

Beat: Politics

European Parliament - Plenary Session

Things we learnt in plenary

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USPA NEWS - Things we learnt in plenary: Ukraine, terrorism, processed meat, child abduction - The tragedies in Ukraine and the Middle East were among the main subjects debated by MEPs during the February plenary in Strasbourg.

Ahead of Thursday's extraordinary European summit, the Parliament also discussed security measures such as the exchange of passenger name records between member states to better track terror suspects. It also asked that the origin or processed meat is clearly indicated to better inform consumers and launched an investigation of tax-related rulings.

The new round of talks between Russia and Ukraine based on the Franco/German peace plan is probably the last chance to bring peace to Ukraine by diplomatic means, MEPs underlined in a plenary debate on Tuesday.

On Wednesday MEPs condemned the horrors perpetrated by the so-called Islamic State and said more needed to be done to help people in Syria and Iraq.

The country of origin of all meat used in processed food, such as lasagne, must be clearly stated on the packaging to enable consumers to make informed choices when buying such products, the Parliament said on Wednesday.

The sensitive data contained in the passenger name records of all flights into and out of the EU can be shared between member states' security services, but this should be closely matched by stronger data protection rules, the Parliament said in a resolution voted Wednesday.

The Parliament voted on Wednesday in favour of continuing its investigation into the alleged "rendition" and illegal detention of terror suspects in EU countries by the CIA, following new revelations in the US on the use of torture by this agency. EU countries should also seek to uncover the truth and prosecute those involved, MEPs said.

In a debate on Tuesday MEPs asked that funds amounting to €1 billion earmarked for the Youth Employment Initiative are already made available this year to speed up the implementation of projects to help fight youth unemployment.

The revelations on member states' tax rulings will be examined by a special parliamentary committee set up for this purpose, following a vote in plenary on Thursday. The committee will be established for an initial period of six months and have 45 members.

Also on Wednesday evening, MEPs debated the very high prices demanded for certain medication that is not covered by a member state's publicly-funded health service, a serious problem in several EU countries for patients who simply cannot afford life-saving treatment.

MEPs approved the accession of Gabon, Andorra, the Seychelles, Russia, Albania, Singapore, Morocco and Armenia to the Hague Child Abduction Convention, which aims to facilitate international cooperation in returning children abducted by one of their parents.

Joining those of other member states, traffic offenders from the UK, Ireland and Denmark will within two years see their contraventions notified to their country irrespective of where they took place, after the Parliament approved the proposal on Wednesday.

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