

Article – Plenary highlights: Commission changes, EU budget and climate law



On Wednesday, [Parliament approved the appointment](#) of Mairead McGuinness as commissioner for financial services, financial stability and the Capital Markets Union as well as Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis' change of portfolio to include responsibility for trade.

MEPs called on Wednesday for [reinforcement of the rule of law](#) across Europe through a new mechanism linking receipt of EU funds by a member state to respect for the rule of law. In a separate vote, they called for EU values to be fully and unconditionally respected in [Bulgaria](#).

All EU countries must become climate neutral by 2050, MEPs said in a vote on the [EU climate law](#). Parliament also called for a 2030 emissions reduction target of 60% (compared to 1990 levels) and an interim target for 2040 to ensure the Union is on track to reach its mid-century goal of climate neutrality. In a separate vote, MEPs called for the EU to promote [forest management](#) models that ensure forests are environmentally and economically sustainable.

Members also discussed [Brexit and the economic recovery](#) in a debate with Council President Charles Michel on last week's EU summit and the upcoming one on 15-16 October.

On Thursday, MEPs called for EU countries to take stronger action to counter the impact of the [Covid-19 crisis on young people](#) by ensuring that those who

register for the Youth Guarantee schemes are offered “good-quality, varied and tailored jobs, training or internships”.

Regarding Brexit, MEPs endorsed two proposals on Thursday concerning the [Channel Tunnel](#) with the goal of maintaining the same set of rules governing the whole railway tunnel once the UK has the status of a third country.

This week’s plenary also approved a deal struck with the Council on common rules to boost EU [crowdfunding platforms](#) and protect investors. The new single set of rules aims to help crowdfunding services function smoothly across the internal market and to foster cross-border business funding.

On Thursday, with public health in mind, MEPs objected Commission proposals on [food products](#) containing titanium dioxide and acrylamide.

[Click here to see what MEPs have to say about the issues on Parliament’s agenda this week.](#)

UPDATE – Media advisory – Video conference of ministers of justice, 9 October 2020



Indicative programme

New timing: 8.30 – Doorstep by minister Christine Lambrecht in [live streaming](#)

At the end of the meeting (+/- 13.30) – press conference in [live streaming](#).

Arrangements for the press conference

Please note that there will be **no physical press conference**. **EU accredited journalists will be able to ask questions remotely** provided they have registered in advance.

You can **register** and have the possibility to ask questions remotely through [this link](#). Journalists who already registered for previous justice videoconferences do not need to register again.

Deadline for registration: Friday, 9 October 2020, 12:00.

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Photos and videos from the event](#)

[Press release – Bulgaria: MEPs calls for EU values to be fully and unconditionally respected](#)



In a [resolution](#) adopted with 358 votes in favour, 277 against and 56 abstentions, MEPs express their “unequivocal support for the people of Bulgaria in their legitimate demands and aspirations for justice, transparency, accountability and democracy”. They condemn the police violence and “disproportionate intervention”, in particular any use of force against women and children and journalists, as well as the “unlawful and excessive audits” into private businesses that support the protests.

European values under threat

The text notes a “significant deterioration of respect for the principles of rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights, including the independence of the judiciary, separation of powers, the fight against corruption and freedom of the media”. It focuses also on persisting systemic issues in the judiciary, especially the lack of a framework to hold the Supreme Judicial Council and the Prosecutor General accountable.

Other concerns include:

- constitutional reform, which should be in line with international standards

- possible changes to electoral law, close to the next parliamentary elections
- legislation adopted too hastily
- investigations into high-level corruption without tangible results
- the state of fundamental rights, e.g. as regards hate speech, gender and sexual discrimination, the rights of Romani people and asylum seekers.

Media freedom and EU funds

MEPs condemn smear campaigns and violence against journalists. They are deeply concerned by the deterioration in media freedom, transparency and the lack of diversity in media ownership, and worried that EU funds are allegedly more likely to be given to government-friendly outlets. They highlight the need for stricter controls on EU spending and want concerns over taxpayers' money being used to enrich those close to the ruling party to be addressed immediately.

Quote and debate

“The rule of law means separation of powers, but allegations of judicial corruption and politically-driven prosecutions proliferate. It means media freedom, but we witness the government exerting increasing influence on public media and applying clientelism when it comes to private media. It means upholding civil rights, but we are witnessing police brutality and the suppression of the rights of minorities”, said rapporteur [Juan Fernando López Aguilar](#) (S&D, ES).

Catch up with the recorded debate (Monday, 5 October) [here](#) – around the 19.39 mark.

Background

Protestors in Bulgaria have called for Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and chief prosecutor Ivan Geshev to resign, as citizens grow increasingly more frustrated over systemic political corruption.

[Call for Evidence on the review of transparency requirements for equity and non-equity instruments](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority has published a Call for Evidence (CfE) in the context of the review of transparency requirements for

equity and non-equity instruments. The purpose of this exercise is to gather input and views on practical issues related to the application of RTS 1 and RTS 2 that market participants have identified since the application of MiFID II/ MiFIR. ESMA would also like to receive feedback on any technical issue and policy gap that market participants have encountered at implementation level, as well as unclear provisions.

Respondents are invited to provide their suggestions and, where possible, related solutions by filling in the [ESMA template](#).

ESMA will consider all responses received by 31 October 2020.

[Press release – Human rights breaches in Eritrea, Nicaragua and Saudi Arabia](#)



Eritrea, notably the case of Dawit Isaak

Parliament demands that all prisoners of conscience in Eritrea, notably Swedish citizen Dawit Isaak and several other journalists detained since September 2001, are immediately and unconditionally released. It calls on the Eritrean authorities to provide information immediately regarding Mr Isaak's whereabouts and well-being, and to grant him access to representatives of the EU, its member states and Sweden, in order to establish his healthcare needs

and any other support he might need.

Members also condemn, in the strongest terms, Eritrea's systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations and urge the country's government to put an end to detentions of the opposition, journalists, religious leaders and innocent civilians.

They further appeal to the African Union, as an EU partner that has explicitly committed to uphold the universal values of democracy and human rights, to step up its activity in relation to the regrettable situation in Eritrea.

The full text, adopted by 663 votes in favour, 19 against and 13 abstentions, will be available [here](#). (08.10.2020)

The 'Foreign Agents' law in Nicaragua

MEPs condemn the attempts to adopt the unconstitutional law on the regulation of foreign agents, the special law on cybercrime and the law on hate crimes, and call on the national assembly of Nicaragua to reject them.

The text highlights that, if approved, these laws will provide Daniel Ortega's government with a new repressive tool to silence not only its critics, but any individual or organisation that receives foreign funding. This will, in turn, lead to more people falling victim to the current state-run repressive campaign and will intensify the broader climate of intimidation and threats, "leading to unacceptable human rights breaches in Nicaragua", says the resolution.

Parliament requests, in view of continued grave abuses and violations of human rights, that the Council quickly add new individuals and entities to its sanctions list, including President Daniel Ortega and Vice-President Rosario Murillo, whilst ensuring that this does not have a negative impact on the Nicaraguan people. It also calls for a European Parliament delegation to be sent to Nicaragua as soon as possible in order to resume monitoring the situation in the country, and urges the authorities to allow it unhindered entry and access to all interlocutors and facilities.

The full text, adopted by 609 votes in favour, 21 against and 64 abstentions, will be available [here](#). (08.10.2020)

The situation of Ethiopian migrants in detention centres in Saudi Arabia

Parliament strongly condemns the ongoing ill-treatment of Ethiopian migrants and the violations of their human rights in Saudi Arabia, notably in detention centres. Since April this year, according to Human Rights Watch reports, around 30 000 Ethiopians, including pregnant women and children, are being arbitrarily detained in the country under horrific conditions after having been forcibly expelled from northern Yemen by Houthi authorities.

MEPs urge the Saudi authorities to immediately release all these detainees, prioritising those in the most vulnerable situations, including women and children. The Saudi side must also ensure that every person entering the

country from neighbouring war-torn Yemen is allowed to do so safely and is transferred to an appropriate reception centre that meets international standards.

The text finally urges Saudi Arabia to immediately end torture and other ill-treatment in detention, and to provide appropriate mental and physical care to all.

For all the details, the full resolution will be available [here](#) (08.10.2020). It was adopted by 413 votes in favour, 49 against and 233 abstentions.