



## Plenary Update

January 2016 Session

**PRESS  
CONFERENCE**  
with Gianni Pittella  
Tuesday at 10.10  
LOW N-1/201

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### Our Priorities

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► **Wed 20 EU priorities for 2016 –Dutch Presidency**

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The European Union needs to re-launch its growth and employment strategy with real ambition for the future. Any backward step on the flexibility cannot be accepted. Reducing unemployment and social inequalities is crucial for the success of European integration, even more so now when Europe must prepare to deal with larger scale immigration.

#### Schengen

Schengen is not only the greatest success of the story of European integration, but the purest symbol of a united Europe. Once this symbol is destroyed, the whole of Europe is at risk of collapse.

#### Migration

The new proposals from the Commission, on a European Border and Coast Guard, which recognises the need to make managing Schengen's external borders a European responsibility, are in line with our major aim: to make the control of our external borders a European matter. It is implicitly recognised that the coast of Lesbos, Lampedusa or the border between Serbia and Hungary are no longer just national borders, but our common European ones.

However, these new proposals must be followed by two further major points: the legal revision of the Dublin system and a new permanent and compulsory relocation scheme for refugees based on real solidarity and burden sharing between Member States.

#### Terrorism

The fight against terrorism requires a comprehensive approach, with a mix of internal and external measures, particularly the establishment of an information and data-exchange system between the national intelligence services and increased judicial co-operation.

#### PNR

The S&D Group has decided to back European PNR as one of an important set of tools to fight against organised crime and terrorism. PNR alone will not solve all our security problems however it represents a positive first step towards the creation of a common European investigative and intelligence framework.

#### British referendum

The place of the United Kingdom is in Europe. Only together can we tackle the challenges of our continent, only together can we compete in this new globalised world and only together can we face new political and security threats.

EU enlargement policy is an important tool and we need to accelerate its process to strengthen social, political and economic stability and democracy in the Western Balkans region.

#### China

The S&D Group is convinced that automatically granting Market Economy Status to China would be premature. Given the current economic situation worldwide, we call on the European Commission to proceed with a full and formal impact assessment before taking any decision in this regard.

► **Tue 19 Situation in Poland**

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We are on the side of the thousands of Polish people who took to the streets to voice their concerns and criticisms about the risks Poland faces should its government turn back the clock on the progress the country has made. Rule of law is a fundamental pillar of the EU. Poland, as a member of the European family, must respect it. We praise the European Commission for having swiftly and legitimately addressed the worrisome laws recently passed by the Polish government, which risk undermining the very foundation of this principle.

► **Tue 19 Towards a Digital Single Market Act**

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With this initiative report, the Parliament relaunches the essential EU objective of one Single Market. The S&D has ensured that this report on the digitalisation of EU economy, society and public administrations determines legislative proposals and non-legislative action which will foster EU competitiveness, offer new opportunities to citizens and will have positive effects on growth and jobs. We want to shape the seismic changes which the Digital Revolution has launched in order to preserve the EU's inclusive and competitive (social market economy) development model.



**PITELLA  
Gianni**



**PITELLA  
Gianni**



**GEBHARDT  
Evelyne**

► **Mon 18 The role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values**

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WARD Julie

The report is an attempt to build on the common agreement (known as the Paris Declaration) reached by the Education Ministers that recognises combined efforts are needed in order to prevent and tackle marginalisation, intolerance, racism and radicalisation, and also to preserve a framework of equal opportunities for all. The report takes a positive approach and identifies opportunities along with challenges particularly in respect of young people and the potential they offer to society. Initiated following the Charlie Hebdo and Danish attacks, its importance and urgency has subsequently increased with the refugee crisis and the second Paris attacks in November.

► **Wed 20 Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine**

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FLECKENSTEIN  
Knut

The S&D Group supports and stresses the importance of full implementation of the Association Agreements/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. We underline, in particular, the need to bring forward the necessary reforms, with commitment by the partner countries and EU support, but also with attention to the social dimension of the partnership. With respect to the forthcoming Dutch referendum on the ratification of the AA with Ukraine, the S&D Group encourages the Dutch people to approve this important partnership for the benefit of Europe as a whole.

► **Wed 20 EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Agreement**

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PANZERI  
Pier Antonio

The conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo (SAA) is the first step of concrete integration of Kosovo to the EU. It represents progress towards stability and prosperity in Kosovo and the region at large. The SAA establishes contractual relations which provides for enhanced political dialogue, closer trade integration and new forms of cooperation. It covers numerous sectors, including the respect for and strengthening of democratic principles and human rights, establishing a framework for cooperation on sectors such as education, energy, environment, justice and home affairs. The SAA also includes provisions aiming to promote European standards in areas such as competition, procurement, intellectual property, consumer protection, and it aims to establish a free trade area.

► **Thu 21 Relaunching Europe - Shaping our Digital Future**

Besides a busy plenary week ahead, our Group is also organising its first **Relaunching Europe** event in 2016. Thus, this Thursday our team will be in the historical city of Koblenz, Germany, debating the future of our Digital Union. Our MEPs Udo Bullman, Jutta Steinruck, Evelyne Gebhardt, Petra Kammerevert, Josef Weidenholzer and Norbert Neuser will join our President Gianni Pittella, as well as specialists and entrepreneurs, to discuss hot topics such as Employment and social rights in the Digital Single Market, digital revolution for companies and digital vocational education. You can read all about our views on this topic in our **position paper**, and you can follow our live streaming both on the S&D and on the Relaunching Europe websites.

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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 with 191 members from all 28 EU member states.

## About the S&D Group

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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.