



## Plenary Update

Progressive Alliance of  
Socialists and Democrats in the  
European Parliament  
Strasbourg Plenary Session May 2017

PRESS  
CONFERENCE  
with Gianni Pittella  
Tuesday at 10.10  
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### Our Priorities

► *Mon 15* **Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 29 April 2017**

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We welcome the adoption of the guidelines for the Brexit negotiations by the European Council. The Council has fully taken into consideration the Parliament's main political approach as expressed in the April resolution. The first priority for the negotiations will be to safeguard and guarantee the status and the rights of both EU and UK citizens and their families.

We share with the Council and the Commission the timeframe and sequence for an orderly Brexit. We also agree on the core principles to be followed during the negotiations: balance of rights and obligations, integrity of the single market and the assumption that no non-EU member state cannot have the same rights and benefits as a member.



PITTELLA  
Gianni

► *Tues 16* **Achieving the two-state solution in the Middle East**

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The S&D Group reiterates its strong support for the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – with the state of Israel within secure and recognised borders, and a sovereign, contiguous and viable state of Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security and mutual recognition along the 1967 borders, with mutually agreed land swaps and Jerusalem as capital of both states – as the only way of achieving a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The S&D Group reiterates its call for an immediate and complete end to the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law, undermine the two-state solution and constitute a major obstacle to peace efforts.



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► *Tues 16* **Situation in Hungary**

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The developments in Hungary over the last seven years have led to a serious deterioration of the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights. And again, in the last year, the Hungarian government has attempted to shut down an independent university, has attacked NGOs and has threatened the fundamental rights of asylum seekers. What is happening in Hungary is bigger than any individual action or law. We are seeing a systemic attack on the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law. Enough is enough. Next week Parliament will adopt a resolution calling for the triggering of the Article 7 (1) procedure. The EPP has to finally break the silence over Mr Orbán's attempt to turn an EU member state into an illiberal state.



SIPPEL,  
Birgit

► *Tues 16* **EU Strategy on Syria**

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The S&D Group supports the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Syrian state and desires a democratic future for the Syrian people. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the EU's high representative for foreign affairs, Federica Mogherini, to reach out to the key players in the region with a view to ensuring political transition, post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction.

Finding a credible solution for Syria involves a clear political transition, reconstruction and reconciliation but also maintaining the EU's support for the large number of refugees and displaced persons – in Syria, neighbouring countries and the wider region.

The S&Ds condemn in the strongest terms the atrocities and widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the regime, with the support of Russia and Iran backed-militias, as well as the human-rights abuses and violations of international law by non-state armed groups, in particular Daesh and other jihadist groups.

It is important to keep in mind that Syrian reconciliation can only be achieved through an early focus on accountability and justice for the numerous war crimes, human-rights abuses and violations of international law committed during this extremely violent conflict.



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► **Mon 15 Resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety**

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The EU, as one of the richest and most prosperous communities in the world, has a moral and political obligation to reduce the huge quantities of food wasted every year. Estimates show we waste 89 million tonnes of food a year. At the same time, 55 million of our citizens are unable to afford a good-quality meal every second day. There is food waste at every stage of the supply and consumption chain. That means there cannot be a single 'silver bullet' regulation that the EU can enforce to solve the problem. We need a co-ordinated policy response at EU and member state level that takes into account various related policies such as waste, food safety and information, but also aspects of economic, research and innovation, environment, agriculture, education and social policy.

► **Wed 17 State-of-play of the implementation of the Sustainability Compact in Bangladesh**

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A lot has already been achieved, but we cannot content ourselves with the current situation. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) issued a serious warning from its Committee on the Application of Standards last year regarding respect for the right to freedom of association. The Commission has called on the Bangladeshi government to take the necessary steps to address the ILO recommendations, which is the responsibility of the government of Bangladesh. The S&Ds are very concerned about reported dismissals and arrests of trade unionists as well as a perceived worsening of trade-union registrations.

We encourage the Bangladeshi government to address the four recommendations from the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards without further delay:

- 1) amend the Bangladesh Labour Act
- 2) ensure the law on the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) allows for full freedom of association
- 3) investigate all acts of anti-trade-union discrimination and tackle impunity against any violent acts against trade-unionists
- 4) ensure that applications for trade-union registrations are promptly acted upon and not denied without transparent and objective grounds.

The S&Ds strongly support the prolongation of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety, for the benefit of all stakeholders and Bangladesh. We will also continue to follow the implementation of the Sustainability Compact closely. If no concrete progress is achieved, the European Parliament, as co-legislator, will have no other option than to consider other steps, including the option under the General System of Preferences regulation to suspend Bangladesh's preferential access to the EU market.

► **Wed 17 Implementation of the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement**

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The Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Korea took effect in July 2011.

The most critical aspect of the implementation process is the failure on the Korean side to implement the provisions on trade and sustainable development, specifically with regard to labour rights. In recent times, there have been severe crackdowns on trade-union leaders by the Korean police. Some of them have been sentenced to up to five years in prison.

Our implementation report reminds the Korean side of its commitment to international labour standards and asks the Commission to press the Korean government for a quick implementation of the labour provisions.

► **wed 17 Road transport in the European Union**

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At the end of March the European Commission will present the so-called 'mobility package', which includes legislation on working and rest times for truck drivers, access to the haulage market and enforcement of social legislation. For the S&Ds it is important to guarantee a high level of social rights and strengthen the enforcement of the legislation. Our aim is to find a balanced approach to ensure free market access while ensuring that worker's rights are not bypassed and transport workers are not exploited by illegal practices.

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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.

### About the S&D Group

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.

