



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Gianni Pittella
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Gianni Pittella

Situation in Greece

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Wednesday 8 July 2015

We did whatever we could and even more to try and find a reasonable compromise that could help the Greek people and be acceptable for creditors and the EU. We were aware from the start of how complicated it would be to reach a deal but it was right to push for a political solution. The stability of the whole of Europe is at stake here. Though it could be said Athens did not approach the negotiations in an adequate way at the very beginning, on the other hand it appeared there was clearly a stubborn attitude from some Member States. We will keep on fighting for the integrity of Eurozone and Europe. All efforts must be made to prevent a Grexit. We have to save Greece from bankruptcy and the EU from a deep crisis. More than ever a compromise is necessary for the integrity of the Eurozone and the credibility of the EU as such. Nobody is allowed to play with fire. The Greek crisis cannot be used to build a two speed Eurozone.



Bernd Lange

Negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

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The author of the parliamentary report, S&D MEP Bernd Lange, this week brokered an agreement on the only standing issue for this report to have a majority in the European Parliament: The compromise on the question of the Investor-State Dispute Settlement Mechanism (ISDS) in the trade agreement negotiated by Bernd Lange will oblige the Commission to exclude ISDS from the trade agreement and replace it by a public, democratic and transparent mechanism. We are already running out of time for the Parliament to have a strong position on TTIP and influence the negotiations between the European Union and the United States. Globalisation needs rules and it is our duty as politicians to deliver. This is a unique opportunity for the European Union to harness globalisation by introducing standards in international trade. Otherwise the world will move ahead without us having a say. We should not miss it. Once the Commission has finished the negotiations between the US and the EU, the agreement will need the consent of the European Parliament before it comes into force.



Tanja Fajon

Srebrenica commemoration

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Monday 6 July 2015

11 July 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the worst act of genocide and crime against humanity that took place in Europe, during the Bosnian War, since 1945. Not only does Srebrenica's tragedy reminds us of the dangers of extreme forms of nationalism and intolerance in society, but it also stands as a symbol of the impotence of the international community to intervene in the conflict and effectively protect innocent civilian population. It should certainly serve as a reminder that such a horrendous crime must never happen again, whereas the European Union should be at the forefront of preventing the recurrence of wars and crimes against humanity. Lessons learned from the violent past must enable the region, and particularly all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to move on. Reconciliation, which is possible only if justice is achieved, if all sides involved take responsibility for their part of guilt and if the painful truth is revealed, will take place when regional cooperation and friendly relations prevail over disputes from the past. In the S&D Group we are trying to contribute to this by marking the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide and inviting two women, members of the Mother's Action of the Srebrenica Žepa Enclave, to share their stories with us. In a future-oriented exchange of views, they will speak about their experience and perception of the genocide, how it influenced their lives and what it feels like to live in Srebrenica, where the memory of the most horrible crime against humanity since 1945 is still very alive.



Sergio Cofferati

Long-term shareholder engagement and corporate governance statement

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The Report on Shareholders' Rights Directive approved in the Legal Affairs Committee with the support of the S&D Group is an important step forward in order to steer companies and investors towards long-term oriented decision making and in order to ensure more transparency with regard to corporate governance of European companies, in particular in the definition of directors' remuneration, and with regard to the engagement of institutional investors and asset managers. Even more importantly, the Report contains important instruments to fight tax evasion and tax avoidance, including a Country-by-Country Reporting obligation for large and listed companies. This provision would ensure that multinationals openly declare the taxes they pay in each country they operate in, so that citizens and authorities can see where large companies actually pay their taxes (clarifying whether they pay taxes where they have real economic activities). This Report represents a necessary instrument in order to ensure more transparency in company management and in the activity of financial intermediaries and to fight effectively tax evasion and tax avoidance. The European Parliament cannot miss this opportunity, in particular after Luxleaks and other scandals.



Maria Joao Rodrigues

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States in 2015

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Tuesday 7 July 2015

The Employment Guidelines set out how the EU and its Member States should concretely improve their employment, education and social inclusion policies to achieve the Europe 2020 Strategy's objectives and targets. Those targets seem distant after half a decade of economic crisis and significant divergence between Member States, but they continue to provide the right sense of direction. The Employment Guidelines as well as the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines are now being updated for the rest of the decade. The S&D's key achievements in shaping the EP opinion include: clear re-affirmation of the Europe 2020 targets, emphasis on boosting aggregate demand, nuanced texts on wages and pensions, greater attention to inequalities – and overall a clear message that European economic governance needs to be rebalanced to better reflect the Union's objectives of full employment and social progress.



Enrique Guerrero Salom

The Commission Work Programme 2016

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The main challenge of the European Union remains to regain the trust and confidence of its citizens and be seen as a source of hope and an engine for sustainable growth, jobs and increased social cohesion. The Group calls on the Commission to propose a new social pact. We urge the Commission to use all its powers to be a leading force in the deepening European integration and the setting out of an agenda ensuring that Europe strengthens its economic recovery in a fairer and inclusive single market with greater creation of quality jobs, protection of the social floor and reduction in social inequalities. We urge the Commission to present an ambitious blueprint proposing all measures necessary to make the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) more resilient and turn it into a framework for better coordination and structural convergence.



Matthias Groote

Market stability reserve for the Union greenhouse gas emission trading

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The EU-ETS needs fixing urgently. The economic crisis and the over-allocation of allowances have led to a significant destabilisation of the system. The introduction of the Market Stability Reserve will send a strong signal to the markets and already begin to influence long-term investment decisions, avoiding costly mistakes and technology lock-in. As the EU-ETS is one of the main pillars of EU climate policy, the S&D Group fully supports the introduction of an emissions trading market system reserve. MEPs of the S&D Group want stability and predictability in the EU-ETS. By automatically transferring allowances to the reserve in times of oversupply and releasing allowances in times of undersupply, the EU-ETS will be made more flexible and thereby more stable. Stability is key to necessary investments for sustainable economic growth.



Victor Bostinaru

The EU's role in the Middle East peace process

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Though we have a new government coalition in Israel we are still facing a stalemate in the Middle East peace process and therefore a debate will allow the European Parliament to reflect and impulse on a more active role for the EU in peace efforts between Israelis and Palestinians. We shall reaffirm our commitment to a two state solution with the state of Israel within secure and recognised borders and with an independent, contiguous and viable state of Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security along the 1967 borders, with mutually agreed land swaps, and Jerusalem as capital of both states. We shall support the efforts of EU High Representative/ Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini who has demonstrated her personal commitment to renew and intensify the EU's engagement in peace efforts. As we are worried about the growing violence in the whole region, we shall also assess the impact of this unstable situation on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the dramatic conditions of a huge number of Palestinian refugees in the neighbouring countries, as well as emphasize the current humanitarian emergency situation in Gaza and the much needed EU support for UNRWA.



Maria Arena

Situation in Burundi

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Thursday 9 July 2015

The European Union has a significant role in the Great Lakes region as guarantor of the Arusha agreements. The dialogue which has taken place between the EU and Burundian authorities, under article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, has not given substantial results so far. Breaches of fundamental human rights and democratic principles are still going on. Given the political and security situation in Burundi, the EU has already decided to suspend its election observation mission but other measures have to be taken. Therefore, we are calling on the European Commission and the High Representative to initiate article 96 proceedings with a view to taking appropriate actions and preparing a list of targeted restrictive measures such as visa ban and assets freezing against those responsible for acts of violence, repression and serious human rights violations. It is also urgent to reassess EU aid with a view to diverting it and increasing financial support to civil society and humanitarian assistance. We call on all Burundian stakeholders to resume dialogue on all areas of disagreement. A lasting political solution for all Burundi's people can be found only through dialogue and consensus between the Burundian government, opposition and civil society.



Carlos Zorrinho

Future EU-Cuba relations

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EU needs to develop a strong partnership with Cuba based in open cooperation, economic and trade relations and political dialogue. That means to increase bilateral aid cooperation embedded with democratic values and a human-centred approach to development, to include Cuba again into the European trade preference system in order to provide incentives for the respect of core human and labour rights and to establish a structured human rights dialogue. S&D supports an accurate and urgent action plan including to derogate the Council common position, establish deep contacts with Cuba civil society, enhance links with Cuban authorities and support the High Representative's efforts to normalise EU –Cuba relations. S&D Group is committed to accompanying Cuba in its transition to a more inclusive democracy, which periodically holds multi-party elections and provides the natural environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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