Newsletter
13-16 March 2023
Strasbourg plenary session

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Fit for 55: Parliament set to adopt three laws to reach 2030 climate target
MEPs are expected to adopt new rules on land use, land use change and forestry, member states’ emission reductions and the revision of the Market Stability Reserve.

Parliament to outline its priorities for the Spring European Council
In a debate with Presidents Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday morning, MEPs will present their demands and expectations ahead of the EU summit on 23-24 March.

Parliament to mark International Women’s Day (8 March)
Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi and astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti will address MEPs in a ceremony on Wednesday.

MEPs set to back new rules for fair access to and use of industrial data
On Tuesday, MEPs will debate and vote on Parliament’s position on the “Data Act”, which aims to boost innovation by removing barriers obstructing access to industrial data.

Question time: ensuring energy security for the next winter
On Tuesday afternoon, MEPs will quiz Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson on the work to ensure EU energy security in 2023.

Israel: MEPs to discuss anti-government protests on judicial independence
In a debate on Tuesday, MEPs will take stock of the widespread public protests in Israel over the government’s attempts to limit the judiciary’s powers.

Georgia: Parliament to assess the political turmoil gripping the country
On Tuesday, MEPs and EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell will debate the aftermath of the protests that have rocked Georgia over a new “foreign influence” law.

Moldova: fear over Russian attempts to derail the country’s pro-EU trajectory
Following recent street protests and warnings of a coup d’état, MEPs will debate the challenges facing EU candidate country Moldova on Tuesday evening.

A common EU response to save lives at sea and enhance legal migration options
On Wednesday, MEPs will take stock of solidarity and responsibility sharing in Europe as regards migration and asylum policy.

Assessing the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement, three years after Brexit
MEPs will take stock of the implementation of the rules governing EU-UK relations since 2020, including the recent Windsor Framework deal.

MEPs to assess the situation in the South Caucasus
Parliament will take stock of the latest developments in Armenia and Azerbaijan, in two reports to be put to the vote on Wednesday.

EU anti-discrimination rules: Parliament to urge progress on stuck file
In the context of an increasing backlash against fundamental rights in Europe, MEPs are set to urge member states to unblock the anti-discrimination directive.

Economic coordination needed to tackle crises and defend citizens’ wellbeing
MEPs set to demand the EU minimise the impact of current crises on the real economy through household support and backup for companies experiencing high energy costs.

Minimum Income Schemes: more support, accessibility and inclusion
MEPs are set to advocate for a new law that raises the national minimum income in EU member states to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

“Save bees and farmers”: MEPs to examine European Citizens’ Initiative
On Thursday, MEPs will debate on a European citizens’ initiative on phasing out synthetic pesticides and creating bee-friendly agriculture.

“This is Europe” debate with Lithuanian President Gitanas Naусėда
On Tuesday at 10.30, the President of Lithuania Gitanas Naусėda will address MEPs and share his views on Europe’s current situation, challenges, and future direction.

The continuous repression of the people of Belarus
On Wednesday, Parliament will vote on a resolution expected to strongly condemn the latest crackdown on opposition voices and journalists in Belarus.

MEPs to complain over lack of member state cooperation with spyware inquiry
Unsatisfied by EU countries’ replies to their questions regarding the use of spyware, MEPs will urge the Commission to act to address this lack of cooperation.

EU employment support for redundant Belgian logistics workers
On Tuesday, MEPs are set to approve EU job seeker’s aid worth €1.9 million for 559 Belgian workers.

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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Draft agenda
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Press conferences and other events
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EP Newshub
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Draft measures to increase the rate of renovations and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions will be debated on Monday and put to a vote on Tuesday.

To make the building sector climate neutral by 2050, all new buildings should be zero-emission from 2028. Existing residential buildings would have to be classified as at least E on their energy performance by 2030, and D by 2033 - on a scale going from A to G, the latter corresponding to the 15% worst-performing buildings in the national stock of a member state. Non-residential and public buildings would have to achieve the same by 2027 and 2030 respectively.

Facilitate access to grants and funding

National renovation plans should include support schemes to facilitate access to grants and funding. Financial measures should provide an important premium for deep renovations, especially of the worst-performing buildings, and targeted grants and subsidies should be made available to vulnerable households.

Background

According to the European Commission, buildings in the EU are responsible for 40% of our energy consumption and 36% of greenhouse gas emissions. On 15 December 2021, the European Commission adopted a legislative proposal to revise the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), as part of the so-called ‘Fit for 55’ package. A new European Climate Law (July 2021) enshrined both the 2030 and the 2050 targets into binding European law.

Procedure Code: 2021/0426(COD)

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, first reading

Debate: Monday, 13 March

Vote: Tuesday 14 March

Press conference: Tuesday, 14:00
Further information
Draft report on the energy performance of buildings
Press release on committee vote (09.02.2023)
Profile of rapporteur Ciarán Cuffe (Greens/EFA, IE)
Procedure file
EP research briefing - Fit for 55 package: Energy performance of buildings (recast)
Free photos, video and audio material
Fit for 55: Parliament set to adopt three laws to reach 2030 climate target

MEPs are expected to adopt new rules on land use, land use change and forestry, member states’ emission reductions and the revision of the Market Stability Reserve.

Following a debate on Monday, Parliament will vote on Tuesday on the deals reached with EU countries in late 2022 on three pieces of legislation that are part of the “Fit for 55 in 2030 package”. This is the EU’s plan to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels in line with the European Climate Law.

**Land use, land use change and forestry**

The revised legislation on converting, using and managing land and forests (LULUCF) increase the EU’s carbon sinks target for those sectors to 310 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent, which would bring the EU GHG reductions in 2030 to 57% compared to 1990 levels.

**Road transport, heating of buildings and agriculture**

The EU 2030-target in the so-called effort sharing regulation (ESR), which sets binding annual GHG emission reductions for EU member states for road transport, heating of buildings and agriculture, will increase from 30% to 40% compared to 2005 levels. For the first time, all EU countries will have to reduce their GHG emissions by between 10% and 50%. The targets for each member state are based on their GDP per capita and cost-effectiveness.

**Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU ETS**

As part of the deal on a more ambitious Emissions Trading System (ETS), Parliament and member states’ negotiators agreed to place 24% of all ETS allowances in the market stability reserve to address possible future imbalances between the supply of and demand for allowances in the market due to external shocks such as those caused by COVID-19.

*Procedure codes: 2021/0200(COD); 2021/0201(COD); 2021/0202(COD)*

*Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure, first reading agreements*

*Debate: Monday 13 March 2023*

*Vote: Tuesday 14 March 2023*
Further information

EP press release: “Fit for 55: Deal on carbon sinks goal will increase EU 2030 climate target” (11.11.2022)

Fit for 55: Deal on stricter rules for member states’ greenhouse gas emissions
Procedure file: Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)
Procedure file: Binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States (Effort Sharing Regulation)
Procedure file: Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU ETS
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Parliament to outline its priorities for the Spring European Council

In a debate with Presidents Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday morning, MEPs will present their demands and expectations ahead of the EU summit on 23-24 March.

At their meeting in Brussels, heads of state or government will focus on the latest developments in Russia’s war against Ukraine and the EU’s continued support for Ukraine, on competitiveness, the Single Market, how to boost the EU economy, and on energy related issues.

In a resolution adopted on 16 February, MEPs reaffirmed their support for providing military assistance to Ukraine for as long as is necessary and called to seriously consider delivering Western fighter jets and helicopters, appropriate missile systems and substantial increases in munitions delivery to Kyiv.

In another resolution adopted on the same day, MEPs said the EU must lead in clean energy technologies, improve its industrial base, and produce high-quality jobs and economic growth to reach the Green Deal goals. They called on the Commission to work on plans to redeploy, relocate and re-shore industries in Europe.

*Debate: Wednesday, 15 March*

*Procedure: Council and Commission statements, no resolution*

**Further information**

Provide Ukraine with military aid for as long as necessary, MEPs say
Green Deal Industrial Plan: securing the EU’s clean tech leadership
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Parliament to mark International Women’s Day (8 March)

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi and astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti will address MEPs in a ceremony on Wednesday.

To mark International Women’s Day, Iranian Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi and Italian astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti will address plenary on Wednesday at 11:00, followed by a round of political group speakers.

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Shirin Ebadi in 2003 for her work for democracy and human rights, focused especially on the rights of women and children. Samantha Cristoforetti is a European Space Agency astronaut and the first woman Chief Commander of International Space Station Expedition 68.

Defending sexual and reproductive health and rights

On the same day in the afternoon, MEPs will discuss with the Council and Commission the challenges that human rights defenders face in standing up for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), with some of them being threatened, targeted and facing criminal charges.

*Formal address: Wednesday, 15 March at 11:00*

*Debate SRHR: Wednesday, 15 March*

Further information

- Statement of Chair of Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee Robert Biedroń for international women’s day (08.03.2023)
- Free photos, video and audio material on international women’s day
MEPs set to back new rules for fair access to and use of industrial data

On Tuesday, MEPs will debate and vote on Parliament's position on the “Data Act”, which aims to boost innovation by removing barriers obstructing access to industrial data.

The draft legislation would contribute to developing new services, in particular in the sector of artificial intelligence where huge amounts of data are needed for algorithm training. It could also result in customers paying less for after-sales services and repairs of connected devices.

The data act establishes common rules governing the sharing of data generated by the use of connected products or related services (e.g. the internet of things, industrial machines) to ensure fairness in data sharing contracts.

The measures would also allow users to gain access to the data they generate, as 80% of industrial data are never used, according to the European Commission. They also want to ensure contractual agreements are at the centre of business-to-business relations.

Background

The volume of data generated by humans and machines is increasing exponentially and becoming a critical factor for innovation by businesses (e.g. algorithm training) and by public authorities (e.g. shaping of smart cities). It is said to have become the new oil.

Procedure Code: 2022/0047(COD)

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure

Debate: Tuesday 14 March

Vote: Tuesday 14 March

Further information

Draft report on harmonised rules on fair access to and use of data
Press release on committee vote (09.02.2023)
Profile of rapporteur Pilar del Castillo Vera (EPP, ES)
Procedure file
EP research briefing: the data act
EP research: Is data the new oil? Competition issues in the digital economy
Free photos, video and audio material
Question time: ensuring energy security for the next winter

On Tuesday afternoon, MEPs will quiz Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson on the work to ensure EU energy security in 2023.

With the Russian war against Ukraine, the collapse of gas deliveries to Europe from Russia, and the deterioration of the energy market, the EU introduced in the course of 2022 a series of emergency measures: the urgent filling of strategic reserves, the REpowerEU plan, energy-saving measures, and a temporary mechanism to limit excessive gas prices. Further measures are expected to be tabled or adopted in the coming weeks, such as a reform the European electricity market, as well as to facilitate the deployment of renewable energy.

Debate: Tuesday, 14 March

Procedure: debate with the European Commission (Question time)

Further information
EP research: Energy crisis
Free photos, video and audio material
Israel: MEPs to discuss anti-government protests on judicial independence

In a debate on Tuesday, MEPs will take stock of the widespread public protests in Israel over the government’s attempts to limit the judiciary’s powers.

Israel has recently seen the biggest protest movement in the country’s history erupt on its streets, with hundreds of thousands of people in several cities marching against a planned legal overhaul of the judiciary pushed by the Netanyahu-led government. Features of the new laws, which critics say are aimed at eroding Israel’s liberal democracy - include giving the government control over nominating judges and would also ultimately remove crucial powers from the Supreme Court to reject legislation.

With protests growing, including from members of Israel’s cultural sphere, hi-tech sector, economists and people linked to the military and intelligence community, Israeli security forces have occasionally used stun grenades and water cannons to disperse demonstrators.

For Tuesday’s plenary debate to assess the latest developments, MEPs will also be joined by EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell.

Debate: Tuesday 14 March

Procedure: Statement by the EU Foreign Policy Chief, without resolution

Further information
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Georgia: Parliament to assess the political turmoil gripping the country

On Tuesday, MEPs and EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell will debate the aftermath of the protests that have rocked Georgia over a new “foreign influence” law.

Large street protests recently swept the Georgian capital of Tbilisi following attempts by the country’s government to introduce a new “foreign influence” law. The new law would have required non-governmental and media organisations that receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad to register themselves as "foreign agents", or face tough legal consequences. But after massive demonstrations and mounting international criticism, Georgia’s ruling party announced the withdrawal of the bill.

Echoing similar legislation imposed in neighbouring Russia, many critics in Georgia voiced concern that the contents of the new law had been dictated by Moscow and would distance Georgia from the European Union. Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili said she would have vetoed the law, although she can ultimately be overruled by the country’s parliament.

Georgia applied for EU membership in March 2022, following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but has so far not been granted EU candidate status due to lack of significant reforms. Before the draft law was withdrawn, EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell described it as “incompatible with EU values and standards”.

Debate: Tuesday 14 March

Procedure: Statement by the EU Foreign Policy Chief, without resolution

Further information
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
Moldova: fear over Russian attempts to derail the country’s pro-EU trajectory

Following recent street protests and warnings of a coup d’état, MEPs will debate the challenges facing EU candidate country Moldova on Tuesday evening.

Moldovan President Maia Sandu recently warned that Russia wants to stage a coup d’état in her country, including through sabotage and by spurring civil unrest, as a way to stop the country’s EU integration process.

As one of Europe’s poorest nations, Moldova has suffered particularly from political and economic upheaval due to Russia’s invasion of its neighbour Ukraine, including street protests in the capital Chișinău. It also has to cope with its separatist, pro-Russian breakaway state of Transnistria, where Russia has a military presence.

The country was granted EU candidate status, together with Ukraine, in June 2022.

Debate: Tuesday evening, 14 March

Procedure: Statement by the EU Foreign Policy Chief, resolution to be voted on at a later session

Further information

The European Parliament’s delegation for relations with Moldova
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
A common EU response to save lives at sea and enhance legal migration options

On Wednesday, MEPs will take stock of solidarity and responsibility sharing in Europe as regards migration and asylum policy.

The plenary debate with the Swedish Council Presidency and the Commission will likely focus on how to advance on the reform of the common EU migration and asylum rules, following the November 2022 action plan by the Commission for the Central Mediterranean route and the February extraordinary European Council.

In the wake of the tragic shipwreck off the coast of Italy, in which at least 70 people drowned, MEPs are expected to ask about actions to prevent irregular departures and loss of life. They will present their views on how to respond to the difficulties faced by the Mediterranean EU countries of first entry, including search and rescue operations, the role of NGOs, cooperation with countries of origin and transit and the fight against people smuggling.

Background

Search and rescue operations at sea and disembarkation activities are not covered by a common EU legal framework, except those carried out by joint operations led by Frontex. The EU border agency currently runs three operations in the Mediterranean: Themis (Italy and the central Mediterranean), Poseidon (Greece, sea borders with Turkey and the Greek islands in the eastern Mediterranean) and Indalo (western Mediterranean route between Spain and Morocco).

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the European Commission in September 2020 aims to improve asylum procedures and fair responsibility sharing among member states. It comprises the following legislative proposals: the Regulation for Asylum and Migration Management, the Regulation for Crisis and Force majeure, the Screening Regulation, and the Amended Asylum Procedures regulation. The Parliament plans to adopt its position on these ahead of negotiations with the Council in the coming weeks.

Debate: Wednesday, 15 March

Procedure: Council and Commission statement, no resolution

Further information

Migration and Asylum: Roadmap on way forward agreed between European Parliament and rotating Presidencies (Press release, 07.09.2022)
Latest Asylum Trends - EU Asylum Agency
Free photos, video and audio material
Assessing the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement, three years after Brexit

MEPs will take stock of the implementation of the rules governing EU-UK relations since 2020, including the recent Windsor Framework deal.

The “Agreement on the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community”, which entered into force on 1 February 2020, was designed to ensure an orderly process for the UK’s withdrawal and avoid the threat of a “no-deal” Brexit.

Since then, problems have arisen, including in relation to the successive “grace periods” provided by UK governments to avoid enforcing border controls in the Irish Sea, as foreseen in the Agreement and its Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland.

As the report was prepared in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs while negotiations on the Windsor Framework were still underway, the lead MEP steering it through Parliament intends to table amendments to ensure that the final text reflects the current state of affairs. The draft text also deals with the question of “pre-settled status” granted to some EU citizens residing in the UK, who will have to start submitting their applications in the second half of 2023 to obtain settled status, which may lead to an “automatic and illegal loss of their rights”.

Procedure Code: 2020/2202(INI)

Debate: Tuesday 14 March

Vote: Wednesday 15 March

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

Further information

Draft report
Rapporteur: Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D, PT)
EP Research Service briefing - “Update on the implementation of the citizens’ rights provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement” (15.02.2023)
Procedure file
Statement of the Co-Chairs of Parliament's UK Contact Group (27.02.2023)
Commission’s webpage on the Windsor Framework
Free photos, video and audio material
MEPs to assess the situation in the South Caucasus

Parliament will take stock of the latest developments in Armenia and Azerbaijan, in two reports to be put to the vote on Wednesday.

The two texts, prepared by the Foreign Affairs Committee, highlight Armenia and Azerbaijan’s deeply-rooted military conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and urge the leadership of both countries to overcome their differences and agree on concrete steps to ensure durable and sustainable peace.

The reports, which assess both countries separately, also address EU relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan, including democratic reforms, energy cooperation, human rights and disinformation. MEPs will debate them on Tuesday and vote on them on Wednesday.

Debate: Tuesday 14 March

Vote: Wednesday, 15 March

Procedure: Own-initiative reports

Further information

Press release: “Armenia: MEPs welcome reforms while pushing for peace with Azerbaijan” (09.02.2023)
Press release: “Azerbaijan: MEPs worried by military conflict and continuous abuses” (09.02.2023)
Profile of the European Parliament’s standing rapporteur on Armenia: Andrey Kovatchev (EPP, Bulgaria)
Profile of the European Parliament’s standing rapporteur on Azerbaijan: Željana Zovko (EPP, Croatia)
Procedure file (Armenia)
Procedure file (Azerbaijan)
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
EU anti-discrimination rules: Parliament to urge progress on stuck file

In the context of an increasing backlash against fundamental rights in Europe, MEPs are set to urge member states to unblock the anti-discrimination directive.

Parliament adopted its position on the draft text in April 2009, but it remains blocked in the Council. MEPs say the directive would contribute to ensuring protection for Europeans against discrimination, irrespective of a person’s sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

On Wednesday, they will quiz the Commission and the Swedish Presidency about the concrete actions and proposals they plan to overcome the political deadlock and adopt the directive by the end of 2023, including the possibility of scrapping the need for unanimity among member states.

Over the past fourteen years and last time on 10 November 2022, Parliament has insisted on the urgent need for the EU to adopt the directive.

Debate: Wednesday, 15 March

Procedure: Oral questions to the Council and the Commission

Further information
Oral question to the Commission
Oral question to the Council
Anti-discrimination directive – Legislative train
Economic coordination needed to tackle crises and defend citizens’ wellbeing

MEPs set to demand the EU minimise the impact of current crises on the real economy through household support and backup for companies experiencing high energy costs.

MEPs will debate and vote on their recommendations for the next cycle of social, economic and budgetary coordination between member states, known as the European semester. Ahead of an upcoming review of the EU’s economic governance rules, MEPs will respond to Commission proposals published in late-2022.

MEPs are expected to call for a strong investment in social-support systems via concrete measures like making the EU’s “European instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency” (SURE) permanent and developing green social protection schemes in member states.

The debate will take place on Tuesday and the votes on Wednesday.

Procedure Code: 2022/2006(INI)
Procedure: non-legislative resolutions
Debate: Tuesday, 14 March
Vote: Wednesday, 15 March

Further information
Procedure file (ECON)
Profile of ECON rapporteur Irene Tinagli (S&D, IT)
Procedure file (EMPL)
Profile of rapporteur for the Employment Committee Estrella Durà Ferrandis (S&D, ES)
European Semester 2023 cycle
Minimum Income Schemes: more support, accessibility and inclusion

MEPs are set to advocate for a new law that raises the national minimum income in EU member states to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Parliament will debate on Tuesday and vote on Wednesday on a resolution demanding EU countries gradually increase their minimum income schemes to be at least above the national threshold for those at risk of poverty (AROPE). The draft text also calls for these schemes to be made available to the more disadvantaged social groups, and to provide incentives for re-integrating workers into the labour market.

MEPs are also expected to enquire about the Commission’s plans to monitor if the minimum income has been effectively integrated in EU countries and to involve social partners at EU level. MEPs are likely to ask how member states will ensure that minimum income schemes do not substitute social policy measures in other areas such as housing, healthcare, disability support or labour market integration.

Procedure: Oral questions to Council and Commission, with resolution

Procedure Code: 2022/2840(RSP)

Debate: Tuesday, 14 March

Vote: Wednesday, 15 March

Further information
Press release on vote in parliamentary committee (24.01.2023)
Oral questions to the Commission
Oral questions to the Council
European Commission proposal on Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (28 September)
“Save bees and farmers”: MEPs to examine European Citizens’ Initiative

On Thursday, MEPs will debate on a European citizens’ initiative on phasing out synthetic pesticides and creating bee-friendly agriculture.

The debate comes after Parliament on 23 January 2023 organised a public hearing on the successful European Citizens’ Initiative “Save bees and farmers! Towards a bee-friendly agriculture for a healthy environment” that gathered over one million verified signatures. The citizens’ initiative calls for synthetic pesticides to be phased out by 2035, restoring biodiversity and support to farmers in this transition.

Background

On 19 October 2021, Parliament adopted their position on the Farm to Fork Strategy to reform the EU's food systems. MEPs highlighted the importance of producing sustainable and healthy food and achieving the goals of the European Green Deal, including on climate, biodiversity, zero pollution and public health. They also underlined the need to ensure food security and a fair income for farmers.

Procedure codes: 2023/2550(RSP)

Procedure: Resolutions on topical subjects

Debate: Thursday 16 March 2023

Further information

Procedure file
European Citizens’ Initiative
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
“This is Europe” debate with Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda

On Tuesday at 10.30, the President of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda will address MEPs and share his views on Europe’s current situation, challenges, and future direction.

The President’s speech will be followed by reactions from political group leaders and other MEPs. Before the debate, EP President Roberta Metsola and President Gitanas Nausėda will hold a joint press point, at around 10.20.

This will be the eighth “This is Europe” debate at the European Parliament, when EU leaders discuss with MEPs their visions for the future of the EU. Previous debates in 2022 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), Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin (in September) and Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob (in December).

Gitanas Nausėda became the President of Lithuania in July 2019. Before that, he worked at the Bank of Lithuania and later as a chief economist in a private bank.

Procedure: Key debate

Debate: Tuesday, 14 March

Press point: Tuesday, 14 March at 10.20

Further information

Biography of Gitanas Nausėda
Free multimedia material on “This is Europe” debates
The continuous repression of the people of Belarus

On Wednesday, Parliament will vote on a resolution expected to strongly condemn the latest crackdown on opposition voices and journalists in Belarus.

On 3 March, a court in Minsk found 2020 Sakharov Prize and 2022 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski, founder of the Viasna human rights centre, guilty of ‘smuggling’ and ‘grossly violating public order,’ sentenced him to ten years in a penal colony and charged him with a heavy fine. Several of his colleagues were also handed long-term prison sentences at the same time, a decision which leading MEPs have strongly condemned and described as a further travesty of justice by the brutal and authoritarian regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

The resolution is also expected to address the case of Belarusian journalist Andrzej Poczobut, who was recently sentenced to eight years in prison for, amongst other things, encouraging actions with the aim of harming the national security of Belarus.

MEPs already debated the alarming situation in the country during the plenary session on Thursday 16 February. You can watch the debate again here.

Debate: Thursday 16 February
Vote: Wednesday, 15 March
Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

Further information
The European Parliament’s delegation for relations with Belarus
EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material
MEPs to complain over lack of member state cooperation with spyware inquiry

Unsatisfied by EU countries’ replies to their questions regarding the use of spyware, MEPs will urge the Commission to act to address this lack of cooperation.

The Parliament’s Committee of Inquiry to investigate the use of Pegasus and equivalent surveillance spyware sent a questionnaire in July last year to all member states on their use of spyware and the relevant legal regime, to which the Council decided to reply jointly, assuring the parliament that member states would fulfil their obligations to cooperate fully. The committee received answers from individual countries, but there was no response at all from several of them.

In an oral question to the Commission to be debated on Thursday, MEPs complain that the Council did not answer the questions, and note that this is a breach of the principle that EU institutions should engage in “mutual sincere cooperation”. They will ask the Commission about the steps it has taken or plans to take to address the breach, and how the Commission itself fulfils its duty of sincere cooperation with the Parliament’s Inquiry Committee.

Debate: Thursday, 16 March

Further information
The question for oral answer will be added here
Webpage of the PEGA Committee
EU employment support for redundant Belgian logistics workers

On Tuesday, MEPs are set to approve EU job seeker’s aid worth €1.9 million for 559 Belgian workers.

559 employees of TNT Belgium at Liège Airport who lost their jobs following the company’s transfer of operations to Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport should receive €1.9 million in EU aid from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF), once Parliament has approved a draft report prepared by the Committee on Budgets.

The funding is intended to help the dismissed workers find new jobs through tailored guidance, help developing new skills, and help with starting their own business.

More information in the recent press release.

Background

Under the EGF regulation 2021-2027, the Fund supports displaced workers and self-employed people who have lost their activity. Member States can apply for EU funding when at least 200 workers lose their jobs within a specific reference period.

Overall, since 2007, the EGF has made available €688 million in 175 cases, offering help to more than 167 000 people in 20 member states. EGF-supported measures add to national active labour market measures.

Further information
Steps of the procedure
Commission press release and link to proposal
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.

- Iran: in particular the poisoning of hundreds of school girls
- Tunisia: Recent attacks against freedom of expression and association and trade unions, in particular the case of journalist Noureddine Boutar
- Cambodia: the case of opposition leader Kem Sokha

Debates: Wednesday, 15 March

Votes: Thursday, 16 March

Procedure: urgent (non-legislative) resolutions

Further information

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

- Policy Coherence for Development, Ochojksa, debate Mon, vote Tue
- Strengthening the TransAtlantic ties in an ever challenging multilateral world – Question Time with HR, Tue
- Activities of the European Ombudsman - annual report 2021 (in the presence of Emily O'Reilly, European Ombudsman), Mon, vote Tue
- Advancing the 2022 Bridgetown agenda, debate Thu
- Long term commitment to animal welfare, Commission statement, debate Thu
- More Europe, more jobs: we are building the competitive economy of tomorrow for the benefit of all, topical debate, Wed
- Cross border adoptions from third countries, Commission statement, Wed