



1-4 OCTOBER 2018

PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

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PRESS BRIEFING

Tuesday 3 October
@ 14.30
EP Press Room LOW
N-1/201

GUE/NGL PRESS BRIEFING

Journalists are welcome to question our MEPs on issues they are covering. The main topic at this briefing will be the upcoming EU leaders' meeting, and GUE/NGL President Gabi Zimmer will talk about the migration crisis and Brexit, with Theresa May's lack of clarity on citizens' rights and the Irish border question amongst the key concerns.

Interpretation: EN, FR, DE, ES, IT and PL.



Gabi Zimmer - October summit of EU leaders

Debate: Tuesday

British PM Theresa May still hasn't put forward a viable proposal for an orderly Brexit which is acceptable for the EU. The Chequers plan even loses her votes in the UK Parliament! The EU has clearly stated that cherry-picking is not going to happen. If there's no formal withdrawal agreement, citizens' rights and the Irish Peace Process will be in danger. For us, citizens' rights are not negotiable and we will not accept any hardening of the Irish border. Time is running out, May must show how she'll address these challenges in a serious way.

On migration, we urgently need a reform of the Dublin system - one based on solidarity with shared responsibility from member states and a fair distribution of refugees. Sadly, the Council is intent on sticking with the old recipe of collaborating with authoritarian regimes like Egypt which don't respect the human rights of the most vulnerable. Instead of further strengthening Fortress Europe and outsourcing its responsibilities to third countries, the Council must immediately stop the criminalisation of refugees and assume its duty to safeguard human rights. We call on the Council to respect the EP's position and to find a common solution - sooner rather than later.



Lola Sánchez - UN binding treaty on transnational corporations

Debate: Tuesday

The European Parliament has unambiguously expressed its support for a UN Binding Treaty on transnational corporations with respect to human rights in as many as nine resolutions! Whilst that is encouraging, it's still not enough. The moment has come to take this one step further. In Strasbourg, we'll have the chance to lay down the guidelines that we expect the EU to uphold when negotiating this Treaty that aims to stop corporate impunity.



Neoklis Sylikiotis - EU support to Palestinian Refugees

Debate: Tuesday

We denounce the US government's decision to end funding for UNRWA, an organisation that provides shelter, care and education to Palestinian refugees living in the occupied territories and in neighbouring countries. This decision is the latest in a series of aggressive steps taken by the US and the Trump administration in order to serve Israel and force the Palestinians into capitulation. The ultimate goal behind the decision is to undermine the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, and to destroy the two-state solution and the peace process.





Nikolaos Chountis - Audiovisual Media Services

Vote: Tuesday

Video sharing platforms (VSPs) are the big winners from the proposed audiovisual media services directive. The exemptions they'll have in broadcast responsibilities to minors and the disabled will put VSPs at an advantage over traditional and other online video services. Much more needs to be done to curb an easing of advertising, teleshopping and product placement rules across the board, too. We'll be voting against the report.



Ángela Vallina - Situation in Yemen

Debate Tuesday; Vote: Thursday

In an everlasting war with thousands killed and millions displaced, we are still waiting for an end to the Yemen conflict four years on. The indiscriminate bombings and drone-used attacks against civilians have continued even with famine imminent. The EU must help the UN in bringing about peace; to guarantee the proper delivery of humanitarian aid; and to stop EU members from selling arms to the Gulf countries. An EU arms embargo to Saudi Arabia must be introduced.



Conny Ernst - Humanitarian emergency in the Mediterranean

Debate: Wednesday

Local and regional authorities play a crucial role in welcoming, supporting and integrating refugees and migrants. Yet, they have almost no access to funding. We need to create such funding opportunities if we want to stop making refugees and migrants vulnerable to ruthless exploitation, as well as economic and social subjugation by criminal organisations.



Malin Björk - LGBTI situation in Chechnya

Debate: Monday

A year and a half on from the atrocities against gay people in Chechnya, we still haven't seen any independent investigation into the hundred-plus testimonies of detention and torture. The EU must put more pressure on Chechen and Russian authorities. LGBTI rights are basic human rights and they should be respected everywhere - no two ways about it. It's high time the EU put some concrete action behind the LGBTI guidelines in its foreign relations.



Barbara Spinelli - Rule of law in Romania

Debate: Wednesday

Independence of the judiciary and the fight against corruption are core elements of the rule of law. Nevertheless, the Parliament should bear in mind that the Romanian protest movement is not only focused on that but also other issues such as same-sex marriage. Moreover, it is extremely fragmented: whilst some see corruption as contributing to an increase in inequality, others see it as a barrier to an amplified neoliberal agenda.