



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda
Tuesday 19 November at 10.10 LOW N-1/201

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Hannes Swoboda

Multiannual financial framework

+ 33 3 88 17 57 16 hannes.swoboda@europarl.europa.eu

Tuesday 19 November 2013

+ 33 3 88 17 54 89 ivailo.kalfin@europarl.europa.eu

The adoption of the multi-annual financial framework (MFF) ends several years of intense negotiations in the European Parliament and Council. After voting on the MFF, the EU will have a clear framework for its policies and the financial resources supporting them until 2020. Although the budget will decrease slightly due to the current budgetary constraints, the S&D's priorities - supported by the European Parliament - made it possible to introduce new mechanisms to use resources more fully and efficiently. This includes measures designed to front load and strengthen policies designed to tackle youth unemployment and poverty, to mitigate the devastating social consequences of the economic crisis, and to help the European economy recover more rapidly, supporting education and young people as well as small and medium businesses. We also achieved a large number of improvements in practically all fields of EU policy.



Ivailo Kalfin

European agricultural fund for rural development

+ 33 3 88 17 59 91 luismanuel.capoulasantos@europarl.europa.eu

Wednesday 20 November 2013

The CAP has been reformed in order to face the challenges of both the present and the future. Thanks to the European Parliament's co-decision powers, this represents the fairest reform yet of agricultural policy in Europe which will benefit not only farmers but also European citizens and taxpayers. The reformed CAP is also the greenest reform of this policy to date, reflected in increased environmental demands and targeted support. Farmers' payments will be reallocated with a clear positive discrimination towards small farmers and smaller holdings, thus taking the employment factor into account. Smaller holdings will also have start up aid support. We have managed to impose a mandatory negative list of aid recipients in order to prevent support being given to so-called 'sofa farmers'. Only those farmers who contribute to agricultural production and environmental benefits will be eligible for support. Following on from this deal, young farmers will also get mandatory support from the agricultural aid package as a way of promoting agricultural activity and reversing the trend of an ageing farm and rural population.



Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos

Programme for social change and innovation

+ 33 3 88 17 55 63 jutta.steinruck@europarl.europa.eu

Wednesday 20 November 2013

This programme will support member states' social and employment policies. It will promote voluntary job-mobility in Europe; provide individual support for cross-border workers; promote innovative projects to combat poverty and social exclusion; and offer microcredits for the most vulnerable so that they can set up their own businesses and support social enterprises. This programme has a clear framework and been linked to the wider issues surrounding quality employment, poverty reduction and social inclusion. In these difficult times of crisis, this programme is of utmost importance if we are to create a more social and fair Europe.



Jutta Steinruck

Programme for the environment and climate action

+ 33 3 88 17 55 95 jutta.haug@europarl.europa.eu

Thursday 21 November 2013

LIFE is the only instrument of the EU budget exclusively dedicated to financing environment and climate-related projects and has co-financed almost 4000 projects since 1992. The new LIFE regulation 2014-2020 increases the current budget to 3.46 billion EUR - still corresponding to only 0.3% of the EU budget - so the integration of environment and climate into major EU funds thus remains crucial. The new 'integrated projects' aim to support this process through the joint investment of different EU funds under the LIFE programme. LIFE 2014-2020 will also include a new sub-programme for climate change. National allocations, which have not been effective and currently distort project quality, will be phased out after 4 years; capacity-building measures to support project applications will be introduced.



Jutta Haug

Creative Europe programme

+ 33 3 88 17 55 14 silvia.costa@europarl.europa.eu

Monday 18 November 2013

Creative Europe 2014-2020, the EU programme for cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors, will provide approximately 1.462 billion EUR for the sub-programmes culture and media, and the cross-sectoral strand. Thanks to the Parliament's efforts, cuts demanded by the European Council were reduced, and we managed to maintain increased funding for these sectors, compared to the previous multiannual programme. The new programme will bring together the current MEDIA, MEDIA Mundus and Culture programmes under a common framework, and set up a new financial instrument - the 'cultural and creative sectors facility' - to improve access to funding via loans for cultural and creative SMEs. There will be specific budgetary allocations: at least 56% for MEDIA, at least for 31% for culture and a maximum of 13% for the cross-sectoral strand. We also managed to gain support for: the recognition of the dual nature of culture; the promotion of tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage; support for education/acquisition of professional skills and competences; and improved access to European works, particularly for young, disabled and under-represented groups.



Silvia Costa



**Victor
Bostinaru**

Cohesion fund

+ 33 3 88 17 58 32

victor.bostinaru@europarl.europa.eu

Tuesday 19 November 2013

The Commission's proposal for the 2014-2020 cohesion fund is found wanting in many areas, particularly when taking into account the objectives pursued by the new cohesion policy package. The new fund will continue to support investments relating to the environment and the trans-European transport network, but through intensive negotiations it was also possible to make eligible key investments that had been excluded. For example, support for energy efficiency and renewable energy use will now be eligible not only for public buildings and enterprises, but also for private housing. This will allow the cohesion fund to play a key role towards the EU 2020 targets, and also to help citizens through cheaper energy bills, and support workers and SME's through the creation of more green jobs. The cohesion fund's support for high efficiency co-generation of heat and power, and for district heating, also provides significant benefits to member states. However, the highly disputed support given to the 'connecting Europe' facility's transport projects will be maintained, but subject to the conditions proposed by the S&D group and incorporated into the common provisions regulation. In particular, cohesion fund member states are now safeguarded until 31 December 2016, as the transferred funds are protected until that point. Only as of January 2017 will the selection of projects to be financed with those funds be carried out through an open competition.



**Constanze
Krehl**

Common provisions on European funds

+ 33 3 88 17 51 34

constanze.krehl@europarl.europa.eu

Tuesday 19 November 2013

After a long dispute with the Council, the S&D group welcomed this compromise which promotes efficiency and simplification of the policy and will focus on renewable energies, SMEs, innovation, employment and the reduction of poverty. For the first time, Parliament exercised its rights of co-decision in this important field. The new framework will be applicable for the European regional development fund (ERDF), European social fund (ESF), and the cohesion fund (CF). For the first time, the fund for rural development (EAFRD) and the maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF) are included in this single set of rules. In terms of the most controversial subject of the new regulation - macro-economic conditionality - the rapporteurs have implemented very tight socio-economic safeguards that will make it virtually impossible to use the conditionality. With an overall budget of €325 billion, the EU regional policy is now ready to boost investments in all of its 273 regions.



**Ismail
Ertug**

Development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T)

+ 33 3 88 17 55 47

ismail.ertug@europarl.europa.eu

Monday 18 November 2013

The new TEN-T guidelines aim at converting the EU's transport infrastructure from a patchwork into a network. They propose two major changes to the existing policy framework, which involve a truly European method of infrastructure planning and strengthened TEN-T policy implementation tools. We believe that this new dual-layer structure, consisting of a comprehensive network and a core strategic network, will ensure coherent infrastructure design across the European Union. Furthermore, we hope that a strong policy framework providing for multimodal corridors with appropriate governance structures will lead to a firm commitment by member states to implement key infrastructure projects by 2030. The S&D group specifically highlights the need to adequately involve regional and local authorities as well as civil society in European infrastructure planning.



**Katarina
Nevedalova**

Erasmus for all programme

+ 33 3 88 17 54 86

katarina.nevedalova@europarl.europa.eu

Monday 18 November 2013

The new Erasmus+ programme builds upon earlier European Union initiatives promoting exchanges and the development of Europe-wide education and training systems, and youth work. New initiatives include a separate programme for sport and a student loan guarantee facility for those studying for a master's degree. Erasmus has grown into one of the EU's most successful and most well-known initiatives. The overall programme budget is an increase on the current level of EU support for programmes in these areas and is a positive outcome in difficult economic circumstances. Applicants are provided with sufficient detail to make clear which activities are eligible for support and over 4 million people will now have the opportunity to benefit from the EU grants over the next 7 years.



**Paolo
De Castro**

Agricultural and fishery statistics

+ 33 3 88 17 55 20

paolo.decastro@europarl.europa.eu

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During these negotiations the Parliament achieved many of its objectives, such as limiting the length of the delegation to the Commission to 5 years and asking the Commission to report on respect of the delegation of power, and requiring the presence of both the national and European Parliament experts in the European statistical system. We consider this process to represent an important guarantee of transparency and democracy in the alignment process.

MEDIA CONTACT

Head of Press & Communication Unit - Utta Tuttlies + 32 473 85 34 07



www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu

Paolo Alberti

+ 32 476 955 144

Dimitris Komodromos

+ 32 474 622 884

Solange Hélin-Villes

+ 32 476 510 172

Victoria Martin De La Torre

+ 32 473 234 173

Céline Bayer

President spokesperson

+ 32 473 858 211



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