



## Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament

**PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda**  
**Tuesday 14th February at 09.45 LOW N-1/201**

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**Hannes Swoboda**

### **Economic crisis, growth and employment**

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**Wednesday, 15 - February 2012**

Greece is facing a very difficult situation. But one thing needs to be clear - Greece must be in the Euro zone. Bankruptcy for Greece would be a disaster. The exit of Greece would be detrimental and very bad for the EU as a whole, both from an economic and a political point of view. The proposed measures will make the situation worse. The approach is not only damaging to society but also counterproductive for the economy and for budgets. We need to strengthen the social partnership and help the Greek people who have been faced with very hard cuts. Austerity alone will not be sufficient. Europe needs to help Greece to exit the crisis through concrete measures to boost growth and investment in employment. The EU is a community and we need to find common answers for common problems. Greece is part of the EU and we stand at its side to help.



**Véronique De Keyser**

### **Situation in Syria**

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**Wednesday, 15 - February 2012**

The S&D Group strongly condemns the widespread and systematic violations of human rights in Syria and calls on Syrian authorities for an immediate end to violence in order to allow a peaceful and democratic transition. The S&D Group welcomes the diplomatic efforts undertaken by the EU High Representative and vice president Catherine Ashton and its Member States towards China and Russia in the UN Security Council in the view of the adoption of a UN resolution on Syria.



**David Martin**

### **EU-Morocco agreement on agricultural and fishery products**

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It must be pointed out that this agreement is quite separate from the fisheries protocol which the European Parliament rejected in December. The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement signed in 2000 states that the EU and Morocco will gradually implement greater liberalisation of their trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products. In addition, following the Arab Spring, the EU made firm commitments to assist the transition of Southern Mediterranean countries in the process of democratisation, by making use of trade and economic instruments to provide greater freedom and economic opportunities. This agreement is a concrete example of these two commitments. Opening the EU market could create jobs and income in the region and it is also beneficial for EU interests too.



**Catherine Trautmann**

### **Radio spectrum policy**

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**Tuesday, 14 - February 2012**

The first Radio Spectrum Policy Programme is a spin-off from the telecoms package. Its rationale is to try to use the EU framework to develop a more integrated approach to spectrum management – a scarce public resource – amongst member states, since frequencies are borderless. This means more co-operation and, where relevant, harmonisation. In these times of economic crisis, the telecoms sector is one of those able to provide growth and activity – as well as new services for European citizens – if we tap into its under-exploited potential. The Socialists and Democrats advocate an innovative EU-wide spectrum management policy aiming at economic, social and cultural welfare.



**Leonardo Domenici**

### **Derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories**

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**Thursday, 16 - February 2012**

It took quite some time to finalise this text and after lengthy discussions the S&D Group is satisfied with the result. The regulation is solid and exhaustive for financial firms and well-calibrated with regard to non-financial firms and pension funds. More could have been done with regard to the role of the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) but the Council has been very strict on this matter. From an S&D / financial transaction tax viewpoint the fact that information on all derivative contracts will be available to the relevant European authorities is of the utmost importance. It is regrettable however that the Council opposed our proposal to give a stronger role to the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) on the procedure for authorising clearing houses.



**Pervenche  
Berès**

### Annual Growth Survey and employment

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Wednesday 15 - February 2012

The financial, economic and social crisis has clearly demonstrated the need to enhance the economic pillar of the economic and monetary union. With this in mind, the European Parliament adopted the report on the European Semester last December, highlighting the crucial role it has to play in ensuring the effectiveness and accountability of the new cycle. The Annual Growth Survey (AGS) prepared by the European Commission in November of each year is the cornerstone of co-ordinating the economic policies of the 27 member states. Therefore, the report on the 2012 AGS emphasises that differentiated growth-friendly strategies have to be implemented among the 27 member states. This will help to ensure that fiscal consolidation will not be detrimental to effective recovery and long-term financing of the real economy, and that the yearly policy guidance is aimed at reaching the EU 2020 headline targets of employment, education and poverty reduction. This report emphasises the importance of the European Parliament's regular contribution to the process and recalls the need for democratic legitimacy within the economic and social policy framework of the European Union.



**Marc  
Tarabella**

### Contractual relations in the milk and milk products sector

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Tuesday, 14 February 2012

Following a new set of EU measures agreed today in Brussels, European farmers – some of whom dumped milk in their fields two years ago to protest against low prices – could soon be allowed to bargain collectively with the supply industry to agree on milk prices. This collective bargaining would be subject to limits (3.5% of the EU market and 33% of total national production) but contract prices would be fixed for a six month period, in order to protect farmers from monthly price fluctuations and allow them to make investments for the long term. However, the new provisions may not be applied uniformly across the EU as some national governments, mostly from the north, are set to block it in their countries. The positive side is the farmers' strengthened bargaining power which will lead to higher quality production for everyone. We also strongly insisted on introducing a minimum duration for contracts as farmers cannot rely on an income negotiated month by month.



**Daciana  
Sarbu**

### Food distribution products to the most deprived persons in the Union

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Tuesday, 14 February 2012

After two years of being blocked in Council the food aid programme, helping the most deprived persons in the EU, can now continue to be funded by the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy). This vital source of help – which ensures access to food for 18 million of the neediest Europeans every year – is even more important during these times of financial crisis. The S&Ds are pleased that it will be 100% financed from the EU's funds and that the budget will not suffer cuts. The challenge now is to ensure that this programme will be maintained after 2013.



**Derek  
Vaughan**

### Guidelines for the 2013 budget - Other sections

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Wednesday, 15 - February 2012

The 'other sections' budget guidelines report sets out the Parliament's position regarding the budgets of other institutions. This includes the European Parliament's own budget, which is the main focus of this report. We call for a freeze in the budgets of all institutions, in line with the recent letter from Commissioner Lewandowski. For the European Parliament's own budget we are calling for an independent evaluation to be carried out and for savings to be made on under-implemented budget lines. In line with the Group's policy, we support a freeze in all travel budgets for 2013 and a freeze in Members' individual allowances until the end of the mandate in 2014. The report was adopted with a large majority in the budget committee. Southern Mediterranean countries.



**Antonio  
Masip  
Hidalgo**

### Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) and the protection of intellectual property rights

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Monday, 13 - February 2012

This regulation establishes a European observatory on infringements of intellectual property rights (IP) that will function as a platform for gathering, monitoring and reporting information and data related to all IP infringements. It will achieve this using the technical resources available within the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs). The S&D Group fully supports the agreement, considering that the changes introduced by the European Parliament will maintain the ambition of the Commission proposal while ensuring a high level of consumer protection and safeguarding good national/regional practices.

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