Newsletter
12-15 December 2022
Strasbourg plenary session

The Ukrainian people to receive the 2022 Sakharov Prize
The brave Ukrainian people will be awarded the European Parliament’s 2022 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in a ceremony on Wednesday at noon.

MEPs to set out their priorities for the December European Council
In a debate with the Commission and the Czech Presidency on Wednesday morning, MEPs will outline their demands and expectations for the 15 December EU summit.

Energy crisis: boosting the deployment of renewables
MEPs will debate and vote on a new law to accelerate the granting of permits for new renewable energy power plants, such as solar panels or windmills.

Russian bombardment of Ukraine: Parliament to debate latest developments
MEPs will debate the humanitarian situation in Ukraine due to Russia’s attacks against critical infrastructure as well as the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor mass killing.

EU response to distortive US tax breaks: MEPs to quiz Commission and Council
MEPs will seek answers on how the EU is handling the massive tax breaks to companies producing in the US, a scheme that puts European companies at a disadvantage.

“This is Europe”: Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob to address EP
MEPs will discuss the EU’s future prospects with Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob on Tuesday at 10.30.

Israel and Palestine: MEPs to discuss a two-state solution
On Tuesday afternoon, MEPs will assess the prospects of a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine in a debate with the European Commission.
Turkish airstrikes in Iraq and Syria: debate with Commission
On Tuesday afternoon, MEPs and European Commission representatives will debate the recent Turkish airstrikes on Kurdish targets in Iraq and northern Syria.

Child Guarantee: MEPs set to call for more funds to cover needs of children
On Tuesday, MEPs will discuss with the Commission and Council the need for a dedicated budget to turn the Child Guarantee into reality, in times of energy and food crises.

Media freedom in the EU: Parliament to quiz Council and Commission
In a debate on the situation of journalists in the EU and its implications for the rule of law, MEPs will consider recent developments and reports on media freedom.

Protecting EU strategic infrastructure from China’s influence
MEPs will discuss how to protect the EU’s strategic infrastructure from China’s influence during Question Time with the Commission on Tuesday.

Defending the rights of persons with disabilities
Parliament is set to demand measures that enable people with disabilities to participate socially and in the labour market, and propose ways to address discrimination.

EU’s long-term budget needs urgent revision due to current crises
MEPs are set to push for a reform of the EU budget to respond more effectively to evolving needs, address funding gaps, increase flexibility and crisis responsiveness.

Seven countries to receive nearly €720 million in EU aid after natural disasters
On Wednesday, MEPs are set to approve nearly €720 million in EU Solidarity Fund aid following natural disasters in seven EU countries in 2021.

MEPs to quiz Commission about how to defend EU democracies from interference
On Wednesday, Parliament will question the Commission about its plans to close loopholes that inhibit the protection of democracies, before the 2024 European elections.

COP27: MEPs to debate outcome of climate change talks in Egypt
On Monday, Parliament will assess the results of the UN Climate Change Conference COP27, which took place in Sharm el Sheik from 6-19 November.

Resolutions on human rights and democracy
Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following human rights, democracy and rule of law topics on Wednesday afternoon, followed by votes on Thursday.

Other topics on the agenda


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Press conferences and other events
EP Multimedia Centre
EP Newshub

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Plenary sessions

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The Ukrainian people to receive the 2022 Sakharov Prize

The brave Ukrainian people will be awarded the European Parliament’s 2022 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in a ceremony on Wednesday at noon.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is expected to address the plenary chamber remotely, with other representatives of the Ukrainian people gathered physically in Strasbourg.

President Roberta Metsola and several of the Ukrainian representatives will hold a press conference after the award ceremony, at 12.45 CET, in Parliament’s Daphne Caruana Galizia press conference room. More details and the names of those expected to address journalists will be announced at a later date.

In addition, Ukrainian laureates and representatives of this year’s Sakharov Prize finalists will take part in a press seminar organised by the European Parliament on Tuesday 13 December from 09.30 CET to 11.30 CET.

You can watch both the ceremony and the press conference live via EP Live and EbS.

Read more about the other nominees for this year’s Sakharov Prize.

MEPs on the Foreign Affairs and Development committees and on the Subcommittee on Human Rights will hold a discussion with the Ukrainian laureates on Monday 12 December at 19.00 – 20.30 CET.

Background information

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, named in honour of Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov, is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It was established in 1988 to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Procedure: Award ceremony

Award ceremony: Wednesday, 14 December

Press conference: Wednesday, 14 December at 12.45 CET, with European Parliament President Roberta Metsola and representatives of the Ukrainian people
Further information
Sakharov Prize Community
Announcement of the brave People of Ukraine, represented by their President, elected leaders and civil society as the 2022 laureate, by Roberta Metsola, EP President
EP Multimedia Centre: Sakharov Prize 2022
MEPs to set out their priorities for the December European Council

In a debate with the Commission and the Czech Presidency on Wednesday morning, MEPs will outline their demands and expectations for the 15 December EU summit.

During their meeting in Brussels, heads of state or government will focus on the latest developments in Russia’s war against Ukraine and how to further assist Ukraine, particularly in view of Russia destroying vital Ukrainian infrastructure and the upcoming winter.

Following the atrocities carried out by Vladimir Putin’s regime, MEPs declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism, in a resolution adopted on 23 November. On the same day, EP President Metsola and Dario Nardella, Mayor of Florence and President of Eurocities, launched the “Generators of Hope” campaign to provide Ukraine with power generators and transformers to help Ukrainians get through the harsh winter ahead.

During the summit, leaders will also discuss the social and economic consequences of high energy prices and the EU’s coordinated response, security and defence issues, relations with the EU’s southern neighbourhood and further external affairs topics.

*Debate: Wednesday, 14 December*

*Procedure: Council and Commission statements, no resolution*

**Further information**

European Parliament declares Russia to be a state sponsor of terrorism  
EP President Metsola launches “Generators of Hope” campaign to help Ukraine  
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Energy crisis: boosting the deployment of renewables

MEPs will debate and vote on a new law to accelerate the granting of permits for new renewable energy power plants, such as solar panels or windmills.

The plan would reduce the maximum length of the approval process for new installations from twelve to nine months if they are located in "renewables acceleration areas". These areas would be defined by each member state depending on whether they are able to install renewables at a faster pace. If the competent authority does not respond by the end of this period, the permit or request will be deemed to be approved.

The proposal also includes an obligation for EU countries to ensure permits to install solar energy equipment on buildings are delivered within three months. For smaller installations below 50kW, a simple notification procedure would be enough. Installing solar equipment would be exempt from the requirement to conduct an environmental impact assessment.

In order to bring more renewable energy to the grid without delay, MEPs will vote on amendments incorporating elements of a recent Commission proposal, tabled under the so-called “emergency procedure”, so the provisions would already come into force in 2023.

The debate will take place on Tuesday, the vote is scheduled for Wednesday.

Background

The draft legislation was tabled by the Commission as part of the REPowerEU package to cut European dependence on fossil fuel imports from Russia. It will amend the Renewable Energy, the Energy Efficiency and the Energy Performance of Buildings directives, on which separate revisions are ongoing as part of the "Fit for 55" package.

Procedure Code: 2022/0160(COD)

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December

Vote: Wednesday 14 December

Procedure: ordinary Legislative Procedure

Press conference: TBC
Further information
Press release on committee vote (14.11.2022)
Profile of rapporteur Markus Pieper (EPP, DE)
Procedure file
Free photos, video and audio material
Russian bombardment of Ukraine: Parliament to debate latest developments

MEPs will debate the humanitarian situation in Ukraine due to Russia’s attacks against critical infrastructure as well as the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor mass killing.

Both debates will take place on Thursday morning.

Following the systematic Russian strikes on Ukraine’s critical infrastructure and civilian centres, as well as other crimes committed by President Vladimir Putin’s regime against the Ukrainian people, the European Parliament recently declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism.

With facilities such as schools, hospitals and electricity stations being targeted in the Russian bombing campaign, Ukraine faces a potentially catastrophic humanitarian situation ahead of the winter, as people risk being left without shelter, water or power, in addition to suffering death and destruction.

90 years after Holodomor

MEPs will also debate and vote on a resolution to recognise the Holodomor as genocide. The Holodomor was a Soviet-imposed famine that killed millions of Ukrainians between 1932 and 1933.

Debates: Thursday 15 December

Vote: Thursday 15 December (Holodomor resolution)

Procedure: Commission statements, followed by a resolution (on the Holodomor)

Further information
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
EU response to distortive US tax breaks: MEPs to quiz Commission and Council

MEPs will seek answers on how the EU is handling the massive tax breaks to companies producing in the US, a scheme that puts European companies at a disadvantage.

The debate will take place on Wednesday morning.

The roughly €350 billion Inflation Reduction Act aims to build a new green economy by giving subsidies and tax credits to companies which manufacture with local parts or produce in the US from 1 January 2023, to the detriment of European manufacturers and in potential breach of World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. In response, MEPs might propose that European state-aid rules be redesigned to give EU funding to local industry or that a complaint should be filed with the WTO.

After a recent EU-US meeting, the EU expressed its expectation that “the US address[es] its concerns constructively”.

In recent debates, several MEPs in the International Trade Committee criticised the measure as being distortive to trade and competition.

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

Procedure: Council and Commission statements, no resolution

Further information
Launch of the US-EU Task Force on the Inflation Reduction Act (26.11.2022)
“This is Europe”: Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob to address EP

MEPs will discuss the EU’s future prospects with Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob on Tuesday at 10.30.

One round of speeches by political group leaders will follow the Prime Minister’s address.

Before speaking to plenary, Robert Golob and EP President Roberta Metsola will hold a bilateral meeting.

Robert Golob became Prime Minister of Slovenia in May 2022. Before that, he worked in the private sector, and is one of the leading experts in power engineering in Slovenia.

This will be the seventh “This is Europe” debate to take place at the European Parliament to discuss with EU leaders their visions for the future of the EU; previous iterations have featured Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas (in March), Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi (in May), Ireland’s Taoiseach Micheál Martin (in the first June plenary), Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković (in the second June plenary) Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis (in July) and Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin (in September).

Procedure: Key debate

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December at 10.30 a.m.

Further information

Biography of Robert Golob
Free multimedia material
Israel and Palestine: MEPs to discuss a two-state solution

On Tuesday afternoon, MEPs will assess the prospects of a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine in a debate with the European Commission.

The debate follows concerns over the dangerous escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as EU calls on Israel to halt all demolitions and evictions, which increase the suffering of the Palestinian population and further escalate an already tense environment.

In May last year, MEPs debated the need for a ceasefire and for negotiations to resume while condemning anti-Semitism in Europe triggered by the upsurge in violence between Israel and Palestine at the time. The European Parliament has expressed its support for a two-state solution in numerous resolutions, including in February 2022.

The debate will be wound up in a resolution to be put to the vote on Wednesday.

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December
Vote: Wednesday, 14 December
Procedure: Statement by the EC, with a resolution

Further information
The European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Israel
The delegation for relations with Palestine
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Turkish airstrikes in Iraq and Syria: debate with Commission

On Tuesday afternoon, MEPs and European Commission representatives will debate the recent Turkish airstrikes on Kurdish targets in Iraq and northern Syria.

The Turkish military operation took place following a bomb attack in Istanbul in November, for which the Turkish government has blamed Kurdish groups. The retaliatory airstrikes - dubbed Operation Claw-Sword - targeted the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia.

The European Parliament’s standing rapporteur for Türkiye, Nacho Sánchez Amor (S&D, Spain), and the Chair of Parliament’s delegation to the EU-Türkiye Joint Parliamentary Committee, Sergey Lagodinsky (The Greens/EFA, Germany), have previously voiced concern over the possible escalation of violence.

Debate: Tuesday, 13 December

Procedure: Statement by the European Commission, without a resolution

Further information
The European Parliament's Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Child Guarantee: MEPs set to call for more funds to cover needs of children

On Tuesday, MEPs will discuss with the Commission and Council the need for a dedicated budget to turn the Child Guarantee into reality, in times of energy and food crises.

The European Parliament has been calling in a series of resolutions on the Commission and the member states to give every child in poverty access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. While the child guarantee was established in June 2021, MEPs are still concerned about its proper funding and implementation by member states.

During the negotiations on the European Social Fund+ (ESF+ Regulation) in 2021, MEPs made sure that member states with a level of child poverty above the EU average would invest at least 5% of their ESF+ in combating child poverty.

**Debate: Tuesday, 13 December**

**Procedure:** Council and Commission statements, without a resolution

**Further information**

Procedure file: Resolution on the European Child Guarantee  
Legislative Train: Council Recommendation on the European Child Guarantee  
Legislative Train: ESF+  
EP Think Tank: Implementing the European Child Guarantee (October 2022)  
European Child Guarantee (Commission)
Media freedom in the EU: Parliament to quiz Council and Commission

In a debate on the situation of journalists in the EU and its implications for the rule of law, MEPs will consider recent developments and reports on media freedom.

The exchange is expected to focus on the findings of the 2022 rule of law report by the European Commission, as well as complementary reports and findings by civil society organisations, and recent developments in multiple member states. Topics also likely to feature prominently in the debate include ongoing legislative work on the Media Freedom Act and the anti-SLAPP initiative, as well as the revelations about the use of spyware and the work of Parliament’s PEGA committee.

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

Procedure: Council and Commission statements, no resolution

Further information
Press freedom: the European Parliament in support of journalists
EU rules needed against abusive lawsuits targeting critical voices (11.11.2021)
EP Study - “Safety of journalists and the fighting of corruption in the EU” (15.07.2020)
Free photos, video and audio material (press freedom)
Protecting EU strategic infrastructure from China’s influence

MEPs will discuss how to protect the EU’s strategic infrastructure from China’s influence during Question Time with the Commission on Tuesday.

Recently a Chinese shipping group obtained a stake in a sea terminal at the port of Hamburg, Germany. The sale illustrates a trend in Chinese companies buying stakes in a wide range of European critical infrastructure, including airports, electricity companies, electric grids, wind and solar farms as well as telecommunications.

While there is already a mechanism in place to screen foreign direct investments in the EU on security grounds, MEPs will quiz the Commission about further plans to ensure Europe does not expose itself to security risks or become vulnerably dependent on China through critical infrastructure.

Debate: Tuesday 13 December

Procedure: Question Time Commission, no resolution

Further information
Press release: MEPs approve new rules to protect essential infrastructure (22.11.2022)
Defending the rights of persons with disabilities

Parliament is set to demand measures that enable people with disabilities to participate socially and in the labour market, and propose ways to address discrimination.

MEPs are expected to reaffirm that the right of persons with disabilities to live independently has to be fully guaranteed through policies and legislation focused on inclusion that will eradicate stereotypes and ableism.

The draft report, which MEPs will debate on Monday and put to the vote on Tuesday, addresses access to the labour market as a key parameter to this end, calling on the Commission to develop a European legal framework for inclusive enterprises, and for all EU funding towards segregated settings to be scrapped. The text also tackles intersectional discrimination including gender-based violence, people being denied access to sexual and reproductive health facilities, denial of informed consent regarding the use of contraceptives, and forced sterilisation, as well as people being deprived of their legal capacity to make their own decisions.

Procedure Code: 2022/2026(INI)

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

Debate: Monday 12 December

Vote: Tuesday 13 December

Further information
Draft report: “Towards equal rights for people with disabilities”
Press release on committee vote (17.11.2022)
Rapporteur: Anne-Sophie Pelletier (The Left, FR)
Procedure file
Union of equality: Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030
Legislative train: anti-discrimination directive
EP Research Service: collection of briefings and studies on relevant topics
Free photos, video and audio material
EU’s long-term budget needs urgent revision due to current crises

MEPs are set to push for a reform of the EU budget to respond more effectively to evolving needs, address funding gaps, increase flexibility and crisis responsiveness.

In a draft resolution to be debated on Wednesday and put to the vote on Thursday, MEPs argue that the EU’s current seven-year-budget has already been “pushed to its limits” less than two years after its adoption in December 2020. In this short period, “the political, economic and social context in the EU has changed beyond recognition”, they say, adding that the EU’s long-term budget is “simply not equipped, in terms of size, structure or rules, to respond quickly and effectively to a multitude of crises”. As a consequence, they call on the Commission to propose an “urgent revision” of the EU’s multiannual financial framework (MFF).

More information in the recent press release.

Procedure Code: 2022/2046(INI)

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

Vote: Thursday, 15 December

Press conference with co-rapporteurs Jan Olbrycht (EPP, PL) and Margarida Marques (S&D, PT) on Wednesday, 14 December at 11:00

Further information
Draft resolution on “upscale the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework: a resilient EU budget fit for new challenges”
Fact Sheets on the European Union - Multiannual financial framework
Press release on committee vote (17.11.2022)
Profile of co-rapporteur Jan Olbrycht (EPP, PL)
Profile of co-rapporteur Margarida Marques (S&D, PT)
Procedure file
Free photos, video and audio material
Seven countries to receive nearly €720 million in EU aid after natural disasters

On Wednesday, MEPs are set to approve nearly €720 million in EU Solidarity Fund aid following natural disasters in seven EU countries in 2021.

The €718.5 million in aid from the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) will be distributed as follows:

In relation to the catastrophic floods in July 2021:
- €612.6 million for Germany
- €87.7 million for Belgium
- €4.7 million for the Netherlands
- €797,520 for Austria
- €1.8 million for Luxembourg
- In relation to the volcano eruption in La Palma, Spain: €9.5 million
- In relation to the earthquake in Crete, Greece: €1.4 million.

More information can be found in the recent press release, the Commission proposal and in the draft report from the Committee on Budgets, by rapporteur Henrike Hahn (Greens/EFA, DE).

Procedure Code: 2022/0337(BUD)

Vote: Wednesday, 14 December

Procedure: Budgetary procedure

Further information
Draft report on the mobilisation of the EUSF to provide assistance to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain and Greece further to natural disasters that took place in these countries in the course of 2021
Press release on committee vote (17.11.2022)
Profile of rapporteur Henrike Hahn (Greens/EFA, DE)
Procedure file
Free photos, video and audio material
MEPs to quiz Commission about how to defend EU democracies from interference

On Wednesday, Parliament will question the Commission about its plans to close loopholes that inhibit the protection of democracies, before the 2024 European elections.

MEPs insist on protection of critical infrastructure, media and online networks and information and energy security from foreign interference. They also want to hear how civil society can be enabled to expose and resist foreign manipulation. MEPs are expected to ask if the Commission intends to tackle the issue of former European officials working for hostile foreign entities and ‘autocracy’s Trojan horses’ inside the EU institutions.

These concrete recommendations were part of the final report by the Parliament’s Special Committee on Foreign Interference. The task of following up on these recommendations falls to the committee’s successor. In October, the Commission announced it would present a ‘Defence of Democracy’ package to combat foreign interference.

Debate: Wednesday, 14 December

Procedure: oral question to the Commission

Further information

Press release: EU must prepare better to fight off foreign interference and disinformation (09.03.2022)
Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation (INGE 2)
COP27: MEPs to debate outcome of climate change talks in Egypt

On Monday, Parliament will assess the results of the UN Climate Change Conference COP27, which took place in Sharm el Sheik from 6-19 November.

MEPs will evaluate the outcome of the meeting in Egypt in particular looking at progress towards the Paris agreement objective of limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and aiming for 1.5 degrees.

An official delegation from the European Parliament was in Egypt on 14-18 November. You can read the reactions of delegation chair Bas Eickhout (Greens/EFA, NL) and Vice-Chair Peter Liese (EPP, DE) to the COP27 outcome here.

Background

Parliament is a co-legislator on the EU energy and climate legislation that seeks to implement the Paris Agreement and it must give its consent before the EU can enter international agreements.

MEPs have been pushing for more ambitious EU climate legislation and declared a climate emergency on 28 November 2019. In June 2021, Parliament adopted the European Climate Law, which transforms the European Green Deal’s political commitment to EU climate neutrality by 2050 into a binding obligation for the EU and member states. It also increases the EU’s target for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 from 40% to at least 55%, compared to 1990 levels. MEPs are currently negotiating with member states on the “Fit for 55 in 2030 package” in order to enable the EU to reach the more ambitious 2030-target.

Debate: Monday 12 December 2022

Procedure: Commission statement without resolution

Further information

EP press release: “COP27: MEPs react to outcome of climate change talks in Egypt” (20.11.2022)
Video: Press conference with Bas Eickhout and Frans Timmermans (17.11.2022)
EP press release: “MEPs to G20: increase climate change targets before COP27” (20.10.2022)
Parliament delegation to COP27
EP study on COP27
EP research: “Understanding Loss and Damage: Addressing the unavoidable impacts of climate change” (13.07.2022)
Multimedia package on COP27
Resolutions on human rights and democracy

Parliament will hold urgent debates on the following human rights, democracy and rule of law topics on Wednesday afternoon, followed by votes on Thursday.

- Chinese government crackdown on the peaceful protests across the People's Republic of China
- Military Junta crackdown on peaceful demonstrations in Chad
- The case of human rights defender Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja in Bahrain
- Chinese government crackdown on the peaceful protests across the People's Republic of China
- Military Junta crackdown on peaceful demonstrations in Chad
- The case of human rights defender Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja in Bahrain

Debates: Wednesday, 14 December
Votes: Thursday, 15 December
Procedure: urgent (non-legislative) resolutions

Further information
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Other topics on the agenda

- Addressing persistent challenges in the aviation sector, Monday, Commission statement without resolution

- ASEAN relations ahead of the EU-ASEAN summit in December 2022, Tuesday, Commission statement with resolution (to be voted at a future session)

- Isabel Carvalhais - A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas

- Annalisa Tardino - Action plan to boost long-distance and cross-border passenger rail

- Loránt Vincze - Deliberations of the Committee on Petitions in 2021

- The 30th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Thursday, Commission statement without resolution

- Topical debate (Rule 162) - Tackle the cost of living crisis: increase pay, tax profits, stop speculation, Wednesday