



10-13'SEP'2018

PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

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**PRESS BRIEFING**

TUE, 11 SEP

@ 15.00

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 topics will be the SOTEU speech by President Juncker and the future of pensions (debate proposed by GUE/NGL).*

*The speaker will be GUE/NGL President Gabi Zimmer. She will highlight the State of the Union as lived every day by millions of Europeans and the Juncker Commission's failure to deliver on the key issues facing people like inequality, right-wing extremism, and tax dodging billionaires.*

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



**Gabi Zimmer - State of the EU**

Debate, WED

Juncker will speak for the last time on the state of the EU and his hitherto record is somewhat sobering.

One in four European is still living in poverty and inequality between Member States is growing. Uncertainty and fear over the future are driving more and more citizens into the arms of extremist, right-wing parties - some of whom are already in governments around the EU. Member State governments are at odds with each other because they do not want to agree on a common asylum and migration policy. The southern European countries have been abandoned with shared responsibility and solidarity continuously destroyed by selfish, national interests.

Refugees have become scapegoats as a way to divert from the devastation caused by neoliberalism. That's why the EU wants to strengthen Fortress Europe even though it is responsible for causing the root causes of migration.

In terms of austerity, Juncker did not dare to introduce stronger measures so that banks and corporations pay for their roles in the financial crisis. Meanwhile, tax evasion and social dumping continue to undermine trust in the EU. Instead, the Commission wants to turn the bloc into a military power - with billions of euros in economic stimulus packages for military companies.

Finally, on Brexit, the UK wants to get out of this EU but a disorderly exit is very much on the cards. That would cause great harm to the EU.



**Marie-Christine Vergiat - The situation in Hungary**

Debate, TUE, Vote WED

Viktor Orbán's government has been descending into authoritarianism for years. And with the European Union's failure to react, its model of repression of freedoms and xenophobia is becoming more and more common elsewhere. However, for the first time, the European Parliament has the opportunity to ask the Council to react and for us to send a clear signal to Orbán: it's time to put a stop to the 'illiberal' excesses of his government that combine nationalism, the denial of democracy and the rule of law with economic liberalism against a corrupt backdrop.





## João Pimenta Lopes - GUE/NGL topical debate on privatisation of pensions

Debate, WED

The European Commission intends to hand over the pensions of millions of Europeans to the financial colossus, BlackRock. The relationship of senior staff at the Commission - like Vice-President Dombrovskis - with this company is unethical and politically compromising. It's been suggested that these plans are aimed at tripling the internal market of pension funds. However, it's just an attempt to dismantle the universal public social security systems - after coming under pressure from high finance.



## Martin Schirdewan - GUE/NGL topical debate on privatisation of pensions

Debate, WED

The privatisation of retirement systems combined with the spread of badly paid jobs lead to old age poverty. In Germany, the consequences of these disastrous policies can already be felt with more than 20% of retirees at risk of poverty. Austria, where retirees get on average €800 more per month than in Germany, shows that this does not have to be the case. People should not be subjected to the whims of financial markets. Instead, policies should once more focus on strengthening a retirement system based on solidarity.



## Cornelia Ernst - Personal data

Debate WED, Vote THU

Three months on from GDPR becoming fully applicable in the EU, it is high time that EU institutions are - just like everyone else - bound by the same rules. As the Parliament's Rapporteur, it was particularly important to me that the EU's law enforcement agencies, Eurojust and Europol also follow the same rules as the police in the Member States. There can be no justification for EU institutions to have a lower level of protection of personal data and privacy.



## Martina Anderson - EU cohesion policy on North of Ireland

Debate MON, Vote TUE

The North of Ireland needs confirmation that EU cohesion funding will continue post-2020. This report does argue that some funding will be maintained post Brexit, and that is welcomed. However, given that the British government has said that Westminster will uphold cohesion funding until the end of the funding period, time is running out. In the North, we have good reasons not to trust the British when it concerns the needs of our people. The EP Brexit resolutions voted overwhelmingly to uphold the Good Friday Agreement in all of its parts and that must include the need for the continuation of EU cohesion funding.



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