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Plenary session of the European Parliament

Strasbourg (France), 11-14.02.2019

10,000 coast guards to protect our borders

Rapporteur: Roberta Metsola

The new and revamped European Border and Coast Guard will introduce, as pushed by the EPP Group, a standing corps of 10,000 operational staff with the executive power to intervene to protect the EU's external borders and effectively implement the return of irregular migrants. The Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee voted positive on this new legislation Monday evening in Strasbourg.

MEPs want EU support to continue for less developed regions

Rapporteur: Andrey Novakov

MEPs voted on Wednesday on the Common Provisions Regulation for 2021-2027 funding. The Report, co-authored by EPP Group Member Andrey Novakov, foresees the increase of the overall cohesion budget to the same level as 2014-2020. MEPs want money for less developed regions and an increase of the EFS+ and Cohesion Fund as well as more resources for cross-border investments (Interreg). The Report is in favour of co-financing: 85% for less developed regions, 65% for transition regions and 50% for more developed regions. Cohesion policy will focus more on demographic challenges, poverty, people with disabilities and deinstitutionalisation. Regional and local authorities, economic and social partners, NGOs, universities and research institutions will be fully-fledged, bottom-up and effectively involved in planning the programmes.

Faster reforms needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rapporteur: Christian Dan Preda

The European Parliament debated the European Commission's Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina on Tuesday. The Foreign Affairs Committee already agreed in 2018 that the nation had made little progress on its way to EU accession. There are still reforms to be implemented in the four key areas: rule of law, fundamental rights, economic development and public administration. "We want to send a clear signal that Bosnia and Herzegovina must accelerate reforms in order to have a chance of obtaining candidate country status in the near future", the Rapporteur, EPP Group MEP Cristian Dan Preda, said.

Implementation of the cross-border Healthcare Directive

Rapporteur: Ivo Belet



On Tuesday 12.02.2019 at the plenary session in Strasbourg, Ivo Belet (EPP, BE), introduced his report on "Implementation of the cross-border Healthcare Directive".

Case law over the years has acknowledged that patients have under specific conditions the right to access healthcare in other Member States than their own.

His report was readable, what is not always the case in the EP.

Besides items as Funding, Patient Mobility, Information to Patients: National Contact Points, European Reference Networks, eHealth, Cross-border Regional Cooperation, and also Brexit, there was a debate that was used by every Group to give their opinion.

Then spoke Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, also Medical Doctor. He praised the rapporteur and declared that the EC will start 27 procedures of infringements against Member States.

Making administrative complications is a discrimination against the patient. He wants to strengthen the contact points in the lists. The next steps may include exchanging electronic patient records, rare diseases, expertise centres, transparency of care, submit calls to the Court of Justice for non-reimbursements, resolve bureaucratic obstacles.

In his reply, the Commissioner said that now is a good time to put the point on the agenda in anticipation of the European elections. He promised to act against countries that impede the implementation.



Ivo Belet had the last word, he emphasized the need for simplified procedures, supporting centres, health is a theme before and after the European elections, a good implementation of the directive is an added value for the European citizen.

The rapporteur is also member of the board of the EUCDW (see our report of the last EUCDW Congress in Vienna).

Bert Van Caelenberg asked attention for the "brain-drain" of health personnel. It cannot be the intention that patients have to go to neighbouring countries because their own health staff are lacking. He invited Ivo Belet to follow together with him the discussion on this theme on 16-17.05.2019, because "brain-drain" will be the theme of the Eurofedop conference in Podgorica (Montenegro).