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Yesterday the European Commission proposed an Emergency Assistance instrument to be used within the European Union to provide a faster, more targeted response to major crises, including helping Member States cope with large numbers of refugees.



RUSSIA AND SYRIA 'WEAPONISING' MIGRATION

BBC.COM

Russia and Syria are deliberately using migration as an aggressive strategy towards Europe, the senior Nato commander in Europe has said.

US Gen Philip Breedlove said they were "weaponising" migration to destabilise and undermine the continent.

He also suggested that criminals, extremists and fighters were hiding in the flow of migrants.

Migrants are continuing to accumulate in Greece, after Macedonia stopped allowing more than a trickle through.

On Wednesday it allowed around 200 Syrian and Iraqi refugees to cross, with thousands still stuck on the Greek side of the border.

New figures suggest last year's total of one million seaborne migrants arriving in Europe could be matched well before the end of the year.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said nearly 129,500 migrants had arrived by sea so far in 2016, plus another 1,545 by land. It said 418 had drowned or were missing.

The crisis has caused tensions to surge, with Greece struggling to cope with the influx and the European Commission criticising Macedonia for using tear gas on a crowd of migrants on Monday morning.

"The scenes we just saw are not our idea of managing the crisis," said EC spokesman Margaritis Schinas.



EU EYES SPENDING 700 MILLION EUROS FOR REFUGEE CRISIS

EKATHIMERINI.COM



The European Union's head office wants to swiftly push through a proposal to earmark 700 million euros (\$760 million) in humanitarian aid to deal with the refugee crisis.



CAMERON'S FRANCE VISIT TO HIGHLIGHT EU SECURITY BENEFITS

REUTERS.COM



Prime Minister David Cameron will use a visit to France on Thursday to argue that Britain's continued EU membership boosts security, a case likely to be supported by his host President Francois Hollande.

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€ EURO ZONE, IMF SPLIT OVER HOW MUCH GREECE NEEDS TO REFORM

REUTERS.COM

Euro zone lenders and the International Monetary Fund disagree over how much more Greece needs to do to reform its economy, a dispute that may delay new payouts and the start of debt relief talks, officials said.

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€ EURO ZONE NEEDS FISCAL UNION TO WITHSTAND FUTURE SHOCKS - ECB'S COEURE

REUTERS.COM

Euro zone countries need to pool their fiscal resources and decision making if the euro area is to dispel doubts about its ability to withstand economic shocks, a top European Central Bank policy maker said on Wednesday.

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🔍 NATIONAL FRONT'S VOTING ERRORS RAISE QUESTIONS OF COMPETENCE

EURACTIV.COM

MEPs from France's National Front have corrected 988 voting errors since July 2014, seven times more than members of the French Socialists and the British Conservatives.

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€ EU REFERENDUM: GOVERNMENT DOSSIER AIMS TO 'SMOKE OUT' LEAVE CAMPAIGN

BBC.COM

The government has published an analysis of the UK's options if it left the EU - suggesting they would all be worse for the economy than staying in. Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said the aim was to "smoke out" Leave campaigners who had "avoided" spelling out their vision of a post-EU Britain.

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🏛️ SPAIN'S SANCHEZ LIKELY TO FAIL IN PM BID

EUOBSERVER.COM

Spanish socialist leader Pedro Sanchez is struggling to get enough support from MPs to form a coalition government before two parliamentary votes this week, making a new general election more likely.

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3 MARCH, 2016

THE AGENDA

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

• 9:00 **Subcommittee on Human Rights**. The agenda includes: Discussion with **Emily O'Reilly**, the European Ombudsman on the recommendation related to the lack of a human rights impact assessment in the preparations of the **EU-Vietnam free trade agreement**, Discussion with members of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts regarding the disappearance of the 43 teaching students in Ayotzinapa and feedback from the DROI mission to Mexico/Guatemala (ASP - 5G-3).

• 9:00 **Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality**. On the agenda: **Women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU** - interparliamentary Committee meeting, co-organised by the FEMM and National Parliaments. Ahead of International **Women's Day 2016**, scheduled for 8 March, this joint meeting will discuss the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU. The event will be divided into three workshops: **Violence against women refugees and asylum seekers** - organised in cooperation with the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**, **Gender and healthcare: the situation of refugees and asylum seekers** - organised in cooperation with the **European Institute for Gender Equality**, **Integration of women refugees** - organised in cooperation with the **European Commission**. Inauguration speeches will be made by **Martin Schulz**, President of the European Parliament and **Mary Robinson**, Former President of Ireland (JAN - 2Q2).

• ECR MEP **Mark Demesmaeker** was elected as vice-chair of the special inquiry committee to investigate failure to oversee emissions tests.

• The **EP-Verkhovna Rada high-level conference** opened a new era of cooperation between the two parliaments, said lead MEP on capacity-building for the Ukrainian Parliament, **Andrej Plenkovic** at the close of the event on Wednesday.

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

• A two-day **Informal Meeting of the Politico Military Group** holds on Amsterdam (Soesterberg).

• 10:00 on Friday, **Environment Council** takes place in Brussels. The Council will discuss the **EU action plan for the circular economy**. Ministers will also hold a policy debate on the follow-up to the Paris agreement on climate change based on a communication drafted by the Commission and on a document prepared by the presidency (Council of the European Union).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

• Yesterday, the Commission proposed an **Emergency Assistance instrument** to be used within the European Union to provide a faster, more targeted response to major crises, including helping Member States cope with large numbers of refugees.

• Yesterday, the Commission presented an assessment of the implications for the European Union of **the new global climate agreement** adopted in Paris in December 2015. The assessment looks at the next steps in the process and how **the Paris Agreement** will be implemented in the EU.

• The Commission adopted yesterday proposals to **clarify the rules applicable to property regimes for international married couples or registered partnerships**.

These proposals will establish clear rules in cases of divorce or death and bring an end to parallel and possibly conflicting proceedings in various Member States, for instance on property or bank accounts.

WHO WHEN WHERE

• 14:30 a two-day **'The Electricity Regulatory Forum'** holds on Florence. The Forum was set up to discuss the creation of the internal electricity market. It is currently addressing cross-border trade of electricity, in particular the tariffication of cross-border electricity exchanges and the management of scarce interconnection capacity (Convitto Ecclesiastico della Calza, Florence).

• A two-day **'Conference about strengthening the position of the European audiovisual content'** starts in Amsterdam. This conference takes place against the backdrop of two major policy debates: the European digital single market strategy, and the revision of the European Audiovisual Media Services Directive (Marine Etablissement Amsterdam).

TODAY CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS



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