

[Press release – Antonio TAJANI, Hans-Gert PÖTTERING, and Hans Walter HÜTTER](#)

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[Article – Coming up this week: sharing economy, money laundering, private security firms](#)

Proposals to regulate private security firms, a blacklist of countries linked to money laundering and the opportunities and challenges of the sharing economy are just some of the topics covered by Parliament committees this week. In addition the House of European History will be officially launched this week, while the Parliament opens its door to the general public in Brussels.

On Tuesday afternoon, the foreign affairs committee votes on recommendations on how to strengthen oversight of private security companies operating in EU countries, as well as in EU missions abroad. Some of them have been repeatedly involved in incidents resulting in injury or even the loss of life.

On Wednesday the economic committee votes on a proposal by the European Commission to update a blacklist of countries linked to money laundering and

terrorism financing. In January MEPs rejected a similar proposal because it did not include countries that facilitate tax evasion. According to EU anti-money laundering rules, citizens and firms of the listed countries who want to do business in EU countries have to be submitted to stricter checks.

Press Freedom Day is held on Wednesday and to mark it members of Parliament's human rights subcommittee discuss the state of press freedom on Thursday morning, with a focus on the growing threat of fake news.

The internal market committee votes Wednesday on a report on the sharing economy, which is when people offer products or services directly to other people using online transactions. Some well-known examples of this include Uber and Airbnb. The report being dealt with by Parliament assesses the benefits it brings, such as new jobs and more choice for consumers, but also looks at the issues it raises: workers' rights, taxation and consumer protection.

On Thursday Parliament President Antonio Tajani inaugurates the House of European History, a museum dedicated to European integration and Europe's recent history. The new museum will open to the public on 6 May.

Parliament opens its doors to the public in Brussels on Saturday, an opportunity for people to learn more about Parliament and the EU ahead of Europe Day on 9 May.

[Commission takes new steps to enhance compliance and practical functioning of the EU Single Market](#)

Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"EU rules protect and empower 500 million people in the Single Market. They can live, work and do business in any EU country. All of this is only possible when the rules are respected. Today's proposals will help develop a culture of compliance. They will also help people and companies to have full access to online information and procedures both in their home country and abroad."*

Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, added: *"Today we are delivering concrete tools to make the Single Market work better for citizens and businesses, so they can make full use of its opportunities. The Single Digital Gateway is also a strong incentive to modernise public administrations by developing ambitious and user-focused e-government strategies. And the new information tool Single Market Information Tool will further contribute to the Commission's enforcement work, so that citizens' Single Market rights are duly respected"*

and EU businesses face fewer barriers when scaling up and entering new markets.”

The three concrete initiatives adopted by the Commission today are:

1: A Single Digital Gateway: In the future, people and companies will have easier access, through a single digital entry point, to high quality information, online administrative procedures and assistance services. Any procedure currently available online for domestic users will be accessible to users from other Member States and in one additional EU language. 13 key administrative procedures will have to be made available online, including requests for a birth certificate, to register a car, start a business or register for social security benefits. According to the “once-only” principle, important data already collected by national authorities will only need to be submitted once and should then be made available to be reused in the most important cross-border procedures at the request of the user.

The Single Digital Gateway responds to users’ needs in a digital world. It could help companies save more than EUR 11 billion per year, and EU citizens up to 855 000 hours of their time annually. The initiative will benefit those moving to or doing business in another EU country, but also the many people and companies who decide to stay in their home country. It also incentivises Member States to adopt e-government strategies to offer modern and efficient public service.

2: A Single Market Information Tool (SMIT):

Single Market rights, for people as well as companies, can only be fully exercised if the commonly agreed rules are fit for purpose and correctly applied throughout Europe. To ensure this, timely access to comprehensive, reliable, and accurate market information is crucial. The Commission can already request information directly from companies in the field of competition policy. The Single Market Information Tool will allow the Commission, in targeted cases, to source defined and readily available data (such as, for example, cost structure, pricing policy or product volumes sold) in cases of serious difficulties with the application of EU Single Market legislation.

This could prove valuable, for example, to collect information on suspected geo-blocking practices, to corroborate information on public tenders, or to obtain data on the pricing and underlying costs of cross-border parcel delivery. Such requests would be a measure of last resort and the information would be handled subject to strict confidentiality requirements.

3: A SOLVIT Action Plan:

The Commission will build on the success of [SOLVIT](#), a free of charge service which provides rapid and pragmatic solutions to people and companies all over Europe when they experience difficulties with public administrations while moving or doing business cross-border in the EU. The Action Plan aims to increase the use of SOLVIT by making sure that more citizens and businesses can easily access it and by improving data collection so that evidence from

SOLVIT cases can be used to improve the functioning of the Single Market.

Background:

In 2015, the Commission presented its [Single Market Strategy](#) – a roadmap to deliver on President Juncker’s [political commitment](#) to unleash the full potential of the Single Market and make it the launchpad for European companies to thrive in the global economy. The Commission has already put forward [proposals on e-commerce](#), [guidance on the collaborative economy](#), steps to [modernise the EU’s standardisation policy](#), a [Start-up and Scale-up Initiative](#), and [measures to give a fresh boost to the services sector](#).

More information:

[Doorstep remarks by HR/VP Federica Mogherini upon arrival at the Special European Council \(Art.50\)](#)

Brussels, 29 April 2017

I think that today we will send a very strong message of unity of the 27 Member States, as we did already in Rome on 25 March, 2017 celebrating not only 60 years of successful history of our European Union but also the future of our European integration.

We will discuss issues related to our future partnership with the UK only at a second stage, including foreign affairs and security policy. But I can tell you already that the Brexit will not affect significantly our global work. We will stay, even at 27 in the future, the first market in the world, the first trading partner for all in the world, the first humanitarian and development donor and also a very strong the security and defence provider.

The UK contributes not more than between 3 and 5% to our EU missions and operations in the world. So the impact I expect on that is not that relevant.

But we will aim at a strong partnership for the future relations in a second stage and I am confident we will continue to work closely together also in the future.

See the video on EbS

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I137774>

Joint Statement by President Juncker, Prime Minister Rajoy and Prime Minister Costa on the agreement reached concerning the Almaraz case

Following our meeting in Malta on 3 February and the [amicable settlement of 21 February 2017](#), on the initiative of President **Juncker**, we have reached agreement on the Almaraz case. Our agreement relies solidly on a set of joint operational conclusions. These conclusions lay down the path for the implementation of the agreement and offer strong guarantees for all parties.

Thanks to the continued assistance and mediation by the European Commission in this process we have reached an agreement to the benefit of all of us. We commit to implement it faithfully.

In the spirit of good neighbourly relations all parties worked together constructively with the willingness to find pragmatic solutions. This is the European spirit of finding compromises for the smooth functioning of our common Union at its best.

We will make good on our shared endeavour to accelerate the work of the High-Level Group on Interconnections for the South West of Europe and we reiterate our strong will to further develop European interconnection projects linking our energy markets.

Background: The steps taken

Following a visit by the Portuguese authorities and senior representatives of the European Commission to the Almaraz site on 27 February 2017, the Spanish authorities shared a substantial amount of detailed information on the environmental and safety aspects of the project for a temporary spent fuel storage facility. The amount and the quality of the information allowed for the comprehensive evaluation of potential trans-boundary effects of the Almaraz temporary spent fuel storage facility.

On this basis, the Portuguese authorities organised a public consultation enabling the Portuguese public to access information on the project in the same way as the Spanish public.

The analysis by the Portuguese authorities resulted in a number of conclusions and recommendations in order to safeguard the concerns of Portugal regarding the potential transboundary effects of the temporary spent fuel storage facility in their territory. These recommendations were presented to the Spanish authorities and the European Commission services, which agreed with the issues raised.

On view of the Portuguese report, the Spanish independent nuclear safety

authority – the Nuclear Safety Council (CSN) – informed that the measures the CSN will require from the operator will fully deal with the recommendations made.

In a reinforced spirit of cooperation, the parties have also agreed to continue exchanging information on the Almaraz temporary spent fuel storage facility. To this end, the Spanish authorities invited the Portuguese authorities to nominate representatives who will attend the annual information meeting organised in the Almaraz municipality informing the public on questions related to the operation of the Almaraz nuclear power plant. This invitation was accepted by the Portuguese authorities.

In addition, the Spanish authorities agreed to share with the Portuguese authorities any other relevant information about the temporary spent fuel storage facility to ensure access to information by both the Spanish and the Portuguese public.