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# THE HERALD

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“Moment of truth to reaffirm EU values” urged the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi the plenary in Strasbourg. Mr Grandi stressed that 20% of all families fleeing war in Syria are headed by women and that women travelling alone, pregnant or with children have outnumbered men since the start of 2016.



## UN REFUGEE CHIEF ‘DEEPLY CONCERNED’ BY EU-TURKEY DEAL

EKATHIMERINI.COM

The head of the UN refugee agency on Tuesday said he was “deeply concerned” by a proposed deal between the EU and Ankara to curb the migrant crisis that would involve people being sent back to Turkey.

“As a first reaction I’m deeply concerned about any arrangement that would involve the blanket return of anyone from one country to another without spelling out the refugee protection safeguards under international law,” UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi told the European Parliament.

Lawmakers at the parliament in Strasbourg, France, applauded after he made the comment.

At a summit in Brussels on Monday, European Union leaders in principle backed a proposal by Turkey to take back all illegal migrants landing on the overstretched Greek islands.

Turkey also suggested a one-for-one deal under which the EU would resettle one Syrian refugee from camps in Turkey in exchange for every Syrian that Turkey takes from Greece, in a bid to reduce the incentive for people to board boats for Europe.

But Grandi said the plan did not offer sufficient guarantees under international law.

He said refugees should only be returned to a country if it could be proved that their asylum application would be properly processed and that they would “enjoy asylum in accordance with accepted international standards and have full access to education, work, health care and if necessary social assistance.”



## SLOVENIA, SERBIA AND CROATIA MOVE TO CLOSE MIGRANT ROUTE

DW.DE



EU member Slovenia on Tuesday announced all migrants without a valid Schengen visa would be denied entry as of midnight, a decision that Serbia said, “practically closes the Balkan route.” Neighboring Croatia also announced that it would refuse the transit of most refugees, as countless migrants still seek to make their way to central Europe.

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## REFUGEE ARRIVALS PLUNGED BY A THIRD IN FEBRUARY

THELOCAL.DE



Germany recorded 61,428 asylum seekers in February, down by a third from January, data released Tuesday by the Interior Ministry showed. Syrians made up the biggest group of people seeking refuge, with 24,612 arriving in February, while Iraqi and Afghan asylum seekers numbered around 12,000 from each place.

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## GREECE AND TURKEY BUILD ON PLAN FOR RETURN OF REFUGEES

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Greece and Turkey signed a readmission agreement for migrants who cross the Aegean to be returned. Only a few hours after they completed 16-hour negotiations in Brussels, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu met in Izmir on Tuesday. They signed six agreements on Tuesday. Perhaps the most significant was a bilateral deal for the migrants who are not eligible for international protection to be readmitted to Turkey after crossing into Greece.

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## FRENCH RAIL STRIKE SET TO CRIPPLE SERVICES ACROSS COUNTRY

THELOCAL.FR

A national French rail strike is due to begin on Tuesday evening with major disruption forecast, especially around the Paris region. The industrial action, which will begin at 7pm on Tuesday and end on Thursday morning at 8am, will see services cancelled throughout the country. The four unions representing workers from France's rail operator SNCF - the CGT, CFDT, Sud and Unsa - are demanding the recruitment of more staff, a rise in salaries and guarantees about improvements in work conditions.

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## EU SLAMS ITALY FOR SPENDING 'IMBALANCES'

THELOCAL.IT

The European Commission on Tuesday said Italy, France and Portugal were in violation of EU rules on public spending and would be more closely monitored by Brussels. In a statement the commission pointed to France's "large public debt coupled with deteriorated productivity growth". In all five countries, including Bulgaria and Croatia, were found to be experiencing "excessive imbalances" in the EU.

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## NEW PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT - WHIP HAND AND HIGH STAKES

REUTERS.COM

Portugal's months-long political uncertainty enters a new phase today with the inauguration of a centre-right president Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa who will assume powers next month that allow him to fire the government and call new elections.

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## KOSOVO TO SEEK WAR REPARATIONS FROM SERBIA IN EU TALKS

EUOBSERVER.COM

Kosovo is to seek war reparations from Serbia in the next round of its EU-mediated talks on normalising relations, Balkans agency DTT-net.com reports. "We will ... seek compensation from Serbia for the major damages and losses caused during the last war," Kosovo minister without portfolio Edita Tahiri said on Tuesday.

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9 MARCH, 2016

# THE AGENDA

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## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

• 9:00 **the plenary session continues in Strasbourg**. On the agenda: KEY DEBATE: Preparation of the European Council meeting of 17 and 18 March 2016 and outcome of the EU-Turkey summit - Council and Commission statements. 13:00 VOTES followed by explanations of votes: Reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels (report by **Laura Ferrara**, EFDD), Trade diversion into the European Union of certain key medicines (report by **Laura Ferrara**, EFDD), EU-Andorra agreement on the automatic exchange of financial account information (report by **Miguel Viegas**, GUE/NGL), Appointment of a new Executive Director of the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (report by **Roberto Gualtieri**, S&D), Procedural safeguards for children suspected or accused in criminal proceedings (report by **Caterina Chinnici**, S&D), Guidelines for the 2017 Budget - Section III (report by **Jens Geier**, S&D), Interinstitutional agreement on Better law-making (report by **Danuta Maria Hübner**, EPP), Motions for resolutions - Tobacco agreement (PMI agreement). 15:00 DEBATES: The current situation in the European Union - debate with **Stefan Löfven**, Prime Minister of Sweden, Situation in Eritrea - statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015 Report on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Council and Commission statements. JOINT DEBATE - VETERINARY MEDICINAL PRODUCTS: Veterinary medicinal products (report by **Françoise Grossetête**, EPP), Authorisation and supervision of veterinary medicinal products (report by **Claudiu Ciprian Tanasescu**, S&D), Thalidomide - oral question, International protection of whistle-blowers - Council and Commission statements.

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- Yesterday, the European Commission presented a **first, preliminary outline of the European Pillar of Social Rights** announced by President Juncker in September last year and launches a broad public consultation to gather views and feedback from other European institutions, national authorities and parliaments, social partners, stakeholders, civil society, experts from academia and citizens. This initiative is targeted at the euro area, while allowing other EU Member States to join if they want to do so. The online consultation will run until the end of 2016.
- The Commission has welcomed political agreement by Member States on the **automatic exchange of tax-related financial information of multinational companies**, known as country-by-country reporting, subject to UK parliamentary scrutiny. The endorsement was reached at a meeting of Economic and Financial Affairs ministers in Brussels, less than two months after the European Commission presented its ambitious proposal. The new rules will apply to multinational companies which operate cross-border in the EU.
- Three months after its adoption by the European Commission, the **Aviation Strategy** is starting to deliver its first results. EU Member States authorised the European Commission to **open negotiations with China and Japan in view of concluding Bilateral Air Safety Agreements**.

## COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- The Court confirmed the obligation on the Greek State to recover from Greek farmers unlawful State aid of €425 million paid as a result of adverse weather conditions (C-431/14 P).

## WHO WHEN WHERE

- 9:00 during the Dutch Presidency of the EU, the ministry of Education, Culture and Science organises the **conference on the future of higher education** (Europe Building, Amsterdam).
- 9:30 the **European Student Convention** starts in Amsterdam (Amsterdam University College, Amsterdam).

- 9:30 the European Commission, the Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation are organising a **workshop which aims to offer to Brazilian and European researchers an opportunity for networking, discussion and preparing joint activities under the call H2020-LCE-22-2016** (Borschette Conference Centre).

TODAY  
CELEBRATING  
BIRTHDAY



**Matteo SALVINI**  
ENF  
(43)