



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Gianni Pittella
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Gianni Pittella

Current situation in the European Union – Statements by François Hollande and Angela Merkel

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Wednesday 7 October 2015

Only together can we tackle the challenges of our continent, only together can we compete in this new globalised world and only together can we face new political economic social and security threats. EU leaders must make a leap forward putting three major issues at the top of the EU's agenda. We need to see a new, reinforced, governance of the EU institutions; a plan for the mutualisation of sovereign debts; and a new larger investment programme. This must allow for greater flexibility and be devoted to growth and job creation. It must also reintroduce the European social agenda – the recognition of the social dimension in the monetary and economic union. EU leaders must continue to fight for a Europe of equality and social justice, sustainable and inclusive growth. Europe remains the best option for future generations because it is about jobs, equality and basic rights. Great importance must be given to cohesion policy as the main investment instrument in the EU, a way of bringing regions closer to the Union and as the pillar that ensures solidarity between member states. EU Member States need to better coordinate their internal and external policies and to raise public awareness on the sustainable goals. The S&D Group emphasises the urgent need for a strong Social Agenda, with decent social standards, greater investment in people and serious action to reduce inequalities. Europe is in dramatic need of real solutions, which can only be European solutions now. Europe needs a clear and unified response to tackle the migration and refugees crisis. The EU and its member states need a holistic long-term approach to migration based on a permanent and compulsory mechanism of redistribution, a clear revision of the Dublin Regulation and the creation of legal avenues for refugees to safely reach our shores.



Knut Fleckenstein

Debates on foreign affairs issues in the presence of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - TURKEY

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Wednesday 7 October 2015

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We are concerned about how the Turkish government deals with the Kurdish question and about the growing pressure on Turkish media in the run-up to the elections. In the run up to the new elections on 1 November, the deteriorating security situation in Turkey and the increased political tensions are very worrying. On top of that, the pressure on the media continues to severely harm the right of citizens to be well informed. This is not a climate in which free and fair elections can be guaranteed. The spiral of violence and intimidation must stop so voters can participate in the democratic process without fear.



Kati Piri

Debates on foreign affairs issues in the presence of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - SYRIA

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It is necessary to bring all parties concerned together in order to find a fast solution to the conflict in Syria. We support Federica Mogherini's approach. The S&D Group strongly supports renewed multilateral efforts to bring an end to the brutal civil war in Syria. In this sense, it welcomes the meeting between the presidents Barak Obama of USA and Vladimir Putin of Russia during the UN General Assembly on 28 September. The main priority should be to stop the civil war. The focus should be on the fight against the terrorist Daesh/IS, Jabhat Al-Nusra and other violent extremist organisations. To move towards such a solution, the S&D Group stresses that it is crucial to seize this momentum for diplomacy and calls for a new international peace conference on Syria. Such a conference should involve, without any preconditions, all relevant domestic Syrian actors, excluding terrorist organisations, as well as international and regional actors, such as EU, USA, Russia, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. We strongly support diplomatic efforts of the HR/VP Federica Mogherini to find a political solution to the civil war in Syria.



Victor Bostinaru



Constanze Krehl

Common provisions (CPR) on European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds): specific measures for Greece

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Monday 5 October 2015

The economic and financial crisis has had a strong bearing on Greece. As a result, Greece has been struggling with a lack of liquidity and public means for investments in its people and the broader economy. Against this background, the EU needs to rapidly send out a message of solidarity to Greece by backing the Commission proposal to amend the existing CPR on ESI Funds, which would, among other measures, increase the EU co-financing rate to 100% for the 2007-2013 round of Cohesion Policy programmes. It is important that we are not losing more time and adopt the draft regulation quickly, so that Greece can be saved from the danger of losing out on key EU funding still available under the 2007-2013 financing period.



Massimo Paolucci

Limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air

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Tuesday 6 October 2015

The Directive on Medium Combustion Plants will regulate, for the first time in the European Union, a major source of air pollution. Its approval will represent a first step in the right direction under the Air Quality Package the European Commission presented last year. Poor air quality is a serious threat to health and the environment. During the negotiations S&D pushed for ambitious emission limit values for new medium combustion plants and a limited number of derogations and shorter compliance timelines for existing plants. We also managed to get Member States' consent to monitoring carbon monoxide emissions from such plants, which will provide the European Commission with useful data for new legislative proposals. Several zones within the Union still do not comply with EU air quality standards despite the harmful effect of air pollution on European citizens' health. Member States will now be obliged to assess the need for stricter emission limit values in such areas.



Inès Ayala Sender

Equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation

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Thursday 8 October 2015

Austerity & the economic crisis have hit harder women. The crisis has further increased the salary gap with men. Women tend to occupy more precarious jobs, have more and more difficulties to conciliate family-life with work and are less represented in top positions. The S&D Group calls for the proper implementation and enforcement of this directive and urges employers to implement the equal pay treatment in their businesses, including compulsory representation of women in management positions.



Pier Antonio Panzeri

Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement on the general principles for the participation of Tunisia in Union programmes

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Wednesday 7 October 2015

Tunisia was the birthplace of the Arab Spring. Thus far, it is the only country in the MENA region to survive this social and political experiment. The success of Tunisia's transition to democracy will depend on its future economic and social development. In recent times, the Tunisian economy has deteriorated markedly, especially after the two terrorist attacks at the Bardo Museum and in Sousse. In light of this, Tunisia is a priority for the S&D Group. The EU has to make concrete economic and investment commitments aimed at supporting the country's fragile transition to democracy. The success of the Tunisian experiment is in the interests of the entire region and the EU. Tunisia's participation in the EU programmes should be seen in this light.



Virginie Rozière

Possible extension of geographical indication protection of the EU to non-agricultural products

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Monday 5 October 2015

The report supports the adoption of a legal framework at a European level which will allow us to protect the geographical indications of industrial and handicraft products manufactured in Europe. The report aims to put pressure on the European Commission to come up with a proposal as soon as possible for a unified system of protection of geographical indications for non-agricultural products, based on the one already existing for agricultural products. The report proposes a system that would allow the co-existence of already established rights, but offering the possibility of European-wide registration and uniform protection and guarantees.

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