

**Dear Pirates,**

Our first nine months in the European Parliament are over and I would like to introduce our regular newsletter. We would like to give you information after each plenary session on how we voted, as well as on what happened last month in Brussels. It is not always easy to keep track of social networking and media information, and we would like to give you a comprehensive picture of what we are doing in the European Parliament. On behalf of all the members of

our Pirate Delegation, I would like to thank you once again for your trust, which is the driving force for us when we sometimes run out of our own. I believe these few sides will find their way into your busy lives and help you be even better attorneys for Pirate mission.

Thank you and I wish you a pleasant read!

**Marcel Kolaja**

Pirate, Vice President of the European Parliament

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# STRASBOURG

The last plenary session of the European Parliament in 2019 took place in the week before Christmas and had once again an interesting agenda which we would like to present to you.

The plenary week runs Monday to Thursday and comprises 56 hours of sessions. 56 hours in four days; not counting all the preparation, political group meetings where we agree on our positions for each programme point, and the ten-hour commute to and from Brussels. While nobody is at the plenary the whole time and MEPs follow most discussions on their screens from their offices, the Strasbourg mission is always very exhausting. We definitely do not want to bore you with a detailed description of the whole session; after all, you can always watch the whole session on stream on the European Parliament website. Let's just run through the most important points from Strasbourg.

# DECEMBER

## PLENARY SESSION



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### TAX EVASIONS VS. SPYING

16. – 19. 12. 2020

The first lively discussion in our delegation happened on Monday. We had to decide whether we would back a proposal which aimed to tackle cross-border tax evasion. A worthy purpose, of course, but in the end, we could not support it. Why? The proposed measures to fight tax evasions included storing data on cross-border payments for five years, as long as the number of transactions, including offline transactions (such as by card), with one entity excee-

ded 25 per calendar quarter. So for example, if you undergo 25 microtransactions in an app or buy twenty five books in an audio library or shop in the same time twenty five times within three months, your card data and transaction details will be stored in some registry for five years. We did not think this proposal proportionate at all and while tackling tax evasion is one of our priorities, we do not believe this is the road to go down.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND SUBSIDY FRAUD

16. – 19. 12.

On Tuesday we dealt with a point that was included on the agenda thanks to our group: a debate about subsidy fraud. In it, Mikuláš Peksa reminded the MEPs of the scandals surrounding Andrej Babiš and that the Commission's audit, sadly still unpublished, confirmed Babiš as the final beneficiary of Agrofert. His trick – happily parking his companies in trust funds – did not work out. The debate focused on the amount of European finance that needs to be recovered because of this trick and it illustrated how impossible it is to distinguish Agrofert from the Czech state. Former top managers of Agrofert now work as ministers and legislators, without any apparent change to their priorities. The

Prime Minister's corporation is not just a company like any other; it has become part of the national interest and the head of the government is willing to guide the country into conflicts with the rest of Europe and with hundreds of thousands of citizens asking for his resignation in nation-wide protests. In his speech, which is available on Facebook, Mikuláš correctly commented that this is another symptom of a systematic problem: control over the use of European resources. When designing this system, it was probably unimaginable for all the legislators that somebody would be able to occupy an entire state system and gain the right to exercise oversight over themselves.

We have a nice tradition during the Strasbourg plenaries: on Tuesday or Thursday, all Czech MEPs meet for breakfast. This time, the breakfast was organized by Marcel Kolaja, meaning not only that it was vegetarian, but also that we discussed the implementation of the controversial copyright directive.

Our guests were Michal Feix from Seznam and Jan Vobořil from Iuridicum Remedium. They used practical examples to illustrate that the copyright directive is so general that it is very difficult to implement. As the current example from France show, some parts will probably not have the intended effect – as the Pirates said from the start. It currently seems that Article 17, which has been challenged by Poland in the Court of Justice (CJEU), will facilitate the filtering of on-line content and will cause disproportional Internet censorship.

At the end of the breakfast, Marcel commented that while we talk about regulating the Internet, what we mean is regulating the web. He believes that overregulation of the web will cause the creation of a parallel structure within the Internet – a new web, which will be more encrypted, anonymous, as we have seen with the so called “dark web”. Extreme regulation could in the end cause an effect similar to the 1920s’ Prohibition in the USA: the creation of parallel structures, which will be less controlled and perhaps connected with other socially problematic phenomena. Every legislator heading head over heels into uncontrolled regulation, such as the copyright directive, should keep that in mind.

## TREATY OF LISBON

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16. – 19. 12.

Our first point on Wednesday was the commemoration of two key documents, which formed the functioning of Europe as we know it: The Treaty of Lisbon and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Any anniversary presents a good opportunity to brush up on our knowledge and understanding that the basic principles of the functioning of the EU is part of being a modern European. These two documents are also used by populists, to denigrate such key democratic institutions as the European Parliament, Council or Commission. The Czech prime minister’s statement that he will not respect the Commission’s audit is only one example of such unacceptable relativisation of EU institutions. We would therefore like to point out two important things.

Firstly: The Treaty of Lisbon did not transfer any new exclusive powers to the EU. Instead, it changed the way the EU executed its existing powers and created new ones, by enhancing citizen participation and protection, creating a new institutional structure, and changing the decision-making process to make it more efficient and transparent. It also strengthened parliamentary oversight and democratic accountability.

Secondly: The Charter did not extend the EU’s powers as stipulated by the Treaties. Instead, it confirms the principles contained in the case-law of the Court of Justice and in the European Convention on Human Rights ratified by the Council of Europe in 1950. It covers rights and freedoms grouped under six titles: dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights, and justice.

Both these documents had a major influence on the role of the European Parliament and on the process of the adoption of legislation in the member states. In general, it can be said that the EU is in charge in topics where everybody agreed that it is better to deal with them together. So, when somebody starts telling you all about how something is a campaign or how Brussels dictated something, you know where to direct them at least to Wikipedia, so they can read more about the Treaty of Lisbon and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

## THE RE-ELECTED EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN

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16. – 19. 12.

On Wednesday afternoon, we joined forces to re-elect Emily O'Reilly European Ombudsman. Last year, she strongly criticized the Czech Commissioner Věra Jourová, dubbing her conduct "unwise and inappropriate given her status as a Commissioner whose conduct must not create any doubts as to any potential conflict of interests." O'Reilly also showed her competence and the importance of her role in other cases. "She rightly criticised former Commission pre-

sident José Manuel Barroso for his revolving doors move to Goldman Sachs. She was also vocal on the untransparent appointment of Jean-Claude Juncker's Head of Cabinet as Secretary-General of the Commission and criticised the lack of transparency of the EU Council. This may be the reason why today's vote was very tight," said Pirate MEP Patrick Breyer.

## THE UYGHUR GENOCIDE AND CHINA CABLES

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16. – 19. 12.

On Wednesday, Jewher Ilham, the daughter of Ilham Tohti, who was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, visited a meeting of our political group. Ilham Tohti is currently serving a life sentence in China. What did he do? He is Uyghur. Officially, he was sentenced on separatism-related charges, but the real reason was his criticism of the Chinese government. His relatives are also suffering from persecution: an example is that one of them was given a ten-year sentence for having Ilham Tohti's photo and article in their phone. We are very glad that the European Parliament de-

cided to award the Sakharov Prize to Ilham Tohti. Markéta Gregorová then had a very emphatic intervention at the plenary, in which, half shouting, she appealed to Commissioner Johannes Hahn to immediately start addressing the situation, using economic sanction and the utmost diplomatic pressure. Jewher brought a clear personal testimony about the Uyghur genocide to the European Parliament, including a clear description of how China uses modern technology to conduct preventive arrests and to oppress its population. Our delegation will keep following this topic with great interest.

## THE CATALAN SPIN AT THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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16. – 19. 12.

Thursday morning brought some very good news, especially for the detained Catalan MEPs. They could not take up their mandates, even though they participated in the European elections and legitimately won the voters' support, because the Spanish government did not include their names in the list of officially elected representatives. The situation surrounding the Catalan independence referendum

is of course very complicated – legally and otherwise – but if you do meet all the conditions for running for a post in an election and you are legally elected, no government can deny you the right to take up your mandate. We met our Catalan colleagues about this matter right after the elections, and we expressed our full support to them in their efforts to gain access to their mandates.

On the last day of the plenary, Markéta Gregorová sent a letter to the Commission, Council, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, urging them to act against Russia's repressive practices against civil society. Markéta's initiative was undersigned by 27 MEPs and it focused on the new Russian law, which allows individual journalists and NGO employees to be labelled "foreign agents" and put under surveillance. Amongst other things, the law violates the international

law, which Russia vowed to comply with. It also impacts international organizations, including Czech ones – the list already includes People in Need. People in Need has been doing outstanding work for the last twenty-five years and it is unacceptable that Russia should now spy and have files on its employees. This kind of conduct is utterly undemocratic, and we will continue fighting against it in the European Parliament.

# WHAT IS

# “MINIPLenary”?

In between monthly plenary sessions of the European Parliament in Strasbourg there are additional so-called “mini-plenaries” - these are short two day plenary sessions of the Parliament that are taking place in Brussels. One of these “mini-plenaries” happened in the last week of January.

The fact that Members can meet and vote in Brussels proves that traditional move to Strasbourg lacks any deeper meaning. And it is not so much about moving those few (hundred) boxes of documents, but mainly about people who are burdened with moving from Brussels to Strasbourg and back. Our Pirate delegation would undoubtedly be in favour for the European Parliament always meeting and voting in one place. Brussels appears to be a logical option, not only because of the presence of other European institutions. But honestly, even if it would be in Strasbourg, it would be better than the situation now. It is no coincidence that the architect of the Strasbourg building of the European Parliament is also the architect of several French prison buildings.



# JANUARY

# PLENARY SESSION

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## EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

13. – 16. 1. 2020

Perhaps the most important item on the January plenary agenda was the vote on the European Green Deal. Naturally, going through seventy-three amendments was not easy. The main objective of this comprehensive investment plan is Europe's carbon neutrality. We have reached a point where we will destroy our planet, unless we change our behaviour. Europe wants to set an example to the world in this regard, and we understandably support such efforts.

This might be the last chance for a long time. Therefore, it is vital that we approach the Green Deal proactively, taking into account all our responsibilities, so that at the end of the program our society will come out richer, more innovative, and modern. We – Europeans – should not boycott the whole program or let a few oligarchs steal it (again).

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## CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

13. – 16. 1.

Following last year's record turnout at the European Parliament elections, Germany and France came up with an idea: that the fact that people are interested could be used to start a pan-European debate on what people actually expect from EU institutions. Based on this, the concept of the Conference on the Future of Europe was created, where Markéta Gregorová representing our delegation. However, there has been a clear difference between the approaches taken by the Parliament and the Council, right from the start. We say that what people want from the EU institutions can be expressed every five years in the elections, as is the common in democracies. It should be enough, if the Par-

liament had a legislative initiative and each election would automatically be a Conference on the Future of Europe. Of course, the twenty-seven heads of states and governments do not like this approach, and they want to keep the power in their hands. Who cares that there is a difference between national and European behaviour? How much do you think European topics are accentuated in national parliaments elections, so we can say that the representation of states actually shows the true will of citizens on European issues?

We are not in the 1960s. People have free access to information, and they have a right to vote for their representati-

ves to the European Parliament directly, based on the candidates' programme. This way, they can exercise their power directly, not through intermediaries, such as representatives elected for a completely different purpose (namely to administer the national state). These representatives will never look beyond the scope of their office and will always pursue national interests above the interests of the whole. But the European Union is like a housing cooperative - its members have entrusted it with the management of matters which are better managed together as a whole. If there are things that do not work in the European Union, it is precisely because the system is set up to manage shared things, but even in this environment, everyone tries to grab as much as possible for themselves. And this will not change until the Parliament has a more significant role. It could also be said

that if the European project is to survive, this change has to happen. Hopefully, similar topics will be discussed at the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Patrick also attended a Conference on the Future of Europe where he gave a speech in the plenary. During the speech he outlined the need for action: „How can we make sure the EU acts in the interests of ordinary people and not those of the business lobby? How do we contain lobbyism and corporate capture? How do we make sure the people can directly take control by way of EU-wide referenda and direct democracy?“ In the end, he added: „This conference on the future of Europe will hopefully bring about some incremental improvements, but not the needed fundamental update for Europe“.

# JANUARY

## “MINI-PLENARY”

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### BREXIT

29. – 30. 1. 2020

Everything has been already said and written about the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. From our point of view, it is a terrible mistake. Of course, both the UK and the European Union will survive such a change, but that is not the point. It is an unnecessarily wasted potential and capacity that could be used for something good. Brexit should serve as a memento for us and we believe that it is a starting point for free European citizens to learn how to work with misinformation, half-truths, and manipulation.

Apart from the „technical“ side of things, Brexit was also extremely emotional moment. We have all been discussing it for so long – whether it happen, when it will happen, whether something else won't happen instead – that the whole plenum was taken aback that the day that Britain left had come, chairs would remain empty and the British flag

would disappear from the poles in front of the entrance of the European Parliament for a long time. We believe that Britain will eventually decide to return because it simply belongs to Europe and to the globally unique European Union project.

On Brexit, we managed that the group tabled an surveillance amendment that the indiscriminate and non-suspicion-based mass surveillance programmes conducted by the UK intelligence agency GCHQ, which are incompatible with the principles of necessity and proportionality in a democratic society and are not adequate under EU law. Unfortunately, the amendment did not get a majority, but the European Parliament spoke out in favour of stopping UK access to Schengen police databases.

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### GENDER PAY GAP

29. – 30. 1. 2020

Another important item of the mini-plenary agenda was a discussion about eliminating the gender pay gap. On one hand, we know that not every difference in pay is necessa-

rily conditioned by gender, but on the other hand, it is also clear that women have to overcome obstacles that men simply do not have to deal with, biologically and socially.

Generally, we think that for the same work there should be the same reward and the differences are sometimes dismal. However, finding a solution of this issue appears to be not that easy. One of the ideas on how to deal with the situation are quotas, on which we have been unable to reach a reasonable agreement. In general, we still think that quotas are no real solution, but rather a way to “put out the current fire”. In some cases, quotas can in fact support one gender in decision-making and prevent certain institutions to be composed only of people of one gender (both male and female). On the other hand, we have seen how many problems an thoughtlessly applied quota can cause. We would therefore prefer more systematic solutions that allow both women and men to work in their “dream jobs” without prejudice. Our fellow MEP Patrick Breyer informed

us about an interesting example from Germany, where taking gender into account is actually banned by the constitution (and quotas would therefore be de facto unconstitutional). Because of that we voted against the quotas. Instead of quotas, we stress the need to introduce other measures to enhance qualification-based representation in decision-making. To increase the participation of women therein and in the labour market in general, we advocate for gender pay transparency, investments in accessibility and affordability of childcare, suitable working environments and flexible working arrangements as some of the key pre-conditions. All in all, this is an interesting topic and we are interested in your opinion.

# FEBRUARY

# PLENARY SESSION

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## THE EU—VIETNAM TRADE AGREEMENT

10. – 13. 2. 2020

The first interesting point on the February plenary agenda was the EU– Vietnam Trade Agreement. We are in favour of business cooperation with democratic countries, which is precisely the problem we had with this agreement. While work on the agreement was underway, the democratic conditions in Vietnam have not improved. In fact, they grew even worse. Spying and intimidation are common tactics used against people who oppose the government; political opponents are routinely arrested, and freedom of speech is more fiction than reality. We therefore wanted the Parliament to

suspend the signing of the agreement and make it conditional on the improvement of democratic indicators. Even at this point, the treaty is more advantageous for the Vietnamese side (over than 10 times more, according to an analysis by the European Commission) and it gives carte blanche to its undemocratic regime and legitimizes it. We are afraid that only very few of the money that will go to Vietnam under this agreement will be received by its residents, and the rest will be used to strengthen official party structures.

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## PCI

10. – 13. 2.

PCI, or Projects of Common Interest is a list of energy projects in which Europe has a strategic interest. Projects on this list are processed in a special mode where not all rules apply (such as rules on withdrawing money). The list includes many gas pipeline projects and we believe that this is a problem. Firstly, the European gas pipeline infrastructure is already relatively good, and we do not see any reason to make strengthening it a priority. Secondly, if Europe wants to get rid of fossil fuel energy, why would they build gas pipelines for billions of euros? Because logically, there will be new

pressure to „make use of them when we have built them for so much money“ and the transition away from fossil fuels will be even harder. And thirdly, these projects make no sense economically. Therefore, we could not support this fourth list of priority projects.

# COMITTEES

Thanks to a good post-election strategy and fast and very proactive negotiations, especially in the week after the elections, we have succeeded in gaining seats in wide range of of the European Parliament committees. Out of the 20 Committees and 2 Sub-Committees of the European Parliament, the Members of the Pirate Party are full or substitute members in 9, plus the SEDE subcommittee. A major success was also that Marcel Kolaja was appointed Vice-President of the European Parliament. Working in committees is the essence of MEP's work and in this section, we would like to inform you of what everyone is planning in each committee and how things are going.



## MARKÉTA GREGOROVÁ

Markéta mainly deals with human rights, international trade, and autonomous weapons systems, because she's a member of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) and Committees on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and International Trade (INTA)

SEDE

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The goal of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence is to enable public debate and enhance parliamentary control over all EU measures relating to the Common Security and Defence Policy, especially those connected to institutions, capacities, and operations. The Subcommittee aims to actively contribute to EU policy formulation in this field. Its other activities include developing relations with strategic partners, especially NATO and the UN, and with third countries which promote multilateralism and international order in the name of peace.

I believe the most urgent and impactful topics for our common European security for the next decade are autonomous drones, unregulated AI, and the proliferation of dangerous emerging technologies such as facial recognition or predictive algorithms. In the Subcommittee for Security and Defence I am recognised in our political group as the leading MEP on these issues. Besides the legislative work on these issues in the Subcommittee, I will work independently on these topics with our European allies in NATO and the UN. I have also been invited to this year's Munich Security Conference, which will

give me the opportunity to formulate and discuss a common strategy with world leaders.

In the Subcommittee on Security and Defence, my colleagues and I learnt what are the military challenges in the Sahel, the security situation in Burkina Faso, the security and defence challenges of 5G technologies, and the state of play in Iraq. We have seen presentation of a study on the ten years of CSDP. We attended a discussion with General Grazianme, Chairman of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and future challenges for the North Atlantic Alliance. Another topic on the Subcommittee's agenda was a recommendation to the

Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy regarding the preparation of the process of nuclear non-proliferation review by 2020, nuclear control, and nuclear disarmament. Thanks to my membership in SEDE, I suppose, I was invited to the biggest security conference of the year in the world: the Munich Security Conference. In addition to the presidents of different countries or corporations (greetings to Mark Zuckerberg :)), I met personally experts in disinformation, 5G or tracking technology and I look forward to using these contacts in the future.

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## AFET

The Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) is responsible for the implementation of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and monitors the spending of EU finance on external action. All international agreements with the EU also need to be approved by the Committee.

My geo-political focus in my mandate is on the Eastern and Southern vanguard of the European Union. Our neighbours and friends in Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia are caught in the buffer zone between a hostile, weakening Russia that is lashing out and us in the European Union pushing for regional trade and peaceful cooperation. I have chosen to work in and with these countries not just in the AFET Committee and to further European interests, which are peace, cooperation, and prosperity in our neighbourhood.

With colleagues from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, we attended a public hearing on the Eastern Partnership. We

were informed about the situation in Ukraine. We also discussed the vision for the development of the Eastern Partnership after 2020, which consisted of three parts: 1) the achievements and outlooks in the region, 2) the general vision and the way forward, and 3) the perspective of the European institutions. There was an exchange of views on the situation in Georgia and the administrative borders, with Ketevan Tsikhelashvili (the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality) and Kakha Kuchava (Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia). Instead of so-called borderization, however, Minister Kuchava presented the internal situation of the party from the perspective of the government. Although in Georgia there are protests against the government for failing to carry out the promised reforms of the electoral system, in the European Parliament, government representatives reported on their achievements. So, I asked unexpectedly about the situation of political prisoners in the country. I fight for the rights of Georgians in my delegations as well.

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## INTA

The INTA Committee evaluates all EU trade and investment agreements, scrutinises the Commission's work before the start of and during negotiations and co-decides on the legal framework in which trade takes place. The Committee also leads the debate about the future shape of international trade and stands up for a rules-based trading order.

The old, unipolar, free trade based, US-led global trading system is coming to an end. Authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia are subverting common rules and reverting to protectionist trade tactics to further their strategic advantage in key future technologies. I have decided to focus my attention in the International Trade Committee on this fundamental change of global trade and supply chains. On behalf of my group, I have been advocating for value-based,

democracy promoting trade rules that safeguard against environmental and labour exploitation. We must stop supplying the enemies of liberal democracy with the very modern weapons that are being used to destroy it.

In the INTA Committee, I drafted an Opinion on what the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) should include in the Report on a European Parliament recommendations the Council, the Commission, and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in view of the Eastern Partnership Summit in June 2020. As you can see, work in Committees is interconnected. The Eastern Partnership is addressed in both "AFET" and "INTA". Therefore, I am in the right committees. :-) At the same time, I will be negotiating about this

report as the Greens / EFA rapporteur and as the shadow rapporteur in AFET. Of course, in INTA I was involved in very intensive debate on Brexit, its implications and how further negotiations on trade agreements will take place. Further-

more, we discussed an important trade agreement with Vietnam, which was already mentioned above. In cooperation with People in Need I wrote an open letter on the human rights violations in Vietnam to all MEPs.

AFCO

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Following Brexit, many seats opened in the Committees of the European Parliament and that is how I became a Member of the AFCO Committee. It is a Committee on Constitutional Affairs and I decided to join it, because in the Czech Republic I am trying to explain how the EU works, and also its future

and reform. This Committee will be directly involved in these activities, and I will not stick only to words and theory, but be there. For example, this Committee addresses the mentioned Conference on the Future of Europe.



## MARCEL KOLAJA

As has already been said, Marcel Kolaja has become Vice-President of the European Parliament. He is also a member of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and a substitute member of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT).

IMCO

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The task of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) is responsible for overseeing the EU rules on the single market, including the digital single market, customs policy and consumer protection. I succeeded in convincing my colleagues and becoming a shadow rapporteur on the Directive on the removal of terrorist content online, which is currently being discussed in the so-called trilogue. These are meetings where the three institutions meet and negotiate on their positions with the aim to draft one coherent piece of legislation. I have attended two such negotiati-

ons and I always try to communicate, either via blogpost, Facebook or Twitter, which I also attach to the original video, alongside the IMCO report. I would encourage you to follow my social networks, I always try to inform my followers about current events, so you would not miss anything essential.

In January and February, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection discussed in particular terrorist content online, dual food quality and liability for defective products. I reported twice on the development of



negotiations on terrorist content at the trilogue level and reiterated that the problem of dual food quality exists and that the Commission has not been active enough in banning the practice. This topic is especially important because it affects every consumer across Europe. I will continue to address this issue in the framework of the following European Commissi-

on strategies, such as Fork to Farm. On the question of responsibility for defective products, I intend to address issues related to defective software in relation to artificial intelligence, which is one of the main themes in this parliamentary term.

CULT

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The Committee on Culture and Education is responsible for all cultural aspects of the Union, such as cultural dissemination, cultural heritage, and cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as education, audio-visual policy, information and media policy, cultural and educational aspects of the information society, and youth and sport. I think this activity is best capable of creating a truly profound European identity based on meeting, learning about other cultures, and the friendships that arise from this learning. It is therefore excellent that the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes have received a significant financial injection of € 100 million over the next period.

The CULT committee has decided to request 3 own initiative reports. The EC is due to publish their proposal on AI within 100 days of taking up office and one of them focuses on "The use of artificial intelligence in education, culture and the au-

dio-visual sector". It has been decided that I will follow this dossier on behalf of our Group. Parallel to this, we started preparations of a CULT Committee hearing on a similar topic, which will take place in February 2020.

At the meeting of the Committee on Culture, we discussed the financing of Erasmus and the Creative Europe program, which are now in a tripartite negotiation phase. The Committee also asked the Croatian Ministers for Culture and Education about Croatian priorities under the Presidency. Questions focused on topics related to the European Capitals of Culture, the development of Erasmus, artificial intelligence in education, culture and the audio-visual sector. There are still some unresolved questions of legal responsibility within this important topic. For example: who owns the copyright of a poem generated by AI software? I am looking forward your answers.



## MIKULÁŠ PEKSA

Mikuláš Peksa is a member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), Economy and Currency (ECON) and Budgetary Control (CONT).

### ECON

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The ECON Committee is responsible for the Regulation of financial services, free movement of capital and payments, tax and competition policy, supervision of the European Central Bank, and the international financial system. In this Committee, the first six months have been intensively focused on filling various posts in the European institutions. Perhaps most important was my objection to the appointment of Christine Lagarde as head of the European Central Bank, which I tried to summarize on my blog. After the new Commission came, we started mostly dealing with the euro and the fight for cryptocurrencies, which started by me explaining to my political group that they are not only a threat. Along

with the fight against tax evasion, my main topic within this Committee is now shifting.

In the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, we dealt with nominations for various top positions in European financial systems, where I focused mainly on avoiding “the revolving door” problem: a situation where officials quickly move on to key positions in business and vice versa. We are pushing for a two-year “cooling period” – it will help keep both politics and business cleaner. I also focus on tax evasion and cryptocurrency – and how they can continue to work within Europe.

### ITRE

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The ITRE Committee is responsible for several sectors of the industry, in particular high-tech manufacturing, information technology, and telecommunications. It also coordinates European space policy and therefore has links with the European Space Agency. It has oversight responsibilities in relation to the Joint Research Centre and the Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements and similar projects. At ITRE, I have a lot to do with energy and finding ways to go towards a green future. Of course, we are also dealing with artificial intelligence and now also metallurgy: in particular that a lot

of cheap, non-organic Chinese steel is coming to the Europe and we want to find out what the Commission intends to do about it.

The beginning of the year was a little bit calmer for ITRE. My colleagues and I mainly focused on identifying our priorities and improving the distribution of topics. I paid a lot of attention to Green New Deal and the energy and digital themes headed by artificial intelligence.

Lots of my focus was given to the Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT), where I am one of the two coordinators for our whole group (Greens / EFA). This Committee monitors and oversees that the budget (approximately € 166 billion in 2019) is used correctly and in a targeted way. Interestingly, around 80% of the funding goes to Member States, around 13% is invested worldwide, and around 7% is spent on administration. Within the Committee, I have had to deal intensively with Andrej Babiš's issued that arised in recent weeks. Fortunately, I am not alone, and I am glad that the whole Greens / EFA group sees the problem of illegal subsidies as crucial and that they, as the only ones in the European Parliament, also clearly called for Andrej Babiš to resign.

In January, most of the European institutions – the Council, the Commission, the courts, and other smaller institutions – sent their final reports to us for approval. Not only I did study the reports thoroughly, but with my team, we prepared dozens of amendments that deal with issues of institution transparency, filling internal posts etc. We also want to make European institutions communicate better on the internet and use free software. Some of my amendments have already been gossiped about on the Politico.eu server, so I am glad they attracted attention. Now we are negotiating about supporting them with other groups.



## PATRICK BREYER

Patrick is a full member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and a substitute member of the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI). He is also a full member of the Delegation for Northern cooperation and for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee, and a substitute member of the Delegation to the EU-North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee. In the LIBE Committee he is also a substitute-member of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol on behalf of Greens/EFA.

JURI

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The main responsibilities of the JURI Committee are the interpretation and application of international and European law and the compliance of European Union acts with the Treaties of the European Union. It is also responsible for legislation in the areas of civil law, commercial law, intellectual property, and procedural law. It is responsible for matters relating to the statutes and political immunity of MEPs and EU staff.

At the moment, in the JURI Committee I have been assigned as a Rapporteur for the Opinion on the Digital Services Act: improving the functioning of the Single Market, which is an Opinion to the Report allocated to the IMCO Committee, Shadow Rapporteur on the Report on Intellectual property rights for the development of artificial intelligence technologies and as a Shadow Rapporteur on the Report on the Digital Services Act: adapting commercial and civil law rules for commercial entities operating online, which is allocated to JURI. In addition, I am closely monitoring the work of the Committee since its work is also focusing on more urgent topics, that need handling within a limited time period.

January and February were busy months for the JURI Committee. Among the most interesting discussions was of course the debate on the UK Withdrawal Agreement. The Croatian Minister of Justice also presented Croatia's priorities to the Committee, while the Commission presented a report prepared by the Expert Group on Liability and New Technologies, called "Liability for Artificial Intelligence and other emerging digital technologies". On the 27th of January, Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, exchanged views with the Members of the Committee. In February, the JURI Committee held its first exchange of views on its Report on the Digital Single Act, which was a great opportunity for the Members of the Committee to communicate thoughts, concerns and recommendations. Another exchange of views was also held on the different files that focus on Artificial Intelligence, including the one on the Report on Intellectual property rights for the development of artificial intelligence technologies.

LIBE

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The LIBE Committee is in charge of most of the legislation and democratic oversight for policies enabling the European Union to offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice (Article 3 TEU). While doing so, it ensures the full re-

spect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU territory in conjunction with the European Convention on Human Rights and the strengthening of European citizenship.

At the moment, I am a shadow rapporteur on seven dossiers. In the past months, my main focus was on the negotiations with the Council on the Regulation for preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online. The Parliament's text has made significant improvements to the text initially proposed by the Commission and along with my fellow colleagues, we have defended these during the Trilogues.

I am also a Shadow Rapporteur for the ePrivacy Regulation. Here, again the European Parliament has made crucial improvements to the Commission's proposal. Unfortunately, these have not been reflected in the Council's attempted proposals, which have been far from good. However, after two years of inactivity, the Finnish Presidency did suggest a new text, which was rejected by the Council. The current Croatian Presidency also suggested some text which is currently under discussion in the Working Groups of the Council. The outcome remains to be seen.

I am also a Shadow Rapporteur on the Report on the Digital Services Act and fundamental rights issues posed, a Shadow Rapporteur on the Opinion on the Digital Services Act: improving the functioning of the Single Market, which is an opinion to the Report allocated to the IMCO Committee, a Shadow Rapporteur on the Report on Artificial intelligence in criminal law and its use by the police and judicial authorities in criminal matters, a Shadow Rapporteur on the Report on the joint Regulation for establishing the conditions for accessing the other EU information systems [ECRIS-TCN] and establishing the conditions for accessing other EU information systems

for ETIAS purposes and a Shadow Rapporteur for the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

Last but not least, during the last months I have worked on different files such as the appointment of the EDPS, the resolution on children rights, and the treatment of healthcare data. Along with my fellow Pirates in the European Parliament, we are fighting to delete controversial text that could lead to mass surveillance, upload filters and unfair terms from this legislation. Not long ago, Commissioner Ylva Johansson spoke out in favour of a new piece of legislation on data retention, while the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen has promised to issue a proposal on AI in the first 100 days of the new Commission.

In January, we held a debate on the Regulation on terrorist content online, while the Croatian presidency presented their priorities, in general as regards the work of the Committee, but more particularly as regards their work on the ePrivacy Regulation. In addition, there was one hearing on the Privacy Shield and one on data retention. Apart from the above, other topics that attracted our interest were the UK Withdrawal agreement, the debate on the illegal use of Schengen Information System database by the UK, and a discussion on the Internal Security Strategy. Furthermore, the Committee held a debate on the ETIAS and ECRIS database and the facilitation of Belarus VISA applications.

# EVENTS



## PPEU BOARD

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The first big piece of news from last November was the election of the new Board of the European Pirate Party. The former chairperson Markéta Gregorová was replaced by Mikuláš

Peksa and took the role of vice-chairperson instead, alongside the Iceland Pirate Oktavía Hrund Jónsdóttir.

## GENEVA FORUM

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In the third week of November, Mikuláš attended the Geneva Forum focused on China's human right abuses enabled by technology. In his intervention, he commented that the Chinese digital dictatorship often gets dangerously trivialized, both in the Czech political scene and in the European Parliament. He believes that efficient prevention of the Chinese scenario in a European context would be upholding transparent rule of law and citizens' privacy.

The two-day Forum was organized by the Tibetan exile government and the participants included UN Watch representatives, members of the human rights organization 2047 Hong-Kong Monitor, or Filip Jirouš, a Chinese Studies scholar from Charles University. The conference included many examples of Chinese violations of their citizens' fundamental rights.

## TERRORIST CONTENT ONLINE

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In November, our MEP Patrick Breyer and MEP Marina Kaljurand organized an event on the Regulation on prevention of terrorist content online, which included a number of speakers from the different fields that will be affected by the legislation. In January we had our second event on terrorist content online (TCO). This time Patrick together with Marina Kaljurand, had the pleasure to welcome a panel of experts as well, including representatives from the Commission, the Council, the civil society, and the industry, with the aim to bring all the different perspectives to the table. The first panel focused on

the scope, definitions, and exceptions that are provisioned in the current text, while the second panel discussed the issues of removal orders and cross-border cooperation between member states and their respective competent authorities, as well as the issues that arise when we consider specific measures for tackling such content online. We hope that this exchange of views will prove to be fruitful for the negotiations that are still ongoing between the Parliament, the Council, and the Commission.

## FREEDOM NOT FEAR

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In November, Patrick also organised two sessions at the annual activist conference Freedom not Fear. The conference provides a space for activists from all kinds of NGOs, as well as active individuals to exchange ideas and plans for the future. Patrick had two presentations at the conference. The first was on the Regulation on prevention of terrorist content

online, while the other was on the ePrivacy Regulation. He mainly aimed to present the current developments and the positions of the Commission, the Council, and the Parliament to the participants, and discuss possible ways to promote constructive political solutions, mainly focused on the provisions which threaten the freedom of the Internet.

## AUTOMATED DECISION-MAKING

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Together with MEP Alexandra Geese and with the support of the Greens/EFA Working Group on Digital Skills and Competences, Patrick also co-organised a conference on automated decision-making, focusing on the risk of discrimination by AI. Patrick was coordinating the second panel, where he

emphasised that discrimination through automated systems is nothing new; in fact, empirical studies show the opposite. It is therefore more important than ever to focus on the issue more deeply and weigh all political solutions.

## THE FUTURE OF INTERNET REGULATION

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Marcel Kolaja and Patrick Breyer co-organised a conference which focused on the current framework and possible future forms and impact of the Digital Services Act, which is currently being drafted. This comprehensive piece of legislation

is supposed to make Europe competitive in the digital field and ensure its security. Sadly, these goals are increasingly becoming an excuse for limiting personal freedoms, spying, collecting personal data, and automatically filtering content,

which means nothing else but Internet censorship in the current situation. One of the main Pirate goals is to bring clear and relevant arguments on this topic from former theoreticians

and relevant players on the digital market to the European Parliament. We will therefore try to hold conferences like this every few months.

## ARMED DRONES IN THE NEW EUROPEAN DEFENCE

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In December, Markéta Gregorová organized an event where three studies by three different organizations were presented: The report *Armed Drones in Europe* (by OSEPI) , The report *Military Drones in the EU* (by PAX) , The report *Civil and Military Drones* (by EPRS).

The goal of these studies is to provide a comprehensive overview on armed unmanned drones in Europe to Europe-

an politicians, industry sectors, public, and media. The new Commission is founding a new Directorate General for the Defence Industry and Space and all the connected financing. It is therefore important to control the development of European defence and defence industry, so it doesn't violate the basic principles the EU is founded on.

## THE GEORGIAN DELEGATION IN BRUSSELS

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Markéta also led a round-table with the Georgian delegation on the situation in Tbilisi and Georgia. In the last months, we have witnessed protests in Tbilisi, with tens of thousands of Georgians protesting in front of the parliament building for two weeks in November. The current majority election system is a clear advantage to a party led by the richest Georgian and the promised reform to a proportional system has

been delayed many times, although it is supposed to be used in the 2024 elections. Markéta discussed the current situation with the delegation, as well as the civil society status, necessary reforms, a closer relationship between Georgia and the EU, disinformation, and the Russian influence in Georgia and the Caucasus.

## INTERNET FREEDOM CONFERENCE

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Markéta was also invited by Leonid Volkov, Alexey Navalny's former assistant, to attend the Internet Freedom Conference in December, co-organized by Russian Pirates. The programme was very varied and Markéta reported on her trip

on her social media. Sharing information with people from a country that is trying to disconnect its citizens from the Internet is very useful, especially because same arguments on privacy protection and upload filters can be heard in Europe.



## EURONEST DELEGATION

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Markéta continued from Moscow directly to the Euronest delegation meeting (an interparliamentary group which includes representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldavia, and Ukraine), which she also co-chairs. The meeting took place in the Georgian Tbilisi and sadly, the Trio 2020 strategy was approved for discussion in the European Par-

liament. This would mean two-speed accession talks with Euronest countries and it is a major disappointment and a great opportunity for the predatory Russia. However, we believe we will manage to stop this at the Parliament negotiation.

## VISITOR GROUPS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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In December, we also welcomed a Pirate member group in the European Parliament. We prepared a guided tour through the Parliament for them, as well as a lunch with the delegation. Then we visited the Parliament recording studios and met the technical assistants who presented their work to the

group. The day ended with a joint dinner and on the next day, the group visited the Parliamentarium and learned about EU history. We're looking forward to more members visiting in 2020!

## THE ADVANCES IN AI - EUROPEAN POSITION

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In January, Mikuláš Peksa with Fanny Hidvégi from EDRi and Petra Molnár from the University of Toronto held a seminar to discuss the problems that current AI application means to

human rights. Even the basic question of when the machine has the power to decide and when a human being has it is quite complex and we must pay attention to it.

## CZECH MEDIA NGOS ON MEDIA PLURALISM

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We called an extraordinary meeting of the Greens/EFA political group to listen to the European Federation of Journalist's conclusions on media plurality in the Czech Republic. And the outcome was truly hard to hear. The Czech Republic plunged from the 13th place to the 40th, between Trinidad and Tobago and North Korea. Guess whose fault that is. Sadly, the cumulation of the media in the hands of billionaires will continue in the Czech Republic because of Kellner's PPF,

which is currently buying the CME media corporation responsible for the Czech TV NOVA. Petr Kellner said in the past that he believes in the importance of defending conservative right-wing values. At the same time, he's building his business in the communist China and the semi-totalitarian Russia. Such an honest and thorough right-wing sentiment.

# THE DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE REGISTRATION OF PRE-PAID SIM CARDS

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Eight years ago, when Patrick Breyer was still a member of the state parliament of Schleswig Holstein, along with his brother, they filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights against mandatory identification when buying pre-paid mobile phone cards. On January, the Court issued its ruling. Unfortunately, its decision was not in their favour – the majority of the judges decided that it was only

a minor interference with fundamental rights. However, one judge agreed with their argumentation and considered the identification obligation to be inadmissible interference. We still believe that anonymous communication is important for everyone and especially people whose freedom of expression is more likely to be suppressed or violated.

## GDPR-DAGEN: EPRIVACY – STATUS AND CONTROVERSIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE

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In the end of February, Patrick was invited as a speaker for the GDPR-dagen Conference in Sweden which took place in the city of Göteborg. The main purpose was to give a presentation about the ePrivacy Regulation. ePrivacy will become a major topic in the coming years since more and more of our daily lives takes place online. While we are online, we are getting tracked and monitored, profiles of us are getting produced, some with our knowledge and some without it. Therefore, we have to protect our personal freedoms on the Internet today. It must be ensured that people won't get tracked

and followed the moment they go online. Strong legislation on the European level could provide that protection. There is a Video on Patricks' channel where you can find the full presentation if it sparked your interest. We would like to thank the organisers of the GDPR-dagen conference for being so supportive and professional preparing the event and the Pirate Party of Sweden for supporting us during the event with taking videos and pictures.

## EUROPEAN INTERNET FORUM'S LUNCH DEBATE ON ENCRYPTION AND DATA PROTECTION

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On the 18th February, Patrick was honored to co-host with his colleague Rasmus Andresen an event of the European internet forum (EIF) on Encryption and data protection. In the Pirate Party, we are very used to use encryption in our mails and other communication for years. But for the public encryption might be something far from their everyday communication scheme. That could be due to lack of knowledge, which when it comes to encryption and how to deal with it can be very dangerous specially when it comes to legislation. Therefore, we have to repeatedly educate people about the

necessity of encryption in the data/digital society. I hope this event was a step towards this direction with high level participants discussing encryption in the European Parliament. Among the extinguished panellists, we had the pleasure to invite Birgitta Jónsdóttir who was a member of the Parliament for the Icelandic Pirates. Patricks' introductory remarks can be found on the EIFs Youtube Channel, where you could find additional information if you are interested on the topic.