



Plenary Update

Socialists & Democrats Group
in the European Parliament
December Plenary Session | Strasbourg

PRESS CONFERENCE

with Gianni Pittella
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Our Priorities

► *Tues, 12* **US President Trump's announcement to recognise Jerusalem as capital of Israel**

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The S&D Group strongly protests against the announcement made by president Donald Trump about the official recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and his decision to move the US embassy to the city in the near future, hiding behind the Congress and without offering any new hope for Palestinians.

This announcement is a bad step at a bad moment. President Trump seems to be using his power to fuel the Israeli-Palestinian conflict instead of working for peace in the region. He is working against the hopes for peace in the Middle East the same way as he has gone against the global efforts aimed at dealing with migration flows or fighting climate change.

We must say it loud and clear again: the only way to achieve a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians is through a negotiated two-state solution with the states of Israel and of Palestinian living side-by-side together in peace and security along the 1967 borders, with mutual land swaps, and Jerusalem as the capital of both states. The final status of Jerusalem has to be settled through negotiations that fulfil the aspiration of the parties. Until then, the Security Council resolutions cannot be overturned.



PITTELLA
Gianni

► *Tues, 12* **Report on the inquiry into money laundering, tax avoidance and tax evasion**

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The Panama Papers, Football Leaks and Azerbaijani Laundromat scandals all proved that neither the EU as an institution nor its individual member states have been sufficiently equipped to effectively counter tax evasion, tax avoidance and money laundering.

The PANA committee concludes that a number of EU directives and regulations have not been sufficiently implemented and enforced. Furthermore, member states and EU institutions have failed to co-operate loyally in the fight against tax evasion and tax avoidance, therefore constituting a breach of the treaty bound obligation of sincere co-operation.

The S&Ds will stand firm on our call for an effective minimum corporate tax rate in Europe. Furthermore, we believe it is now up to the European Parliament to fill in the obvious blanks left by the Council on the EU blacklist of tax havens, and recognise that tax havens also exist within the EU.



KOFOD
Jeppe

► *Wed, 13* **State of play of negotiations with the United Kingdom**

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The European Council will meet on 14 & 15 December to discuss the ongoing Brexit negotiations and assess whether sufficient progress has been made on citizens' rights, Ireland and the UK's financial obligations. On Wednesday 13 December, the European Parliament will discuss the state of the negotiations and whether it is time to begin talks on the future relationship between the UK and the EU.



GUALTIERI
Roberto

► *Tues, 12* **Extension of the duration of the European Fund for Strategic Investments**

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The deep economic crisis coupled with the misguided austerity approach have created an investment gap of several hundred billion euros in Europe every year. Knowing how detrimental the long-term economic and social effects of this gap can be, the S&D Group has been calling for a European investment plan since the start of the crisis. In 2015, our call was finally answered and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) was established. This week, the European Parliament will vote on the extension of the fund that will now aim at mobilising 500 billion euros in fresh investments until 2020. However, the agreement also includes important fixes and improvements that our Group fought hard to achieve. From now on, the EFSI's mission will be much more focused on supporting social and environmental sustainability, the development of new technologies and a more balanced geographical allocation of investments. Beyond that, the fund will work more transparently and its democratic accountability will be substantially increased. We are proud on having achieved this much for more investments and a better, more sustainable future in Europe.



BULLMANN
Udo

► *Tues, 12* **Situation in Libya**

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Libya remains one of the most complex mixed migration situations in the world, with refugees traveling alongside migrants through perilous routes, surviving dangerous desert crossings and abuses that include torture, detention in inhumane conditions and abductions for ransom. We strongly condemn all the serious human rights violations against migrants in Libya as a real crime against humanity. It is crucial that the international community intervene in order to find a solution to this inhumane tragedy, to tackle the root causes of migration and for a long-term stabilisation of Libya, in the context of the UN-facilitated political process.



PANZERI
Pier Antonio

► *Tues, 12* **Annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy**

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The report stresses the need for a united response and strong cooperation in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) / The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The objective is a strategic autonomy which will also allow avoiding duplications and provide the practical and financial benefits of further integrating European defence capabilities. We have included the need to tackle terrorism and the root causes of instability in the world, such as poverty and raising inequality, bad governance and climate change.

It stresses the importance of our CSDP missions as Europe's common contribution to peace and stability in the world, as well as the need to strengthen their mandate and financing. The reform of the ATHENA mechanism, the establishment of an inclusive and ambitious PESCO, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and the need for a swift mobility of forces between member states are additional key elements of the report.



BOȘȚINARU
Victor

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The main message of the report is that due to the unstable security environment, but also with transatlantic relations and regarding BREXIT, things in security and defence are moving much faster than ever before. We emphasise the importance of our strategic partnership with

NATO and call for strengthening co-operation and complementarity between the two organisations, while strengthening EU security and defence co-operation.

In the past year, many initiatives and proposals within the scope of the CSDP have already been presented. Nevertheless, there is still lot to define. We support stronger security and defence co-operation, but we also want that the Parliament is duly included as a substantive part of the decision process on future developments.

► *Mon, 11* **Towards a digital trade strategy**

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Digitalisation of the economy has a profound impact on the global trading system. Therefore, trade policy must adapt to the new developments. The EU, as a community of values and the world's biggest exporter of services, should set the standards in international rules and agreements on digital trade flows based on three elements: (1) ensuring market access for digital goods and services in third countries, (2) ensuring that trade rules create tangible benefits for consumers and (3) promoting respect for fundamental rights. We achieved a result that fully safeguards the EU's internal data protection legislation while calling for rules on the transfer of data.



GRASWANDER
HAINZ
Karoline

► *Wed, 13* **Enlargement and strengthening of the Schengen area: Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia**

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The Schengen area is one of the greatest achievements bearing the European Union's rubberstamp, as well as the largest free travel area in the world. Moreover, a strong and united Schengen directly contributes to an enhanced security co-operation at EU level and a high degree of mutual trust amongst the member states.

As called for by president Juncker in his State of the Union Address 2017, if we want to strengthen the protection of our external borders, then we need to open the Schengen area of free movement to Bulgaria and Romania without any hesitations, and for Croatia once all criteria have been fulfilled. Following the thorough subsequent evaluations carried out by the European Commission, Romania and Bulgaria proved to fulfil the conditions necessary to join Schengen area. The Socialists and Democrats Group, through the topical debate, will ask for the necessary steps to be taken towards enabling the full application of the Schengen acquis in Bulgaria and Romania and the abolition of checks on persons at internal land, sea and air borders.



PITTELLA
Gianni

► *Tues, 12* **Annual Report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy**

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The annual report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is a balanced text and overall consensual. Knut Fleckenstein, S&D Shadow Rapporteur, supported the approach not to focus too much on the different countries in order to create a rather strategic-oriented CFSP report. In the shadow meeting, we agreed on 24 compromise amendments that were voted and agreed in the AFET committee on 6 November 2017. Regarding the compromise on the developments in the Middle East and Iran, the S&D defused a potentially dangerous situation for High Representative Federica Mogherini before her mission to Washington by reformulating an EPP demand on the Iranian missile program that went far beyond the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the EU position and the scope of the JCPOA. The final report is a result of good and co-operative work between the main groups in the Parliament.



FLECKENSTEIN
Knut

► *Tues, 12* **Iran Nuclear deal**

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The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran is a step forward in the fight for nuclear non-proliferation and the result of years of important negotiations. The deal provides the necessary guarantees and monitoring mechanisms and it has been thoroughly implemented by Iran.

The decision of the US President to decertify this deal is damaging to the US credibility and interest, especially considering the failure of the North Korean process which clearly constitutes today a nuclear threat for the world. This being said, this decision only opens a US domestic debate and it does not impact the implementation of the deal as such. The European Union and all the other partners remain committed to the JCPOA and dialogue remains the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation.



BOȘTINARU
Victor

There are a number of other issues that have to be addressed in our dialogue with Iran but which are clearly outside the scope of the deal, like the respect of human rights, the firing of ballistic missiles by Iran and its destabilising action in the region notably its presence in Syria.

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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.

About the S&D Group