



PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

2-5 July 2018



Gabi Zimmer - European Council Meeting conclusions and Austrian presidency

EU leaders are pushing to close borders and establish reception camps in countries such as Libya where the human rights situation is terrible. By doing this, the EU is disrespecting its own humanitarian responsibility and human rights principles. The EU urgently needs to agree on a Dublin reform. Migrants must be fairly distributed amongst EU countries, and legal and safe routes to the EU must be opened. The Parliament has already submitted its position on the asylum package to the Council. But I warn against the Council to re-open this package in order to exclude the Dublin reform. If the EU continues to foresake the southern European countries, not only will human rights and our solidarity be at stake but the future of the EU, too. For the Austrian presidency, the far-right conservative government of Chancellor Kurz promises a 'Europe that protects' its citizens. But social security in the EU is hardly mentioned in its programme. Even worse is the fact that Kurz has already begun attacking EU social standards. Austrians will soon have to work up to 12 hours a day instead of the current eight - and up to 60 hours a week. Furthermore, Kurz is pushing for the indexation of child benefits for EU citizens. His government is therefore violating the principle of equal treatment - rendering EU nationals from Eastern Europe working in Austria second-class citizens. We will fight for social security for all.

Debate: Tuesday



Neoklis Sylikiotis - European Defence Industrial Development Programme

We are against the militarisation of the EU. We reject any attempt to support the arms industry that will launch new conflicts. This agreement will only bring about catastrophic consequences for the people. Our alternative proposal is to invest in peace and promote disarmament, the demobilisation of troops, the end of military interventions and the dissolution of NATO.

Debate: Monday; Vote Tuesday



Malin Björk - Non-criminalisation of NGOs

The NGOs that are helping refugees in Hungary and those rescuing lives in the Mediterranean Sea or assisting people in the mountains are heroes - not criminals. These people are doing what the EU and its member states should be doing. To persecute solidarity is totally unworthy of our democracies and marks the start of a very dangerous, slippery slope.

Debate: Tuesday; Vote: Thursday



Paloma López - Definition of SMEs

From the very start, we've been concerned that bigger enterprises like 'MidCaps' would be included in the definition - taking away the resources from and the advantages that had been established for micro and small enterprises. That's why I think this new definition for SMEs is totally useless as it doesn't address the root of the problem and, if anything, does more harm to businesses that are in genuine need.

Debate: Tuesday



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Marie-Christine Vergiat - Travel Information and Authorisation System

Through ETIAS - a 'travel authorisation' - applicants will have to provide information that is not even necessary for a visa, like education, profession etc. Worse still, they are going to implement a profiling tool to determine so-called 'migratory risks'. FRONTEX and Europol will also play their part in the ETIAS and all of these proposals are unacceptable.

Debate: Wednesday



Helmut Scholz - EU electoral law reform

For two-and-a-half years, the Council has allegedly been working on the Parliament's proposal to reform European electoral law. Yet, they will only be introduced for the 2024 elections. Furthermore, the Parliament's proposals were already quite weak - but the Council has managed to reduce them to virtually nothing. Compelling arguments for enforcing the Spitzenkandidaten, to ensure gender equality and transparency during the nomination of candidates, as well as to harmonise the electoral processes across the 28 member states were simply ignored. We will reject this proposal.

Vote: Wednesday



Xabier Benito - Facility for refugees in Turkey

The situation in Turkey and the EU agreements in place remain unfavourable. The purpose of the draft amendment is to allow the schooling of refugee children to continue. However, no negotiation had taken place between the Parliament and the Council on the financing. We are here to advise them! It is of course necessary to continue to provide funding for educating children, but the EU must also stop using neighbouring countries as guardians of this 'Fortress Europe'. Turkey must respect democracy and human rights.

Vote: Wednesday



Jiří Maštálka - Statute for social and solidarity-based enterprises

Social and solidarity-based enterprises are part of the social economy. They provide employment for more than 14 million people in the EU. They are typically engaged in the delivery of social services and work integration services for disadvantaged groups in the labour market. We must give more visibility to social enterprises. If we want to live in a truly Social EU, promotion of this sector is crucial.

Vote: Thursday

GUE/NGL Press Briefing: Tuesday 03/07/2018 @ 14.30 EP Press Room LOW N-1/201

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