



# Plenary Update

Group of the Progressive Alliance  
of Socialists and Democrats  
in the European Parliament  
February II Plenary Session

PRESS  
CONFERENCE  
with Gianni Pittella  
Tuesday at 10.10  
LOW N-1/201

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## Our Priorities

► *Tues 14* **State of play of the second review of the economic adjustment programme for Greece**

[gianni.pittella@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:gianni.pittella@europarl.europa.eu)  
+ 33 3 88 17 5159

The S&D Group recognizes Greece's enormous efforts and sacrifices in the last years. European Socialists and Democrats underline the need to conclude in the coming days the second program review in respect of the European standards and acquis.

The requests put forward by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for additional measures that the Greek government should take in advance of the 2019 budget are unacceptable and could negatively impact Greece's political stability and damage its economic prospects.

Greece's creditors and EU Institutions must accept an agreement that will help the country and gives stability and perspectives. We are convinced that the deadlock between Greece and its creditors is also counterproductive for the European Union.

S&Ds also stressed the fundamental importance of implementing radical reforms in the field of public administration and justice as prior conditions for a new productive development model.



PITTELLA  
Gianni



BULLMANN  
Udo

[udo.bullmann@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:udo.bullmann@europarl.europa.eu)  
+ 33 3 88 17 5342

By honouring their commitment to enter meaningful discussions on debt relief, creditors must give Greece the chance to return to sustainable and inclusive growth. To get this done, debt relief must be paired with responsible and growth-friendly fiscal policies to break the vicious circle of economic degradation and social regress.

► *Wed 15* **EU-Canada CETA**

[sorin.moisa@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:sorin.moisa@europarl.europa.eu)  
+ 33 3 88 17 5705

The debate on CETA in our Group has been very intense and marked by a strong pluralism of ideas. This pluralism has allowed us, as a Group, since the CETA negotiation was finalised in the autumn of 2014, to achieve a significant number of improvements of CETA. We have forced the elimination of the old private arbitration system (ISDS) and its replacement with the Investment Court System (ICS), consisting of a permanent tribunal and appellate court, with judges randomly allocated for each case, strict rules on ethics, conflict of interest and transparency. However, we regret that a work programme to define and improve the details of ICS has not been finalised before presenting the CETA text for consent to the European Parliament. We have a clear, written commitment from the Commission that the European Parliament will be fully involved in defining the details of the ICS system which are not already contained in CETA. Notably, the EP will be fully involved in the selection of ICS judges in a manner similar to that used for the selection of ECJ judges.

We agree that CETA is one of the most advanced treaties of its kind in terms of compliance with social and environmental standards, but we would have preferred, as a principle, that sanctions could be imposed for non-compliance with sustainable development provisions. However, we are pleased to have obtained a commitment from Canada and the Commission to move towards a sanctions-based approach. We have obtained a clear article in CETA on the right to regulate, excluding any liabilities for affecting the profit expectations of companies, but nevertheless there are colleagues who still believe that the risk of 'regulatory chill' has not been completely eliminated. The Group has tabled a Resolution that includes both our victories and our worries. Whether we see more the full or the empty half of the glass, the process of shaping CETA has definitely brought us, as a Group, in a position to indicate the direction of progressive trade policy in Europe.



MOISA Ionel-  
Sorin

► *Mon 13* **Revision of the European Consensus on Development**

[norbert.neuser@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:norbert.neuser@europarl.europa.eu)  
+ 33 3 88 17 5892

The backdrop of the new global challenges the world has to digest such as climate change, migration, security, the committee of Development in the European Parliament today gave its green light on its priorities for the revision of the European Consensus on development.

The Revision of the European Consensus on Development comes at a good moment to pave the way for guidelines that will serve as a framework for European Development policies for many years to come. The European Parliament's resolution will serve as a basis for the negotiations with the EU institutions.



NEUSER  
Norbert

[linda.mcavan@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:linda.mcavan@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5438

The Consensus on Development should be a key external pillar of the EU and Member States' strategy for meeting the SDG target of ending poverty and inequality by 2030. It's clear we have a different set of priorities and challenges than in the past, but we have to be very clear that the role of development policy is first and foremost one of fighting poverty to tackle root causes of global challenges like migration and instability.



McAVAN  
Linda

► **Tues 14 Prospects for resuming peace talks in the Middle East**

[elena.valenciano@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:elena.valenciano@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5846

The Israeli PM Netanyahu continues blocking any initiative for bringing the Middle East conflict to an end. When the Israeli Government and Knesset pass legislation to rule over the West Bank, it is exactly the same as if they were ruling over Brussels. They simply have no right to do that. We, the European Socialists and Democrats in this Parliament, need to stand by the 52 members of Knesset that have opposed the majority of only 60, against this "Regulation Bill" to legalise 4000 new units of settlements. This legislation, including permission to build on Palestinian private owners land, is simply "land grabbing" and theft.



VALENCIANO  
MARTÍNEZ-  
OROZCO  
ELENA

[victor.bostinaru@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:victor.bostinaru@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5832

The two-state solution, with the state of Israel and the 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, remains the only hope for peace and the cornerstone of our political position and action. Today's priority must be to keep the viability of this two-state solution alive. It is time for the EU to take concrete steps to encourage Israel to halt any new settlement construction. Therefore our group shall request to the European Commission the establishment of a screening mechanism in order to insure that all agreements between the EU and Israel must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the occupied territories and that this agreement is fully implemented in practice.



BOȘTINĂRU  
Victor

► **Tues 14 2016 Report on Albania**

[knut.fleckenstein@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:knut.fleckenstein@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5548

Albania has made good progress on its accession related reforms. It has notably embarked on a comprehensive judiciary reform process which has been a major demand by Albanian citizens. The judiciary reform will allow Albania to move forward on other key priorities as well, such as the fight against corruption and organised crime. Accession negotiations should be opened as soon as there is credible progress on the implementation of the judicial reform.

Albania is on the right track, all political forces now need to assume their responsibilities, ensuring implementation of the reforms and offering a European future for the country.



FLECKENSTEIN  
Knut

► **Tues 14 2016 Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina**

[dimitris.papadakis@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:dimitris.papadakis@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5604

The report welcomes the start of consideration of Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) EU membership application and calls for internal cooperation in order to have coherent replies to the Commission's questionnaire.

S&D fully supports the European perspective of BiH and advocates a common, peaceful future for all its inhabitants within the EU.

We emphasized the importance of the social dimension and related references are now included in the report.

S&D will insist on equal rights for all citizens and on the need of promoting reconciliation and socially sensitive reforms.

It is essential, that reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina are promoted in a balanced manner, through transparency and dialogue with social partners, in a way that will lead to positive changes in the daily life of all citizens, by providing new jobs and by protecting effectively the disadvantaged people of the society.



PAPADAKIS  
Dimitris

► **Wed 15 Civil Law Rules on Robo CS**

[mady.delvaux@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:mady.delvaux@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5136

The growth of intelligent robots is going to have as profound an effect on our societies as the industrial revolution. We need to think urgently about the legal, ethical and societal ramifications of this new robotic revolution. It is important that we as politicians make sure that robots will at all times serve humans. This report is the start of that process. One idea adopted in this report is to look at a universal basic income – where everyone would receive a wage from the government whether they are in work or not. This revolution can bring huge benefits to our societies – new jobs in research and innovation, robots performing dangerous tasks currently done by humans, lower risk of car accidents by excluding human error and smarter energy consumption. However, we need to make sure these benefits outweigh the challenges.



DELVAUX-  
STEHRES  
Mady

The S&D Group has three fundamental principles guiding our work on the reform. That is to achieve an ETS that delivers on the European Union's climate obligations, is fair to industry and enables a solidary transition for workers.

The ETS is the single most important piece of legislation that the EU has in order to fulfil our commitments for the climate and the Paris Agreement, as well as for our industrial policy and the possibilities to ensure that we have a competitive and modern production in Europe.

The compromise package that will be voted next week strikes a good balance between these elements. There are some parts that we can be more happy with than other, but the final compromise package which has been agreed by all political groups is in line with the S&D Group's key priorities. It is a package deal, where all elements are interconnected with each other. We cannot take out some elements without changing everything else.



**GUTELAND**  
Jytte

## Press contact

**Utta Tuttlies**

*Head of Press & Communications Unit,  
Group's spokesperson*  
+ 32 473 85 34 07

**Jan Bernas**

*President's Spokesperson*  
+ 32 471 64 87 77

**Solange Hélin-Villes**

+ 32 476 510 172

**Tim Allan**

+ 32 475 635 673

**Dimitris Komodromos**

+ 32 474 622 884

**Evangelia Sali**

+ 32 495 56 24 31

**Silvia Pelz**

+ 32 478 75 07 12

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.

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.

## About the S&D Group

