



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

Issues expected to be discussed during this new legislature of the European Parliament

BRIEF OVERVIEW¹

The new legislature of the European Parliament, covering the period 2009-2014, will be characterised by various developments. It is too soon to deduce what issues will crop up along the years, also keeping in mind that a new Commission will be established possibly by the end of this year.

However there are several issues which already await Parliament's involvement. The institution is has highlighted various areas, including proposed legislation on capital requirements for financial institutions and at what level (national or European) should financial institutions be monitored.

With regard to initiatives related to climate change it is being expected that the revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme and the legislation on industrial emissions will be discussed. The same can be said for the revision of the Directive on the energy efficiency of buildings, on which the European Parliament had previously indicated that its wants all buildings built in 2019 to produce the same amount of energy it consumes.

On immigration, the European Parliament is set to continue working on amendments to the Common European Asylum System and on a Commission proposal to legislate in relation to seasonal workers from third countries.

The widely discussed employment policy proposals on working time and maternity leave are also expected to feature. The latter is set for a vote within the EP and follows a suggestion by a Parliament Committee for a two-week extension over the proposed increase to 18 weeks. On the working time issue, while the lack of institutional agreement has arrested any new major amendments, the Commission may propose changes in relation to time on-call.

The EU budget reform should soon gather momentum as the European Commission is expected to present its first report later this year after an extensive consultation session. This could be another major issue, albeit internal, which the EP will be engaged in.

Other issues which could feature include patient mobility and organ transplants, pharmaceuticals, food labelling, passenger rights and urban mobility, the European maritime area, supplementary pensions rights, the telecommunications package and internet access (where we have also seen the election of an MEP with this as his party's main issue) and musicians' rights.

Enlargement will remain on the agenda as Croatia, Turkey and the FYROM stand as official candidates for membership while other countries from the Balkans, Albania and now Iceland show their willingness to join the Union.

¹ Contents are mainly sourced from a Briefing provided by the European Parliament in preparation for the Constitutive Session of the EP in Strasbourg.