



DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL

European Council conclusions and the latest developments of the war against Ukraine, and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation

Iratxe García Pérez, S&D Group president

Our group has taken a strong and united stance on Putin's brutal war against Ukraine. We definitely need to continue supporting Ukrainians in their heroic defence efforts, and stick to the sanctions against Russia to ensure that the economic consequences will lead Putin to stop his criminal war. We are following the news development in all diplomatic efforts, but we must remain very cautious. Any seemingly positive sign could be another bluff by Russia to buy time. The war has also had dramatic economic and social consequences within Europe, which we must tackle urgently. We welcome progress at the last summit on energy efficiency to make Europe more independent from energy supplies from Russia. The joint purchase of gas is definitely an initiative moving in the right direction. Energy cooperation with the US is essential to isolate Putin and to reduce Europe's dependency on Russian energy. The question of refugees is extremely important and we must make sure that there are enough funds to provide them with the necessary support and access to education, health or housing."

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY 5 APRIL

EU protection of children and young people fleeing the war against Ukraine

Helène Fritzon, S&D vice-president responsible for children's rights

According to the UN, one child becomes a refugee in Ukraine almost every second. Both in the EU and in Ukraine, many of Ukraine's 7.5 million children are in desperate need of security, protection, humanitarian aid and psychosocial care, and the number of children in need is growing by the day. We have already called for the Council and Commission to draw up an EU-Ukraine Child Protection Package to protect and strengthen children's rights. Next week in Plenary, the Socialists and Democrats will use the key debate to make the EU act to meet children's specific needs, including child protection, child-friendly spaces, education and psychosocial support. It is their right and our obligation.

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY 5 APRIL

Situation in Afghanistan, in particular the situation of women's rights

Elena Yoncheva, S&D lead MEP on Afghanistan

It is of utmost importance to have a substantial debate on what the EU will do to help women in Afghanistan. The latest setback on rights, namely to ban women flying alone, prevent access to education and introduce gender segregation in amusement parks, shows a very dark perspective. The resolution should focus on the access of women to the labour market and education. A strong EU position is urgent also in the context of several regional powers' intentions to assert themselves as the leading external player in the country.

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DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL

Ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) TEU regarding Poland and Hungary

Birgit Sippel, S&D spokesperson on civil liberties, justice and home affairs

The dangerous inaction from the Council has given the PiS and Fidesz governments a free pass to continue down a path that strips Polish and Hungarian citizens of their democratic and fundamental rights. Next week in Plenary, we will be reminding the Council of its collective responsibility to finally act as part of the Article 7 procedures, which have been ongoing since December 2017 and September 2018. Member States have to put concrete recommendations on the table to reverse the harm these governments have inflicted on people and the EU as a whole. Hungarian and Polish people can count on our support to use every tool at our disposal to stop these governments from undermining democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU any further.

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QUESTION TIME ON TUESDAY 5 APRIL

The EU's security and Strategic Compass

Sven Mikser, S&D coordinator in SEDE committee

Putin's war against Ukraine, at the doorstep of the European Union, is a direct challenge to the rules-based system of international relations. In order to give an adequate response to this dangerous shift in European security, the EU must play a more assertive role and become a better and more credible security provider in our continent and beyond. While diplomacy, development cooperation and trade will inevitably remain important foreign policy instruments to promote human security and sustainable prosperity, we must invest much more into the EU's ability to be a capable and an autonomous global actor in the field of security and defence. This will help us defend the rules-based multilateral order. We welcome the adoption of the Strategic Compass, under the leadership of High Representative Josep Borrell, by all member states. This is a big step towards a more robust common security and defence policy through concrete actions like collaborative development and procurement of equipment, more coordinated defence spending, robust tools against hybrid attacks, as well as a Rapid Deployment Capacity, a force of up to 5,000 troops that could be promptly mobilised in case of a crisis. As European Parliament members, we want to play our full oversight role over the implementation of the Compass, notably on the budgetary aspects, to make sure the Council delivers on our joint level of ambition.

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DEBATE ON THURSDAY 7 APRIL

Right to Repair

Biljana Borzan, S&D vice-president for consumer protection

Our choices as consumers have a strong impact on the environment and society. We are all increasingly frustrated when we are forced to replace products rather than repair them. That is why next week the European Parliament is calling for an effective Right to Repair. With clear labelling on reparability, we can respond to consumers' demands for more information on the durability and sustainability of products. We want to ensure the availability of spare parts and make sustainable choices more affordable. However, the responsibility for securing a sustainable future is not solely on the consumer. Businesses need to end harmful practices like premature obsolescence or destruction of unsold goods.

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY 5 APRIL

Trans-European energy infrastructure

Erik Bergkvist, S&D member of the committee on industry, research and energy

Due to the drastically worsened security situation in Europe combined with the urgency of responding to climate change, the revised TEN-E has acquired an importance far greater than anyone would have imagined just a few months ago. With a uniquely broad unity among the negotiating parties, we have agreed on a regulation that will strengthen the energy infrastructure within the EU and pave the way for a rapid transition to green and renewable energy alternatives. We are now better prepared to meet current and future challenges, and we should be proud of the results.

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TOPICAL DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL

Cooperation and similarities between the Putin regime and extreme-right and separatist movements in Europe

Andreas Schieder, S&D negotiator in the special INGE committee on foreign interference

Over many years, close contacts between far-right parties in Europe and Putin's Regime have been cultivated. The Austrian FPÖ, the French Rassemblement National, and the Italian Lega have all signed cooperation agreements with Russian President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party. Media regularly reports that these parties are willing to accept political party funding from Russia. Through our work in the INGE committee on foreign interference, we managed to expose that Russia deliberately seeks out far-right extremist parties and movements to recruit allies within the European Institutions to help them to strengthen their position, to lobby for sanctions relief, mitigate the consequences of international isolation, legitimate their Proxy-Governments, and destabilise Europe. In return, the far-right in Europe can count on very generous support from Russia for their election campaigns. This must stop. This is why we need a ban on foreign donations for political activities in the EU. This is necessary to reduce dark money inflows, increase transparency, and prevent foreign actors interfering in elections and referendum campaigns in Europe.

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ONLINE EVENT ON MONDAY 4 APRIL FROM 18H00-19H00

S&D Global Progressive Forum event on: 'A new global order, what do Russia and China want?'

Andreas Schieder, S&D MEP and chair of the Global Progressive Forum

Russia currently aims to re-establish the rule of force as the organising principle of the international community. This is the exact opposite of the kind of international order that we, as progressive Europeans, would like to see. Our political goal is a strong and effective EU as an actor for peace, democracy and human rights on the international stage, where interactions must exclusively be based on international law. Follow the event via live streaming here: <https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/>

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S&D Group press conference
Iratxe García Pérez, S&D president
Tuesday 5 April, 10.10 - 10.30
Daphne Caruana Galizia room - Strasbourg
Weiss N-1/201
Webstreaming here:
<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/>

Journalists who want to participate and ask questions can connect via this link:
<https://broadcaster.interactio.eu/join/66e2-hy1p-1w4u>

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