



## Plenary Update

Socialists & Democrats Group  
in the European Parliament

Strasbourg, October 1 Plenary Session

### PRESS CONFERENCE

with Gianni Pittella

Tuesday at 15.00

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## Our Priorities

### ► *Tues, 3* State of play of negotiations with the UK

[gianni.pittella@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:gianni.pittella@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5159

[roberto.gualtieri@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:roberto.gualtieri@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5523



PITTELLA  
Gianni



GUALTIERI  
Roberto

The progress made in the fourth round of negotiations is not yet sufficient to move on to talks about our future relationship. We recognise a more positive dynamic and some limited steps forward. However, the message from the Parliament to the Council is clear: unless there is a major breakthrough in line with the Parliament's position on the UK withdrawal agreement then the EU Council should postpone the decision on whether to begin talks on our future relationship until December.

The recent, more constructive, words from Theresa May in Florence have not yet been translated into concrete proposals. We made positive progress on direct effect (whether laws can be relied on in member state courts or need to be interpreted) and work has started on Ireland, but we are still a long way from concluding the first stage of negotiations. This is particularly true for the financial settlement, where the UK has still not given a clear answer to what is a clear question. The settlement must be part of the withdrawal agreement and not linked to our future relationship with the United Kingdom. On this, we want to be direct: you cannot 'buy' access to the single market through concessions on the financial settlement. A trade-off is not possible – any commitments taken by the 28 member states must be honoured by all of those 28 members.

On the very sensitive issue of the Irish border we are all committed to finding the best solution to preserve the Good Friday Agreement. Here again, we are still waiting for concrete proposals from the British side on how to combine the promise not to have any physical infrastructure at the border with the UK while being outside the Single Market and Customs Union.

On citizens' rights, we want to reiterate the absolute need to incorporate the full set of rights citizens currently enjoy into the withdrawal agreement, be it for EU citizens resident in the UK, British citizens living in the EU27, family members or for children born in the future after the UK's withdrawal. We are greatly concerned about the administrative burdens on EU citizens living in the United Kingdom and about the examples of discrimination they are facing. We of course also want UK citizens residing in the EU to be treated fairly and in full conformity with EU law.

### ► *Mon, 2* Women's economic empowerment in the private and public sectors in the EU

[anna.hedh@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:anna.hedh@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5527

The report highlights that women's economic empowerment is an essential element of gender equality and thus a fundamental right, and at the same time gives a boost to prosperity and economic growth.

While the EU is one of the world's leaders in terms of women's rights and gender equality, it still lags behind when it comes to women's equal participation in the labour market and in economic decision-making.

The report includes calls for concrete action to improve work-life balance, a better share of paid and unpaid work between men and women, pay transparency and wage mapping in order to reach equal pay for equal work and work of equal value, and gender equality plans in companies and the public sector, and highlights the role of collective agreements and social partners in this field.

Women's economic empowerment is both right and smart at the same time. Member states need to step up with specific legislation to tackle the gender pay gap and to enable women to participate equally in the labour market.



HEDH  
Anna

### ► *Tues, 3* Situation in Moldova

[victor.bostinaru@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:victor.bostinaru@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5832

The Parliament of Moldova adopted a new electoral law in July, with a nearly three-quarters majority, which introduced a mixed system based on the one in use in Germany, in place of the proportional one.

The EPP, ECR and ALDE encouraged protests in Chisinau and are now trying to use this reform – which took on board most of the Venice Commission's recommendations – to call into question the pro-European integration of Moldova and the macro-financial assistance for the country that was recently adopted.

The S&D Group, while acknowledging that the path of reforms in Moldova must continue, in line with the association agreement and deep and comprehensive free trade area (AA/DCFTA), understands the importance of Moldova in the current geopolitical context and supports the pro-European government coalition which finally brought stability and credibility to the country. It is very important to encourage and support pro-European forces in Moldova, ahead of the 2018 parliamentary elections, especially bearing in mind that President Dodon continues to publicly support Russia and proposes a constitutional amendment to make the Republic of Moldova into a presidential republic, with all the consequences this would have.



BOȘTINĂRU  
Victor

### ► *Wed, 4* Enhanced co-operation: European Public Prosecutor's Office

[sylvia-yvonne.kaufmann@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:sylvia-yvonne.kaufmann@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5788

Fraud against the EU's financial interests causes an estimated annual loss of between €500 million and €3 billion for the European taxpayer. Law enforcement in the cases of these crimes is insufficient. If national authorities do not take action, we all have to foot the bill. That's why we have supported the creation of the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

But we didn't give the member states a blank cheque for our consent. The European Parliament has adopted three interim reports where it has stated its position on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutors' office. After having carefully examined the Council text we can say: the Council took on board a lot of our concerns and overall we are satisfied with the agreement. We can finally say 'yes' to a European solution in order to protect European taxpayers' money.

That doesn't mean of course that there are no critical issues for us. The European added value of an EPPO with only 20 member states participating is clearly lower. We will closely follow the impact it has, especially as Hungary and Poland are not participating but are among the main beneficiaries of European funds.



KAUFMANN  
Sylvia-  
Yvonne

### ► *Tues, 3* 2017 UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany (COP23)

[gilles.pargneau@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:gilles.pargneau@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5440

The impact of climate change on migration can no longer be ignored. According to the UN, environmental changes will lead to the forced displacement of 250 million people by 2050. For this reason, the S&D Group is calling for international recognition for the status of 'climate refugees'.

For the S&D Group, the content of this resolution should serve as a guide for the G20 nations and the European Union. The G20 nations must raise their contributions and the European Union must put the Paris Agreement into effect in European legislation and develop a European strategy to achieve carbon-neutral status by the middle of the century. In this resolution, the S&D Group has called for a financial commitment from developed countries to provide \$100 billion to developing countries each year. The latest report from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that public and private funding could reach between \$77 and 133 billion.



PARGNEAU  
Gilles

### ► *Tues, 3* Ending child marriage

[vilija.blinkeviciute@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:vilija.blinkeviciute@europarl.europa.eu)

+ 33 3 88 17 5428

The oral question and resolution focuses on the tools available to fight child marriage outside the EU (in developing countries one in three girls are married before turning 18) but also within the EU (where few statistics are available). Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) is a violation of the rights of the child and a form of violence against women and girls.

The resolution calls on the EU to work with international stakeholders (UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women) to focus on girls' empowerment, increase access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services, and to use dialogue on human rights, the Trade for All strategy, the GSP+ scheme and bilateral co-operation to curtail the practice of child, early and forced marriage. It also focuses on the case of refugee children.

The S&Ds denounce Trump's policy of cutting family-planning services and call for EU development funding to compensate and provide services to women and girls in developing countries, and to curtail child and early forced marriage.



BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ  
Vilija

**Utta Tuttlies**  
*Head of Press & Communications Unit,  
Group's spokesperson*  
+ 32 473 85 34 07

**Jan Bernas**  
*President's Spokesperson*  
+ 32 471 64 87 77

**Solange Hélin-Villes**  
+ 32 476 51 01 72

**Dimitris Komodromos**  
+ 32 474 62 28 84

**Tim Allan**  
+ 32 475 63 56 73

**Silvia Pelz**  
+ 32 478 75 07 12

**Victoria Martín De La Torre**  
+ 32 473 23 41 73

## About the S&D Group

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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 with 189 members from all 28 EU member states.

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.

