

# S&D Interparliamentary Newsletter - Connecting with National Parliaments

BRUSSELS, 05/03/24

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY WEEK 2024

### Closer engagement between parliaments is necessary, and not just at elections times

Dear Arielle,

The European Parliament, together with the [Belgian Senate](#) and the [House of Representatives](#), representing the [parliamentary dimension of the Presidency of the Council of the EU](#), organised the European Parliamentary Week (EPW) 2024, on 12 and 13 February 2024 in the European Parliament in Brussels. **Approximately 280 participants took part in the meeting**, among which 19 MEPs, 113 Members from 26 EU Member States and 33 EU Chambers together with 10 MPs from candidate countries and observer countries.

The [European Parliamentary Week](#) is an opportunity for national parliaments of the Member States of the European Union to exchange and debate on European coordination of the economic and budgetary policies of the Member States within the framework of the European Semester and the [Treaty on Stability, coordination and governance](#) within the Economic and Monetary Union. The Conference also contributes to ensuring democratic accountability in the area of economic governance and budgetary policy in the EU.



This year's edition of the European Parliamentary Week was the last one for the 9th term of the European Parliament. Noteworthy keynote speakers including, [Eliane TILLIEUX](#) (PS), President of the Belgian House of Representatives, [Charles MICHEL](#), President of the European Council, [Pierre WUNSCH](#), Governor of the Belgian National Bank and [Vincent VAN PETEGHEM](#), President of the ECOFIN Council. [Valdis DOMBROVSKIS](#), Executive Vice-President of the European Commission and [Commissioner McGuinness](#) also participated in the exchange with national Members of Parliaments. Throughout the different debates, it was repeated that **ever-closer engagement and contact is necessary between parliaments across Europe and the European Parliament, not just at election times but also indeed throughout the mandates of both.**

The first day of the conference consisted of the opening session followed by three parallel Interparliamentary Committee Meetings, which focused respectively on the future of the [European Monetary Union](#) (EMU), on social investment and convergence, and on the lessons learned from [NextGenerationEU](#). On the second day, two plenary sessions covered strategic investments and reforms in view of enhancing the EU's growth potential and on the future of the EU single market and taxation.

## S&D parliamentarians across Europe are calling for a better and more progressive future

The S&D political family met in the framework of the EPW 2024 to learn more about the Belgian Presidency but also and very importantly, to **strengthen cooperation** between the European and national levels. Many parliamentarians advocated for stronger links, and coordination between MEPs and MPs on economic governance issues.



## Belgian Presidency: a new impetus for parliamentary democracy



Since 1 January 2024, Belgium took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union. [Eliane TILLIEUX](#) (PS), President of the House of Representatives, and [Kathleen VAN BREMPT](#), head of the Belgian delegation in the S&D Group, gave insights into the Presidency and its [parliamentary dimension](#) in particular. The Presidency is taking place during very challenging times: just a few months before the next European elections and in a very complex geo-political context. Within less than three months, the Belgian presidency has the **responsibility of finalizing as many legislative files as possible** including key sensitive issues, such as the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the “Green deal net

zero industry act”, the defense of democracy package, the review of economic governance and the multiannual financial framework.

The [Belgian presidency](#)'s priorities are focusing on defending the rule of law, democracy, and unity, strengthening European competitiveness, pursuing a green and just transition, reinforcing the European social and health agenda, protecting people and borders and promoting a global Europe. **Inter-parliamentary cooperation is at the heart of the Presidency and in particular of the President of the Chamber.** In fact, it was within the EP hemicycle that the federal government's declaration was examined on October 2, 2020. It was the first time that a national parliament met in the EP hemicycle, thus giving interparliamentary cooperation between a national parliament and the European Parliament a completely new form. In recent years, the President of the Federal Chamber strived to **give new impetus to parliamentary democracy and to give pride of**

**place to Europe within her Chamber.** This is why, now for each European summit, the Belgian Prime Minister reports to the Federal Advisory Committee responsible for European issues, of which Eliane Tillieux is also the co-chair.

The President of the Belgian House of Representatives called in her statement to **strengthen the European dimension in national parliaments and the social dimension of the European Semester.**



## **S&Ds are pushing to fully integrate the European Pillar of Social Rights into the future framework of economic policy coordination**

It was 35 years ago, in 1989, that the Delors Report on the Economic and Monetary Union proposed creating a single currency. It took huge efforts to create the euro, incredible political leadership and courage, not least from [Jacques Delors](#). Now, its reform will require even more of that.



The European Commission launched a [review process on economic governance](#) architecture at the beginning of the current mandate, to address its obvious shortcomings. Subsequently, the Commission, on 26th April 2023, adopted a legislative package on the revision of the economic governance. The EPW came at a timely moment, as the EU co-legislators provisionally agreed a revamp of EU economic governance on 10 February 2024. For some S&D parliamentarians, the new fiscal rules are a step forward and will ensure better investment and flexibility for member states to smooth their adjustments, and will strengthen the social dimension. However, for others the agreement has some important shortcomings in particular the lack of room for investments and the democratic accountability. The S&D will continue pushing for a fiscal capacity on EU level, which is strongly needed to enable Member States to finance the digital and green transition and protect the EU from internal and external shocks. Moreover, all agreed that S&Ds should keep a close eye on how the social aspects are taken into account in the European Semester process.



Economic governance and its revision are complex questions, which are difficult to translate for elections, though they will affect every citizen's and worker's life. Less than 120 days away from the next European elections, the rise of populism and nationalism was a central concern for many social democrats across Europe. It is evident that these elections will be different from the previous ones, and that the threat of extreme right and left populism is at our doorstep. S&Ds have to go the extra mile in protecting our European democracy and bringing social cohesion back to the continent!

**ANNUAL VISIT OF THE STARTING TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Within the framework of the official annual visit of the [Norwegian Parliament](#) to Brussels on 14 February, the S&D Group



organised a dedicated programme for [Labour Party](#) members. The [unicameral](#) parliament has 169 members and is elected every four years based on party-list proportional representation in nineteen [multi-seat](#) constituencies. Following the 2021 election, ten parties are represented in parliament: the [Labour Party](#), with 48 seats, is the biggest political group and is currently in government with the [Centre Party](#). Norway is among the EU's closest partners. Indeed, Norway is closely linked with the EU through membership in the Agreement on the [European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#), which brings together all the 27 EU

Member States and three of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries in a Single Market. Norway is furthermore a member of the Schengen Area and a signatory of the Dublin Regulation on asylum policy. The EU and Norway also enjoy very close and active cooperation on foreign and security policy issues. The Norwegian Labour Party is a full member of the [Party of European Socialists](#) (PES). LP MPs had an extensive exchange with S&D [MEP Ilan De Basso](#) on how to best defend the Nordic model from potential threats in EU legislation. They also exchanged in-depth with the S&D Secretariat on the upcoming European elections and on how to best cooperate with each other, in order to become more effective as European social democrats and tackle the challenges together that are too big for one single country to overcome.

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## WHAT'S NEXT

- 3 – 5 March, **Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence** (IPC CFSP/CSDP), Bruges, Belgium
- 7 March, **Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on International Women's Day**, European Parliament, Brussels - **S&D political group meeting**
- 17 – 18 March, **Inter-parliamentary Conference on circular economies**, Flemish Parliament, Brussels
- 18 March, **Annual visit of the Finish Parliament - Special program for the S&D affiliated Members**, European Parliament, Brussels
- 24 – 26 March, **LXXI COSAC Plenary Meeting**, European Parliament, Brussels - **S&D political group meeting**

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- [First ever resolution on the rule of law in Greece adopted! EPP must finally stop covering for Mitsotakis!](#), 07/02/2024

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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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**S&D**

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