

Beat: Politics

EP debate European border guard and plight of Middle East minorities

This week

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USPA NEWS - Plans to set up an EU Border and Coast Guard are to be put to a vote in Parliament's civil liberties committee this week. MEPs also vote on proposals to introduce a standard European travel document for non-EU nationals and to expand the exchange of criminal records between member states.

At a hearing in the Human Rights subcommittee members discuss the plight of minority groups caught up in Syria's civil war and in ISIS atrocities. Preparations also take place for next week's plenary session. Also plans to establish a European Border and Coast Guard, bringing together the EU's Frontex border agency and national border authorities, are to be put to a vote in the civil liberties committee on Monday. The new agency would ensure effective intervention at EU external frontiers when urgent action is needed, even if the EU countries concerned have not sought assistance.

Also on Monday the civil liberties committee holds a debate on proposals to establish a common EU list of safe countries of origin, potentially including Turkey. Members also vote on a proposal to introduce a standard European travel document for non-EU nationals residing illegally in member states. Residents without proper documents would be returned to their country of origin.

The civil liberties committee votes also on whether to expand the exchange of judicial information to include the criminal records of non-EU nationals. This would update the European Criminal Records Information system (ECRIS) to enable judges to access the criminal records of non-EU nationals anywhere in the EU with one single request. The Human Rights subcommittee holds a public hearing on the plight of minority groups caught up in Syria's civil war and in ISIS atrocities. Those in attendance will include representatives of the Christian, Turkmen and Yazidi communities in the Middle East.

At a meeting of the civil liberties committee on Monday, director of the Fundamental Rights Agency, Michael O'Flaherty, presents the agency's annual report for 2015. The report deals with issues including the migration and refugee crisis, the upsurge of racist and xenophobic incidents in member states and the consequences of the recent terrorist attacks on fundamental rights.

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