



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Gianni Pittella
Tuesday 15 April at 15.30 LOW N-1/201

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**Gianni
Pittella**

Election of the President of the Commission

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Tuesday 15 July 2014

The election of the new president of the European Commission by the European Parliament is a victory for our institution and the S&D Group is ready to do what is necessary to make this a success. However Mr Juncker must respect our priorities and values. Our support for Mr Juncker requires a clear commitment from him in favour of a new direction to boost growth and employment. Our priorities are: practical solutions to bring down unemployment, serious action on investment and social justice, greater flexibility in the interpretation of the Growth and Stability Pact, and a new European immigration policy based on European solidarity. If Mr Juncker wants to count on our support next week he must show he respects these priorities and come up with real proposals to make a difference in Europe.



**David
Martin**

EU-US Negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement – TTIP

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Tuesday 15 July 2014

As Socialists and Democrats we recognise the opportunities of the agreement. These include improved access to US markets for services and public procurement, recognition of technical standards, protection of EU geographical indications and the abolition of US trade restrictions (such as the 'Buy American Act' and the 'Jones Act'). The EU and its industries and services have clear interests under TTIP. At the same time however, the S&D Group has made a number of crucial demands in these negotiations. The extent to which these demands are met in the final text will be the deciding factor in whether or not our Group can give its consent to the agreement. Our demands focus on the following critical elements: maintaining EU standards; data protection; regulation of financial markets; defending the role of democratic legislative processes; protecting labour rights; dropping proposals for an investor-state dispute settlement; and transparency in negotiations.



**Alessandra
Moretti**

Council and Commission statements – Withdrawal of the Maternity Leave Directive

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Tuesday 15 July 2014

The European Commission is considering withdrawing the draft Maternity Leave Directive (also known as the Estrela report) which was adopted with a large majority in the European Parliament in 2010 and has been blocked in Council since then. EU member states are still refusing to start the second reading phase. The Maternity Leave Directive would strengthen women's rights by ensuring women across the EU are entitled to a minimum of 20 weeks of fully paid maternity leave and making sure they are protected when they return to work. The directive also includes provisions on paternity leave. Withdrawing this proposal sends an extremely negative signal to citizens all over Europe and is a massive setback for women's rights. Our Group calls on the Commission and the Council to commit to supporting the directive and conclude negotiations in the coming months, under the Italian presidency.



**Knut
Fleckenstein**

Situation in Ukraine (resolution to be voted on Thursday 17 July)

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The current situation in Ukraine means the Ukrainian government must make sustained efforts to strengthen economic stability and the political integrity of the country. The EU must give the maximum support to the Ukrainian president's peace plan and the initiatives for an inclusive national dialogue, as well as to the work done by the OSCE (the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe). Therefore the EU Commission and the EU's high representative for foreign affairs should reinforce the EU's commitment to supporting Ukraine. Russia bears a particular responsibility in helping to de-escalate tensions in Ukraine's eastern regions.



**Victor
Bostinaru**

Situation in Iraq

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Wednesday 16 July 2014

The territorial advances of the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant are extremely concerning. The internal conflict in Iraq is having serious consequences, threatening the already fragile stability of the entire region.

The number of displaced Iraqis is increasing as hostilities escalate and the major objective for the government and the army should be protecting Iraqi citizens – from all ethnic and religious groups.

A united, federal Iraq where Kurds, Sunnis and Shias are all granted their rights is the best long-term solution for Iraq and for broader regional security and stability. We call on all important regional and global players, such as the US, the EU, Iran, Turkey and Israel, to support this solution.



We are proud to welcome our new Bureau, elected on 25 June 2014. The team has a clear gender balance and reflects European diversity with members coming from the south, north, east and west of Europe, as well as from both small and larger countries.

The S&D Group's Bureau co-ordinates its political activity. It is made up of the president, nine vice-presidents and the treasurer.

Individual vice-presidents are in charge of specific EU policy portfolios and supervise cross-committee issues. Two others are responsible for the S&D Group's communications and for the co-ordination of parliamentary affairs.



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