



DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY

**European security and defence***Iratxe García Pérez, president of the S&D Group:*

Our Union is called upon to do everything in its power to play its role and completely fulfil its responsibility, on the European continent and globally. Against a geopolitical context of permanent crisis and unprecedented challenges to the global security environment, a stronger, more resilient and more united EU must play a leading role in building a secure Europe and a fair rules-based multilateral system – able to pre-empt conflict and ensure lasting peace. Since the start of Putin's war against Ukraine, the EU has taken unprecedented action. The High Representative has generated a new consciousness and has promoted a new vision on security and defence throughout this mandate to this very end. We need to foster strong and strategic alliances with like-minded partners, review our neighbourhood policy and accelerate the enlargement process whilst moving forward with much-needed institutional and decision-making reforms. It is now crucial to build on the current momentum as we stand up for our values and our interests when and where they are challenged.

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DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, VOTE ON THURSDAY, 29 FEBRUARY

**Address by Yulia Navalnaya and debate and vote on the murder of Alexei Navalny and the need for EU action to support civil society in Russia***Iratxe García Pérez, president of the S&D Group:*

We will be able to express our condolences to Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of Alexei Navalny, and we will pay tribute to the 2021 Sakharov Prize laureate. His courage, his sacrifice and his tireless fight for democracy, rule of law and freedom against the tyranny and corruption of Putin's brutal regime, will not be forgotten. We strongly condemn Navalny's murder – a political assassination whose ultimate responsibility lies with Putin. The body of Alexei must be returned to his family immediately, and an international and independent investigation is needed into the exact circumstances of his death. We stand with his family, friends and countless supporters in Russia and around the world.

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VOTE ON TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY

**Nature Restoration Law***César Luena, S&D MEP and European Parliament's negotiator on the matter in the committee on environment, public health and food safety:*

Addressing the urgent need to safeguard Europe's biodiversity and agriculture, the Nature Restoration Law marks a historic milestone as the first of its kind in 70 years. With 81% of European land and sea in poor condition, the law emphasises the importance of restoring nature to combat climate change, enhance agricultural resilience and reverse the loss of biodiversity and pollinators. There is no food, nor farming, without healthy nature. It's as simple as that. Despite numerous challenges, we reached a balanced approach, ensuring both ambitious goals and practical feasibility. We look forward to the plenary's approval, marking a pivotal step towards a sustainable future for farmers and society as a whole.

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DEBATE ON TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY

**War in the Gaza Strip***Pedro Marques, vice-president of the S&D Group for a strong social and values-based Europe in the world:*



The humanitarian situation in Gaza is simply catastrophic. Over 30,000 civilians have been killed by the Israeli army, with 70% of them women and children. Over one million Palestinians have been displaced. Diseases are spreading and aid flows remain highly insufficient. This tragedy cannot go on.

While calling for the immediate release of all hostages still in the hands of Hamas', we have urged and will continue urging for a permanent and unconditional ceasefire. As ordered by the ICJ (International Court of Justice), we urge Israel to refrain from acts under the Genocide Convention and take immediate measures to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches civilians in Gaza.

We are grateful for the incredible work UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) is carrying out for civilians. It is imperative that humanitarian aid continues relentlessly. As for the allegations, while noting that no evidence or proof has been provided by Israel so far, we welcome the UN's decision to launch two separate investigations into the allegations and the implementation of its neutrality policies. Cutting funds to UNRWA based on allegations against a tiny fraction of its staff is and would be totally irresponsible.

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**DEBATE ON MONDAY, 26 FEBRUARY**

**Platform work – call on EU member states to end the deadlock without delay**

*Elisabetta Gualmini, vice-president of the S&D Group and European Parliament's negotiator on the new EU legislation on platform work:*

Twice, the European Parliament – under the leadership of Socialists and Democrats – reached a historic deal on protecting over 30 million platform workers, first with the Spanish and then with the Belgian presidency. Twice, EU member states then failed to endorse it. The ball is in their court and they have to take full responsibility for it in front of the whole of Europe. We asked for the plenary debate next week to urge them again to end the deadlock immediately, and to set things straight. Heading to the EU elections in 100 days, Europeans need to know: liberals in France, Estonia and Germany, and conservatives in Greece, are blocking an opportunity to protect all workers in the digital era and to shield employers against unfair competition. They decided to turn their backs on workers and on employers abiding by the law, and chose instead to side with the economic interests of digital giants. This is a big threat to the European social model and a wasted chance for Europe to become the pioneer in global labour law. We strongly urge them to reconsider their position.

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**DEBATE AND VOTE ON TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY**

**Revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework**

*Margarida Marques, S&D MEP and European Parliament's co-negotiator on the matter in the committee on budgets:*

Next week, we vote in plenary on the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) until 2027. This revision has been negotiated in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the war against Ukraine, the overall escalation of humanitarian crises worldwide – along with countless other challenges both on the doorstep of the EU and within it. It was clear we had to make a revision of the MFF in order to ensure that the Union has enough means to respond to the changing and emerging needs of EU citizens and businesses.

Our Group welcomed the agreement, reached by the heads of state and governments, on the revision of the MFF during the special summit held on 1 February, despite the time it took for the European Council to decide due to the blackmailing by the Hungarian government. For the first time ever, the Union took the unprecedented step of revising its multiannual budget mid-course to adapt it to increasing needs. This is a very positive sign that the EU can and will deliver when it matters most. This revision is a prerequisite for increasing much-needed support for Ukraine through the setting up of the Ukraine Facility, as well as reinforcing key EU programmes.

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**VOTE ON TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY**

**Protection of journalists and human rights defenders from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings**

*Tiemo Wölken, S&D MEP and European Parliament's negotiator on the matter in the committee on legal affairs:*

Journalists, watchdogs and all those carrying out acts of public participation on matters of public interest are the backbone of our democratic societies and they should be able to do so without fear and without being legally intimidated. The S&Ds have worked tirelessly to introduce new flanking measures, such as making existing legal aid, financial aid and psychological support available through a single contact point at national level. We have also secured the full reimbursement of costs for defendants, as well as the availability of strong penalties and the link with the right to compensation recognised under national law across member states. The Anti-SLAPPs Directive is a victory for all of us! It will help to better protect the rule of law, freedom of speech and freedom of association and, ultimately, our democracies in Europe!

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**DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, VOTE ON THURSDAY, 29 FEBRUARY**

**Data collection and sharing relating to short-term accommodation rental services**

*Brando Benifei, S&D MEP and negotiator on the matter in the committee on the internal market and consumer protection:*



Short-term rental companies like Airbnb and Booking.com have greatly boosted tourism and brought about economic development. Nevertheless, they have also led to the so-called "touristification" of cities, negatively affecting housing affordability and liveability. The legislative vacuum in the field of short-term rentals is a real problem all over Europe. Through this regulation, we can help public authorities to regulate a sector that continues to boom. For the S&Ds, it is clear that the responsibility should be shared among the hosts, online platforms and public authorities. This is why the S&D Group successfully pushed to make sure that hosts will now receive a free registration number to rent out their property, while online platforms not only assess if the information provided by the host is reliable and complete, but also that they conduct checks on a regular basis.

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**DEBATE AND VOTE ON THURSDAY, 29 FEBRUARY**

### Modernisation of EU-Chile agreements

**Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, S&D spokesperson on trade and chair of the European Parliament-Chile Joint Parliamentary Committee:**

The modernisation of the trade and political agreements with Chile is a great success as they are truly progressive and beneficial for both sides, confirming the commitment of the EU and Chile in the fight against climate change and promoting sustainable development and gender equality. Chile is one of our closest partners, the EU being Chile's third-largest trade partner. The modernised EU-Chile agreement will allow us to strengthen our political and economic ties by fostering trade and investment opportunities. Better access and sustainable investment in critical raw materials and clean fuel such as lithium, copper and hydrogen will directly contribute to advancing our shared green ambitions. It will also be beneficial for EU agriculture, granting far greater access than is currently the case to the Chilean market, and protecting 216 geographical indications (GIs) from the EU in Chile and 18 GIs from Chile in the EU. Our Group will vote in favour of the agreements, hoping they will pave the way to similar agreements with other Latin American partners.

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**DEBATE ON WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, VOTE ON THURSDAY, 29 FEBRUARY**

### European Digital Identity framework

**Romana Jerković, S&D MEP and European Parliament's negotiator on the matter in the in the committee on industry, research and energy**

On Thursday, we will vote on the revised eIDAS Regulation which establishes the new European Digital Identity framework.

The revised regulation constitutes a clear paradigm shift for digital identity in Europe, aiming to ensure universal access for people and businesses to secure trustworthy electronic identification and authentication. Under the new law, member states will offer citizens and businesses digital wallets that will be able to link their national digital identities with proof of other personal attributes (e.g. driving licence, diplomas, bank account). Thanks to eIDAS, citizens will be able to prove their identity in a secure and privacy-friendly way as well as share and electronically sign personal documents from their digital wallets with a click of a button on their mobile phone.

By helping remove virtual borders, eIDAS will contribute to the deepening of the Digital Single Market and to the further integration of Europe by facilitating seamless access to public and private services in the whole Union.

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## PES Congress in Rome

After a busy plenary session in Strasbourg, we will be heading with an S&D delegation led by our group President Iratxe García Pérez to the PES Congress taking place in Rome on the 1st and 2nd of March. Together with progressive heads of state and government, European Commissioners, party leaders, activists, and supporters, we will work towards the Europe we want: social, democratic and sustainable.

For any questions, please contact our S&D Group spokesperson Utta Tuttlies.

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**S&D Group press conference**  
**Iratxe García Pérez, S&D president**  
**Tuesday, 27 February, 10:00 - 10:30**  
**Daphne Caruana Galizia room - Strasbourg**  
**Weiss N-1/201**  
**Webstreaming here**  
**<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/>**

**Journalists who want to participate and ask questions can connect via this link**

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