The scheduling of a six-strong parliamentary delegation to Malta and Slovakia this week threatens to be thrown into disarray because of a clash with other events.

Parliament’s civil liberties committee is sending a delegation of MEPs to Malta and Slovakia to assess the rule of law, corruption and the safety of journalists.

The deputies were due to meet members of both governments, police and judicial authorities, journalists and NGOs.

Meetings are also scheduled with representatives of the families of murdered journalists Ján Kuciak, from Slovakia, and Maltese reporter Daphne Caruana Galizia.
However, on the day MEPs arrive in Bratislava the Slovak cabinet will be in Kosice on Monday to meet with the Czech government to jointly celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia.

Meanwhile, a meeting due to take place on Thursday in Malta with Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat looks unlikely to go ahead because Muscat is expected to be in Salzburg for an informal summit of EU leaders, which also includes Parliament’s President Antonio Tajani.

On Monday, a parliamentary source said the delegation will follow up previous missions to both countries after the assassinations of Kuciak and Martina Kusnirova, and Caruana Galizia.

The new monitoring group on rule of law and the fight against corruption, set up within the civil liberties committee to address the situation in the two member states in particular, recommended a new visit to Bratislava and Valetta to gather further information on the murders.

Despite the apparent hiccup in scheduling, the source said that, in Slovakia, the MEPs still plan to see the country’s President Andrej Kiska, its Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini and representatives of the justice and interior ministries.

“They will meet special prosecutors, the national police chief and representatives of other law enforcement bodies, as well as several journalists and editors, and NGOs active in the fields of transparency and fighting corruption,” said the source.

In Malta, the deputies plan to meet justice and tourism ministers, and quiz the attorney general, the chief of justice, police authorities and the heads of the Malta Financial Services Authority and the Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit.

“The MEPs will also exchange views with journalists and representatives of the Daphne Project and discuss the situation with NGOs concerned with the rule of law and fighting corruption.”

The committee decided last May to establish a new working group to monitor the rule of law and fight against corruption within the EU, in particular, in Malta and Slovakia.

The delegation is chaired by Sophia in ‘t Veld, a Dutch ALDE group member, and is composed of one member from each of the mainstream political groups.

With a mandate due to expire on 31 December, the group is tasked with recommending specific actions such as meetings, hearings and missions. It will also present a final report to the committee summarising its conclusions.

As well as in ‘t Veld, the other delegation members are: Maltese EPP group member Roberta Metsola; Josef Weidenholzer, an Austrian Socialist; Romanian ECR MEP Monica Macovei and Sven Giegold, a German Greens deputy.

On Monday, none of the six MEPs were immediately available for comment.

Elsewhere, Parliament’s delegation for relations with Palestine will this week travel to the occupied territories to meet authorities, civil society bodies, community leaders and human rights defenders.

They will assess the political situation in the West Bank and Gaza and the prospects for a future Palestinian state given the US decision to recognise Jerusalem as capital of Israel and cut funding for UNRWA. They will also assess the human rights situation and look into the use of EU aid, EU-funded projects and the accelerated expansion of illegal Israeli settlements.
An international trade committee delegation will, meanwhile, go to Japan ahead of parliament’s approval vote, at the end of this year, on the recently-agreed economic partnership agreement.

MEPs will discuss various aspects of the trade deal, including timber trade, measures to help small and medium sized enterprises and the prospect of Japan ratifying certain labour standards.

Meanwhile, a foreign affairs committee delegation will travel to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to meet ministers and heads of parliamentary bodies and take stock of the implementation of EU-Kazakhstan cooperation agreement and the ongoing negotiations for a new agreement with Uzbekistan.

A Parliament source said, “They will seek to strengthen relations on nuclear non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, regional security, the rule of law, governance and human rights.”

About the author
Martin Banks is a senior reporter for the Parliament Magazine

Tags
Foreign Affairs [1]
Justice and Rights [2]

Categories
International Relations [3]
Public order, justice and rights [4]
LiveCivil Service Awards
Chief Nursing Officer for England's Summit
Women into Leadership
Youth Justice Convention
Socitm Spring Conference
NHSCC Annual Members' Event
Dods at Party Conference

Source URL: https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/busy-week-travel-ahead-meps

Links
[3] https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/international-relations