



11-14 FEBRUARY 2019

PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

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PRESS BRIEFING

Tuesday 12 February
@ 11.30
EP Press Room LOW
N-1/201

GUE/NGL PRESS BRIEFING

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

Gabi Zimmer - 'Future of Europe'

Marie-Christine Vergiat - Right to peaceful protest and use of excessive force

Interpretation: EN, FR, DE, ES, IT & PL



Gabi Zimmer - 'Future of Europe' debate with Giuseppe Conte

Debate: Tuesday evening

The future of the EU very much depends on how we work together to shape a common European migration policy. However, by closing its ports and tightening immigration laws, Italy's far-right Lega and populist Five Stars coalition government is heading towards a confrontation with Brussels. Meanwhile, Italy is also criticising other member states for their refusal to accept refugees. We must end the deadlock in this debate. The criminalisation of sea rescue NGOs and their boats must end. We need to stop the deaths in the Mediterranean and allow legal channels for migrants and refugees coming to the EU.

GUE/NGL also visited Naples back in the autumn where we met Mayor Luigi de Magistris, who has been accepting refugees by not yielding to the inhumane policies of the Italian government. Mayors in other cities also did the same and opposed Salvini's cruel policies on refugees – with their citizens' support. We eagerly await Giuseppe Conte's response to all that.



Lidia Senra - EU-Morocco fishing agreement

Vote: Tuesday

With the ECJ's 2016 ruling that Western Sahara is a distinct and separate territory to which Morocco has no sovereignty, this invalidates any EU-Morocco agreement including those on trade and fisheries. Neither has ever had the consent of the Sahrawi people. To ratify any agreement, the EU must negotiate with the Polisario Front whose sovereignty over Western Sahara is recognised by the UN. Concluding this fisheries agreement is therefore a violation of Sahrawi resources and their human rights - and legitimising the Moroccan occupation.



Marie-Christine Vergiat - Right to peaceful protest and use of excessive force by police

Debate: Monday, Vote: Thursday

The images of the brutal crackdown on the 'gilets jaunes' since the end of November speak for themselves. The injury toll is staggering: 3200 wounded including 37 minors and 44 journalists, 175 head injuries, 17 eyes blinded and 4 hands ripped off. The disproportionate use of force has led to this escalation of violence. It is high time we banned 'non-lethal' lethal weapons like LBD 40, GLI F4 grenades and sting-ball grenades.





Younous Omarjee - Cohesion Funds

Debate and vote: Wednesday

We will be voting on one of the few policies for true European solidarity: Cohesion Policy. It helps our regions to create jobs, to embark on energy transition and to develop infrastructures. However, we demand a more ambitious budget and we deplore the restrictions imposed upon it by EU austerity!



Anne-Marie Mineur - EU-Singapore trade deal

Debate: Tuesday, Vote: Wednesday

The Singapore agreements are yet again examples of how the European Commission never practice what they preach: a trade policy that serves the people and the environment. Singapore is effectively a tax-haven which has not ratified the ILO core conventions on forced labour and discrimination. The agreement also has an ISDS part, yet it doesn't provide any sanctions to allow enforcement of the sustainable development chapter.



Barbara Spinelli - Charter of Fundamental Rights

Debate: Monday, Vote: Tuesday

The Lisbon Treaty has conferred the EU Charter the status of primary law. However, its intrinsic operational limitations coupled with the attitude of the EU institutions to passively look at it as a mere source of negative obligations as well as to belittle its social provisions, have led to its substantial under-utilisation. This report aims to propose an alternative path with a view to maximising the Charter's potential and added-values.



Anja Hazekamp - Animal transport

Debate and vote: Thursday

Every year, millions of animals are transported over extremely long distances in overloaded trucks. Current enforcement of animal welfare rules between many EU countries is inadequate - and even worse to non-EU countries. Animals suffer due to maltreatment, extreme temperatures with no access to feed and water. The Parliament must vote to shorten maximum transport time and end the export of live animals to third countries.



João Pimenta Lopes - Backlash in women's rights and gender equality

Debate: Tuesday, Vote: Wednesday

Women are experiencing a growing backlash against their rights within the EU. They've been hit hard by austerity with significant regression on their social, labour, health - especially sexual and reproductive - rights. Another worrying trend is the increase in multiple forms of violence and harassment with tragic consequences. Only progressive policies will help in the fight against all kinds of violence and an improvement in the social and economic situation of women.



Neoklis Sylikiotis - Artificial Intelligence and robotics

Debate: Monday, Vote: Tuesday

European policy on artificial intelligence and robotics must ensure and implement transparency, ethics, accountability and liability. It is also very important to guarantee social partners are involved. A.I. and robotics developments will have a huge impact on industrial relations across the EU. This needs to be addressed in a balanced way that not only promotes reindustrialisation but also allows workers to enjoy the productivity gains. Maximising the potential benefits of A.I. must also mean the creation of more quality and decent jobs.



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