

Hearing of Commissioner-designate Hadja Lahbib



Hearing of designate commissioner Hadja Lahbib, Belgium, in the European Parliament in Brussels on the 06 November 2024

The Committees for Development, Women’s Rights, Civil Liberties and Environment questioned Hadja Lahbib, candidate for the Preparedness, Crisis Management and Equality portfolio.

Equality

In her introductory statement, Belgian Commissioner-designate Hadja Lahbib underscored that with crucial equality legislation already adopted in recent years, it is time to make sure the new rules are successfully applied across the EU, including the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

She announced that, on International Women’s Day on 8 March 2025, she will present a Roadmap for Women’s Rights that will serve as a guiding compass for future Gender Equality

Strategy from next year. She also promised targeted measures for a renewed post-2025 LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy, including positive incentives, a ban of conversion therapies and a new anti-racism strategy.

In response to questions from MEPs, she denied the alleged downgrading of the equality portfolio and underlined that she will have the same resources as current Equality Commissioner Helena Dalli. She committed to advancing specific issues such as the EU's adoption of a definition of rape based on consent, abortion rights, maternal surrogacy, rights of children and poverty, through dialogue and awareness raising, and above all based on respect for the individual rights of women, children and other vulnerable groups.

Preparedness

In order to prepare for future crises, Ms Lahbib called on the EU to apply an “all-hazard approach”, boosting coordination and involving all parts of society, in particular citizens. Building on the [Niinistö report](#) on strengthening EU civil and military preparedness and readiness, she plans to reinforce the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#), the [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#), and the [rescEU](#) strategic reserve, as key instruments of EU solidarity. Ms Lahbib will also work on developing a new strategy on medical countermeasures to address public health threats, which would include joint procurement and stockpiling.

Replying to MEP questions on how to enhance the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to ensure it serves vulnerable communities and maximises intra-EU solidarity, Ms Lahbib advocated a strategy encompassing civil and military defence, covering all types of disasters – health, environmental and others – and focusing not only on response but also on crisis prevention.

Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management

Ms Lahbib will push for a Commission-wide integrated approach to support fragile countries experiencing humanitarian crises, particularly through a more coherent application of the humanitarian-peace-development triple nexus. To reduce the humanitarian aid gap, Ms Lahbib will encourage EU member states to increase their funding, lobby new donors, and facilitate a larger role for private sector actors in developing and delivering humanitarian aid.

Responding to MEPs' questions about the Middle East and the situation in Gaza and Lebanon, she championed the EU's neutral approach to delivering humanitarian aid, advocating for the respect for international humanitarian law and defending the principles of the Geneva Conventions.

Press point

After the hearing, the Chairs of the Development, Women's rights, Environment and Civil Liberties committees [Barry Andrews](#) (Renew, IE), [Lina Galvez](#) (S&D, ES), [Javier Zarzalejos](#) (EPP, ES), [Antonio Decaro](#) (S&D, IT) held a [press point outside the meeting room](#).

Next steps

The committee chairs and political group coordinators of the four responsible committees will meet without delay after the hearing to assess the performance and qualification of the Commissioner-designate.

Based on the committees' recommendations, the Conference of Presidents (EP President Metsola and political group chairs) is set to conduct the final evaluation and declare the hearings closed on 21 November. Once the Conference of Presidents declares all hearings closed, the committees' evaluation letters will be published.

The election by MEPs of the full college of Commissioners (by a majority of the votes cast, by roll-call) is currently scheduled to take place during the 25-28 November plenary session in Strasbourg.

Further information

[EP hearing webpage: Commissioner-designate Hadja Lahbib](#)
[EP research service briefing on Hadja Lahbib portfolio](#)
[Recording of the hearing](#)
[Hearings Timetable](#)
[Committee on Development](#)
[Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality](#)
[Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#)
[Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety](#)

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