



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda
Tuesday 5 February at 10.10 LOW N-1/201

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Hannes Swoboda

Statement by François Hollande, President of the French Republic

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Tuesday 5 February 2013

Growth policy is still lagging behind austerity in Europe today. We call on President François Hollande to strengthen his commitment to a sustainable growth policy. With regard to the budget discussions, we want to see a budget compromise which sends a clear signal on investment, growth and jobs. We will only accept a budget compromise which includes incentives to push in this direction. In the fight for our Europe, we call for a Europe that promotes employment and social fairness. European history shows how important it is to remember why the European Union was founded and to be firm in our call for a peaceful and democratic Europe. Europe must be based on strong values and fundamental rights for all, irrespective of religion or national background.



Sergio Gutierrez Prieto

European Semester for economic policy coordination: employment and social aspects in the annual growth survey 2013 / Shadow Rapporteur

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The European Commission opened the new European semester on economic governance for 2013 when publishing its Annual Growth Survey (AGS) in November 2012. In order to address the related employment and social issues at stake, the European Parliament's employment committee drafted its own initiative report. This report is therefore the Parliament's contribution to the Spring European Council in March 2013. The S&D Group was pleased to see some of its key messages in the report. These include a call on the Commission to both reshape its economic models to take into account the multiplier effect and to promote growth-friendly fiscal consolidation and investments in training, education and life-long learning. These are necessary if the Europe 2020 targets are to be achieved.



Elisa Ferreira

European Semester for economic policy coordination: annual growth survey 2013 / Rapporteur

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Our Group is very critical of the austerity policies applied by the COM in the MS which are being threatened or experiencing serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability. We support the recommendations of the independent Annual Growth Survey (iAGS) prepared by 3 European economic institutes which concludes that the current policies are self-defeating and unable to bring back growth to Europe. The iAGS proposes instead to slow down the pace of adjustment within the limits of the revised Stability and Growth Pact (six-pack) because that can free up to 80 billion Euro a year for growth-enhancing and employment creation policies. The EPP and ALDE fully support the COM's mistaken line of continuing the self-defeating economic policies. This is despite growing evidence demonstrating that excessive austerity is counter-productive. The IMF has recently downgraded its forecasts of economic growth for 2013 in the Eurozone from + 0.2% to -0.2%. The COM which in October produced a 2013 GDP forecast of a mere 0.1% will provide new figures in February, which we expect to confirm the continuation of the recession and that it is to be expected.



Ulrike Rodust

Common Fisheries Policy / Rapporteur

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The EP will vote on the core of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy - the basic regulation. The S&D fisheries working group around rapporteur Ulrike Rodust (S&D) has achieved a very progressive result in the vote in the fisheries committee in December. Her compromise text found support by most other political groups. S&D strives for finally making European fisheries sustainable: Overfishing in EU waters has to be ended by 2015, following the principle of maximum sustainable yield. The EU fleet shall not contribute to overfishing in the waters of developing countries. The wasteful practice of discarding edible fish shall be phased out. More decision making power shall be transferred to a regional level. Member States and Fishermen not following the CFP rules shall not receive any subsidies. S&D wants to strengthen the text adopted by the fisheries committee by giving preferential access to fisheries resources to artisanal fishermen who preserve the local economic and social fabric.



Claude Moraes

European Refugee Fund, the European Return Fund and the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals / Shadow Rapporteur

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Wednesday 6 February 2013

The Commission has proposed a decision to amend the co-financing rate, for those Member States benefiting from EU financial support mechanisms, in respect of the External Borders Fund. The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that Member States receiving financial assistance under the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism, the European Financial Stability Facility, the Balance of Payments Mechanism or from EU bilateral loans continue to implement the programmes established under the External Borders Funds and continue to disburse funds to projects on the ground. The proposal provides for the maximum Union contribution to supported projects under the fund to be raised from 75% to 95% for those Member States benefiting from EU financial support mechanisms. It is important to note that changing the co-financing rate for Member States experiencing serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability does not entail increasing the total amount of the fund. The annual allocations for the fund will remain unchanged.



Edit Herczog

Guidelines for the 2014 budget - Other sections than the Commission / Shadow Rapporteur

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Guidelines for the other sections of the 2014 budget are the first step towards establishing next year's administrative budgets for all the other EU institutions except the European Commission. In recognition of the difficult economic and budgetary conditions in the member states, the European Parliament and all the other institutions should continue to reform their budgets and work towards the legislative and organisational excellence European citizens deserve, while limiting or freezing their administrative expenditure. Therefore our main priorities are: to continue structural and organisational reforms to deliver greater value through successful and efficient management of our financial and human resources; to carry on identifying possible areas for savings and improvements; and at the same time to ensure labour rights are fully respected. The S&D Group in the European Parliament is aiming for more Europe with much more efficiency, to deliver a better Europe for all.



Raimon Obiols

Council and Commission statements - Dialogue for a peaceful solution of the Kurdish issue in Turkey

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An open and sincere political dialogue is necessary to find a solution to the Kurdish issue in Turkey. The recent events in Paris where three Kurdish activists were murdered may undermine ongoing dialogue between the Turkish government and the Kurdish leaders. However, the EU must stand firm and urge both parties to pursue negotiations to end the existing conflict and pave the way to a new civil constitution, reflecting Turkey's pluralism and fully recognising all citizens and their rights.



Richard Howitt

Corporate social responsibility: promoting society's interests and a route to sustainable and inclusive recovery / Rapporteur

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Richard Howitt report challenges business on how it can restore confidence after the economic crisis. Endorsing the European Commission Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the Rapporteur argues there can be no sustainable economic recovery without sustainable business. The Howitt Report proposes that Europe itself is more active in promoting the responsibility of business, advancing a new proposal for companies to publicly report on their sustainability, championing a new mechanism for corporate accountability in the United Nations and formally signing-up to the internationally-recognised OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprise. A direct call is made to European businesses to combat the social consequences of the current crisis, including by taking action for youth job creation, the sustainability of pensions, and by tackling exploitative labour practices in company supply chains. The report will help shape European action on CSR over the next five years.

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