



VOTES ON TUESDAY 18 JANUARY

Election of the President of Parliament

Iratxe García Pérez, S&D Group President

Next week, the European Parliament will renew its leadership for the second half of the mandate. After hearing from candidates this week, we remain determined to build a pro-European majority that will allow Parliament to function with responsibility and stability, but our group needs to be properly represented in the house. We are also still seeking assurances that the next EP president will promote an agenda in line with our priorities and our values. As yet, nothing is decided. Our group will only decide our vote in our meeting next Monday, ahead of the plenary vote. We continue to mourn the loss of our friend and colleague David Sassoli and we will pay tribute to his life in a memorial ceremony at the opening of the plenary. Whoever succeeds President Sassoli has enormous shoes to fill and we expect them to follow in his footsteps in a spirit of dialogue, respect and cooperation.

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CEREMONY ON MONDAY 17 JANUARY

Memorial ceremony for President David Maria Sassoli

Brando Benifei, Head of S&D Italian delegation

The thought that the new year would start with such a painful loss was unimaginable to anyone. The first plenary session in Strasbourg opens with our beloved President's memorial service. David was a bridge builder, able to unite people across the continent, even with different political ideas. David never stopped fighting for a better world where Europe could lead by example. David showed us how to unite values, human relations and empathy with the highest sense of institutional duty and responsibility. David has been an extraordinary President of the European Parliament, an exceptional human being. The void his departure has created in our hearts equals the greatness of what he has accomplished, of what he has given to us all, to our Parliament, to all Europeans. This place will never be the same without him. Grazie, David. Ciao, David.

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DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY

Presentation of the programme of activities of the French Presidency

Pedro Marques, S&D vice-president

The S&D Group welcomes the French presidency and highlights the importance of improving tax justice, strengthening social Europe, and meeting the challenges of the digital transition leaving no one behind. Promoting the EU's role in the world is an important objective, but this cannot be done by building a fortress Europe, yielding to the extreme right's agenda, but by building a solidary Europe open to the world.

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VOTE ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY

European Medicines Agency

Nicolás González Casares, S&D rapporteur

More transparency, participation, coordination and prevention. The lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic show that the EU and its Member States were not prepared to tackle this threat, and now we will finally have a stronger European Medicine Agency (EMA). Next week in Strasbourg, we will be voting to shape a stronger EMA, which means stronger resilience for the EU to tackle possible future challenges of the magnitude of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 19 AND VOTE ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY

Digital Services Act

Christel Schaldemose, S&D rapporteur on the Digital Services Act

The European Parliament starts the year with one of the most important issues of our time: how online services are regulated in Europe. It is stunning, but the current rules date back from the year 2000. This was more than 20 years ago! Meanwhile, the world and the digital sector in particular have changed beyond recognition. This made it imperative for our Group of the Socialists and Democrats to make sure the legislation proposed by the European Commission is of benefit not only to providers of digital services, but also to consumers. Self-regulation of business does not work. It will never work for as long as these digital multinationals care more about their profits than the people. They should not be the ones making the rules. It is our duty to make sure that what is illegal offline is illegal online, too. It is an honour for the S&D Group and to me personally to be in charge of drafting the report of the European Parliament on the Digital Services Act. In the process of drafting the report, I took precious testimonies from all stakeholders involved, including whistle blowers. For the Socialists and Democrats it is clear - we have to put an end to the negative impact of big tech companies' products on users. I am happy my report was adopted with a large majority in the committee on the internal market and consumer protection of the EP. It is now time to vote on the report in the plenary. We fought really hard for the interests of European consumers and I am optimistic my report will be adopted by all MEPs and we will go to negotiations with the Member States under the French Presidency of the Council with a strong position.

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DEBATE ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union

Helène Fritzon, S&D vice-president

The beginning of the year is the right time to remind everybody of our priorities. We will not rest until women's rights are totally guaranteed. That is why the S&D Group has proposed "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union" as the topical debate in the next plenary session. We will speak clearly: SRHR are fundamental human rights. They cannot be withdrawn by any member state! The debate will also be an opportunity to remind the Commission, the member states and all political groups that six months ago, our House adopted the historic "Matić report" calling for guaranteed access to SRHR in the EU without discrimination. This includes reliable and comprehensive sexuality and relationship education, fertility treatment, modern contraceptives and safe and legal abortion. We want to see this report implemented! We will not give up until every human being, every woman and girl, has full access to bodily autonomy and SRHR. Women's rights are human rights.

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DEBATE ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY

Joint debate - Animal transport

Isabel Carvalhais, S&D rapporteur for the final report from the committee of inquiry on the protection of animals during transport

Animal welfare is a topic that affects us all deeply as citizens, it is a flag of the European Parliament, and the transport of live animals is an inseparable part of that animal welfare. We want this committee to make a real difference in defending the welfare of animals when transporting live animals. An ambition built on the respect of the different geographical realities, the rural world and the persistent differences in infrastructure development.

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S&D Group press conference
Iratxe García Pérez, S&D president
 Tuesday 18 January, 14.30 – 14.50
 Daphne Caruana Galizia room - Strasbourg - Weiss N-1/201
 Webstreaming here
<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu>

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