

**Plenary Announcements  
for Opening of European Parliament's March 2026 Plenary Session  
by the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola**

*Strasbourg, 9 March 2026*

*Checked against delivery*

**Events in Iran and the wider region**

Dear colleagues,

We have witnessed the events unfolding in Iran and the Middle East over the last days. This House has a proud history of standing with people in Iran - from our Sakharov Prize winners, to addresses in this chamber for women's day, to our call for sanctions on the regime and our leadership on the listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation.

And I know that we will continue to push for people in Iran to live in liberty and to choose their own destiny.

Iran's indiscriminate attacks on Gulf states are condemnable. They are the actions of a desperate regime, whose intent is to sow chaos across the region, and they must stop now and de-escalate.

We also know that people in Cyprus are concerned and I want to be unequivocal: you are not and will never be alone. European solidarity is real, tangible and by your side. We will send the clearest of messages that Europe stands firm and united. Because the security of Cyprus is the security of the European Union.

Any threat to Member States is totally unacceptable, and when our resolve is tested, we will see as we are seeing now: Europe acting as one.

And in the midst of all of this, we think of the people of Iran, who have waited through decades of darkness, and all those who have suffered at the hands of the regime's proxies.

For the thousands murdered, executed and forcibly disappeared. For the mothers who searched through basements piled with bodies. For the generations driven from their homes and condemned to exile. For every political prisoner tortured or unjustly imprisoned. For every son summarily hanged from a crane in a public square. For every innocent European held hostage by the IRGC. For all the victims of the terror this regime unleashed across the Middle East and beyond. For women, life, liberty. For Jina Mahsa Amini. For every voice forever silenced. After 47 years, it must be their time.

## **Political violence**

Dear colleagues,

I want to touch on a topic that I know has impacted all of us: we are witnessing a disturbing rise in political violence, fuelled by hyper-polarisation in our societies online, and a hateful rhetoric that has led to people being attacked, targeted and in some cases killed.

This House condemns political violence in the clearest terms, wherever it occurs and from whatever quarter it comes.

This Parliament stands against political violence without exception, and I want to underline that any political differences must be settled in the arena of public debate, without ever resorting to aggressive behaviour or violence, and I expect all of us elected to this House to be the best examples of that.

Our politics must be one of tolerance, of understanding that we do not always share the same view or outlook - but that our Europe must be one of pluralism and debate and this House stands as a proud example of how we can settle political differences.

## **Liège synagogue attack**

Dear colleagues,

In the early hours of this morning, the city of Liège in Belgium was woken by an explosion outside a synagogue. Thankfully, no one was injured, but the antisemitic intent behind such an act is unmistakable.

Our thoughts are with the people of Liège and with the entire Jewish community of Belgium. I know the Belgian authorities will do everything in their power to bring the perpetrators to justice.

But Europe must be a place where Jewish people can live openly, freely and without fear. Where a synagogue is a house of prayer and of community, not a target.

This House takes that responsibility extremely seriously, as you all know. And we are acting to combat antisemitism and religious hatred, to protect Jewish life, and to confront hate wherever it appears.

Jewish life belongs in Europe. And Europe will always defend it.