

Committee Issues for MEP-BSR session in Vienna

1. Committee on International Trade (INTA)

The question of EU-AU relations.

In 2019 the African Union (AU) ratified its entry into the African Continental Free Trade Area, creating the world's largest free trade area, by EU model. The EU and the AU are long-standing partners where European investment has been key in job-creation growth in Africa. Now the relationship between Europe and Africa is shifting from Africa being the recipient of European aid to a trade partnership. Moreover, Chinese influence on the African continent has increased dramatically, potentially posing a threat to European and African interests. *How can the EU deepen economic and trade relations between Africa and Europe? How should the EU continue to support the African Union in harnessing its economic potential? How can the EU best promote European interests in Africa through aid and/or investment strategies?*

2. Committee on Development (DEVE)

The question of European enlargement policy for the Western Balkans.

The European Commission set a target of 2025 for Western Balkan EU accession, and negotiations are underway with candidate countries. However, there has been expressed 'Enlargement fatigue' among member states, and the processes have been delayed for candidate states in the Western Balkans towards accession. *How can the EU continue to foster stability, sustainable development, climate action and EU integration in the region? How should the EU proceed with its accession commitments to the Western Balkans?*

3. Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), Sub-Committee on Financial crimes, tax evasion and tax avoidance (TAX3)

The question of tax avoidance within the EU.

In recent years more and more multinational companies, such as but not limited to McDonald's, have been finding loopholes in member state tax regulations, which has led to decreased tax revenues for member states. In order to deal with this tax avoidance, the European Union and member states have attempted a bolder approach to enforcement and reform to ensure that large

multinational corporations pay their fair share of taxes. Despite these efforts, these corporations have stayed one step ahead of lawmakers and enforcement authorities, restructuring their businesses and shifting assets and cash flows.

How can current EU legislation with regards to tax avoidance be improved? Should the EU push for minimum standards of tax regulations? If not, what alternative measures can the EU implement to fight tax avoidance?

4. Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN)

The question of rail transport.

In the pursuit of the environmental goals of the Paris agreement, more transportation needs to be by train to cut carbon emissions. Today, the European rail network faces challenges in terms of the lack of integration and standardization between member states and outdated operational practices.

Which measures should the EU take towards an integrated European railway area? How can rail transport become a valid transportation alternative, for instance security, cost and convenience, for flying within the EU?

5. Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)

The question of democracy and transparency in the EU.

How could the EU become more transparent for the citizens in each member state?

Should there be democratic reforms to increase the accountability of EU politicians (e.g. commissioners) to the citizens? What other alternatives to increase democracy and transparency can be implemented in the EU? How can the EU best counter the arguments of the anti-EU parties?

Minor changes might occur/links to be provided

(May 2019)