



DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER

Council and Commission statements - Preparation of the European Council meeting of 21-22 October 2021*Iratxe García, S&D Group president*

Some member states should better inform citizens about their anti-COVID vaccination campaigns. We have managed to ensure supply in the EU, but the rates of vaccination are very different among countries, with some still having worrying levels of contagions, hospitalisations and deaths. At the same time, we have to show more global solidarity. We need to consider options such as TRIPS, COVAX, licensing technology transfer and developing production capacity in third countries. I hope EUCO will also look into energy prices and find ways to better coordinate, going beyond the Commission proposal. Regarding migration, I am dismayed not to see any progress in this common policy, and some member states like Poland going backwards by not even respecting the Geneva Convention to protect refugees, including children, in the Belarusian border.

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER, VOTE ON THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER

The rule of law crisis in Poland and the primacy of EU law*Juan Fernando López Aguilar, S&D MEP and LIBE committee chair and the EP rapporteur on Poland*

It must be crystal clear: we don't want Polesxit, and we know that neither do the huge majority of Poles want Polesxit. But what the PiS controlled Constitutional Tribunal has started on October 7 is indeed the beginning of Polesxit from the EU legal order. The Polish Tribunal undermined the foundations of the European Union. This must not remain without consequences. The primacy of the EU law must be undisputed. During the debate in Strasbourg, we will call on the European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen to urgently trigger the rule of law conditionality mechanism and open new infringement proceedings against Poland for breaching the Treaty. But this is not enough. The Council must take the Article 7 procedures to the next level, issue concrete recommendations and impose sanctions if they are not respected. Obviously, the Recovery Funds for Poland must be put on hold under the current circumstances.

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DEBATE ON MONDAY 18 OCTOBER AND FINAL VOTE ON TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER

Protecting workers from asbestos*Johan Danielsson, S&D MEP and responsible for the file on protecting workers from asbestos*

Asbestos exposure is the number one cause of work-related cancers in Europe. The research is clear - there are no safe levels of asbestos exposure. While the production and the sale of asbestos has been banned in the EU since 2005, and even before that in many member states, this dangerous substance still remains present in many buildings. With the deterioration of building stock, exposure levels are expected to rise. This endangers the lives of millions of European workers, as well as renters and home-owners.

The Commission now has to prove they are serious about their commitment to the Vision Zero approach to work-related death by setting a strict exposure limit of 0,001 asbestos fibres/cm³. To further protect workers, renters and building owners, we also want to see a public asbestos register, systematic screenings of buildings before sale or rent and stronger action against asbestos globally. Those workers who have already fallen ill from asbestos must have access to early diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and compensation. The Socialist and Democrats call for a European strategy to safely remove all asbestos from buildings to protect workers and inhabitants, now and in the future. It is time to create synergies between different policy sectors. Our ultimate goal is a global ban. Only an asbestos free-world is a safe world.

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UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, the UK (COP26)*Mohammed Chahim, S&D vice-president responsible for the environment*

Keeping the limit of 1.5°C temperature rise within reach is paramount if we are to avert the catastrophic impacts of climate change, but at the same time in doing so we will bring about numerous co-benefits for the environment, the economy, the society and public health. We need more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in order to bridge the gap towards the Paris Agreement goal. We call for phasing out all fossil fuels and supporting the G7 commitment to end finance of unabated coal by the end of 2021. We also need to work to rebuild international coalition to secure an ambitious outcome at the COP26.

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Farm to Fork Strategy

Clara Aguilera, S&D shadow rapporteur for Agriculture Committee

We want to ensure a healthier and more sustainable food production in Europe, giving at the same time the instruments and financial means to all farmers to adapt and facilitate the change. Farmers are a major key to the change and to meeting the Green Deal's goals. Along the way, investment in research and innovation will be crucial to achieve the sustainability goals of the European Green Deal and the F2F strategy, and also by reflecting a real reciprocity in terms of high standards of production, for all food and feed imported, in all EU trade agreements.

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DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER

Pushbacks at the EU's external border

Birgit Sippel, S&D spokesperson for home affairs

The recent media reports about systematic pushbacks across the EU's external borders are highly alarming. Effective border management must always be in compliance with our international obligations and EU law. Pushbacks are a clear violation of the principle of non-refoulement and our Union and member states must always uphold the right to international protection. The S&D Group therefore welcomes the debate on pushbacks at the external borders to address the alleged human rights violations and the despicable violence against the most vulnerable.

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EU budget 2022

Victor Negrescu, S&D shadow rapporteur in BUDG

What matters for Europe now is social recovery. In turbulent times when we hope the worst of the pandemic is behind us, it is crucial to spare no efforts and money for employment, social policy, employment, education and youth. But we should not forget we live in a competitive world and if we want to succeed in it, the EU should not lag behind in funding research and innovations, health, digital, smart, sustainable and affordable transport and agriculture. Our group is also fighting for adequate funding for gender equality, social cohesion and cooperation with third countries. We, Socialists and Democrats, want no obstacles in the proper funding of these priorities for EU citizens for next year coming from the current pluriannual budget, unlike the EU budget 2021, which has led to a lost year in the implementation of the MFF 2021-2027.

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Conference on the Future of Europe - Progressive Caucus meeting on Friday 22 October and Plenary on Saturday 23 October

Next week, the plenary on the Conference on the Future of Europe will meet in Strasbourg for a second time. During the plenary, citizens will report from their themed panel discussions, while representatives will also give feedback on events and online contributions since the EU's consultation was launched in May. The S&D Group in the European Parliament will co-host the second Progressive caucus meeting with the Party of European Socialists in Strasbourg on Friday 22 October, the day before the plenary. Media representatives will be able to interview members of the S&D delegation to the Conference on request. Any journalists present in Strasbourg should get in touch with S&D press contact Utta Tuttlies.

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Press conference S&D Group president Iratxe García Pérez Tuesday 19 October from 11:45 to 12:15 CET in Strasbourg Parliament, Louise Weiss, N-1.2
Webstreaming here
<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/>

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