

Article – Coming up in plenary: vaccines, EU-US relations and Portuguese presidency



Vaccine contracts

MEPs will hold a debate on Tuesday morning on the need for more clarity and transparency concerning vaccine contracts and the EU's decision-making process regarding Covid-19 vaccines.

EU-US relations

With [Joe Biden taking over as president of the United States](#) on 20 January, MEPs are hopeful for a new chapter in EU-US relations. On Wednesday morning, Parliament will debate areas where the two partners can strengthen their collaboration in the future.

Portuguese presidency

Portugal took over the six-month rotating [presidency of the Council of the EU](#) on 1 January. Portuguese prime minister António Costa will address MEPs on his country's priorities on Wednesday morning.

Right to disconnect

The current pandemic has meant that one in three Europeans are now working from home. In a vote on Thursday, Parliament is likely to call on the Commission to make “the right to disconnect” a legal entitlement in the EU. MEPs say workers, when off work, should not feel obliged to answer work-related calls, emails and messages.

Impact of Covid-19

On Wednesday afternoon, MEPs will quiz Council and Commission representatives on the measures the EU is taking to deal with the social and employment effects of the Covid-19 crisis.

Artificial intelligence

MEPs are also set to debate and vote on how to govern the use of [artificial intelligence](#) (AI) specifically within the military and public domains. They are expected to insist on respect for human rights when using AI technologies in mass surveillance.

Gender equality

On Thursday, the Parliament will debate the [EU's strategy for gender equality](#) as well as how Covid-19 has impacted women's rights and how to include women in the digital economy.