



21-24 OCTOBER 2019

PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

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PRESS BRIEFING

TUE 22 Oct 13h30

Press Bar

Louise Weiss Building,
North (N) Level 00

GUE/NGL PRESS BRIEFING

Journalists are welcome to question our MEPs on issues they are covering.

Martin Schirdewan (DIE LINKE, GUE/NGL Co-president)

Manon Aubry (France Insubmise, GUE/NGL Co-president)



Martin Schirdewan – Postponement of Commission vote

Vote: postponed to November II

Three candidates in the von der Leyen Commission have not been approved by the Parliament's committees. So, even before she takes office, her administration has been severely weakened. The Franco-German alliance is divided, has no majority in the Parliament and has no clear political vision. But, even with three new nominees, our group will vote against the whole cabinet - in November or whenever it comes. The majority of the candidates failed to convince our group during the hearings that the good of the people is more important to them than that of the multinationals.



Manon Aubry - Review of the Juncker Commission

Debate: Tuesday morning

Neither the people nor the planet will miss Juncker when he leaves. He is directly accountable for the rise of inequalities, the absence of action against climate change and the continuous destruction of our welfare states and public services. Juncker will only be remembered for his involvement in the LuxLeaks tax scandal and we will highlight all his failed policies in Strasbourg. The EU needs to change radically if it wants to reconnect with European citizens: Ursula von der Leyen should bear that in mind!



Özlem Alev Demirel –Turkey's invasion of northern Syria

Debate: Wednesday; Vote: Thursday

The Turkish President is waging a war that is illegal under international law but purely for domestic and political reasons. America and Russia are also now using this war for their own purposes: Trump implementing his exit strategy whilst Putin gets the Syrian democratic forces to be closer to the Assad regime. Once again, it's the Kurds who are caught in between and will be paying the price. Meanwhile, the EU reaffirms that economic trade relations are more important than human rights and democracy. Had it not, it would have meant a genuine arms embargo, as well as clear support and recognition of the administration of the democratic autonomous regions in Syria - both of which are now more urgent than ever.





Martina Michels - Far-right, violent extremism in Europe

Debate: Monday

The recent terrorist attack in Halle, Germany underlines once again just how quickly far-right extremism and populism can lead to violence and murder. The EU and its member states have got to understand that far-right extremism is a threat all over our continent - it has been suppressed and even ignored for a long time. However, impulsive policies will not solve the problem as we need to fight against it on EU levels. Right-wing governments must stop blocking policy changes and protecting the far-right in such a way.



Miguel Urbán – Search and rescue in the Mediterranean

Debate: Wednesday, Vote: Thursday

Three aspects under the current EU migration policy at sea have to go: stop the criminalisation of NGOs; setting up of a European search and rescue system at sea; and the suspension of EU agreements with third countries. Our search and rescue system cannot be implemented alongside third countries with appalling human rights record. We have to make sure those who are rescued will not face torture or become enslaved in places like Libya.



Malin Björk - Unblocking the EU's anti-discrimination directive

Debate: Tuesday

Today, EU legislation does not sufficiently protect LGBTI people or the disabled. It is nothing less than a scandal that this directive has been blocked for more than ten years by some member states. We are talking about real people who suffer from discrimination in their daily lives – in schools, in the health system and in public spaces. This has to change. Having an anti-discrimination legislation in place is the minimum requirement. It is time to deliver.



Elena Kountoura - The Collapse of Thomas Cook

Debate: Monday, Vote: Thursday

The collapse of Thomas Cook has left thousands of employees jobless overnight and many more travellers stranded abroad. Yet, Europe does not have the tools to support the tourism sector even though it employs some 13 million workers in the EU. This sector is vital for growth - especially in remote and island regions. A comprehensive reinforcement of travellers' rights is therefore long overdue from the Commission - and the same goes for a European crisis mechanism.



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