

DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER

## Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 and 16 October 2020

As cases increase in Europe, we need common and standardised measures to be able to act against the COVID-19 pandemic. We sent a strong message to EU leaders ahead of the European Council that we need common criteria and measures on health, mobility and transport in order to be able to act with better results. We are ready to support research for a vaccine that is the only answer, not only within the European Union, but worldwide. In order to be able to tackle the consequences of the pandemic, we urgently need to unblock the negotiations in the Council. We urgently need the Recovery Plan now.



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## Commission Work Programme 2021

When the Commission presents the 2021 Work Programme, we expect to see more of the progressive agenda on the table. As well as a proper social dimension to the Green Deal and digital transition, we expect an effective action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. As we emerge from the pandemic, we need to make sure that the economic rules are fit-for-purpose with sustainable development at the heart of economic policy. The S&D Group is committed to making 2021 the EU's year of delivery. This week in plenary, we will be pushing the Commission to have all legislative initiatives on the table before the end of 2021 to allow the European Parliament and the Council time to reach an agreement and approve policies in a timely manner.



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## Common agricultural policy

We want a greener CAP with a red heart. We want to see a CAP that help farmers to compete at both the local and global level and that ensures high and common European standards of food quality and health safety. The CAP needs to remain a common endeavour across the EU which is why we say 'No' to any re-nationalization of CAP! The new CAP must have the tools to be in line with social, climate and environmental targets set by the Commission in the European Green Deal, biodiversity and the Farm to Fork strategy and it could be a decisive asset in our ambitions to reach carbon neutrality by 2050

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DEBATE ON MONDAY 19 OCTOBER - FINAL VOTE ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER

## Digital Services Act: Improving the functioning of the Single Market

We live in a digital world where digital services have become the new utilities of our time. Their importance for our social and economic lives will only continue to grow and we need to catch up with those new realities by creating a digital environment built on trust, choice, and with a high level of protection for all consumers, citizens, and SMEs. For the first time, we are introducing at EU level new concepts, such as 'Know Your Business Customer', ex-ante rules for the digital sectors, special responsibilities for online market places to guarantee the safety of our consumers, stricter rules on targeted advertising and AI mechanisms and a scope that will encompass companies established even outside the EU. This report is a much needed step towards the improvement of digital services and providing a better and safer digital environment to our citizens and consumers.



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## Digital Services Act: adapting commercial and civil law rules for commercial entities operating online

With digital services evolving every day, the rules that exist to make sure the digital sphere is fair and respects fundamental rights also need an update. Online platforms need clear rules and procedural standards on how to deal with content. The S&D Group does not want to put private companies in charge of policing the internet, but a clear notice and action system that provides legal clarity to platforms and guarantees the fundamental rights of users. For the S&D Group, it is important that the law fully applies in the digital world, both in terms of access to justice and enforcement. For example, when content is deleted, we want to make sure users are able to seek legal redress through fair and independent dispute settlement bodies in member states. When online services are not complying with the rules, we want to make sure there is a body in place, like a European agency, that has the teeth it needs to enforce the rules, for example with fines. Rules on content management can also help limit the viral

spread of hate speech and disinformation. We want to put users in charge of the content they see, rather than leave them at the mercy of profit-driven algorithms that prioritise attention-grabbing content. The best fight against harmful content is not censorship, but putting users in control of what content they are shown.



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**DEBATE ON MONDAY 19 OCTOBER - FINAL VOTE ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER**

### Framework of ethical aspects of artificial intelligence, robotics and related technologies

With Artificial Intelligence fast becoming part of our everyday lives, now is the time to look seriously at the opportunities and the risks these new technologies pose and at the same time work to make them more trustworthy for citizens. Now is the time to set binding standards in Europe on the ethical development, deployment and use of AI and to make it a world-leader in this context. The S&D Group has led the work in the European Parliament to ensure that we have future-proof and technologically neutral clear rules for the first time in the EU to apply to the development, deployment and use of socially responsible, egalitarian, non-discriminatory and sustainable AI technology, especially that which is considered high-risk. This involves adapting existing EU liability rules on the development, deployment and use of AI-related technologies in order to ensure compensation for all kinds of damages undergone by injured parties, including non-material ones, as well as guaranteeing the reversal of the full burden of proof to the benefit of the injured party to ensure consumer protection also in the digital sphere.



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### Obligations of the Commission in the field of visa reciprocity in accordance with Article 7 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806

Citizens in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania still need a visa to travel to enter the United States for short-stays, while all other EU citizens and US citizens can travel visa-free. The EU does not single out any US citizens by denying visa rights so the same must apply to all EU citizens. We cannot tolerate a situation where a third country treats a small number of Member States unfairly. We are calling on the Commission, as the Guardian of the Treaties, to follow its legal obligation and put into motion the suspension of visa reciprocity with the United States. This is not just a question of abiding by EU law, but a question of standing by our principles of solidarity in Europe and making it clear that there are no second class citizens in the EU. In the committee vote, the EPP Group yet again failed to stand up for citizens. This week, EPP MEPs have a second chance to send the message that it does not matter where in the EU you live, discrimination against any EU citizen is not acceptable.



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**DEBATE ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER**

### Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the VPC/HR on relations with Belarus

Next week the European Parliament will give its recommendations for the relations with Belarus. We do not recognise the result of the 9 August presidential elections, and repeat our call on Aleksandr Lukashenko to finally step down. There is no room for engagement with Belarusian authorities as long as the regime continues the brutal repression against the people. We support their legitimate demands for new free and fair elections and an end to the authoritarian rule. The EU must make sure that no EU financial assistance benefits this regime, while continuing to support civil society and the victims of repression. In the long term, the EU must review its policy towards Belarus and move from "critical engagement" to "critical re-assessment" and review its approach to Eastern Partnership countries that violate the joint commitments on democracy, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights



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