



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

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**The President**

Brussels, 11 March 2020

Dear President Michel,

Dear President Von Der Leyen,

On behalf of the S&D Group, I would like to convey our deep concerns regarding a number of recent carnival parades in our Member States. In those parades, we have seen several intolerable anti-Semitic caricatures using stereotypes to depict Jews, an Holocaust-themed parade where a troupe dressed as Nazi officers and camp prisoners were dancing through the streets as well as one where a figure of a homosexual couple was burned on the streets.

Equality is one of the fundamental values on which the European Union is founded, and reflected in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. These types of displays clearly goes against this value and the right to non-discrimination. Carnivals have a long tradition of satire in Europe, but freedom of expression and traditions must never become a vehicle to promote or excuse racism, anti-Semitism homophobia or hate-speech.

Unfortunately, and for several years now, the Council have been blocking the much needed horizontal anti-discrimination Directive outside the place of work and I call on you to make the utmost efforts to unblock the negotiations.

However, even without it, and apart from the relevant Charter and Treaty provisions, I would like to recall the '*Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law*', where Member States are obliged to make certain forms of conduct punishable as a criminal offence, and could also cover other grounds, if decided by national authorities, such as sexual orientation. Moreover, I would also like to recall the Council Declaration on the fight against Antisemitism from December 2018 in which Member States reiterates their calls for appropriate measures against hate crimes and the full implementation of this Framework Decision.

In this regard, I would therefore call on both of you to remind all the Member States involved of their responsibilities under EU law and to take action in the framework of the different EU acquis in place, which could also involve criminal sanctions. A constant fight against stereotypes and hate-speech should be a priority for national authorities as well as the European Union.

Best regards,

**Iratxe García-Pérez**  
**President of the S&D Group in the European Parliament**