



Plenary Update

Socialists & Democrats Group
in the European Parliament
Strasbourg | January 2018 Plenary session

PRESS CONFERENCE

with Gianni Pittella
Tuesday at 10.10
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Our Priorities

► *Wed, 17* **Debate with the Taoiseach of Ireland, Leo Varadkar, on the future of Europe**

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A new impetus to economic growth through a reform of the eurozone governance, fighting tax fraud, translating the social pillar into real legislative measures and approving as soon as possible the reform of the Dublin system: these are some of the key priorities the S&D Group will support in next week's debates. We will also express to the Prime Minister of Ireland our dissatisfaction on his recent remarks concerning fiscal harmonisation: the establishment of a common European corporate tax remains our priority.



PITTELLA
Gianni

► *Tue, 16* **The situation in Kenya**

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After a troubled electoral year, the situation in Kenya is still very tense. As Socialists and Democrats, we wish to reiterate our support to the Kenyan people who were so keen to participate in a democratic life. Since the disappointment of last year's presidential elections, the intransigence of political forces has continued. In the European Parliament, we are extremely worried about the future of the country, especially in light of the reports of use of excessive force by the police and the serious situation of human rights defenders on the ground. We encourage all political forces in Kenya to genuinely engage in constructive dialogue in order to find solutions to the deep crisis in which the country finds itself.



WARD Julie

► *Mon, 15* **Promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources**

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The European Commission was too timid in its proposal, and these times require more ambition. If Europe wants to fulfil its Paris commitments, to fight climate change and to lead the energy transition, we need to do more.

The S&D Group was able to achieve at committee level a broad consensus for a significantly higher 2030 target of renewable energy, raising it from the 27% proposed by the Commission to the 35%. We also managed to reinforce self-consumption as a right, to bring security and certainty to investors, to raise the ambition for de-carbonising the transport sector, as well as the heating and cooling sectors.



BLANCO
LÓPEZ José

With these goals, we will not only advance in the transition towards a de-carbonised economy, but we will also strengthen our energy security and our economy, also creating highly-qualified jobs. We hope that the Council and Commission will be up to the task during the inter-institutional negotiations.

► *Mon, 15* **Energy efficiency**

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Energy efficiency has been the S&D's first approach to energy policy in recent years. We need to have an ambitious policy in this area in order to achieve our climate and energy goals as soon as possible. Higher efficiency targets will reduce the dependency on energy imports, contribute to economic growth and to job creation. It is also an integral part of our strategy to eliminate energy poverty in Europe by reducing energy costs for millions of households across the Union. The Parliament's energy committee adopted a strong report fully in line with the S&D Group's priorities. Our aim is to maintain this high level of ambition by voting in favour of the 40% European target, binding national targets and strong obligations to renovate building stock, to fight energy poverty and to reduce loopholes on annual saving obligations.



POCHE
Miroslav

► *Tues, 16* **EU support to the Colombian peace process**

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This debate on Colombia should have ended with the approval of a resolution. Unfortunately, this is not the case because EPP, ECR and ALDE opposed the very idea of approving a new resolution in support of Colombia's peace process. This is a mistake, for several reasons:

Firstly, because the peace process needs renewed proof of the European Parliament's support. The Colombian elections are close, but their results should not cause an interruption of the Peace Agreement implementation, and the Parliament should have said so.

Secondly, because there is a new kind of violence, caused by the narco, which is negatively attacking the life and security of the Colombian people. The European Parliament should denounce this problem.

Finally yet importantly, the European Parliament should encourage the dialogue between the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Government, so that the armed groups finally disappear from Colombia.



**JÁUREGUI
ATONDO**
Ramón

► *Wed, 17* **Jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility and international child abduction**

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The new Brussels IIa regulation improves existing rules with regard to legal and administrative decisions in cross-border matrimonial matters and parental responsibility disputes related to custody, access rights and child abduction. As disputes between parents and the separation of parents can be traumatic for a child, judicial proceedings must clarify the child's situation as quickly as possible by taking into account the best interests of the child. Our Group welcomes the recast of Brussels IIa that aims to enhance co-operation between the authorities of the member states. Furthermore, we managed to achieve more improvements, especially regarding a child's right to be heard in a proceeding, as well as to strengthen mediation between parents in order to reach a common settlement. However, our group regrets that the scope of Brussels IIa does not include registered partnerships, an arrangement chosen mostly by same-sex couples. This marks a missed opportunity to reach more equality.



GEBHARDT
Evelyne

► *Thu, 18* **Implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive and the need for reform in professional Services**

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Today there are over 5,500 regulated professions across the EU, with significant variations between member states, representing 22% of the labour force in all sectors of activities, such as health and social services, business services, construction, network services, transport, tourism, real estate, public services and education.

The report stresses that an effective and fair regulation of professions in the EU is beneficial for citizens, consumers and professionals; at the same time, we recall that member states are free to introduce new regulations or to amend existing rules restricting access to or pursuit of regulated professions, reflecting their vision for society and their socio-economic context, as long as they are justified by public interest objectives and they are proportionate and non-discriminatory.

The report also highlights the fundamental role played by the professions in the EU's economy and believes, furthermore, that the quality of professional services is of paramount importance to preserve the European economic, social and cultural model.



DANTI Nicola

► *Mon, 15* **Conservation of fishery resources and protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures**

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Technical measures are rules that establish how and where fishermen may fish. Currently, there are more than 30 different regulations and acts containing technical measures. A reform of this complex and fragmented legislative framework is long awaited by fishermen. The S&D Group believes that simplification and regionalisation should be the guiding principles of the new regulation, in line with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and with the aim of ensuring environmental and socio-economic sustainability of the fishery sector.



BRIANO
Renata



BOȘTINARU
Victor

There are still unknowns surrounding the protests in Iran, including the fact that the protests have been welcomed by the hardliners and conservatives in opposition. Therefore, we have to position ourselves with caution and continue monitoring a very fluid situation while condemning any disproportionate use of violence, show unequivocal support to freedom of expression and call for the respect of human rights. We shall firmly condemn the death of 21 young protesters on the streets and in the Iranian prisons.

The main grievances appear to be related to a socio-economic stagnation. In this context, it is important to emphasize that the benefits of the nuclear deal didn't as yet match the expectations of the Iranian population. This being partially due to the remaining sanctions (mostly the US ones) but also to the persistent impediments of the Iranian economic and political system. Considering this, it is very important to reiterate the EU's and the international community's support for the full implementation of the deal.

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About the S&D Group

The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (the S&D Group) is the second largest political group in the European Parliament with 189 members from all 28 EU member states. We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness. We promote social justice, jobs and growth, consumer rights, sustainable development, financial market reforms and human rights to create a stronger and more democratic Europe and a better future for all citizens.

