



European Parliament Plenary and Committee Meetings Brussels Coming Week Highlights

President's diary. On Tuesday EP President Roberta Metsola will meet UN Deputy Secretary-General and Chair of UN Sustainable Development Group Amina J. Mohammed, have an audience with his Majesty King Philippe of the Belgians, followed by a New Year's Reception, and a meeting with Italy's Minister for European Affairs of Italy Raffaele Fitto. On Wednesday, she will address the plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee. President Metsola will have a bilateral meeting with Israel's President Isaac Herzog on Thursday, and in the afternoon will travel to Madrid, where she will meet Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón and deliver a keynote address and receive the award "Woman of the Year" at the Women in a Legal World conference. On Friday, still in Madrid, the President will have an audience with His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain, and meet Senate President Ander Gil, Madrid's Mayor José Luis Martínez-Almeida and the President of Spain's Congreso de los Diputados, Meritxell Batet Lamaña.

Plenary

Isaac Herzog/Holocaust Remembrance Day. Israel's President Isaac Herzog will address MEPs during the plenary session in Brussels to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January). EP President Roberta Metsola will open the solemn sitting and after the ceremony, Presidents Metsola and Herzog will inaugurate the Holocaust Memorial in front of Parliament's plenary chamber (Thursday at 10:30).


Committees

Priorities of the Swedish Presidency. Sweden's ministers will present their priorities in a series of meetings with parliamentary committees. Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council until end of June 2023 (Monday to Thursday).

Media Freedom Act. MEPs in the Culture and Education Committee will discuss with the EU Commission on the European Media Freedom Act, a draft bill aiming at protecting media pluralism and independence in the EU (Monday).

Save bees and farmers. Following a successful European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) on 'Save bees and farmers! Towards a Bee-friendly agriculture for a healthy environment', the Environment and Agriculture committees are hosting a public hearing with the initiators of the ECI on their proposals to phase out synthetic pesticides by 2035, restore biodiversity, and support farmers in this transition (Tuesday).

Transparency of political advertising. MEPs in the Internal Market Committee will vote on a draft law to modernise and strengthen rules on the provision of paid political advertising services. The proposal would oblige political advertisements, online and offline, to be clearly identifiable and for information to be available about the sponsor, the cost of the ad, how it is targeted, and the elections to which it is linked. Additional rules for periods preceding elections and referendums are also included (Tuesday).



EU plan for semiconductors. The Energy and Industry Committee will adopt its amendments to the proposed "EU Chips Act", designed to strengthen the EU semiconductor industry. The Act includes provisions to support innovation, attract investment, and build a stronger domestic semiconductor industry following post-COVID shortages and supply bottlenecks (Tuesday).

Allegations of corruption and foreign interference. The Special Committee on Foreign Interference (INGE2), together with the Foreign Affairs Committee and Security and Defence Subcommittee and in association with the Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula and the Delegation for relations with Maghreb countries, will discuss the recent cases of foreign interference in the European Parliament (Thursday).

Link to Weekly Agenda [here](#)

European Commission Coming Week Highlights

Wednesday College Meeting

Link to Commission's weekly calendar [here](#)

European Council and Council of the European Union Coming Week Highlights

23 January [Foreign Affairs Council](#) **Agenda.** The Council will exchange views on the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the Sahel and coastal countries of West Africa. It will also be informed about current affairs, with a focus on Iran, Armenia, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Montenegro and Ethiopia.

26 - 27 January [Informal meeting of justice and home affairs ministers](#) Information about the agenda and the outcome of this meeting is available on the presidency website.



Highlights 23 to 29 January 2023

European Parliament.

Highlights Week 23 to 29 January

President Metsola on more integrity, independence and accountability

President Metsola updated MEPs on measures being taken to increase Parliament's integrity, independence and accountability, at the opening of the session.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Swedish Prime Minister outlines priorities to make EU greener, safer and freer

On Tuesday morning, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson discussed the priorities of the Swedish Council Presidency with MEPs in Strasbourg.

During his address, Mr Kristersson said that his country's first priority at the helm of the Council would be Europe's security by continuing to support war-torn Ukraine and highlighting the EU's geopolitical significance in an increasingly uncertain world. However, he also stressed that "when we build security, we must also look at other aspects that are close to our citizens", pointing out that the EU needs to cooperate more effectively against organised crime and work towards a common and coherent migration policy.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Waste shipments: MEPs push for tighter EU rules

On Tuesday, Parliament adopted its negotiating position for talks with EU governments on a new law to revise EU procedures and control measures for waste shipments.

The revised legislation should protect the environment and human health more effectively, while taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by waste to achieve the EU's goals of a circular and zero-pollution economy.

With the adopted text, MEPs support explicitly banning shipments of all wastes destined for disposal within the EU, except if authorised in limited and well-justified cases. EU exports of hazardous waste to non-OECD countries would also be prohibited.

Next steps

MEPs are now ready to start negotiations with EU Council.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Corruption allegations:

On Wednesday, one month after the allegations and charges against some MEPs, Parliament took stock of developments and demanded concrete action to close loopholes.

Link to EP report [here](#)

MEPs demand continued Ukraine support and measures to cope with rising prices

In a debate with Presidents Michel and von der Leyen, MEPs called for continued support for Ukraine and a common EU response to the US inflation reduction act.

Link to EP report [here](#)

30 years of the EU single market

Following a ceremony and debate at the start of the plenary session, Parliament adopted on Wednesday a resolution on the 30th anniversary of the EU single market with 537 votes in favour, 35 against and 66 abstentions. The text outlines the most pressing challenges facing the single market today and recommendations for the way forward.

Background

Since its creation in 1993, the single market has helped to make everyday life easier for people and businesses, fuelling jobs and growth across the EU. It ensures free movement of goods, services, capital and persons in a single EU internal market. The EU has the world's largest single market - it is home to 447 million consumers and 23 million companies. According to a European Parliament study, the benefits of removing the remaining barriers to a fully functioning single market could account to up to €713 billion by the end of 2029.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Protecting gamers and encouraging growth in the video games sector

On Wednesday, Parliament called for gamers to be better protected from addiction and other manipulative practices, while emphasising the potential of this innovative sector.

Specific measures to protect children

The report - adopted with 577 votes in favour, 56 against and 15 abstentions - asks for harmonised rules to give parents a good overview of and control over what games their children play as well as how much time and money they spend playing. MEPs demand clearer information on the content, in-game purchase policies and target age group of games, possibly along the lines of the [Pan European Game Information \(PEGI\) system](#) already used in 38 countries.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Marc Angel elected Vice-President of the European Parliament

On Wednesday, in a secret vote, Marc ANGEL (S&D, LU) received an absolute majority of votes cast and was elected to the office of European Parliament Vice-President, following two rounds of voting.


Background

Based on the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure, in the event of a [vacancy](#), a new Vice-President is elected to take the place of his or her predecessor in the order of precedence - so the MEP elected today is now Parliament's fifth VP. [Nominations](#) may be made by one-twentieth of Parliament's component Members or a political group. A candidate needs an absolute majority of votes cast by secret ballot to be elected.

Link to EP Report [here](#)

MEPs call for a firmer response to Russian threats to European security

The EU and its member states need to increase their military, political and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and strengthen their defence in countering Russian threats to European security, MEPs say in their annual



Common Foreign and Security Policy report adopted on Wednesday by 407 votes in favour, 92 against and 142 abstentions.

The EU's response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is being closely watched by autocracies around the world and will greatly influence how they behave on the international stage, MEPs warn.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Parliament calls for more sanctions against Iranian regime

The Iranian regime's blatant disregard for human dignity and the democratic aspirations of its own citizens as well as its support to Russia "necessitate further adjustments in the EU's position towards Iran", says a resolution adopted on Thursday.

MEPs urge the EU to expand its sanctions list to cover all individuals and entities responsible for human rights violations and their family members, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, President Ebrahim Raisi, Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri and all foundations ('bonyads') linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

They also call on the Council and the member states to add the IRGC and its subsidiary forces, including the paramilitary Basij militia and the Quds Force, to the EU terrorist list. Any country in which the IRGC deploys military, economic, or informational operations should sever and outlaw ties with this agency.

Link to EP report [here](#)

MEPs push for special tribunal to punish Russian crimes

In a resolution adopted on Thursday, MEPs demand the Russian political and military leadership be held accountable for the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

Parliament says the atrocities committed by Russian forces in Bucha, Irpin and many other Ukrainian towns reveal the brutality of the war and underscore the importance of coordinated international action to bring those accountable to justice under international law. MEPs urge the EU, in close cooperation with Ukraine and the international community, to push for the creation of a special international tribunal to prosecute Russia's political and military leadership and its allies.

Establishing a tribunal would, MEPs argue, fill a vacuum in international criminal justice and complement the investigative efforts of the International Criminal Court, as it currently cannot investigate the crime of aggression when it comes to Ukraine.

Link to EP report [here](#)

Human rights breaches in Brazil, Morocco and Nagorno-Karabakh

On Thursday, the European Parliament adopted three resolutions on the respect for human rights in Brazil, Morocco and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Link to EP Report [here](#)

European Commission. Highlights Week 23 to 29 January.

Joint Statement by Vice-President Šefčovič and UK Foreign Secretary Cleverly

following their video conference

European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, and Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris met via video conference today to discuss the work on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland since their last meeting on 9 January.

The two sides discussed the range of existing challenges over the last two years and the need to find solutions together to tackle comprehensively the real-life concerns of all communities in Northern Ireland and protect both Northern Ireland's place in the UK's internal market and the integrity of the EU's Single Market.

They agreed that this scoping work for potential solutions should continue in a constructive and collaborative spirit, taking careful account of each other's legitimate interests.

New European Bauhaus

The Commission is presenting the first **New European Bauhaus** (NEB) [Progress Report](#) taking stock of the achievements in the initiative's first two years as well as the first assessment tool for NEB project: the [NEB Compass](#). The New European Bauhaus has created a broad community of organisations and citizens all around Europe working around a common vision combining sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics. Key NEB activities – including the NEB Prizes, the first Festival, the NEB Lab – are delivering on their aims and have built a bottom-up transnational network. Thanks to over €100 million in European funding already allocated, small and large-scale NEB projects are now underway all-around Europe. The Commission will also scale up funding with a further €106 million in dedicated Horizon Europe funds alone for 2023-24.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

rescEU: Commission creates first ever chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear strategic reserve in Finland

The Commission is allocating €242 million to Finland for the development of the first rescEU chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) strategic reserve. The Commission has already set up rescEU reserves for different areas across other EU Member States, such as the rescEU forest fighting airfleet (Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Sweden in 2022) and the rescEU medical stockpile of protective equipment and devices (Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, and The Netherlands).

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

State Aid

France. The Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether certain [French support measures](#) in favour of Fret SNCF are in line with EU State aid rules.

The beneficiary of the measures is Fret SNCF SAS, a wholly owned subsidiary of the French railway operator SNCF SA ('SNCF'). Fret SNCF has been constantly loss-making, except in 2021. In the period from 2007 to 2019, its losses were continuously covered by its parent company SNCF through intra-group cash advances, which constitute State resources because of shareholding and control by the State.

Austria. The European Commission has approved a €100 million [Austrian measure](#) to reduce peak electricity consumption in Austria in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine. This is the first measure aimed at supporting electricity consumption reduction that the Commission has approved under the State aid Temporary Crisis Framework



European Council and Council of the European Union Highlights Week 23 to 29 January.

Eurogroup, 16 January

Euro area enlargement: The Eurogroup marked the particular occasion of Croatia's euro accession. The Croatian minister, the Commission and the ECB updated ministers on the state of play on the changeover to the euro.

Digital euro: stocktake on the advancement of the project: The Eurogroup took stock of the advancement of the digital euro project and discussed the way forward. Ministers adopted a Eurogroup statement which summarises the views expressed on the policy topics discussed so far and outlines the continuation of the Eurogroup involvement in this project.

Economic situation and IMF Article IV review of euro area policies – interim staff visit. The International Monetary Fund presented the outcome of its interim Article IV staff visit to the euro area. The IMF review is expected to be concluded by mid-2023. Ministers also heard from the institutions on their assessment of the latest macroeconomic developments and outlook.

Fiscal policy coordination in the euro area - energy support to households and firms - case studies.

Ministers continued their coordination exercise on fiscal policy focusing on the energy support measures, with a presentation of case studies. The French and Dutch ministers presented their national experience and provided a basis for the Eurogroup to discuss the challenges faced in designing and implementing measures to alleviate the impact of the surge in the price of energy on households and firms.

Euro area aspects of the economic governance review

Ministers discussed the euro area aspects of the economic governance review, such as the draft budgetary plans exercise, the euro area fiscal stance and macroeconomic stabilisation, as well as the post-programme surveillance process and the application of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure to euro area member states.

The euro area recommendations for 2023. Ministers discussed the draft recommendations on the economic policy of the euro area for 2023, ahead of their approval at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council.

Based on Commission proposals, the Council addresses annual recommendations on economic policy to the euro area as a whole within the European Semester. The recommendations are first discussed in the Eurogroup and formally adopted by the Council after endorsement by the European Council at its meeting in March.

Link to Council report [here](#)

Economic and Financial Affairs Council, 17 January

Presidency work programme

The Swedish Presidency presented its **work programme** for the first semester of the year in the field of economic and financial affairs.

Economic and financial impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine

Ministers exchanged views on the economic and financial impact of Russia's war against Ukraine. The Commission updated ministers on the economic and financial situation in Ukraine as well as on the **implementation of the EU's macro-financial assistance to Ukraine**. In December 2022, the Council and the European Parliament adopted legislation to lend Ukraine an **additional €18 billion in 2023**. The European Commission signed a memorandum of understanding with Ukraine yesterday and the first part of the assistance amounting to €3 billion was disbursed today.

Recovery and Resilience Facility

The Council adopted an amending implementing decision as regards the **recovery and resilience plan of Luxembourg**. This is an adjustment of technical nature. Its purpose is to take into account the updated reduced maximum financial contribution (€ 82.7 million instead of € 93.3 million).

European Semester 2023

The Council initiated the annual European Semester process for the monitoring of the member states' economic, employment and fiscal policies. It adopted conclusions on the 2023 **alert mechanism report**, as well as conclusions on the 2023 **annual sustainable growth survey**. It approved the 2023 **recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area**. The latter will be submitted to the European Council for endorsement at its meeting in March before it can be adopted by the Council at one of its upcoming Ecofin meetings.

Link to Council report [here](#)

European Court of Auditors Highlights Week 23 to 29 January

Review 01/2023: EU funding through the cohesion policy and the Recovery and Resilience Facility - Comparative analysis

The European Court of Auditors has published special report Review 01/2023: [EU funding through the cohesion policy and the Recovery and Resilience Facility - Comparative analysis](#)

Inter-parliamentary meetings and conferences during the Parliamentary Dimension of the Swedish Presidency (1st semester 2023)

Date	Meeting	Host	Location
26 January	Digital inauguration of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Swedish Presidency	SE Presidency Speaker Riksdag	Stockholm Remote
29-30 January	Conference of the Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) – Meeting of the Chairpersons	SE Presidency	Stockholm

Inter-parliamentary meetings and conferences during the Parliamentary Dimension of the Swedish Presidency (1st semester 2023)

6 February	Meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments	CZ Presidency	Remote
20 February	Inter-parliamentary Conference on the European Green Deal with a focus on a circular bio-economy	SE Presidency	Remote
27-28 February	European Parliamentary Week -IPC on SECG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference on the European Semester. The Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union (Conference under Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union) 	SE Presidency EP: BUDG; ECON; EMPL	EP Brussels
2-3 March	22nd Inter-parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (IPC for CFSP/CSDP)	SE Presidency	Stockholm
9 March	ICM FEMM on the occasion of International Women's Day	EP: FEMM	EP Brussels
26-27 March	The 12th Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol (JPSG on Europol) pursuant to Article 88 TFEU and the EUROPOL Regulation EU (2016)/749	SE Presidency	Stockholm
23-24 April	Inter-parliamentary Conference on Challenges and Opportunities for the EU's Future Energy Supply	SE Presidency	Stockholm
24-25 April	Conference of the Speakers of European Union Parliaments	CZ Presidency Senate	Prague
27 April	Inter-parliamentary Committee Meeting on the European Parliament's position for a new European electoral act and the role of national parliaments in this this procedure (exact title TBC)	AFCO	EP Brussels
14-16 May	The LXIX Conference of the Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union -- COSAC (LXIX COSAC)	SE Presidency	Stockholm
23 May	ICM DROI on the Coordination of EU Delegations and EU MS's Embassies on Human Rights in third countries	EP: DROI	EP Brussels

Inter-parliamentary meetings and conferences during the Parliamentary Dimension of the Swedish Presidency (1st semester 2023)

25 May	ICM on Reaching the transport objectives of Fit for 55 at national level - opportunities and challenges	TRAN	EP: Brussels
26 June	ICM on the Role of national parliaments in overseeing the spending of EU funds and the Next Generation EU plan	CONT	EP Brussels
27 June	ICM on the current EU foreign and security policy challenges	AFET	EP Brussels
28 June	ICM EMPL with National Parliaments to celebrate two years of the Child Guarantee	EMPL	EP Brussels
18-19 June	Inter-parliamentary Conference on Democracy in Europe	SE Presidency	Stockholm

Sources: Websites of: European Parliament European Commission, European Council and Council of the European Union Council, European Court of Auditors and European Ombudsman.