

# Press release – Opening – European Parliament President highlights ‘Girls in ICT’ Day

President Tajani highlighted the international “Girls in ICT” Day, to be held on Thursday. This aims to encourage young women to study and take up careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

In Europe, only 29 women per thousand graduate in these fields, compared with 95 men, he noted.

This gender gap grows as you go up the hierarchical scale, added Mr Tajani, urging EU countries and companies to do their bit to close this gap, in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

## **Agenda changes**

### ***Wednesday 26 April***

- The order of the second and third items will be reversed, so that the Commission Statement on the “Decision adopted on the European Pillar of Social Rights and work-life balance initiative” will be taken as the second point, after the Commission statement on “Situation in Hungary”.
- The debate on the Commission statement on “Situation in Hungary” will be wound up by a resolution, to be voted in the May I part-session

### ***Thursday 27 April***

- The immunity report (A8-0163/2017) by MEP Gilles Lebreton on MEP António Marinho e Pinto is added to the votes (Rule 9.8).
- A motion objecting to the Commission Delegated Regulation amending Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 978/2012, applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences, is added to the votes.

## **Immunity waivers**

The President announced that the European Parliament had received requests from the Financial Department of the High Court of Paris to lift the immunity of Marine Le Pen and Marie-Christine Boutonnet and pursuant to [rule 9\(1\)](#), he had referred the requests to the Legal Affairs Committee.

## Requests by committees to start negotiations with Council and Commission

Decisions by several committees to enter into inter-institutional negotiations (Rule 69c) are [published on the plenary website](#). If no request for a vote in Parliament on the decision to enter into negotiations is made within 24 hours, the committees may start negotiations.

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## Safety-Security-of-Europe-Estonian-Prime-Minister-in-eu-LISA

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia Jüri Ratas met today with the Executive Director of eu-LISA Krum Garkov in the headquarters of the Agency in Tallinn, Estonia. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the role that large-scale IT systems play in contributing to safety and security in Europe and preparations for the upcoming Estonian EU Presidency.

Krum Garkov welcomed Prime Minister Ratas and thanked him on behalf of the Agency for the interest and support shown with the high-level visit. The Executive Director and Prime Minister exchanged views on transformations in the area of EU freedom, security and justice, which relies increasingly on modern technologies and information sharing. Mr Garkov elaborated on eu-LISA's 2017 priorities related to the evolution of the existing IT systems and integration of new ones in line with their respective legal basis. The revision of the Agency's mandate and the legal proposals that are currently being negotiated at EU institutional level were also discussed. In addition the Prime Minister and the Executive Director talked about the ongoing preparations for the EU Presidency that Estonia will take over from Malta for the second half of this year.

During a brief tour of the current headquarters, located in the EU House in Tallinn, the Prime Minister and the Executive Director spoke about the progress of the new headquarters building that will, in the not too distant future, house eu-LISA in Tallinn.

Prime Minister Ratas also spoke with staff, addressing the Strasbourg and Brussels office too via video conferencing.

### **Links:**

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## **European Commission and European External Action Service issue 2016 Annual Report on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

The European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have today adopted their 19<sup>th</sup> annual report to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on political and economic developments in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) in 2016. The European Union adheres to its 'one China' policy and supports the 'one country, two systems' principle and its implementation.

2016 was a politically challenging year for the Hong Kong SAR and for the functioning of the 'one country, two systems' principle. The year was marked by the emergence of political groups advocating self-determination or even independence, the Mong Kok riot, Legislative Council elections and the disqualification of two pro-independence lawmakers, the decision by the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) to issue an interpretation of the Basic Law provisions on oath taking, voting for the Election Committee, and preparations for the Chief Executive elections.

The case of the five book publishers who went missing in 2015, which the EU regards as the most serious challenge to the Basic Law and the 'one country, two systems' principle since the 1997 handover, continued to unfold, and the circumstances of their disappearance have yet to be clarified.

Despite the above-mentioned issues, the report concludes that overall the 'one country, two systems' principle continued to work well in 2016. The judiciary continued to demonstrate its independence and adherence to due process, despite being confronted with several politically-sensitive judicial reviews and the NPCSC's interpretation of the Basic Law. The rule of law remained the guiding principle for the government, economic stakeholders and the population at large. Anti-corruption action remained strong and good governance indicators were positive. Freedom of speech and freedom of information were generally upheld. However, negative trends were observed with regard to press freedom and in the publishing industry as a result of caution and self-censorship on the part of those reporting on domestic and foreign policy developments in the People's Republic of China.

Trade, economic and cultural relations between the European Union and Hong Kong have been growing steadily. As in previous years, the European Union was Hong Kong's second largest trading partner after mainland China, while Hong

Kong was the EU's 14th largest trading partner in goods and a key partner for trade in services. The EU is looking forward to further strengthening and expanding its relations with the Hong Kong SAR.

The EU hopes that the Hong Kong SAR and China's central government will resume electoral reform in Hong Kong in line with the Basic Law and reach an agreement on an election system that is democratic, fair, open and transparent. Universal suffrage would give the government greater public support and legitimacy in pursuing Hong Kong's economic objectives and tackling social challenges such as the socio-economic and generational divides in Hong Kong society.

The full report is available here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN:2017:16:FIN>

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## **European Commission and the European External Action Service issue 2016 Annual Report on the Macao Special Administrative**

The European Commission and the European External Action Service have adopted their latest annual report to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on political and economic developments in the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), covering 2016.

Since the handover of Macao to China in 1999, the European Union and its Member States have been closely following political and economic developments under the 'one country, two systems' principle. The European Union adheres to its 'one China' policy and supports the 'one country, two systems' principle and its implementation in Macao.

The European Union believes that, notwithstanding some challenges, the 'one country, two systems' principle has generally continued to work well in 2016, to the benefit of Macao and China as a whole, and of the international community. EU-Macao relations continued to flourish, with a growing portfolio of cooperation activities and solid trade relations. The EU is looking forward to further strengthening and expanding its relations with the Macao SAR. The European Union reiterates its commitment to democracy, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and rights in Macao.

The full report is available here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN:2017:15:FIN>