



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda
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Hannes Swoboda

Preparations for the European Council meeting (19 -20 December 2013)

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Wednesday 11 December 2013

European prime ministers will meet to formally discuss the EU's common security and defence policy next week. But how do they intend to address the disastrous economic and social conditions that Europe and its people continue to suffer? When will we see real answers to the questions that millions of Europeans are asking: how to find a job, how to have a decent life and how to be sure that the future will not be unemployment, deteriorating social conditions and misery? These are the questions the European Council must answer.



Matthias Groote

Timing of auctions of greenhouse gas allowances

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The EU's emissions trading system (ETS) has created the world's first major carbon market and an EU-wide carbon price – a key tool for reducing the EU's industrial emissions in a cost-effective way. Despite the reduction of emissions since the start of the EU ETS, the system still has serious imbalances. There is now a significant surplus of allowances, resulting in a carbon price of around €4/tnCO₂ (compared to the €30/tnCO₂ envisaged when the climate and energy package was adopted). The emissions trading system is one of the pillars of our climate policy. 'Backloading' to delay the auctions of some allowances should not be seen as a permanent solution but rather a short-term measure to stabilise the system until the necessary long-term structural measures are adopted. At this point, all parties have agreed on the European Parliament's compromise. The votes on 'backloading' will be on 10 December in Strasbourg.



Ulrike Rodust

Common fisheries policy

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The reform of the common fisheries policy is a huge success for the S&D Group: we have ensured that European fisheries will finally be managed sustainably. This will create a better future both for fishermen all over Europe and for the health of our oceans. Overfishing and the wasteful practice of discarding edible fish will be phased out quickly while allowing for practicable solutions to help fishermen adapt to new realities. We also made sure that in the future the EU will have to act responsibly when fishing in the waters of third countries, especially in the developing world. Another major success is the new principle of 'regionalisation': while overarching objectives will still be set by the EU. The reformed policy ensures that detailed decision-making will be taken on a regional level rather than in Brussels.



George Sabin Cutas

Mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation

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The European Commission is proposing to extend the automatic exchange of information (AEOI) between EU tax administrations as part of the intensified fight against tax evasion. Under the current proposal, dividends, capital gains and all other forms of financial income and account balances will be added to the list of categories which are subject to automatic exchange within the EU. This would pave the way for the EU to have the most comprehensive system of this kind in the world. The Commission's proposal is in line with its action plan on tax fraud and tax evasion and also with the European Parliament's position set out in the Kleva report on fighting tax fraud, evasion and havens. The current proposal also responds to requests from several member states for an 'EU FATCA', following bilateral agreements between some member states and the US under their Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) legislation. It is crucial to maintain this momentum and ensure the swift adoption and implementation of the proposal, as the EU is in a position to establish a global standard for the automatic exchange of information.



Libor Roucek

Outcome of the Vilnius Summit and the future of the Eastern Partnership

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The S&D Group welcomed the initialling of association agreements with Moldova and Georgia at the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius, but was disappointed by Ukraine's last-minute refusal to sign the agreement, a decision made under heavy and unacceptable pressure from Russia. We condemn the reported police violence against peaceful demonstrations in Kiev and call for a broad-based dialogue between the government, opposition parties and civil society to reach a political solution that will also put Ukraine back on track in the European integration process. The S&D Group remains committed to the European aspirations of the Ukrainian people, and maintains that door should be kept open for the signature of an agreement with Ukraine, provided the relevant conditions are met. We also believe that, going forward, the EU should develop a more strategic and flexible policy toolbox to support the European future of our eastern partners.



**Roberto
Gualtieri**

Constitutional problems of multi-tier governance in the European Union

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The report is a comprehensive analysis of differentiated integration within the European Union, particularly the new definitions of economic governance and the eurozone mechanisms. Having identified and highlighted institutional problems related to differentiated integration of EU policies within the EU, the report focuses firstly on how to mobilise the full potential of the current treaties and secondly, how to develop a strategy to strengthen integration of the eurozone and the effectiveness and democratic legitimacy of its governance, while also maintaining consistency across the EU in the future. The aim is to develop a strategy that will incorporate economic governance into the EU's institutional framework in the medium term, improve the EU's institutional set up and strengthen its democratic legitimacy while also maintaining its consistency and dynamism.



**Thijs
Berman**

Establishing a financial instrument for development

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The development cooperation instrument (2014-2020) finances EU development co-operation, the main objective of which is the fight against poverty. The proposed financial allocation of €19 billion includes geographic and thematic programmes and proposes to finance the joint Africa-EU strategy. The two new DCI thematic programmes are: global public goods and challenges, and civil society organisations and local authorities. The Commission introduces a differentiated approach to geographic programmes between countries and higher priority will be given to countries most in need. An agreement has been reached which reflects good progress, especially in terms of combining a human-rights based approach and sustainable development without excluding climate change adaptation and mitigation. Food security is also an important focus of the regulation. A 20% benchmark will be dedicated to basic social services with a focus on education, health and secondary education. Despite the fact that the Parliament could not obtain all its demands regarding strategic decisions at a country level for priority sectors, the final compromise largely reflects the European Parliament's priorities and also increases its scrutiny role.



**Kinga
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Rights and citizenship programme 2014-2020

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The consequences of the financial and economic crisis endanger our fundamental values more and more. In these circumstances the rights, equality and citizenship programme pays close attention to the fight against discrimination, racial and xenophobic hatred, marginalisation, segregation and all forms of violence. It is particularly important to guarantee the rights of disabled people and minorities, including the Roma. EU funding must contribute to a more inclusive society, one of the commitments in the EU 2020 strategy.



**Enrique
Guerrero
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EU donor co-ordination on development aid

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The report notes that €8.4 billion in annual savings could be achieved if country allocation was completely co-ordinated and if poverty reduction was its only target. €800 million could be saved annually by cutting transaction costs if the EU and its member states concentrated their aid efforts on fewer countries and activities. Moreover, the development committee requests that the Commission submits a proposal concerning the regulation of co-ordinating development aid by early 2016. The development committee calls for more effective co-ordination of the in-country and cross-country division of labour between the EU and the member states. A differentiated approach to aid effectiveness is needed, based on several indicators beyond GDP that would take into account in-country poverty, inequality and vulnerability. Finally, the committee asks for the EU to ensure that the commitments on aid and development effectiveness are fully reflected in all financial mechanisms relevant to development co-operation.



**Luis Manuel
Capoulas
Santos**

**EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement:
protocol setting out fishing opportunities and financial contributions**

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There are good agreements, bad agreements and fair agreements. This is a fair and balanced one, from an economic, social and environmental point of view, and fulfils the expectations of all sides. Nevertheless the Group will vigilantly monitor the implementation of this new agreement making sure that the benefits are fairly distributed between Morocco and Saharawi population.

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