



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Gianni Pittella
Tuesday 16 December at 10.10 LOW N-1/201

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**Gianni
Pittella**

Preparations for the European Council meeting (18-19 December 2014)

+ 33 3 88 17 5159 gianni.pittella@europarl.europa.eu

Wednesday 17 December 2014

The next European Council will be crucial. We should take further steps forward from Juncker's plan and give member states more effective ways to manoeuvre within the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), including the neutralisation of national contributions to the European fund for strategic investments and for selected EU projects. These two key measures could be implemented without changing the Stability and Growth Pact. We also encourage institutional investors and national investment banks to participate in the plan. The goal of the Socialists and Democrats' Group is to realise this great revolution, bearing in mind that nowadays a mere diligent accountant's approach would represent the best ally of populists and Eurosceptics across Europe. Long-term political strategy has to prevail. The European economy is one and can only recover if member states have the ability to relaunch their economies and implement effective and significant reforms.



**Richard
Howitt**

The recognition of Palestinian statehood

+ 33 3 88 17 5477 richard.howitt@europarl.europa.eu

Wednesday 17 December 2014

On Wednesday, the European Parliament is scheduled to vote on a resolution initiated by the Socialists and Democrats Group in favour of official recognition of Palestinian statehood. National parties in the S&D family in Spain, France, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Belgium and the United Kingdom have proposed recognition of Palestine and we are proud that the S&D Group is now doing so in the European Parliament to encourage all EU member countries to respond. We recognise that a final and lasting peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through successful negotiations with full security for Israelis as well as Palestinians. But we believe Palestinian statehood can add pressure to end long years of lack of progress and represents a fully justifiable concrete step towards the two-state solution.



**Birgit
Sippel**

Situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration

+ 33 3 88 17 5559 birgit.sippel@europarl.europa.eu

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On the initiative of the S&D Group, the European Parliament will vote on a resolution setting out the need for the EU to adopt a more holistic approach to migration. Therefore, the Parliament will look in detail at the various elements which would be necessary for this approach, including: legal and safe access to the EU's asylum system; more possibilities for legal migration; improving the management of emergency situations; the current and future use of EU funds; co-operation with third countries; and more consistency between EU migration, development and foreign policies. This resolution can give the S&D Group the tools needed to push the Parliament into taking an ambitious step forward and finally examining all the interconnected areas of migration.



**Matthias
Groote**

Objection to RPS measure - Fuel Quality Directive

+ 33 3 88 17 5431 matthias.groote@europarl.europa.eu

Monday 15 December 2014

The Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) is one of the key EU policies that were adopted as part of the climate and energy package in 2009. The directive was intended to reduce pollution in the transport sector and foster decarbonisation. The Commission recently presented an implementing measure which proposes a specific calculation methodology for fuels. While the S&D Group generally welcomes the long overdue implementation of the FQD, it opposes the methodology proposed by the Commission since it certifies environmentally harmful fuels such as tar sands that have almost the same greenhouse gas (GHG) footprint as conventional fossil fuels. Applying the Fuel Quality Directive swiftly is of utmost importance to the S&D Group. However, we cannot accept such a watered-down implementing measure which will undermine EU standards as a trade-off for the conclusion of trade agreements, in this case, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. Therefore the S&D Group asks the Commission to withdraw the current proposal and to present a new proposal in line with the targets of the legislation as soon as possible.



Eider Gardiazabal

General budget of the EU for the financial year 2015

+ 33 3 88 17 5333

eider.gardiazabalrubial@europarl.europa.eu

Tuesday 16 December 2014

We secured a substantial amount of funding to ease the strain on contractors such as small and medium-sized enterprises, local collectives and non-governmental players. Nevertheless this is far from what we wanted. It must be borne in mind that even though the EU budget is only 1% of the EU's GDP, it must act as a magnet to encourage other investors to join in.



Andrejs Mamikins

Association agreement with Georgia

+ 33 3 88 17 5373

andrejs.mamikins@europarl.europa.eu

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The European Parliament's ratification of the association agreement with Georgia has opened a new chapter in the European Union's relations with this country. Georgia has made significant progress in reforms and strengthening its relations with the EU. We welcome recent judicial reforms designed to strengthen Georgia's democratic institutions and support further democratisation of Georgian society. Although there is still a lot of work to be done in future, previous experience shows that Georgians prefer to solve problems, not avoid them. Europe should now show real solidarity with Georgia and its people.



Norbert Neuser

Shortage of funding for the World Food Programme aid scheme to Syrian refugees

+ 33 3 88 17 5892

norbert.neuser@europarl.europa.eu

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Last week, the World Food Programme suspended its food aid scheme to more than 1.7 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt due to a shortage of funding from the global community, including from the EU. We welcome the public mobilisation to fill the funding gap and allow the WFP to reinstate its assistance. However, there is increased pressure on budgets for humanitarian assistance and we must look at solutions to make sure EU countries live up to the commitments they make to the world's most needy – it must remain our responsibility and our priority.



Sorin Moisa

Autonomous trade preferences for the Republic of Moldova

+33 3 88 17 5705

sorin.moisa@europarl.europa.eu

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The S&D Group is committed to supporting Moldova and its citizens who are facing serious economic difficulties, particularly due to the import ban on Moldovan agricultural products, imposed by Russia in July 2014. It is widely assumed that Moldova has been punished by Russia for having chosen stronger ties with the EU through the EU-Moldova Association Agreement. The Commission's proposal would grant Moldova additional duty-free tariff quotas for fresh apples, grapes and plums under the existing Autonomous Trade Preferences regime (due to expire in December 2015). This would provide immediate relief to the Moldovan economy while having a negligible impact on the EU market.



Claude Moraes

Renewing the EU Internal Security Strategy (ISS)

+ 33 3 88 17 5553

claudemoraes@europarl.europa.eu

Wednesday 17 December 2014

The EU desperately needs a holistic approach in order to address the rapidly changing security threats facing Europe, including foreign fighters and cyber-security threats. Importantly, fostering a joined-up approach will promote policies centred on fundamental rights such as the right to privacy, which is why this resolution specifically refers to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling on data retention. The resolution marks the beginning of an extensive and informed debate in the area of internal security. We will continue to press for an internal security strategy which appropriately balances security with privacy rights.

MEDIA CONTACT

Head of Press & Communication Unit - **Utta Tuttlies** + 32 473 85 34 07

Paolo Alberti
+ 32 476 955 144

Solange Hélin-Villes
+ 32 476 510 172

Jan Bernas
President spokesperson
+ 32 471 64 87 77

Dimitris Komodromos
+ 32 474 622 884

Victoria Martin De La Torre
+ 32 473 234 173

S&D

www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu