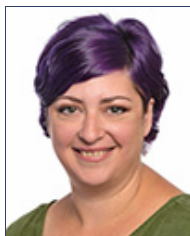


**DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER****The need for a European solution on asylum and migration including search and rescue**
Birgit Sippel, S&D spokesperson on migration

After only a few weeks in office, the new far right government in Italy has already stopped rescue boats carrying asylum-seekers from entering its ports. As a result, hundreds of vulnerable people in distress were redirected to France. While it is clear we need more solidarity and shared responsibility in the EU, disregarding legal obligations and fundamental rights, and using distressed people as pawns, is not the way to reach this goal. Now in the European Parliament we are focused on agreeing on new laws that ensure migration and asylum policy is not just the responsibility of a few countries. Solidarity between EU member states must go hand-in-hand with solidarity with the people who are suffering and who come to the EU for help. Portraying these asylum-seekers as the villains and depicting the essential rescue work of NGOs as criminal activity is wrong.

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**DEBATE ON MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER; VOTE ON THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER****Negotiations between the Commission and the Hungarian government on the Conditionality Mechanism and the frozen EU funds for Hungary**
Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, S&D MEP and co-negotiator on the issue from the European Parliament committee on budgets

We don't want to freeze money for the sake of punishing a government, be it the Hungarian or any other. It is about the rule of law being upheld in a member state in order to guarantee that our taxpayers' money is properly spent. The European Commission was clear there were deficiencies and shortcomings in the way in many areas in Hungary. Among the most flagrant deficiencies were the problems with public procurements. The 17 measures Hungary has to implement are in fact very poorly implemented by the national authorities. Only 2 out of 17 measures are adequately implemented. The Conditionality Mechanism does not work well when Hungary and the European Commission do not apply it correctly. Are the financial interest of the EU protected properly in Hungary? The clear and resounding answer to this is "No!" and so we ask the Commission to not unfreeze the EU funds. The problems with the rule of law in Hungary have not been solved and the EU budget is not safeguarded.

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**DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER****Eliminating violence against women**
Maria Noichl, S&D MEP and spokesperson on women's rights

S&D called for this debate ahead of the 25th of November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. This is important every year, but this year it is also the occasion to discuss the current directive proposal of the Commission. This is the necessary "plan B", given that the Istanbul Convention, the best legal instrument so far to combat violence against women, was not ratified by so many EU member states putting ideology first, instead of protecting women from violence and safeguarding their rights. It is high time to finally have a European wide approach to combat gender-based violence, to improve prevention measures, as well as Europe-wide data collection across the EU. We also must criminalise gender-based cyber violence and prosecute anyone who decides, accompanies, or is present while female genital mutilation (FGM) is being performed. Finally, the S&Ds have been long demanding to introduce a consent based definition of rape, which will ensure that 'no' means 'no' everywhere in the EU

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VOTE ON THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER

Outcome of the modernisation of Energy Charter Treaty

Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero, S&D spokesperson on trade

We have been saying for a long time that the Energy Charter Treaty is a barrier for climate actions, undermining our efforts to get rid of fossil fuels. Therefore, we have been calling for its revision. Although the modernised text brings some improvements, it still falls short of our demands. It is still not compatible with the Paris Agreement objectives. For example the deadline for phasing out fossil fuel protection is still too long if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Moreover, the core of the old investment protection model (ISDS) remains unchanged and poses new risks, increasing the risk of costly arbitration cases. That is why we need to start the process towards the EU's coordinated exit from the Energy Charter Treaty. This is the best option if we want the Union to remain true to its climate ambitions and close the door once and for all to the dangerous system of private arbitration.

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER, VOTE ON WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER

New EU strategy for enlargement

Tonino Picula, S&D spokesperson on foreign affairs and the European Parliament rapporteur on the new EU strategy for enlargement

By adopting my report, the European Parliament will send a clear signal to the member states that there must be no alternatives to substitute enlargement. The EU must deliver on its commitments towards the Western Balkans, and Eastern Partnership countries, namely Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, and enlargement must once again become an EU geopolitically strategic policy after several years of fatigue. But in order to be successful, EU should reform its decision-making by, for example, introducing qualified majority voting in areas relevant to the accession process. Enlargement must be properly conducted, putting the rule of law and democratic reforms at the heart of the process. Serbia, as any candidate country, should stop making a mockery of democracy and join EU sanctions against Russia. Otherwise, this will have consequences for its EU prospects, including the possible suspension of EU pre-accession funds.

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER

The reform of the EU fiscal rules in times of social and economic crisis

Biljana Borzan MEP, S&D vice-president for economic matters

Europe needs bold and decisive fiscal policies. The European Commission's outline of the reform of the EU fiscal rules, presented last week, heads in the right direction. Delivering fiscal adjustments in a way that allows for investments in a just transition is crucial for the future of Europe. We commend the Commission for acknowledging this pressing imperative. However, it is now time to put forward a legislative proposal that will include a European fiscal capacity. This is crucial to ensure that the above-mentioned investments are sustained.

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S&D Group press conference
Iratxe García Pérez, S&D president
Tuesday 22 November, 10.00 - 10.20
Daphne Caruana Galizia room - Strasbourg
Weiss N-1/201
Webstreaming here
<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/>

Journalists who want to participate and ask questions can connect via this link

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