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# THE HERALD

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EU Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs meet in Brussels to seek to reach a general approach on the Visa Code and Visa Touring regulations. Ministers are taking note of a progress report on the proposal for a European border and coast guard and are also discussing the latest developments concerning migration. The Justice Council is expected to adopt a general approach on the Counter Terrorism Directive.



## EU PARLIAMENT SLAMS 'SULTAN' ERDOGAN ON TURKEY DEAL

EURACTIV.COM

European Parliament lawmakers accused the EU Wednesday of giving Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan the "keys to the gates of Europe" through a migration crisis deal with Ankara.

At a summit on Monday European Union leaders agreed to work for an agreement with Turkey that would include a 'one-for-one' swap of Syrian refugees and a doubling of aid for Ankara to six billion euros.

But European Parliament Liberal group leader and former Belgian prime minister Guy Verhofstadt told MEPs in Strasbourg, France that the deal was "hugely problematic".

"It is a deal with Turkey in which we outsource our problems," Verhofstadt said.

"A deal in which we are giving in fact the entrance keys, the keys to the gates of Europe, in the hands of Turkey, of the successors of the Ottoman Empire, to Erdogan, I should even say maybe to Sultan Erdogan.

"He shall now decide on the entrance to the European Union."

Manfred Weber, the leader of the biggest group in the European Parliament, the centre-right European People's Party, said that the EU should not give a "blank cheque" to Turkey. He also condemned the "unacceptable" crackdown by Turkish authorities on the country's leading anti-Erdogan newspaper.



## MERKEL CRITICIZES CLOSING OF BALKAN ROUTE

DW.DE



After Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia closed their borders to migrants over the past day, Merkel said Wednesday the Balkan nations' measures to stop the flow of migrants would be unsustainable without a broader EU response to the refugee crisis. Closing borders "is not the solution to the entire problem," Merkel said. Rather there must be an agreement among the EU's 28 members, she said.

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## POLAND'S CONSTITUTIONAL TRIBUNAL RULES AGAINST SWATHE OF LEGAL CHANGES

THENEWS.PL



Poland's Constitutional Tribunal on Wednesday ruled that a series of controversial changes to the way it functions - introduced by the ruling Law and Justice party - are unconstitutional.

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## HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS TURN OUT TO PROTEST FRENCH LABOUR REFORM

FRANCE24.COM

Hundreds of thousands rallied across France on Wednesday as students and unions protested against far-reaching labour reforms, testing President François Hollande's nerve as he tries to lower an unemployment rate that has surpassed 10 percent. The interior ministry estimated that 224,000 people had turned out to protest across France. Paris police said between 27,000 and 29,000 protesters took to the streets of the French capital while unions cited by local media put the estimate at between 80,000 and 100,000.

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## MEPS DELAY VOTE ON €3 MILLION LIMOUSINE PLAN

POLITICO.EU

A vote on setting up a European Parliament limousine service was delayed Wednesday as MEPs questioned the need to spend an extra €3 million per year on cars and chauffeurs in fancy uniforms.

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## ECR GROUP KICKS OUT GERMAN FAR-RIGHT MEPS

POLITICO.EU

Two MEPs from the far-right Alternative for Germany, Beatrix Von Storch and Marcus Pretzell, have been asked to leave the European Conservatives and Reformists group in the European Parliament. "The ECR Bureau met this evening and has invited the AfD to leave the ECR Group before 31st March, otherwise a motion will be tabled to expel them at its next meeting on the 12th April," said a statement from the ECR.

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## MEPS BACK AGREEMENT AMONG EU INSTITUTIONS TO UPGRADE EU LAW

EUROPA.EU

A deal among the key EU institutions - Parliament, the Council and the Commission - to improve the planning, quality and transparency of their law-making was endorsed by MEPs on Wednesday. It provides for more democratic long-term planning, a new database of planned EU laws, and more information for the press and public on negotiations among EU institutions.

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## COMMISSION PROPOSES TO LIFT VISA OBLIGATIONS FOR CITIZENS OF GEORGIA

EUROPA.EU

The European Commission proposed to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to lift visa requirements for the citizens of Georgia by transferring Georgia to the list of countries whose citizens can travel without a visa to the Schengen area. The proposal comes after the Commission gave a positive assessment last December, confirming that Georgia successfully met all benchmarks under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan.

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10 MARCH, 2016

# THE AGENDA

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## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

• 8:30 the **plenary session continues in Strasbourg**. On the agenda: DEBATES: Zika virus outbreak - oral question, Banking Union - Annual report 2015 (report by **Roberto Gualtieri**, S&D). Debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Rule 135): Freedom of expression in Kazakhstan, Egypt, notably the case of **Giulio Regeni**, Democratic Republic of the Congo. 12:00 VOTES followed by explanations of votes: Motions for resolutions concerning debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Rule 135), Introduction of emergency autonomous trade measures for Tunisia (report by **Marielle de Sarnez**, ALDE), Veterinary medicinal products (report by **Françoise Grossetête**, EPP), Authorisation and supervision of veterinary medicinal products (report by **Claudiu Ciprian Tanasescu**, S&D), Motions for resolutions - Towards a thriving data-driven economy, Situation in Eritrea, Report on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2015 Report on Montenegro, Banking Union - Annual report 2015 (report by **Roberto Gualtieri**, S&D). 15:00 DEBATES: Price crisis in Europe's pig meat sector - oral question.

## COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

• 10:00 a two-day **Justice and Home Affairs Council** starts in Brussels. Today, home affairs ministers will discuss the current situation concerning migration and consider possible future actions. The Council will take note of the progress on the proposal for a European border and coast guard. This would consist of an European border agency (replacing Frontex) and national authorities responsible for border management. On Friday, justice ministers will discuss the proposal for a regulation establishing an European public prosecutor's office. The Council will also take note of progress on two related directives, which are part of the digital single market strategy for Europe.

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

• The European Commission has published the 2015 edition of the **General Report of the activities of the European Union**. The General Report covers the major events and initiatives of the year. This year, these include, amongst others, the EU's efforts to tackle the refugee crisis, the agreement on support for Greece, the EU's response following the Paris terrorist attacks and the launch of the Investment Plan for Europe, as well as other major initiatives such as the Digital Single Market, Energy Union and Capital Markets Union.

• Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, **Marianne Thyssen**, welcomed the official signature by the European Parliament and the Council of the **decision to establish a European Platform to tackle undeclared work**. The main aim of the Platform is to reinforce cooperation between Member States in the fight against undeclared work, by exchanging best practices which could lead to the development of common guidelines and principles to help inspection authorities to tackle undeclared work more effectively.

## WHO WHEN WHERE

• 10:00 the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures will present the **2016 ESFRI Roadmap on Large Scale Research Infrastructures during a one-day conference** (Trippenhuis building, Amsterdam).

• 13:30 the European Commission holds a **workshop on EU funding opportunities for the fashion, textiles, and cultural and creative industrie** (Auditorium DG GROW, Avenue d'Auderghem 45, Brussels).

• The ECR Group in the European Parliament has voted to admit Cypriot MEP **Eleni Theocharous** to the group.

## TODAY CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS



**Judith SARGENTINI**  
Greens/EFA  
(41)



**José Inácio FARIA**  
ALDE  
(54)



**Luděk NIEDERMAYER**  
EPP  
(50)