



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Gianni Pittella
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Wednesday 9 September 2015

State of the Union

The discussion in plenary on the State of the Union will be a unique opportunity to ask for a change in Europe. The Greek and migration crises the have brought a sense of urgency. Either we act now or Europe will ebb away.

We believe that it is time to carry out a new European offensive. We want a Europe Asylum policy paving the way for a true EU migration policy. We must strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union, through a stronger involvement of the Parliament and the development of a EU fiscal capacity to support our economy. We also need a more progressive taxation to fight against tax fraud and avoidance because companies must pay their taxes where they make their profits. We also want a Europe more sustainable investing in a circular economy. We will fight to change Europe.

Migration and refugees in Europe

Every morning we are waking up to a new tragedy, from stories of refugees found dead in a lorry in Austria, to the heart-breaking pictures of a boy washed up on a beach in Turkey. The failure of national governments to show solidarity between themselves and towards refugees has directly contributed to these tragedies. We have called for a long time to scrap the Dublin system and replace it with a common European asylum and anti-trafficking policy. Only when refugees have a safe and legal way of reaching Europe will they no longer be forced to make perilous and often fatal journeys. We have bickered for too long, we need to take action now before we wake up to another tragedy. We need a complete overhaul of the Dublin agreement, replacing it with a real and effective common European policy based on solidarity.



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Wednesday 9 September 2015

EU's role in the Middle East Peace Process

As we are still facing a stalemate in the Middle East Peace Process, a debate and a Resolution will allow the European Parliament to reflect and impulse on a more active role for the EU in this process. We reaffirm our commitment to a two states solution with the state of Israel within secure and recognised borders and with an independent, contiguous and viable State of Palestine; living side-by-side in peace and security along the 1967 borders, with mutually agreed land swaps, and Jerusalem as capital of both states. We support the efforts of the EU High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini who have demonstrated her personal commitment to renew and intensify the EU's engagement in peace efforts. The growing violence in the whole region generates new security challenges for Israel, but it also creates shared interests with the Arab states. This, together with the nuclear deal with Iran offers a unique momentum for the peace process, which should not be missed. The resolution emphasize also the dramatic conditions of a huge number of Palestinian refugees in the neighbouring countries as well as the current humanitarian emergency situation in Gaza and the most needed EU support for UNRWA.



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Cloning of animals kept and reproduced for farming purposes

Cloning is a form of asexual reproduction performed in a laboratory. This technique aims to obtain a genetic copy of an animal for reproducing its special characteristics. At present, cloning is not used for farming purposes in the EU. However, it is used in certain third countries, such as the USA, Canada, Argentina, Brazil and Australia, to multiply top-performing breeding animals. Nowadays, cloning has serious consequences in terms of animal welfare, which is the legal basis for the two EC legislative proposals to suspend the use of the cloning technique in the EU for farm animals, the placing on the market of clones from live animals and embryo clones. Public opinion is highly opposed to the cloning of animals for food supply. S&D Group largely supports the Sommer/Moi report which endorses a prohibition of placing cloned animals on the EU market, as well as their offspring, products derived thereof, and their reproductive material, which goes beyond the EC position.



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Monday 7 September 2015

Situation of fundamental rights in the EU (2013-2014)

The European Union was founded on the principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights; these values stem from the common constitutional traditions of all Member States. Member States' compliance with these values guarantees that all rights and obligations deriving from the Treaties and from international law are upheld, ensures mutual trust between Member States and their respective legal systems, hence it is vital for the proper functioning of the European Union. The already existing tools are deemed to be insufficient in dealing with breaches of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights that is why the S&D Group supports the establishment of a new mechanism to monitor and protect these fundamental principles and values; a mechanism to remedy the breaches to avoid the development of systematic threats in the Member States.

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