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S&Ds Times - Weekly Update. This Week's Highlights And What's Coming Up

Quote of the week by S&D president, Iratxe García Pérez

“We had a good and honest exchange with Ms. von der Leyen. However, we did not have enough answers, so we will write down our demands and we will assess her on the basis of the responses we receive. Some of our priorities, such as building a European migration policy based on human dignity and solidarity, will also demand action from the Council. However, we want to know whether we can count on the Commission to fight for it.

“Our Group will hold another debate ahead of the vote, where we will evaluate to what extent our demands can be fulfilled, and only then will we adopt a group position regarding the vote.”

The week ahead

Our MEPs head to Strasbourg again for the second time in three weeks, with another busy plenary ahead. The main issue on the agenda is whether the European Parliament will approve the nomination of Ursula von der Leyen as European Commission President. Ms von der Leyen will address the Parliament on Tuesday morning, with the vote on her candidature at 18.00 on Tuesday evening.

The S&D Group was deeply unhappy about the process that led to Ms von der Leyen’s nomination. We still believe that our lead candidate Frans Timmermans was by far the best-qualified candidate and was the person to deliver the change Europe needs. However, we are a responsible political group and have engaged constructively with the nominee for Commission President.

On Wednesday, Ms von der Leyen joined our group to put forward her political programme. Although some aspects were positive, large questions remain. Our Group leader **Iratxe García Pérez** has written a letter outlining our key demands and we will wait to see the responses to these, as well as listening to Ms von der Leyen next week, before deciding whether to vote in favour of the new Commission President.

The vote on the new Commission President is not the only important issue next week. On Wednesday, Parliament will debate the ongoing situation in the Mediterranean Sea, where NGOs and humanitarians are being criminalised for trying to stop people drowning. This is

completely unacceptable and the EU and national governments must urgently act to prevent this and stop more needless loss of life.

On Wednesday, Parliament will look back at the successes of a busy Romanian Presidency of the European Council and hear the priorities from the new Finnish Presidency. Parliament will also debate important foreign policy issues, including the latest developments in Iran, developments in Hong Kong, and situation of migrants at the USA-Mexican border.

Alongside the plenary schedule, the make-up of the various committees will be finalised with the final committee chairs and vice-chairs elected, and group coordinators confirmed. Parliament will also vote on the numerical strength of interparliamentary delegations.

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