



New Direction

the foundation for european reform

THE HERALD

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Europe Day held today every year celebrates peace and unity in Europe. The date marks the anniversary of the historical 'Schuman declaration'. The EU institutions open their doors to the public in early May in Brussels and Strasbourg. Local EU offices in Europe and all over the world organise a variety of activities and events.



GREEK GOVERNMENT TURNS FOCUS TO EUROGROUP AFTER SECURING VOTE ON NEW MEASURES

EKATHIMERINI.COM

Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos is to face his eurozone counterparts in Brussels today for talks that are expected to focus on the terms of Greece's third bailout and the prospects for debt relief following the approval in Parliament on Sunday night of overhauls of the Greek tax and pension systems.

All 153 coalition lawmakers backed the legislation, which is worth 5.4 billion euros in budget savings.

Despite Greece's keenness to impress creditors with the new laws, no decision is expected at today's meeting.

However, Athens is hoping to secure a positive statement on the outlook for debt relief.

It will also be keen to promote its idea for an automatic mechanism for cutting state spending, basically an alternative for the additional 3.6 billion euros in "contingency" measures the International Monetary Fund wants Greece to legislate now.

Speaking in Parliament before Sunday's vote, Tsipras defended the new measures, noting that the pension reforms leave the majority of main pensions untouched.

Claiming to be undertaking "a massive effort for social justice in conditions of harsh fiscal adjustment," Tsipras accused opposition parties of not having any serious counterproposals to those of the government.

"We are determined to make Greece stand on its two feet at any cost."



MASS PROTEST AND COUNTER-MARCH IN WARSAW

THENEWS.PL



Tens of thousands gathered in a pro-EU march in Warsaw on Saturday, protesting at sweeping changes introduced by Poland's ruling conservatives, while a smaller counter-march voiced opposition to interference by Brussels in Polish affairs.

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POLICE FIRE TEAR GAS AT PROTESTORS OUTSIDE GREEK PARLIAMENT

FRANCE24.COM



Greek riot police fired tear gas Sunday to disperse demonstrators who threw Molotov cocktails during an anti-austerity protest outside parliament in Athens. Greek television showed police firing volleys of tear gas in response to projectiles lobbed by masked youths during the demonstration, which attracted around 10,000 people angered by the latest measures demanded by Greece's creditors.

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EU REFERENDUM: GOVE AND OSBORNE EXCHANGE BLOWS OVER TRADE

BBC.COM

Michael Gove has clashed with cabinet colleague George Osborne after he said the UK could pull out of the EU's single market without damaging trade. The justice secretary said the UK would not be "punished" for leaving the EU by having tariffs placed on its exports. But the chancellor said this would be a "catastrophe" in terms of lost jobs and could "wreck the economy". He also warned of a "significant shock" to the housing market.

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TREASURY GUARANTEES WERE A CRITICAL RIFT BETWEEN ERDOGAN AND DAVUTOGLU, SOURCES SAY

HURRIYETDAILYNEWS.COM

Several disagreements between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and outgoing Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu have been highlighted since the latter's announcement to step down, however the issue of Treasury guarantees was an unvoiced yet critical source of friction, according to sources in the capital Ankara.

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TURKISH PRESIDENT ERDOGAN REJECTS EU DEMANDS

DW.DE

A day after his prime minister resigned, Turkey's president has spoken out against the EU's demands for changes to terror laws. He also said Turkey urgently needs a new constitution and a presidential system. In a speech broadcast live on television, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan drew particular attention to one of the EU requirements for Turkish citizens to be allowed visa-free travel into the Schengen area. Erdogan said Turkey would not reform its anti-terrorism legislation for the sake of visa-free travel.

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ITALY-AUSTRIA BORDER CONTROLS 'POLITICAL CATASTROPHE'

THELOCAL.AT

Austria imposing controls on its border with Italy would be a "political catastrophe" for Europe, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said Saturday. Vienna is threatening to resume checks on the Brenner Pass between the two countries as part of a package of anti-migrant measures if Italy does not do more to reduce the number of new arrivals heading to Austria.

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JUNCKER APPOINTS SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE PROMOTION OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF OUTSIDE THE EU

EUROPA.EU

Speaking at the Vatican on the occasion of the award of the Charlemagne Prize to Pope Francis, President Jean-Claude Juncker announced his decision to appoint Ján Figel (former European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth from 2004-2009) as the first Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union. Ján Figel assumed this new role on Friday for an initial mandate of one year.

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THE AGENDA

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

• 17:00 **the plenary session starts in Strasbourg**. On the final draft agenda: Resumption of session, Statement by the President on the occasion of 9 May, Order of business.

Joint debate - Cohesion policy: Cohesion policy in mountainous regions of the EU (report by **Iliana Iotova**, S&D), New territorial development tools in cohesion policy 2014-2020 (report by **Ruža Tomašić**), Acceleration of implementation of cohesion policy - oral question. Impact of Nord Stream 2 on the gas market in the CEE region - Commission statement, Traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail - oral question. **Joint debate - Fisheries Partnership agreements**: EU-Liberia sustainable fisheries partnership agreement (recommendation by **Jarosław Wałęsa**, EPP), EU-Mauritania fisheries partnership agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution (recommendation by **Gabriel Mato**, EPP). One-minute speeches (Rule 163).

• 19:00 **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs**. On the agenda: Short-stay visa waivers: Agreements between the European Union and the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Palau and the Kingdom of Tonga (vote on three draft reports by **Mariya Gabriel**, EPP), European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS): exchange of information on third country nationals (consideration of amendments, rapporteur **Timothy Kirkhope**, ECR), Legal aspects of the EU - Turkey statement of 18 March 2016 - presentation by the Legal Service, Third Report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap - presentation by the Commission (WIC - 200)

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

• 15:00 an extraordinary meeting of the **Eurogroup** takes place in Brussels to discuss the state of play of the macroeconomic adjustment programme for Greece. Discussions will cover a comprehensive package of policy reforms as well as the sustainability of Greece's public debt.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

• The Commission presented **proposals to reform the Common European Asylum System** by creating a more efficient and more sustainable system for allocating asylum applications among Member States. The basic principle will remain the same - asylum seekers should, unless they have family elsewhere, apply for asylum in the first country they enter - but a new mechanism will ensure no Member State is left with a disproportionate pressure on its asylum system. Last week's proposals also include transforming the existing European Asylum Support Office into a fully-fledged European Union Agency for Asylum to reflect its enhanced role in the new system and reinforcing of the EU's fingerprinting database, Eurodac, in order to better manage the asylum system and to help tackle irregular migration.

• The Commission has found the prolongation until 1 October 2016 of an **Irish scheme aimed at restructuring credit unions** to be in line with EU state aid rules on the restructuring of banks during the crisis.

• The Commission proposed to the Council and the European Parliament to lift the visa requirements for the people of Kosovo by **transferring Kosovo to the visa-free list for short-stays in the Schengen area**. The proposal is presented together with the Commission's positive assessment confirming that Kosovo has fulfilled the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap.

• The Commission published **two reports as part of its preparatory work to create a Digital Single Market**. The first one is related to the public consultation on the review of the EU Satellite and Cable Directive. The second report covers the public consultation on the technical measures related to the end of roaming charges in the EU.

• Negotiators of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission agreed on the **first EU-wide rules to make the websites and mobile apps of public sector bodies more accessible**, especially for the blind, the deaf and the hard of hearing. The Directive will cover public sector bodies' websites and mobile

apps, from administrations, courts and police departments to public hospitals, universities and libraries.

• The Commission adopted three major projects: the first, worth €46.6 million from the Cohesion Fund, aims to improve railway connections in Prague, the second, worth €31.5 million from the European Regional Development Fund, will fund the rehabilitation of a national road in the centre of Romania, and the third, worth €201.7 million from the Cohesion Fund, will co-finance the construction of a section of the D3 motorway in the region of Žilina, in Northern Slovakia.

WHO WHEN WHERE

• The High Representative/Vice-President **Federica Mogherini** participates today at the meeting of Friends of Syria on ministerial level in Paris, also in presence of the Syrian opposition representative, **Riyad Hijab**.

• **Phil Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, will be in Northern Ireland.

• **Maroš Šefcovic** in Bratislava, **Valdis Dombrovskis** in Riga, **Carlos Moedas** in Lisbon: participate in the celebrations of the Europe Day today.

TODAY CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS



Terry REINTKE
Greens/EFA
(29)



Tanja FAJON
S&D
(45)



Joachim STARBATTY
ECR
(76)