On the upcoming elections:
For the first time in years, there is a chance that the new president of the European Parliament will not be decided through secret deals by the ‘very Grand Coalition’ - but from a free, democratic vote by all elected members of the Parliament. The European Parliament is at the core of European democracy with all its deficiencies. It is incumbent of this house to uphold democracy by ending secret deals between the big groups - and to include smaller groups and individual members elected by EU citizens.

We therefore envision our presidential candidates as the alternative: for the full participation of citizens and for the respect of minorities. As we have seen, a strong president does not automatically make a strong Parliament. What we need is a strong Parliament vis-à-vis the other institutions. With the new Rules of Procedure now in place, we fear that smaller groups will be excluded further. Therefore, we insist upon the new EP Bureau with its vice-presidents to reflect all political opinions which respect democratic rules and values.

On the Social Pillar:
At the beginning of his mandate, Juncker’s Commission promised a ‘Social Pillar’ for the EU. However, the proposals presented in March 2016 were very weak. A pillar must be made of substance. If the EU once again fails to deliver on its social promises, it will fail. We urgently need a social EU! The Parliament’s priorities for the ‘Social Pillar’ should be: EU accession to the European Social Charter; decent working conditions; lifting all children out of poverty; and national minimum wage targets. In the vote, we must prevent the EPP and others to undermine meaningful proposals before the Pillar could be built properly. The Parliament has got to send a very strong message to the Commission and the Council.
Dimitrios Papadimoulis - Greece
GUE/NGL European Parliament Vice-Presidential candidate

I’m honoured that my political group, GUE/NGL, has put my name forward for the second time during this parliamentary term as their vice-presidential candidate.

My goal as Vice-President of the European Parliament is to continue to serve this institution and the citizens of the European Union; and to respect and promote the ideas and principles of participation, transparency and democratic accountability.

I have always tried to achieve this vision by supporting collective work, unifying efforts and respecting diversity.

Since July 2014, the European Parliament has faced growing challenges that have put the future of the European project in doubt. The economic crisis has deepened; cohesion has weakened; unanimous solidarity over the refugee crisis remains unfulfilled. Such challenges have worsened over the past years – and we must do better to address them.

I would like to count on the support of all the democratic, progressive and green voices in the European Parliament - together - in order to keep our work more efficient. At the end of the day, we can only succeed together and to achieve that, we must address the growing concerns of European citizens - constituents who have elected us and whom we represent.