

Article – Plenary highlights: Coronavirus debate, budget, migration



The plenary session took place in Brussels instead of Strasbourg and was shortened to just one day because of concerns linked to the spread of the coronavirus. [Members debated the outbreak of COVID-19](#) with the European Commission and Council on Tuesday morning, stressing the need to slow down its spread across Europe. They also called for solidarity among EU countries and for funds to research the virus.

In a [debate on the EU February summit](#) that failed to produce an agreement among EU leaders on the EU [long-term budget](#), MEPs criticised the proposal by European Council President Charles Michel as lacking ambition and warned they would not approve a bad deal on EU's funding for the next seven years.

The EU should help Greece manage its border with Turkey, said MEPs in Tuesday's [debate on the current situation](#). Many also said the EU should not repeat the 2015 refugee crisis and must update its common rules on asylum.

At the start of the session on Tuesday, MEPs [welcomed the new Gender Equality Strategy](#), announced recently by the European Commission, but underlined the need for concrete action. "Realising women's rights is not an option, it is a duty and it is possible where there is political will," said Parliament Vice-President Mairead McGuinness.

Other business

This week political group leaders also decided to [revise Parliament's calendar](#) as a precautionary health-related measure. The next plenary will also be shortened and take place on 1-2 April in Brussels, while committee meetings planned for next week have been postponed.