



DEBATE ON MONDAY, VOTE ON TUESDAY
Use of AI in criminal law
Petar Vitanov, rapporteur

The use of AI is growing exponentially, and things that we thought possible only in sci-fi books and movies – predictive policing, mass surveillance using biometric data – are a reality in some countries. Next week, the European Parliament will vote to recognise the danger of such practices for our democracy. We were very clear in our committee vote that these practices have no place in the EU and next week we hope a majority of MEPs stand by our commitment to full compliance with fundamental rights. Technical progress should never come at the expense of people's fundamental rights.

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DEBATE ON MONDAY, VOTE ON WEDNESDAY
Protection of persons with disabilities

Alex Agius Saliba, S&D coordinator in the committee on petitions.

Over the years, the petitions committee has received many important petitions on the protection of persons with disabilities in the EU. Citizens regularly get in touch to express their concerns on accessibility, social protection and employment rights. In these petitions, our citizens have raised issues like the obstacles that persons with disabilities face in various aspects of their daily life, such as access to public transport, the built environment, use of sign languages, financing or access to education and vocational training. This is a strong message for the EU to act. Given the new disability strategy, the European Disability Card is one of the most important instruments that will help persons with disabilities to exercise their right to free movement. In next week's plenary session, MEPs will call for mutual recognition of disability status across all EU member states. Now it is our duty to respond to our citizens' concerns and to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in a barrier-free Europe and to promote social and economic inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society, free from discrimination and fully respecting their rights on an equal basis with others.

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DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY MORNING
Rise of energy prices
Dan Nica, S&D coordinator in the committee on industry, research and energy

Our group is extremely worried because the situation with the energy prices is critical already now, in late September, and we are not even at the beginning of the winter season. Numerous reports and experts are quite pessimistic for the next couple of months and this is extremely alarming for us as a group defending people from all kind of poverty, including energy poverty. Individual Member States cannot be left alone in tackling the situation with high energy prices. The rules of the game are set in Brussels and it should be Brussels to propose concrete and sustainable measures. Therefore, we, the S&Ds call on the European Commission to draw up a concrete plan and to propose coordinated measures that will allow all EU countries to intervene quickly at national level, instead of counting only on ad-hoc measures. It is absolutely necessary, in this context, to take measures to prevent speculation in the European carbon market, which can further increase market volatility and electricity prices and threaten the energy transition.

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY, VOTE ON WEDNESDAY
The future of EU-US relations
Tonino Picula, S&D spokesperson on foreign relations and the European Parliament's standing rapporteur on the US

This debate could not be timelier! The election of President Biden last November provided much relief and optimism in the EU and we strongly believe that we need a renewed and strengthened transatlantic partnership to tackle common challenges like fighting climate change or resisting assertive authoritarians undermining our democracies. But while the US is one of Union's closest allies, diverging interests and challenges remain – on trade, data protection and attitudes towards China. The way the US has withdrawn from Afghanistan and a new Australia-UK-US security agreement (AUKUS) should serve as a reminder that the EU needs to mature and seek to redefine our relationship with the US on a more equal footing. This means standing up for our own interests whenever needed, but also taking greater responsibility. We must reinforce both the EU's autonomy of decision and its autonomy of action. A strategically autonomous Union would be the best partner for the United States!

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY, VOTE ON THURSDAY

Situation in Belarus

Robert Biedroń, S&D MEP and the chair of the European Parliament delegation to Belarus

Since the rigged elections of August 2020, Lukashenka's regime has been increasing repression to an unprecedented level. The main opposition figures are in prison or in exile, independent journalists have been jailed, among more than 700 political prisoners in the country. It is time for the EU to implement the 5th package of sanctions, to close the existing loopholes, target a substantially larger number of entities and officials responsible for, or complicit in, human-rights violations and to further cut the financial resources of the regime. The sanctions should also address the recent harassment of human-rights defenders, civil society activists and journalists, as well as the malign organisation of illegal migration into the EU. The instrumentalisation of human beings for the regime's abject purposes, that is the state-organised smuggling of migrants across Belarus' borders is unacceptable. But the way the Polish authorities are treating migrants is unacceptable too. Poland must comply with the Geneva Convention, allow Frontex to use its expertise on the ground and guarantee journalists and NGOs access so they help to ensure that migrants are treated with the dignity they deserve.

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DEBATE ON THURSDAY

European Union Agency for Asylum

Elena Yoncheva, European Parliament negotiator for the agreement on the EUAA

Next week the European Parliament will debate the agreement on the European Asylum Agency. With this historic agreement, we are proving we can deliver genuine solidarity and practical support to EU governments when it comes to asylum procedures. This week the S&D Group visited the EASO office to hear first-hand the challenges it has faced in recent years and it is clear we need this agency up and running as soon as possible. With only a few months before the mandate enters into force, we need to now focus on implementation so that it has the tools to help protect the fundamental rights and dignity of people seeking protection in the EU. The EUAA has to play a leading role on the ground and we need to ensure that they are ready to make full use of the new provisions for more effective asylum management and stronger support for frontline member states.

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DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY, VOTE ON THURSDAY

Harmful tax practices

Aurore Lalucq, S&D MEP and author of the report

In my report, I propose to reform EU policies on harmful tax practices, both through EU action and by reforming the Code of Conduct on business taxation. This Code of Conduct is the EU's main tool for combating harmful tax practices. To turn it into a sharp weapon in the fight against tax avoidance and evasion we want to update it to a new Code, known as FATAL (Framework on Aggressive Tax Arrangements and Low-rates). Firstly, we want to turn the Code into a binding instrument, including equipping it with a sanction mechanism. Secondly, the fast and efficient implementation of a global minimum corporate tax rate, at the agreed level of at least 15%, will be crucial for building a fairer tax system. Thirdly, we must also reform our criteria on what constitutes a tax haven to include a minimum level of economic substance. The forthcoming adjustment of the list, this Tuesday, will allow the most notorious tax havens to get off the hook. Finally, we should enlarge the scope of the Code to include preferential personal income tax regimes designed to attract highly mobile wealthy individuals.

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S&D Group press conference
Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ, S&D President
Tuesday 5 October 10:15 to 10:45

Livestreaming: https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/briefing-s-d-by-iratxe-garcia-perez-president_20211005-1015-SPECIAL-PRESSER_vd

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