

**GARCÍA PÉREZ Iratxe** - president of the S&D Group

## The new College of Commissioners of the European Union

We voted in favour to support the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, because she committed to our main key demands. But our support is not a blank cheque. The proposal for the College of Commissioners should be in line with the political guidelines of the European Commission and should fully respect the pro-European agreement between pro-European and democratic forces.

Full respect to the Spitzenkandidat process, gender balance, a strong focus on social rights and the fair distribution of executive vice-president positions reflecting the majority in the European Parliament – this is what we have been asking for.

We, the S&D family, are ready to do our job. Negotiations are still ongoing and the process of hearings for the Commissioners-Designate will be key. All candidates should demonstrate their commitment to European values and progressive priorities.



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Debate on: Tuesday, 17 September

## Presentation of the Draghi report and a debate on the future of European competitiveness

We need a competitive Europe that does not lose its social heart. Competitiveness needs to benefit everybody – based on well-being and social progress. This debate is a good way to kick off the new legislative period with ideas on how to modernise our economy and accelerate the green and just transition. We need to increase the EU's investment capacity with common EU funding and a strong budget, while advancing on the social deal in line with our EU green goals. The decarbonisation of the EU economy and the green industrial strategy, based on social equality, equity and quality public services, must be high on the agenda for this mandate.

The Draghi report – as a continuation of Enrico Letta's report earlier this year – offers a good overview of the challenges we are facing and the solutions across various policy areas. Growth is possible with social justice.



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## EU budget 2025 – presentation by the Council of its position

This is the first budget after the revision of the pluriannual budget of the Union 2021–2027, known also as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and also the first time that we will need to pay the increasing interest costs on funds borrowed under the European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI). Consequently, we are extremely worried by the position of the Council which asks for major cuts in headings and programmes with a direct and visible impact on our citizens. A lot is at stake, including Horizon Europe – the key funding programme for research and innovation and Erasmus+ – one of the greatest EU success stories involving young people. The position of the Council asking for major cuts in 2025 goes far beyond what we agreed with the member states as a revision of the current MFF. The S&D message to the member states is “keep your promises!” If the budgetary cuts for 2025 become a reality, this will undermine the credibility of the European project in the eyes of Europeans because it will considerably decrease the financial means to deliver. This is unacceptable for the Socialists and Democrats, and we are working to build a majority in the Parliament to block these ideas coming from the Council. We want to ensure a long-term budgetary perspective that will enable us to deal with all the upcoming challenges.

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## Global measures towards social media platforms

The recent clashes between several democratic governments and tech giants like X (formerly Twitter) highlight the crucial role that social media can play in our democracies. Elon Musk's decision to not comply with Brazilian court orders is just one more example of how tech giants are increasingly behaving with impunity before governments and the courts. The Digital Services Act represents the EU's first step in protecting our citizens against the spread of misinformation and preserving our youth's mental well-being. But we should not stop there. Following the UN Secretary's call, we must explore how we can protect our democracies worldwide against the digital Wild West that social media platforms have become.

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## War in the Gaza Strip and the situation in the Middle East

There are no more words to describe the disastrous state in Gaza which show the highest levels ever seen of food insecurity, lack of shelter, clean water, sanitation... all elements of basic human dignity. Even worse, day after day we wake up to news of recurrent massacres of civilians and humanitarian workers perpetrated by the indiscriminate and criminal actions of the Netanyahu government. We cannot tolerate this situation becoming the new normal. This must stop now. The international community can no longer accept this bloodshed in Gaza. It is about respecting international law and if the EU does not speak together about this, who else in the world will? We must make use of all the instruments at hand to exert the necessary pressure to stop this man-made catastrophe.



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## The deteriorating situation of women in Afghanistan

The new law passed in Afghanistan silences and erases women from society, further reducing public spaces for women. A woman's voice should not be raised outside the home, and they should not sing or read poetry aloud. All of this is unacceptable.

The rights and conditions of women in Afghanistan worsens day by day to the near indifference of the world. Newspapers and TV stations hardly talk about it anymore, and only the NGOs still present in the country continue to address the issue. We need the EU and the international community to make their voices heard – loud and clear – and to put pressure on the Taliban regime to revise these laws ensuring human rights are upheld for all women. Geopolitical interests cannot prevail over women's rights and bodies.



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## Situation in Venezuela

The Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament will not recognise the results of the last Venezuelan elections until Nicolas Maduro provides proof of election. Unfortunately, the hope of having transparent and democratic elections vanished rapidly when it became clear that Maduro did everything in his power to be re-elected, although the real numbers say that the opposition leader Edmundo González Urrutia won the elections. The arrest warrant against him is yet more evidence of Maduro's policy of repression that we, as a Group, have repeatedly denounced. This is why the Spanish government's decision to grant political asylum to González Urrutia shows courage, determination and coherence to contribute to the defence of democracy in that country. We have always supported the efforts and work of the high representative and vice-president of the Commission Josep Borrell to foster dialogue, but now it is time for the EU step up its game and increase sanctions on the regime, including high-level officials, members of the security forces and the regime's Supreme Tribunal of Justice, and Maduro himself.



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## S&D Group press conference

[GARCÍA PÉREZ Iratxe, President](#)

17/09/2024, 12:00 - 12:30

Daphne Caruana Galizia room - Strasbourg, Weiss N-1/201

[Webstreaming here](#)

[Journalists who want to participate and ask questions can connect via this link](#)

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