

# S&D Interparliamentary Newsletter - Connecting with National Parliaments

BRUSSELS, 24/09/2024

## A Message from S&D Vice-President, Heléne Fritzon

*“As the S&D Vice-President for Strategic Partners (including National Parliaments), a Feminist Europe, Gender Mainstreaming and Children’s Rights, I am committed to strengthening relations with colleagues and friends from our national parliamentary sister groups.*

*As outlined by Article 12 of the Treaty of the EU, “National Parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union”, and as such I advocate that their role is central, not only to our political Group, but to the wellbeing of the wider European project. Under my Vice-Presidency over the next legislative mandate, the S&D Group will always promote robust inter-parliamentary cooperation and will ensure that this area of outreach remains a strategic priority.*

*Members of Parliaments from the Socialist and Democrat political alliance represent no less than 1400 elected representatives across the EU Member States, and our network, now standing at 35 parliamentary sister groups, is still expanding to include those on the periphery of our Union. The size and strength of our progressive family is a great source of pride, and is something we actively maintain through regular inter-institutional exchanges and communication. We need to continue investing in this area, however, to better understand each other and to coordinate our political positions on key issues that face Europe today.*

*As the largest centre-left force in European policymaking, the Socialists and Democrats’ influence is undeniable. Now, we have a great opportunity to make use of our strong parliamentary presence and to advance progressive cooperation across the region.*

*I look forward to working with you over the coming term.”*



## The New College of Commissioners-Designate

In recent weeks, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has been attempting to compose her new College of Commissioners in order to begin the legislative term. She revealed these names and their corresponding portfolios last Tuesday morning.



From the set of twenty-six Commissioners-Designate, four are from the S&D political family. These include Teresa Ribera (Spain), Dan Jørgensen (Denmark), Glen Micallef (Malta) and Roxana Mînzatu (Romania). Of these four Socialist candidates, both women, Ribera and Mînzatu, have been selected for Executive Vice-President positions.

Until each of the nominated candidates have undergone extensive institutional proceedings, including thorough hearings in front of the European Parliament, they will not yet serve as Commissioners in an official capacity. Read more about the proposed portfolios in each of their respective Mission Letters [here](#).

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#### S&D CONCERNS AND DEMANDS:

Our Group welcomes the significant and influential portfolios granted to members of the European Socialist family and we trust in their ability to lead on the crucial issues outlined in their briefs. At the same time, we are aware of the political challenges that lie ahead in a von der Leyen II Commission, one that appears to be geared more towards security, tech and industrial growth than previous priorities of climate action and equality.

During June's European Parliament elections, a pro-European, democratic majority held in place against rising populist groups. This outcome must be reflected in the composition and political direction of von der Leyen's second term in charge. Moreover, **we as the largest progressive force** in European policymaking are determined to see our agenda implemented in concrete measures. Central to our political platform is the **advancement of social rights amid the green and digital transitions, a gender equality agenda, countering far-right extremism, and an assertive but responsible Europe on the world stage.**

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### An Update on the Hungarian Council Presidency



From 1 July this year, and for the second time in history, Hungary has held the six-month rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This means that Budapest will guide the Council's agenda and represent the institution in negotiations with other EU

bodies until 31 December this year. The Hungarian Presidency completes a trio, run initially by Spain and subsequently, Belgium.

Undoubtedly, the political context of Hungary's Council Presidency has generated **unprecedented challenges for the EU and for progressive forces**. Never before has a Member State with such a **poor democratic record** been at the centre of EU governance.

For years, the Orbán government has degraded civil liberties, jeopardised the sovereignty of Ukraine, and threatened fundamental democratic standards while pushing a regressive social agenda. The Hungarian Prime Minister's **isolationist and authoritarian values are in total conflict with the original vision of the EU**- a Union centred around freedom, human dignity and respect for the rule of law. In response to this problematic situation, and regarding the Parliamentary Dimension of the Presidency, **the S&D Group has decided to withdraw our formal participation in initiatives organised in Budapest for now**. Our Group's decision to remain absent was affirmed and reinforced by other pro-European political groups who have also not been present in Budapest for these events.

Despite these challenging political circumstances, the S&D Group remains committed to maintaining and advancing the interparliamentary link among our political family in Europe. In particular, we send our support to our social democratic partners and friends in Hungary- those in the Demokratikus Koalicio, Magyar Szocialista Párt, and Esély Közösség, who are fighting for an open, tolerant and democratic Hungary against the Orbán regime. This solidarity is central to our cooperation with national parliaments and we remain at the disposal of our political network for support and information.

#### **INTER-INSTITUTIONAL EXCHANGES IN BUDAPEST:**

Thus far, the COSAC Chairpersons Meeting and the Interparliamentary Conference on Common Foreign and Security Policy/ Common Security and Defence Policy have taken place in Budapest, in July and September respectively.



At the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, a delegation of twenty-two Member States and nine EU candidate countries were present. The European Parliament was represented by Vice-President Younous Omarjee, while the Hungarian National Assembly was represented by its Deputy Speaker and Chairpersons of the Committee on European Affairs. Here, key topics of discussion included the **role of national parliaments and the principle of subsidiarity in the inter-institutional dimension, the EU enlargement process and developing a crisis-proof, sustainable approach to agricultural policy** across the region.

Meanwhile, the Interparliamentary Conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy/ Common Security and Defence Policy facilitated an exchange between delegations of twenty four Member States and eight candidate countries. Other participants included David McAllister, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the European Parliament, Hungarian Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrel. In the context of this Interparliamentary Conference, key agenda items included **Ukraine's territorial integrity, external border management, and the influence of new technologies on international affairs**.



## **S&D Influence in the European Parliament's 10th Term**

#### **GROUP BUREAU:**

Following the re-election of **Iratxe García-Pérez** as S&D President in late-June, the political group's new Bureau is now in place.

Nine Vice-Presidents and one Treasurer, alongside the President, will head up the Socialists and Democrats leadership for the next mandate. These parliamentarians will coordinate the political direction of the Group and oversee its organisational management. As a **gender-balanced and geographically diverse executive**, the new S&D Bureau will provide strong and progressive leadership for the next five years, focusing on policy portfolios and areas of communication central to our political cause.



From left to right: Mohammed Chahim, Ana Catarina Mendes, Christophe Clergeau, Camilla Laureti, Gabi Bischoff, Iratxe García-Pérez, Eero Heinälouma, Heléne Fritzon, Yannis Maniatis, Alex Agius Saliba, Kathleen Van Brempt.

#### COMMITTEE CHAIR ROLES:

With the constitution of committees in the European Parliament in July, it was determined that the S&D Group will have **five chairpersons guiding five broad policy areas** for the next two and half years. These figures will lead important legislative work on their respective portfolios by overseeing negotiations with EU ministers, preparing essential reports, and organising hearings.

Members from our political group will chair the following committees: Regional Development (Dragos Benea), Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (Antonio Decaro), Women's Rights and Gender Equality (Lina Galvez), Economic and Monetary Affairs (Aurore Lalucq), and International Trade (Berndt Lange).

Socialist and Democrat representation in these roles ensures that progressive priorities remain central to the legislative process in Europe. From **demanding adequate action on climate change and ensuring the protection of vulnerable citizens, to inclusive approaches on trade, cohesion and gender policy**, S&D leadership will

secure tangible successes in the fight for a fairer Europe based on solidarity and sustainability.



#### EP BUREAU:

Furthermore, the S&D Group is proud to hold six key positions on the Bureau of the European Parliament. These include Pina Picierno, Victor Negrescu, Katarina Barley, Javi Lopez and Christel Schaldemose as Vice-Presidents, with Marc Angel serving as Quaestor\*

Together, and with the remaining members of the Parliament's Bureau, these figures are responsible for **decision-making regarding the internal, financial, and administrative operations of the institution.**

*\*From left to right*



## WHAT'S NEXT

- 3-4 October, Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union (SECG), Budapest.
- 29-30 October, LXXII COSAC Plenary, Budapest.

## LATEST NEWS

[EU budget 2025: S&Ds call on member states not to make major cuts in EU programmes](#), 18/09/2024

[S&Ds urge strong EU response to flooding crisis - both short and long-term](#), 18/09/2024

[Socialists and Democrats issue warning over next Commission mandate](#), 10/09/2024

[S&D leader calls for tangible social legislation after Draghi's report](#), 09/09/2024

[S&D Group leader Iratxe García calls for a progressive EU competitiveness strategy that is fit for today's and tomorrow's world](#), 04/09/2024

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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.

[CONTACT US](#)



Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament

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