



# ACTIVITY REPORT

## 2019-2024

**SOCIALISTS**



**DEMOCRATS**



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YEARS



Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament

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# President's foreword



As we approach the close of what has to be one of the most extraordinary parliamentary terms we have ever faced, the S&D Group can look back at our achievements with pride and we can be hopeful for the future. Unexpected events sent shockwaves across the continent: a devastating pandemic, Russia's unacceptable aggression against Ukraine, the hike of energy and consumer prices and their severe impact on millions of families across Europe. These elements, along with the recent barbaric atrocities of the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel and its disproportionate response claiming the life of thousands of innocent civilians in Gaza and an appalling humanitarian catastrophe, have made the 2019-2024 mandate extremely challenging.

What is equally remarkable though is that throughout this turbulent period, our S&D Group and our PES family have shown exceptional resilience and strength.

The S&D Group has been the driving force behind some of the most notable accomplishments in the EU's recent history.

Together we have shown that it is both possible and necessary to reshape the way our Union works. We began this mandate in 2019 by delivering on our promise to ensure gender parity in the European Commission for the first time. During the pandemic, we proved that there was a credible alternative to the failed response to the 2008 crisis and the subsequent years of austerity. For the first time ever, we managed to establish a borrowing mechanism for the Union's needs. Our Group was key in ensuring that Next Generation EU channelled significant funding to our key priorities on climate change and on social investment. Our political family also made the Temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) possible.

Today we are witnessing how the military occupation of Ukraine by Putin's regime, with all its repercussions, is putting even more pressure on the existing challenges we face: the aftermath of the pandemic, climate change, energy crisis, social justice, state of democracy, equality and women's rights, to mention but a few. All these crises have truly been a wake-up call, and an opportunity for our Group to act on our political and policy agenda towards more integration, solidarity and sustainability.

What we have achieved in this mandate is significant: a European Climate Law and a European Green Deal with a just transition; economic governance based on sustainable development and a European

investment strategy through the Recovery and Resilience Fund. We have ensured a strong social agenda including a European minimum wage; legislation on platform workers; a European strategy to fight poverty and a European Child Guarantee. Our fight continued with the regulation of the digital economy to protect consumer rights, privacy and children; minimum corporate taxation; a European Gender Equality Strategy; and much, much more.

We are living in extraordinary times. In times of uncertainty, the best thing we can do for our democracies and for the EU is to strengthen our social policies. Over this mandate, the S&D Group has delivered on policies that have required a radical rethinking of our society. We have fought for, and now must deliver on, game-changing projects such as the European Green Deal, the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, Next Generation EU, the Rule of Law mechanism, and for changes on Tax Transparency. We have worked over the last five years to strengthen the EU's place in the world. All this can be summarised: we have fought to deliver a truly green agenda with a red heart.

Together, we have successfully initiated this shift, and I am sure that our Group will continue to work tirelessly to improve people's lives, and make sure the S&D Group leads across the Parliament in the next mandate.

**Iratxe García Pérez**  
S&D Group President

**“Our Group was key in ensuring that Next Generation EU channelled significant funding to our key priorities on climate change and on social investment.”**

# Introduction


The S&D Group has been unwavering in its efforts throughout the 2019-2024 mandate to change people's lives for the better. The last five years have been marked by unprecedented challenges that have required unparalleled action and decision-making from the EU.



As the leading progressive political group in the European Parliament, we have played a defining role in shaping policies and legislation that will advance social progress and that champion a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable future.

This report summarises the S&D Group's main achievements over this mandate and offers a snapshot of the work that we have carried out during this challenging period.





In response to the Covid-19 outbreak, Socialists and Democrats spearheaded the Recovery and Resilience Facility that kept our economies and societies afloat. These funds have helped Member States to recover from the Covid-19 crisis by pooling EU resources and investment. EU Funds have taken the form of grants and loans and are distributed according to the reform and investment needs in each Member State.



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# Standing with people during the pandemic

As a way to prevent massive unemployment as a result of the pandemic, we wasted no time in securing a temporary unemployment scheme. We came up with the solutions to support jobs and workers at a difficult time.

The S&D Group helped secure essential support for people and regions hardest hit and we quickly approved the use of cohesion funds to help people avoid unemployment and to provide medical equipment to save lives. At the same time, we modernised cohesion policy to make it fit for today's challenges, meaning more investment in the digital and green transition, as well as more funding for social projects, to ensure that no one is left behind.

By setting up a special committee on the Covid-19 pandemic, we fought hard to ensure that the EU is not only better equipped to respond to potential future health crises, but also better prepared.

Our solidarity with people went beyond the pandemic. In the ensuing cost of living crisis -made worse by Russia's aggression against Ukraine - the S&D Group has been at the forefront of addressing the growing concerns of EU citizens and businesses grappling with rising prices. We were the driving force with our 'Bring down the Bills' campaign to make the EU implement strategic measures to mitigate economic challenges.





By adopting targeted policies and fostering cooperation among Member States, the S&Ds focussed its efforts on ensuring that the EU stabilises its economies and alleviates the cost of living burden.

# Making social rights a reality

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For the Socialists and Democrats, Europe is about its people. Social rights are the fabric of our existence as a political family. Through a new Action Plan, we have enhanced the European Pillar of Social Rights to act as a shield to protect people's health, safety, workers' rights and living conditions.



“With over 95 million Europeans in 2021 at risk of poverty or social exclusion, we are continuing the fight for adequate minimum income schemes.”

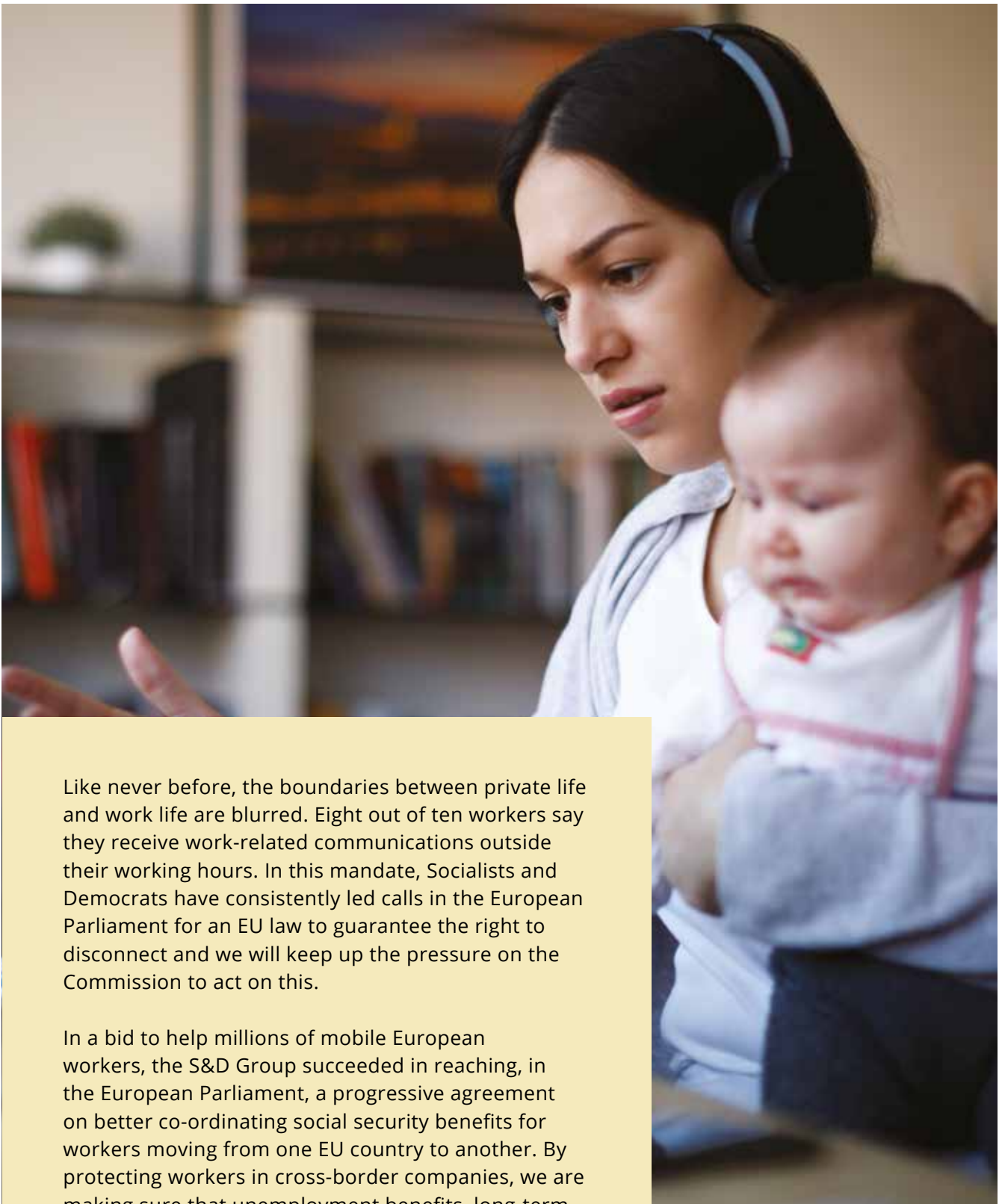
In a time of an exploding cost of living, the S&D Group led the charge in reaching an agreement on adequate minimum wages to boost salaries across Europe and strengthen collective bargaining to fight in-work poverty.

With one in five children living in poverty, Socialists and Democrats made the Child Guarantee a reality. We spearheaded the campaign to fight child poverty across Europe with decent housing and adequate nutrition, as well as free quality education, childcare and healthcare for all children.



The health of everyone matters. That's why we have taken a step forward in improving the health of EU workers, by updating EU rules on reducing workers' exposure to asbestos and carcinogens and tackling head on the number one work-related cause of death.

Under our leadership, the EU is setting a new global social standard on platform work. With new EU rules, we want to significantly improve the social and labour rights of gig earners working for big digital companies.



Like never before, the boundaries between private life and work life are blurred. Eight out of ten workers say they receive work-related communications outside their working hours. In this mandate, Socialists and Democrats have consistently led calls in the European Parliament for an EU law to guarantee the right to disconnect and we will keep up the pressure on the Commission to act on this.

In a bid to help millions of mobile European workers, the S&D Group succeeded in reaching, in the European Parliament, a progressive agreement on better co-ordinating social security benefits for workers moving from one EU country to another. By protecting workers in cross-border companies, we are making sure that unemployment benefits, long-term care and family benefits stay with them wherever they go in the EU.



The rising phenomenon of artificial intelligence (AI) comes with both risks and opportunities, especially at work. Under the new AI Act, we have put people at the centre and made sure that companies have an obligation to involve trade unions with a view to reaching an agreement before AI is used in the workplace.


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For the S&D Group, binding European minimum income schemes are essential to help families in need to pay the bills and live in dignity. With over 95 million Europeans in 2021 at risk of poverty or social exclusion, we are continuing the fight for adequate minimum income schemes.

The S&D Group is keeping its promise to young people in Europe. We are keeping up our fight for an EU law to ban unpaid traineeships. Trainees perform a real job so they need to be treated and paid fairly. We have resisted the attempts of the conservatives in the European Parliament to prevent legislation that would stop the abuse of trainees as a source of cheap or free labour.





# Protecting people and the planet with the European Green Deal

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From the start of this mandate, the S&D Group led the response to the climate crisis by linking our support for a von der Leyen Commission with support for the European Green Deal. The European Climate Law was adopted in 2021 and the ambition to make Europe's economy and society climate-neutral by 2050 was written into law. Our political family fought for the Just Transition Mechanism to ensure that no one was left behind in the transition to a climate-neutral EU.

Through the Fit for 55 package, we worked responsibly towards the reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 covering industry, maritime, road transport, buildings and the agricultural sector. With the Social Climate Fund, the S&D Group fought and won for the first time on a dedicated redistributive social policy tool to support vulnerable citizens in the transition towards a carbon-free EU.

Championed by our political family, the new Nature Restoration Law is the most cost-effective measure in our battle against climate change, as healthy ecosystems will absorb more CO<sub>2</sub>, and will revitalise degraded soil and support essential pollinators, ensuring food security and agricultural sustainability. For the S&D Group, serial polluters are criminals and we need to be much tougher on environmental crimes. We supported EU measures to investigate and prosecute criminal offences against the environment, whether it is deforestation, chemical pollution or illegal recycling.





Under the leadership of the S&D Group, the Parliament has an ambitious position on improving air quality in the EU. Air pollution is responsible for nearly 300,000 premature deaths and we lay out a clear roadmap on how to achieve zero air pollution by 2050.

Soil plays an essential role in our environment, providing food, purified water, biodiversity, and playing a part in climate regulation and this is why the S&D Group has pushed for a co-ordinated response to protecting soil in the EU.

Renewable energy has an important role to play in achieving both our climate ambitions and energy security. Our realistic approach, that also takes into account people's energy bills, meant that we secured an agreement that raises the share of renewable energy in the EU's overall energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030. As part of our climate commitments, the Socialists and Democrats also managed to deliver a new Energy Efficiency Directive that makes energy savings of 11.7% by 2030 mandatory.

# Fighting for Women's Rights

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In the face of the terrible attacks on women's lives that we have seen in some Member States over the last five years, our political family has resisted these with strength and determination. We have also seen during this mandate, S&D Members fighting and winning some significant political achievements in the pursuit of gender equality. One notable milestone has been the push for increased representation of women on company boards, a crucial step towards dismantling gender barriers in the corporate world.

A woman with dark hair styled up, wearing a vibrant green sleeveless top with a ruffled front and a black watch on her left wrist, stands on a modern staircase with a metal railing. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is blurred, showing other people and the architectural details of the building.

“Governments and organisations have recognised the need to break the glass ceiling and empower women to assume leadership positions, fostering a more inclusive and diverse business environment.”



Addressing the pervasive issue of the gender pay gap, we have exerted our political efforts on advocating for pay transparency. By requiring companies to disclose salary information, these initiatives aim to expose and rectify wage disparities between men and women. This transparency not only holds organisations accountable, but also encourages fair compensation practices, thereby narrowing the income gap and promoting economic equity.

The Socialist and Democrats have remained unyielding in their commitment to combat violence against women. Our efforts encompass both preventative measures and support systems for

victims, fostering a safer environment and reinforcing the principle that violence against women is unequivocally unacceptable. Our continued push for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU stands as another significant achievement during this mandate. The Convention creates a legal framework across Europe to protect women against violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. The commitment to implement such measures reflects a united front in recognising the urgency of gender based violence and ensuring the fundamental right to live free from violence.





Furthermore, a pivotal step toward ensuring justice and protecting women's rights has been the push towards recognition of non-consensual sex as rape across all EU countries. This legislative change would affirm that consent is paramount and that any violation of an individual's autonomy will be treated with the gravity it deserves. The S&Ds will continue to push for this legislative change.

This is why we, as Social Democrats, continually intensify our efforts in the fight for equality for men and women in every sector of life. Raising awareness is not enough: we continue every day to call on the EU Commission and all EU Member States to gender mainstream all policies on local, national and European level and to implement gender budgeting on all levels.

“The Socialists and Democrats supported the EU’s minimum effective tax rate of 15% for multinational companies. This global tax deal relies on the EU taking the lead on tax justice and is expected to add €48 billion per year to the EU’s revenues.”

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white sweater, is seated at a dark green table. She is looking down and counting several Euro banknotes. On the table in front of her are more Euro banknotes and some papers. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a white sofa and a wooden chair.

# Building a fair economy for all

The Covid-19 pandemic and the energy crisis showed the need for more flexibility in the EU's fiscal rules. We have made it clear that we reject a return to austerity and support more investment in building our future together.

We have consistently made the case for new own resources for the EU budget, so that we can guarantee investment in key policies in the coming years. Citizens expect a lot from the EU and only a strong budget can deliver.



With the aim of delivering greater tax justice for citizens, the S&D Group has led the fight for tax transparency for multinationals. Companies making more than €750 million per year and with operations in more than one country will have to publish details of their profits, staff and taxes. A fair economy means making sure that companies have to disclose their environmental and social footprint as well.

With the Digital Services Act, the S&D Group has set the new gold standard for digital regulation, not just in Europe but also around the world. We have reset the rules to work for consumers and users, not just for Big Tech companies. We have made sure that what is illegal offline is illegal online too.



Thanks to the S&D Group, consumers will no longer have to buy a new charger every time they buy a new mobile phone, camera or laptop. A single charger for multiple electronic devices is both good for consumers and good for the planet and the Socialists and Democrats made it a reality.

Socialists and Democrats can be proud of the work we have done on beefing up the fight against money laundering. We introduced a new single rulebook that brings together fragmented national rules as well as a new EU agency to fight money laundering and terrorist financing.



The Socialists and Democrats are also leading the way on new 'Right to Repair' legislation where we want to promote a more sustainable consumption of goods, protect the environment and save consumers' money.

The S&D Group also led on strengthening the stability and resilience in EU banks, protecting them from future economic shocks and helping us achieve climate goals through green investments.

Because of the damage it does to our health, our planet and our economy, we put the 'take, make, dispose' model for products in the bin. Thanks to our work on the Ecodesign Directive, sustainable products will become the norm, allowing consumers to save energy, repair and make smart environmental choices when they are shopping.



# Promoting the Rule of Law and Democracy



Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are founding values of the EU. However, they are under attack in some Member States and the consensus on our common values is at risk. In the face of these attacks, the S&D Group has been a dedicated defender of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU.

The S&D Group has been delivering on its promise to reinforce democratic values and uphold the rule of law globally. One landmark achievement has been the establishment of a ground breaking conditionality mechanism that links EU funds to the respect for the rule of law. This represents a bold step toward ensuring that financial support is contingent upon the preservation of democratic principles, judicial independence, and the protection of fundamental rights. By attaching consequences to the violation of these principles, the group has been at the forefront of the commitment to fostering accountable governance among EU Member States such as Hungary.



The Socialists and Democrats fought for the Annual Rule of Law Report that stands as another pillar of the EU's commitment to upholding democratic standards. This comprehensive report assesses the state of the rule of law across all Member States, providing a transparent and objective evaluation. By highlighting areas of concern and progress, the report serves as a tool for constructive dialogue and collaboration among Member States, promoting a shared commitment to democratic values. The S&D Group has been at the forefront of the work on this report.

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With the importance of the critical role of a free press in a thriving democracy, the S&D Group has actively defended media freedom and worked to protect journalists. We were at the forefront of the fight against SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation). These are unfounded and abusive legal procedures, used by the powerful and wealthy, to try to dissuade critical voices from bringing issues of public interest to light. We succeeded in inserting into the law participation in the proceedings of NGOs, trade unions and other parties with legitimate interest in support of defendants. We also introduced measures regarding legal, psychological and financial assistance through a single point of contact to those that are victims of SLAPPs.

Our democracies are increasingly targeted by Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference. This has a worrying impact on our democratic processes, public discourse and elections. At the initiative of our former EP President David Sassoli, the S&D Group played a leading, proactive role in responding to foreign interference, by establishing a dedicated special committee. Under our leadership, we proposed a series of measures on how to limit foreign interference including in the online sphere, how to ensure free and open elections and how to enhance transparency of political processes, including in our own elections.

The Group was fully behind the decision of the EU to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia signalling our commitment to fostering stability, democracy, and prosperity in the Western Balkans. Simultaneously, we also pushed for the candidate status to accession for Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, acknowledging their aspirations for closer ties with the Union, and for reforms in Georgia in the same spirit. Our work on this reflects a commitment to supporting these countries in their pursuit of democratic reforms, economic development, and enhanced cooperation with the EU.

# Supporting Ukraine against Russia's war of aggression



In the tumultuous landscape of international politics, the Socialists and Democrats have shown we are committed to forge an effective and unified response to Russia's war of aggression. Recognising the gravity of the situation, the EU, with the S&D Group as a driving force, swiftly rallied its Member States to stand together in the face of adversity.

“The S&D Group has played a vital role in ensuring the EU’s commitment to boosting energy security and independence which is a crucial stride towards resilience.”

We have been at the cornerstone of the EU's achievements, not only ensuring effective humanitarian aid but also bolstering Ukraine's military capabilities and providing crucial economic assistance. This multifaceted approach underscores the EU's commitment to fostering stability and resilience in the region. Promoting accountability for Russia's crime of aggression and its war crimes has been another important accomplishment for the S&D during this mandate. We have pushed actively to pursue justice, working tirelessly to ensure that those responsible for atrocities are held accountable. This commitment sends a powerful message to the international community about our dedication to upholding human rights and justice, even in the face of geopolitical challenges.

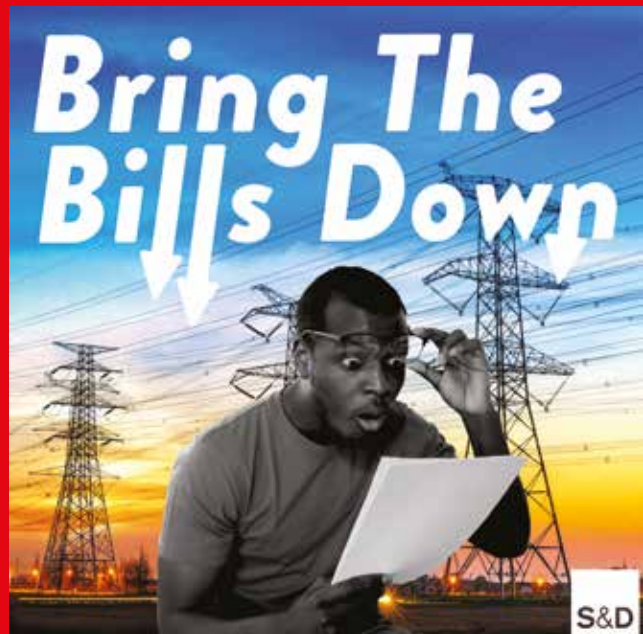
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In response to Russian aggression, the S&D Group has been a leading force in ensuring that the EU has implemented robust sanctions, demonstrating a commitment to economic consequences for hostile actions. These measures show our resolve to protect the principles of international law and the rules-based international order as much as EU's values and the well-being of its citizens.

The S&D Group has played a vital role in ensuring the EU's commitment to boosting energy security and independence which is a crucial stride towards resilience.





The Strategic Compass, a key tool for the EU's Open Strategic Autonomy, underscores the EU's commitment to enhancing security and defence capabilities. The Socialists and Democrats championed this strategic framework. It enables Member States to align their efforts, fostering a collective approach to safeguarding the Union's interests and citizens.



Our support for smarter spending and joint procurement in the defence industry highlights our dedication to efficiency and collaborative innovation. By streamlining resources and encouraging cooperation, we ensure a robust defence capability while maximising fiscal responsibility.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine placed a black cloud over the EU for much of this mandate. However, the S&D Group's response always reflects a commitment to unity, accountability, and resilience. Through multifaceted strategies, the S&Ds have shown how the EU can shape a future where its citizens are protected, its values upheld, and its security fortified.



A photograph of a landscape at sunset or sunrise, with a European Union flag on the right side. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, and the ground is covered in grass. The flag is partially visible, showing the blue field with yellow stars.

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# Strengthening international solidarity





During the 2019-2024 mandate, the Socialists and Democrats have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to strengthening international solidarity through a series of noteworthy achievements. We have embraced the principles of equal partnerships and multilateralism to ensure that the EU emerges as a global leader in promoting co-operation for shared goals.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Amongst our accomplishments have been the S&D Group's renewed focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), placing them at the forefront of the EU's agenda. This commitment underscores our dedication to addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality and climate change.

In the area of trade policy, we have taken bold steps by prioritising the environment climate, human rights and workers' rights in our trade negotiations. A ground-breaking move includes holding companies accountable for the environmental and social impact

of their production, as well as our push for banning products manufactured through forced labour entering the EU market. We will do our utmost to make these changes a reality without delay.

To ensure sustainable practices in extractive industries of developing countries, S&D Members have actively worked towards making these industries more responsible and environmentally friendly. The implementation of the EU human rights sanctions regime reflects a commitment to upholding human rights globally, sending a clear message against impunity.

Building connections worldwide through the Global Gateway initiative has been another achievement from S&D Members, fostering international collaboration and understanding. The EU Global Health Strategy and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum mark strides towards a comprehensive and sustainable approach to health and migration challenges.

Despite these accomplishments, there are demands for further progress. We advocate for the establishment of an EU Search and Rescue Mission, emphasising the importance of prioritising human lives in crises.

Additionally, the S&Ds remain steadfast in their work to halt the outsourcing of external migration policy, ensuring that human rights are not compromised in the pursuit of managing migration challenges in a pragmatic and humane way.

The S&D Group's political achievements during this mandate reflect a dedication to global solidarity, with a focus on sustainability, human rights, and co-operation. These milestones not only position the EU as a prominent international actor, but also underscore its commitment to building a more just and equitable world.



# About the Socialists & Democrats Group

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The S&D Group is represented by 141 MEPs across 26 EU countries. The S&D Group is the second largest political group in the European Parliament and our MEPs work in all parliamentary committees and interparliamentary delegations.

We stand for an inclusive European society based on the principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness. We campaign for social justice, jobs and growth, consumer rights, sustainable development, financial market reforms and human rights in order to create a stronger and more democratic Europe and a better future for all citizens.

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