

S&D Interparliamentary Newsletter - Connecting with National Parliaments

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European Parliamentary Week 2025

Dear, <<First Name>>, on the 17th and 18th of February, parliamentarians from across EU Member States, candidate and observer countries gathered in Brussels for the annual [European Parliamentary Week](#), the first edition of the European Parliament's tenth mandate.

Marked by strong attendance this year, the flagship interparliamentary initiative was a timely opportunity for dialogue on the most pressing economic issues facing Europe currently.

In particular, the **Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance**, provided a crucial discussion on Europe's economic governance framework, and underscored social and budgetary policy priorities in a moment of geopolitical instability and macroeconomic vulnerability.

Taking place in the framework of the Polish Council Presidency's Parliamentary Dimension, high-level speakers from the Sejm and the Polish Senate, alongside special guests including **Mario Draghi**, presented key findings and called for enhanced cooperation among Europe's legislative bodies to achieve economic resilience and sustainability into the next decade. **Vice-President for Relations with National Parliaments, German S&D MEP Katarina Barley** chaired proceedings throughout.



Economic governance dialogue at a crucial juncture

The global context surrounding this year's EPW certainly heightened the significance and expectations for the annual institutional forum. Following the release of two high-level reports in recent months, produced by [Enrico Letta](#) and [Mario Draghi](#) respectively, concerns around Europe's industrial and fiscal position have intensified sharply.

International conflict, including the continuous Russian aggression in Ukraine, combined with serious economic threats from the new US administration have further complicated the security, digital and green transitions challenging Europe's economic system.



Moreover, with Poland taking charge of the European Council's agenda since January under the motto “***Security, Europe!***”, economic security, forming part of a [seven-pillared programme](#), has been outlined as a fundamental principle to guide the direction of the EU over the coming months.

The opening session of the Conference primarily focused on the urgent need to bolster economic growth, competitiveness and stability, with three subsequent interparliamentary committee meetings running in parallel. Across these meetings, priority topics included the **future of the capital markets union**, the **impact of Artificial Intelligence on European employment policies**, delivering large-scale **investment to boost industrial competitiveness**, and ensuring **cohesion between national and EU budgets**.

S&D Political Family Meeting

Present at the EPW 2025 was a strong social democrat cohort from across Europe's parliaments.

The **largest progressive force**, our political family was represented by **35 MPs from 19 national delegations** over the two days in Brussels.



To begin the EPW 2025, our group of centre-left parliamentarians initially met before the Conference for a broad and productive discussion. This meeting was co-chaired by **MEP Gaby Bischoff** (S&D Group Vice-President for Social Europe, Sustainable Economy and the Single Market) and **MP Katarzyna Ueberhan** (Vice-President of the Nowa Lewica Parliamentary Group and Chair of the Social Policy and Family Committee in the Sejm).

Combining national MPs and Members of the European Parliament from the economic, employment and budget committees, a dynamic conversation on best practices regarding the implementation of the Economic Semester cycles was heard. Strengthening cooperation between the EU and national level, therefore, was outlined as an essential priority from Vice-President Barley, who stated she will be visiting European capitals over the coming months to further advance policy synergies between the European Parliament and legislative bodies in the Member States.

Progressive call for a stronger social investment dimension

During this political family meeting, MP Ueberhan and **MEP Krzysztof Œmiszek** highlighted the progressive measures being pursued by their party, the Nowa Lewica (New Left), within the current Polish Government coalition in order to deliver a more equality-oriented Council Presidency agenda for this six-month period.

Key legislative files that our Polish counterparts are looking to progress during in this timeline include; the European Works Council, a key vehicle for industrial democracy, and the Equal Treatment Directive. Additionally, negotiations on the coordination of European social security systems and the Traineeships Directive should be re-opened and advanced, with fair and equitable solutions reached as soon as possible.



Among the many themes and issues highlighted during this exchange, one stand-out one was the general **call for a more prominent social dimension in the wider discourse around economic competitiveness**. At the heart of this agenda is the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), a vital policy initiative designed to deepen the social software of European economic governance. Discussed at the political family meeting, this **Pillar will be reviewed in 2025**, and social democrats are focused on strengthening it, particularly around the issue of labour mobility and upskilling grounded in solidarity.

Closely related to this, the very topical simplification agenda currently being promoted by the European Commission was raised. On this point, [MEP Bischoff was clear in stating](#) that the S&D Group is open to pragmatic reforms, but will certainly not allow large-scale deregulation of the EU's legislative framework that will inevitably endanger hard-fought social achievements for citizens and businesses.

The positive work of European Commission Executive Vice-President, **Roxana Minzatu** in the [Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness](#) portfolio was referenced during this discussion as a crucial asset for progressive economic governance in the EU over the coming years.



Combating economic exclusion for a fairer future

Other priorities identified by social democrat deputies included **adequate own resources** to invest towards the massive green and digital transitions required to modernise our economic systems, and a more **assertive, coordinated approach to security and defence financing**, which simultaneously upholds environmental and social obligations to citizens.

Highlighted by several social democrat Members, housing reform is a burning priority for people, whereby access, affordability, and security need to be significantly ramped up through an active, interventionist agenda at both national and EU level. Central to this effort, will be the S&D's action on the new Special Committee on the European Housing Crisis, led by committee chair, MEP Irene Tingali.



With an increasingly hostile political agenda being pushed by populists and extremists across Europe recently, progressive Members participating at the EPW 2025 called for a more united, proactive and ambitious narrative to achieve inclusive economic policies.

A standard approach of the European far right now, migrants and other vulnerable groups are being scapegoated for Europe's economic difficulties. To combat this, the resounding message at the S&D political family was **solidarity with all working communities**, regardless of race, background and nationality.

Now, more than ever, there needs to be robust social investment in areas and industries who face the threat of being left behind by rapid economic changes. Both the youth and elderly demographics were also identified as being increasingly precariously situated in our economies and in need of targeted investment.

Visit of Norwegian Labour Party Members to Brussels

On the 5th of February, a delegation of Members from the **Storting (Norwegian Parliament)** travelled to Brussels for an interparliamentary study visit. In the context of this visit, the S&D Group was

delighted to host two **Arbeiderpartiet Members, Tove Elise Madland and Sigurd Rafaelsen**, for a meeting that discussed our common platforms as social democrat allies, and close working partners in the Party of European Socialists.

S&D Group Vice-President, **Heléne Fritzon and First Deputy Secretary General, Nicolas Macias**, engaged in a productive bilateral with our Norwegian colleagues on several urgent topics such as **energy cooperation and security partnerships** in the current geopolitical climate. Also discussed was the alarming rise of the populist right in Norway and across Europe, and how progressives should respond with an ambitious social agenda that focuses on materially improving peoples' living standards.

Currently leading a minority government that has surged in polling support recently, we wish our colleagues in the Storting the very best of luck as they campaign towards a **general election later this year on 8 September**.



Other interparliamentary activities

COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting, 26-27 January

In January, the **COSAC (Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union) Chairpersons Meeting** took place in Warsaw to kick off the Polish Council Presidency's Parliamentary Dimension.

At its heart, COSAC is a **forum for institutional cooperation**, and an exchange of information and best practice between parliaments of the European Union, particularly regarding the practical aspects of parliamentary scrutiny of Union affairs. It is the only forum for interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union directly referenced by the Treaties.

[Held on 26-27 January](#), this bi-annual meeting prepared the agenda for the upcoming COSAC Plenary in June, in collaboration with the Presidential Troika, which consists of the preceding and following Presidency countries.



With Poland commencing a new Troika after the largely inactive Hungarian Council Presidency, **a fresh period of interparliamentary cooperation can begin**. Importantly, Warsaw's opportunity to guide the Council agenda over the coming months coincides with a new EU legislative cycle and the preparations for the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework.

Referencing current geopolitical volatility and the economic and social insecurity being felt citizens as a result, Ms Małgorzata Kidawa-Blonska, Marshal of the Senate of Poland, stated: ***“Europe is only***

powerful when it speaks with one voice, and only then it is capable of presenting its interests with solidarity”.

The next [COSAC Plenary, the LXXIII edition, will take place on 8-10 June in Warsaw](#), and will be preceded by an **S&D political family meeting of Members of National Parliaments and MEPs**.

16th Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol

Meanwhile, on **24 February**, the [16th Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol](#) took place in the Polish Parliament. This inter-institutional forum politically monitors the activities of Europol, (the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation) in its missions and operations, including the impact of those operations on the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens.

As standard, Members of both the European Parliament and national parliaments participated in various scrutiny sessions held in the presence of senior Europol representatives. On this occasion, the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group focused on a select number of critical issues related to justice in Europe: **combatting drug trafficking, the fight against child sexual exploitation (online and offline)**, and Europol’s activities in relation the **ongoing war in Ukraine**.

What's Next:

- **6 March** - Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on ‘*Strengthening the Women, Peace and Security Agenda – Upholding Women’s Rights in Defence, Security and Peace Building*’, European Parliament, Brussels.
- **18 March** - EU Tax Symposium: ‘*Strengthening competitiveness and fairness to build prosperity*’, European Parliament, Brussels.

- **23-25 March** - [Interparliamentary Conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy](#) (IPC CFSP/CSDP), The Sejm, Warsaw.
- **9 April** - Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on ‘*Affordable Housing for All – Policy Approaches and Best Practice Cases in the Member States*’, European Parliament, Brussels.

Latest News

- [S&Ds on Omnibus Package: Simplification of EU legislation must not endanger existing achievements for citizens and businesses](#), 26/02/2025
- [S&Ds on Clean Industrial Deal: Affordable energy prices are key to EU reindustrialisation](#), 26/02/2025
- [S&D Mission to Middle East reaffirms commitment to humanitarian aid, peace and a two-state solution](#), 21/02/2025
- [Statement by S&D, EPP, Renew Europe, and Greens EFA on Ukraine](#), 18/02/2025

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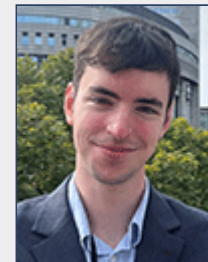
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The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (the S&D Group) is the second largest political group in the European Parliament. We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom 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.

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Socialists & Democrats
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