



PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

15-18 May 2017



#### **Gabi Zimmer – Council conclusions**

We welcome that the 27 EU member states have a strong and shared position for the Brexit negotiations and that they were willing to engage with the European Parliament regarding the priorities for the negotiations guidelines. But we are still missing a clear commitment to fully involve the Parliament in the negotiations process. We demand that the interests of citizens are prioritised - both EU citizens living in the UK and British nationals in member states – to ensure their legal certainty and safeguard their rights. It is crucial that the final agreement does not lead to the lowering of standards, including environmental, social, labour, food and consumer standards. We fully support a designated special status for the north of Ireland and to ensure that the Good Friday Agreement is upheld in all of its parts in order to prevent a resurgence of the conflict.



#### **Martina Michels – Balancing financial instruments and grants in EU cohesion policy**

The subsidy system of EU funds plays a vital role in fostering territorial, social and economic development. Increasing volumes of financial instruments, including “EFSI”, should not negatively affect the grant appropriations or lead to a crowding out effect on the EU’s budget allocated to the cohesion policy as this could lead to territorial disparities. You cannot be serious about a social pillar for the EU if you reduce the existing solidarity policy approach to investment in business development.



#### **Neoklis Sylikiotis – Achieving the two-state solution in the Middle East**

The situation in Palestine is becoming more and more inhumane. Israel with its criminal actions contradicts any peace effort to achieve a two-state solution. All EU member states must recognise a Palestinian state on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, as enshrined in UN resolutions, living in peace and security side-by-side with the State of Israel. The recognition of Palestine would lead to the immediate resumption of direct peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians. The EU and the international community must exert pressure on Israel in order to end its settlement policy, as stated in UN resolution 2334, to end the occupation, to release all Palestinian political prisoners, to commit to a roadmap for peace and recognise an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

#### **GUE/NGL Press Briefing: Tuesday 16/05/2017 @ 11.30 EP Press Room LOW N-1/201**

Gabi Zimmer, President of GUE/NGL on the EU Council conclusions

Malin Björk on the persecution of (perceived) homosexual men in Chechnya, Russia

Marie-Christine Vergiat on the situation in Hungary

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**Marisa Matias – Fintech: the influence of technology on the future of the financial sector**

We need financial instruments that are transparent and accessible to all. A large majority of consumers want simple and secure financial products. We need to protect their interests and make this a public duty. However, the proposed report wants to remove this responsibility. It makes no effective demands for regulation of the financial system - which is our minimal demand – and instead makes regulation more difficult or even impossible. This is another lost opportunity, repeating the same mistakes of other reports while making things even worse.



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

I am pleased that after the debate on Hungary in the April plenary session, a resolution was tabled by the progressive groups of the European Parliament to denounce Victor Orbán's 'illiberal' excesses that go far beyond the case of the Soros university. The anti-NGO bill, as well as the violations of the rights of migrants and more particularly the right of asylum, are particularly worrying and seriously undermine the universal values of democracy and rights. It is therefore way past the time to act and condemn these liberticidal tendencies by activating the ad hoc legal mechanisms, as insufficient as they might be.

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