules to help businesses obtain legal redress against the theft or misuse of their trade secrets are up for final vote on Thursday. MEPs inserted safeguards to ensure that new rules will not restrict the work of journalists or deter whistle-blowing. The vote confirms an informal agreement with Council, reached in December 2015.

In the negotiations with member states, MEPs insisted the new directive should not curb the freedom and pluralism of the media or restrict the work of journalists, in particular with regard to their investigations and the protection of their sources.

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

[2013/0402\(COD\)](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 13 April

Vote: Thursday, 14 April

#tradesecrets

Further information

[Draft report on protection of trade secrets](#)

[Press release on committee vote \(28.01.2016\)](#)

[Press release after informal agreement with council](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Constanze Le Grip \(EPP, FR\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Rule of law in Poland: MEPs to vote on resolution

MEPs are set to vote on a non-binding resolution on the situation in Poland wrapping up the plenary debate of 19 January with Poland's Prime Minister Beata Szydło and Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans.

The January debate followed the Commission's 13 January decision to initiate the first stage of the "Framework for addressing systemic threats to the Rule of Law" in Poland. The *European Commission for Democracy through Law* (Venice Commission) issued its opinion on the Polish authorities' amendments to the law on the country's Constitutional Tribunal on 11 March.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

Debate: Tuesday, 19 January

Vote: Wednesday, 13 April

#Poland #ruleoflaw #mediafreedom

Further information

[Live replays \(debate 19.01.2016\)](#)

[Poland: MEPs debate rule of law issues with Prime Minister Szydło \(press release 19.02.2016\)](#)

[Framework for addressing systemic threats to the Rule of Law](#)

[College Orientation Debate on recent developments in Poland and the Rule of Law](#)

[Framework: Questions & Answers](#)

[Opinion on amendments to the law on the Constitutional Tribunal by Venice Commission of 11 March 2016.](#)

Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa to address the European Parliament

Portugal's new President, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, elected on 24 January 2016, will deliver a speech in the European Parliament on Wednesday at 12.00. The 30th anniversary of Portugal's EU membership, the migration and refugee crisis and the current terrorism challenges are expected to be among the topics addressed. Portugal joined the European Communities on 1 January 1986.

Professor of Law Mr Rebelo de Sousa won the presidential elections with 52% of the votes in the first ballot, on 24 January 2016. He started his five year mandate on 9 March.

He was one of the founders of the People's Democratic Party, later the Social Democratic Party (PSD, member of the EPP group), and party leader from 1996 to 1999. Apart from his political and governmental positions, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa was also involved in founding the Portuguese newspapers Expresso and Semanário. He has been a regular political commentator since the 1960s, first in newspapers and later on radio and television.

Formal sitting: Address by Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Republic

Wednesday, 13 April - 12.00-12.30

#Portugal

Further information

[Website of the Presidency of the Portuguese Republic](#)

[Biography of Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Republic](#)

[Result of the presidential elections in Portugal on 24 January 2016](#)

Albania and BiH: 2015 progress reports on EU integration

Parliament will debate the 2015 reform efforts of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina with Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn on Wednesday. It is likely to call on Albania to intensify its reform efforts in key priority areas, such as the rule of law or the fight against corruption, needed to start EU accession talks. MEPs are also likely to welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent EU membership application.

The House will vote on the two separate resolutions on Thursday.

Procedure: Council and Commission statements (with resolution)

[2015/2896\(RSP\) - Albania](#)

[2015/2897\(RSP\) - Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Debate: Wednesday, 13 April

Vote: Thursday, 14 April

#BiH #Albania #EUenlargement

Further information

[EP rapporteur on Albania Knut Fleckenstein \(S&D, DE\)](#)

[EP rapporteur on Bosnia and Herzegovina Cristian Dan Preda \(EPP, RO\)](#)

[Procedure file on Albania](#)

[Procedure file on Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Erasmus+ also for travelling apprentices in the EU

MEPs will vote Tuesday on a resolution asking that the Erasmus+ funding programme be better used to increase mobility of young apprentices and students in vocational education. Mobility strategies and partnerships between local and regional authorities and businesses, chambers of commerce, trade unions and other organisations should be put in place to promote, plan and manage apprentices' professional training schemes abroad, says the draft resolution.

Recognition and validation of learning outcomes, including those developed through non-formal and informal learning, should be better organised at national level, whether via credits or certificates, language knowledge and organisation of the curricula or studies, says the text.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

[2015/2257\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 11 April

Vote: Tuesday, 12 April

[#education](#) [#VET](#) [@EUErasmusPlus](#) [#vocationaltraining](#)

Further information

[Draft resolution on Erasmus+ and other tools to foster mobility in VET - a lifelong learning approach](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Ernest Maragall \(Greens/EFE, ES\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[European Commission - Vocational education and training \(VET\)](#)

Ways out of the agricultural crisis

MEPs will quiz EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan, on Tuesday, on details of the Commission's latest aid package to help EU farmers cope with combined impacts of falling prices, costly inputs and the Russian embargo on EU foodstuffs, inter alia. They will also assess the effectiveness of the 2015 package and present their ideas about an efficient response to the ongoing agricultural crisis.

EU lawmakers will stress aid must primarily reach farmers in the worst-hit sectors and improve their market position. They might also reiterate their [previous call](#) for additional measures, including legislative ones, to strengthen farmers' positions and introduce more balance in the food supply chain.

MEPs will also discuss ways to make EU agriculture more resilient to any future shocks or disturbances beyond the EU's borders. They will probably call on the Commission to ensure farmers' access to flexible and innovative financial instruments to better protect their income and react promptly to market changes.

Question for oral answer to the Commission

2016/2611(RSP)

Debate: Tuesday, 12 April

#AgriCrisis #RussianBan #milk #pigmeat #beef #fruits #vegetable #EUAgriculture

Further information

[Oral question to Commission](#)

[Commission's aid package helpful but not enough to tackle farm crisis, says Agriculture committee chair \(press release, 16.03.2016\)](#)

[Agriculture MEPs hold a minute of silence for victims of EU farm crisis and urge the Commission to act \(press release, 08.03.2016\)](#)

[Agriculture committee demands an EU law to fight unfair trading practices \(press release, 12.11.2015\)](#)

[European Commission activates exceptional measures to further support European farmers in crisis \(Commission's press release, 14.03.2016\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

MEPs to approve EU support for 500 former truck industry workers in Sweden

Parliament will vote on a proposal to grant €1,793,710 in EU aid to Sweden to help find new jobs for 500 workers made redundant by Volvo Trucks, mainly in the Umeå plant, and four suppliers and downstream producers.

The employees were laid off because European truck makers have lost market share to Asian ones in recent years. Volvo says that it has been forced to cut costs to tackle global competition.

Background

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund contributes to packages of tailor-made services to help redundant workers find new jobs. Its annual ceiling is €150 million.

Procedure: Budgetary

[2016/2022\(BUD\)](#)

Vote: Wednesday, 13 April

#EGF #Volvo #Sweden

Further information

[Press release on committee vote \(04.04.2016\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Victor Negrescu \(S&D, RO\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Fighting poverty: help poor families to cut heating bills

EU member states should impose a moratorium on winter heating disconnections, so that no household can be cut off from energy in the cold, says a draft resolution to be put to a vote on Thursday. To step up the fight against poverty in the EU due to growing household costs, MEPs call for more support for poor families and further investment in energy efficiency projects to reduce utility bills.

The non-binding resolution, drafted by **Tamás Meszerics** (Greens/EFA, HU), argues that the EU is getting further away from its 2020 strategy goal of bringing at least 20 million people out of poverty in the next four years. It also calls on the Commission to assess whether minimum income schemes in the EU enable households to meet basic needs. Adequate minimum income should be above the poverty threshold, which is approximately 60% of respective national median income.

Background for editors

Poor households spend the largest share of their income on food, housing and utilities. According to EU statistics on income and living conditions 10% of citizens had arrears on utility bills in 2015, 12% were unable to keep their home adequately warm in 2014, while 16% of the population were living in dwellings with leaking roofs and damp walls in 2014.

Between 2008 and 2013, the number of poor people in the EU increased from 117 million to 122.6 million: 16.7% of the population were at risk of poverty after social transfers, 9.6% were in a situation of serious material deprivation and 10.7% of households were considered to have very low work intensity.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

[2015/2222\(INI\)](#)

Debate/vote: Thursday, 14 April

#fightagainstpoverty

Further information

[Draft resolution on meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Tamás Meszerics \(Greens/EFA, HU\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Parliament to give its verdict on six nominees to the European Court of Auditors

Parliament will vote on Wednesday on the nominations of auditors to the European Court of Auditors from Slovakia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Poland, Malta and Slovenia on the basis of recommendation from the Budgetary Control Committee. The final decision on appointments to the Luxembourg body will be taken by the EU Council of Ministers.

Members of the Court of Auditors are appointed for six years. The Council, after consulting the European Parliament, decides upon the proposals made by each member state. Before the plenary vote, the six nominees were heard in the Budgetary Control Committee (CONT) on 15 March, which recommended rejecting the candidates from Slovakia, Poland and Malta.

Procedure: Consultation - nomination of Members

[2016/0803\(NLE\)](#) - Maltese

[2016/0804\(NLE\)](#) - Slovenian

[2015/0814\(NLE\)](#) - Latvian

[2015/0815\(NLE\)](#) - Czech

[2015/0816\(NLE\)](#) - Slovak

[2015/0817\(NLE\)](#) - Polish

Vote: Wednesday, 13 April

[@EUAuditorsECA](#)

Further information

[Questionnaires sent by the nominees before the hearing in CONT Committee](#)

[Rapporteur Igor Šoltes \(GREENS/EFA, SI\)](#)

[Rapporteur Bart Staes \(GREENS/EFA, BE\)](#)

International fisheries: stricter rules for fish products and vessels

The EU fisheries agreement with Mauritania should serve as a role model for transparency and enforcement, says a draft resolution on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) to be debated on Monday and voted on Tuesday. MEPs will call for stricter rules on imported fish products and sanctions against non-complying vessels.

Using the fisheries agreement with Mauritania as a role model for transparency means that any fish or fishery-derived product that does not comply with certain conditions or consumer protection requirements will be barred from European markets. An EU database covering all private agreements between EU shipowners and local and regional bodies, authorities and third countries, will also be created, among the key proposals included in the resolution drafted by Linnéa Engström (Greens/EFA, SV) to be put to plenary vote on Tuesday.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

[2015/2091\(INI\)](#)

Debate: Monday, 11 April

Vote: Tuesday, 12 April

[#CFPreality](#) [#EUfisheries](#)

Further information

[Draft report](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Linnéa Engström \(Greens/EFA, SV\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EP research in-depth analysis on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy](#)

[The Common Fisheries Policy: origins and developments \(background information available in all languages\)](#)

New five-year EU-Greenland fisheries agreement

Under a new five-year-deal to be approved in plenary on Tuesday, EU vessels targeting mainly prawn, halibut, cod and redfish would be allowed to continue to fish in the waters of the Greenlandic Exclusive Economic Zone. In return, the EU would pay Greenland a financial contribution of €17.8 million per year. This Protocol follows the expiry of the 2013-2015 Protocol.

The Fishing Partnership Agreement (FPA) is a "mixed agreement", which permits the EU vessels to fish for a wide range of species. The first fisheries agreement between the EU and Greenland was concluded in 1985 for an initial period of ten years and thereafter extended for additional six-year periods until it was replaced by the FPAs. The first fisheries agreement was implemented by successive protocols.

Background

Greenland joined the European Communities (EC) as a part of Denmark in 1973, but left the EC following a referendum in 1985. Today, Greenland is one of the overseas countries and territories (OCT) of the Union. In 1979 Denmark granted 'Home Rule' to Greenland, and following a referendum in 2008 all functions of government rest with the Government of Greenland except for those related to defence, fisheries inspection outside the territorial waters, constitutional affairs, currency and monetary policy, which are retained by Denmark.

The Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture (MFHA) has overall responsibility for fisheries policy and the management of fish resources in Greenland.

Fish account for nearly 90 % of exported goods. Virtually all of Greenland's exports of fish products are destined for the EU, with Denmark accounting for more than 90 % of EU imports.

Procedure: Consent

[2015/0152\(NLE\)](#)

Vote: Tuesday, 12 April

#Greenland #Denmark #EUfisheries

Further information

[Draft report](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Marco Affronte \(EFDD, IT\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Commission webpage on Greenland](#)

Debate on Nagorno-Karabakh

The recent resurgence of the 22 years old frozen-conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in Azerbaijan that declared its independence in 1991 backed by Armenia, will be debated with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday to see how the EU could help in mitigating the crisis.

More than 60 people were killed and dozens wounded in three days of fighting in the worst combat in the last two decades. Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to enact a ceasefire on 5 April.

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

Debate: Tuesday, 12 April

#NagornoKarabakh

EU-Cuba deal up for a debate

The EU-Cuba political and cooperation agreement, and how it will enhance EU-Cuba relations, will be discussed on Tuesday afternoon with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.

Accompanying the ongoing process of reforming the Cuban economy, promoting cooperation to foster sustainable development, democracy and human rights and finding common solutions to global challenges, are among the aims of the EU-Cuba political and cooperation agreement concluded by Federica Mogherini and Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez on 11 March 2016 in Cuba. The deal should be swiftly signed and ratified possibly towards the end of 2016.

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

Debate: Tuesday 12 April

#EU #Cuba #EUCuba

Further information

[EEAS webpage on "EU-Cuba negotiations towards a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement"](#)

[EEAS webpage on EU relations with Cuba](#)

Human rights and democracy resolutions

Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following human rights and democracy topics on Thursday 14 April, at 10.30, with the votes following at 12.00.

- Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore
- Honduras: situation of human rights defenders
- Nigeria

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions

Debates/votes: Thursday 14 April

#humanrights #democracy #Pakistan #Lahore #LahoreStrong #Honduras #Nigeria

Other items on the agenda

Other items for debate and vote include the following:

- Public tax transparency, statement by the Commission - *debate Tuesday*
- Minimum standard rate of VAT (INI), rapporteur Peter Simon (S&D, DE) - *vote Tuesday*
- Zika virus outbreak - vote on motions for resolutions *Wednesday* (debate 10.03.2016)
- Breeding animals and their germinal products (COD), rapporteur Michel Dantin (EPP, FR) - *vote Tuesday*
- Small-scale coastal fishing in regions dependent on fishing (INI), rapporteur Ruža Tomašić (ECR, HR) - *debate Monday, vote Tuesday*
- Implementation and review of the EU-Central Asia Strategy (INI), rapporteur Tamás Meszerics (Greens/EFA, HU) - *debate Tuesday, vote Wednesday*
- Agreement on strategic cooperation between Brazil and Europol (COD), rapporteur Claude Moraes (S&D, UK) - *vote Tuesday*
- Impact of migration crisis on the transport sector in the EU - Commission statement - *debate Thursday*