



Plenary Update

April I 2016 Session

PRESS
CONFERENCE

with Gianni
Pittella

Tuesday at
10.10

LOW N-1/201

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Our Priorities

Σ Tue, 12 **Effectiveness of existing measures against tax evasion and money laundering in light of recent Panama paper revelations**

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PITTELLA
Gianni

Given the seriousness of the Panama scandal, the S&D Group has ensured that an extraordinary plenary discussion will take place on the subject next week in Strasbourg. Along with other political groups, we will work out the best possible way for the Parliament to tackle this issue, including the possible creation of an inquiry committee, amongst other options. The Panama Papers is the biggest leak ever on illegal tax practices involving the use of tax havens and money laundering. The European Parliament, which is already working very hard on the issues of tax fraud and tax evasion, cannot turn a blind eye to such new revelations. The EU must take tough measures to fight tax evasion including money laundering following new revelations of the Panama Papers. We need to increase transparency of who actually owns and/or benefits from these shell companies. We need to sanction those who advise people on how to evade tax. Any bank involved in facilitating criminal behaviour must face real sanctions including having its business licence revoked. We also need a European blacklist of tax havens.

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Σ Tue, 12 **Counterterrorism following the recent terrorist attacks**

Now is the time for the EU to show sorrow and unity. After the Brussels terrorist attacks, the tragedy in Paris and in Beirut, recently in Turkey, and in several countries in Africa and the Middle East, Europe must finally forge an integrated strategy to combat terrorism, fundamentalism and social and economic injustices, which are the roots of hatred and violence. Terrorism is only one of the many consequences of the increased instability of our neighbouring regions. Our European society cannot be overcome by fear and create a fortress leading to even more ghettoization and marginalization. We must work together to keep our society united around common values and principles, and we must fight to eradicate xenophobia and islamophobia. We should question ourselves in asking why young Europeans devote themselves to fundamentalism and terrorism. We definitely should improve our model of cultural integration. A new European strategy must be developed to embrace every aspect: security, integration, culture and cooperation for development. The very existence of our societies, our values and principles are at stake, as well as the future of our next generation - the future of Europe itself.

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Σ Wed, 13 **Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 17 and 18 March 2016 and outcome of the EU-Turkey summit**

The deal with Turkey is a part of the solution, not the solution in itself. We firmly believe that only by implementing the relocation system, reinforcing Schengen and by reviewing the Dublin agreement, will Europe finally be capable of resolving the migration crisis in the long term. The EU is first and foremost a family based on solidarity. We expect extensive financial, logistic aid and expertise to be granted to Greece in order to run a proper hosting and registration system.

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Σ Wed, 13 **The situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration**

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KYENGE
Cécile

With this report we outline our vision for a common European immigration policy. There is a need for a European immigration policy that includes the right to asylum, and fully implements the principle of solidarity. As clearly stated in the treaties, solidarity is the basis of the European integration process. Therefore, we need an overhaul of the Dublin regulation. We are calling for permanent, robust and effective Union search and rescue operations to help prevent the tragic and needless deaths we have seen in the last few years. This must be followed by a replacement of the Dublin system - under which refugees must apply for asylum in the first country that they arrive in in the EU - with a centralised European system. Under the new system, refugees would be distributed across the Union on the basis of fair and objective criteria.

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Σ Wed, 13 **Data protection PNR**

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The Passenger Name Record Directive will be voted on by the European Parliament next week, alongside the Data Protection Package. The S&D Group welcomed this development but also slammed hypocritical national governments for their failure to make use of existing EU measures to fight terrorism. The most important lesson that has come out of the tragic events in Paris and Brussels is not that we do not have enough information on terror suspects but that this information is not being used or shared effectively by national law enforcement agencies. That is why we pushed so hard for the Data Protection Package to be voted alongside PNR because we need to have a clear legal framework of how personal data can be used and shared. Having this framework will make it significantly easier for national law enforcement agencies to share information quickly and effectively.



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⌘ *Tue, 12* **Decision adopted on public tax transparency**

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S&D strongly criticises the weak approach taken by the Commission in the leaked paper on public country-by-country reporting and hopes that by Tuesday Commissioner Lord Hill can present a stronger proposal. In the leaked version, companies with a turnover of over 750 million euro per year and a subsidiary in Europe are obliged to disclose tax data member state by member state, but they would only need to provide aggregated data, which means one number only for the rest of the world. This would encourage companies to shift their profits to tax havens outside of Europe. Therefore, the proposal in its current version would provide little added value. The Panama Papers confirm, that we do need a full country by country reporting for all large companies and all tax jurisdictions inside and outside the EU to stop tax evasion.



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⌘ *Wed, 13* **2015 Report on Albania**

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Albania has been a candidate for EU accession since June 2014. Its current reform priority is the judicial reform which will be essential for fulfilling the EU membership criteria. An independent justice and better rule of law are the most important reform needs according to the country's population as this will allow us to fight corruption and organised crime even more sustainably. The EP resolution proposed by the rapporteur (S&D) expresses support to Albania's reform process and calls for intensifying the reform efforts in order to fulfil the EU membership criteria as soon as possible.



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⌘ *Wed, 13* **2015 Report on Turkey**

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The cooperation with Turkey in addressing the refugee crisis should not be linked to easing the conditions for accession to the European Union. This is contained in the annual progress report on Turkey, which comes to a vote at the next session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. According to rapporteur Kati Piri the rule of law in Turkey is still under heavy pressure when it comes to human rights and press freedom. The situation in southeast Turkey, where a violent struggle is conducted between the PKK and the government, is particularly worrying.



PIRI Kati

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⌘ *Wed, 13* **2015 Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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The S&D Group welcomes the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina and the country's submission of an EU membership application. We must keep this positive momentum going. The government needs to start delivering on much needed reforms for the benefit of all citizens. We encourage all political leaders to cooperate constructively to take the country forward and make the EU application a success. It is important that the process is transparent and inclusive for the whole of society. Constitutional change will eventually be needed for the country to transform it into a fully functional state, guaranteeing equality of all its citizens. The S&D Group remains committed to the European perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



KHAN Afzal

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⌘ *Mon, 11* **The EU role in the framework of international financial, monetary and regulatory institutions and bodies**

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Although the European Union is the biggest trading block worldwide, our voice in international financial, monetary and regulatory bodies tends to lack harmonisation and hence strength. The S&D group therefore supports the report voted in the plenary this week which stresses the need for more coordination and points the way to a single, and thus strong, European voice. Progressing in this direction is in fact fundamental to guarantee a better international representation of our European interests. Our demands on two important aspects of this process were met: the promotion of transparency about the functioning and funding of various international financial organisations, as well as the constant scrutiny by the European Parliament, the democratic arm of the European



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☞ **Wed, 13 Renewing the approval of the active substance glyphosate**

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Given the reasonable doubt about the safety of herbicides with the glyphosate as active compound, the Commission's proposal for reauthorisation for the maximum possible period of 15 years is absolutely intolerable. The S&D Group cannot allow such irresponsible approach to the human health and environment. We want a phase out from the use of the probably carcinogenic herbicide with as short transition period as possible. The S&D Group will not witness passively the misuse of readmission procedure for approval of health harming chemicals on the basis of outdated science. We want to revise current pesticide authorisation process to make it more transparent and more reliable. It is possible, it is more responsible and it is necessary and we appeal to the Commission to follow.



POC Pavel

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☞ **Tue, 12 The EU in a changing global environment - a more connected, contested and complex world**

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This contribution of the EP to the global strategy that the EU seeks, in view of the unprecedented security, humanitarian, economic and political challenges we face, stresses the imperative for Europeans to work as a credible political Union, pooling, sharing and exchanging national resources and tools, civilian and military, including intelligence cooperation, and articulating coherently internal and external action. This is crucial to defend European citizens and interests, which can only be achieved through an Union that pushes for global human security and a rules-based global governance, anchored in human rights and the rule of the law. "National sovereignty" in this global era leads to war. We need the European Union for Peace.



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About the S&D Group

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 190 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.

