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PARLIAMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE S&D GROUP IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT • October 11 2013

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SWIFT: S&D GROUP CALLS FOR SUSPENSION OF BANK DATA AGREEMENT UNTIL US RESPONDS

The European Socialists and Democrats called in Strasbourg on the European Commission and Council to suspend the EU-US agreement on the transfer of EU citizens' bank data (the SWIFT agreement) until Washington provides a clear response on the alleged illegal hacking by the US National Security Agency (NSA) into the SWIFT database.

The procedure to suspend the agreement must be initiated by the European Commission and backed by a two-thirds majority vote in the Council. S&D Group Vice-President Sylvie Guillaume said:

"Keeping us safe can never be an excuse for excessive surveillance at the expense of liberty and freedom. The allegations about possible unauthorised access to the SWIFT database are serious enough to consider asking EU governments to authorise an investigation by the Europol Cybercrime Centre. A positive response to the Parliament's recommendation would be a crucial chance for member states to express their concern over the protection of personal data, following the NSA/PRISM revelations."

S&D MEP Claude Moraes, the European Parliament's leading investigator on the NSA scandal, said:

"The SWIFT agreement is in place to ensure we have the correct balance between security and the protection of civil liberties and fundamental rights. Following a long and tense negotiation, the European Parliament eventually gave its support on the basis that the agreement provided a balanced approach to fighting terrorism whilst at the same time guaranteeing that EU citizens' right to privacy is protected.

"The reports of the NSA tapping into the SWIFT data mean that there are now serious doubts that this agreement offers any real legal guarantees and safeguards for EU citizens' personal data. After several weeks, the US has still not denied these reports or provided sound and irrefutable evidence

"These allegations put the capacity of both the US and the EU to fight against terrorism into real jeopardy. They must be investigated fully to ensure trust and loyal co-operation on both this and future international agreements." Please [click here](#) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131021IPR22725/html/MEPs-call-for-suspension-of-EU-US-bank-data-deal-in-response-to-NSA-snooping> to read the adopted text in full.

EU BUDGET 2014: S&D EURO MPS WANT MORE FUNDS FOR GROWTH AND JOBS

S&D Euro MPs voted to reinstate funds for growth and job creation that the Council cut from the draft EU budget for 2014. S&D Group negotiator Eider Gardiazábal said:

"The Council of Ministers must be consistent and respect its promises. EU governments can't complain all day long about the lack of growth and then cut the funds for boosting investment and job creation. These funds are critical for the 5.5 million young people in Europe that are currently unemployed. Our proposal would ensure that the youth employment initiative is funded throughout next year. We want a modernised EU budget oriented towards growth and employment. We need sufficient spending in areas such as research, infrastructure and climate change to achieve the targets of the EU 2020 strategy. The EU budget should also strengthen solidarity between EU citizens and member states in these times of crisis.

"The S&D Group has also managed to secure increases for key programmes supporting jobs and growth, such as EURES, Microfinance, Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens, as well as the fund to aid the most deprived. S&D Euro MPs also pushed for €50 million in additional funding for assistance to Palestine, the Middle East peace process and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to help protect the safety and livelihoods of refugees facing instability in this region.

S&D Group Vice-President responsible for the budget Göran Färm added:

"This vote does not solve the current budget nightmare Europe is facing. The difference between payments and commitments in the last three years is such that it has turned the EU budget into a deficit budget. We need to find a solution to the mountain of unpaid bills we have before us. It is already clear that the annual payment ceiling for 2014 will be insufficient to meet the actual needs." Please [click here](#) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22651/html/Budget-2014-Parliament-reverses-Council-cuts-in-research-and-jobs-expenditure> to read the adopted text in full.

LAMPEDUSA: COUNCIL AND CONSERVATIVES MUST STOP HAMPERING LEGAL MIGRATION

The EU governments and conservative MEPs were strongly attacked in Strasbourg for trying to take off the agenda the adoption of new EU measures to favour legal immigration and avoid further tragedies of desperate migrants trying to irregularly enter the EU. The criticisms came after the EPP members unsuccessfully tried to remove an amendment calling on the EU Commission and governments to improve legal access to the EU for migrants. S&D vice-president Sylvie Guillaume said:

"The Lampedusa tragedy must be a wakeup call to the whole of the European Union.

"Today's EP resolution, strongly backed by the European Socialists and Democrats, explicitly calls on the EU Commission and Council to radically change approach on migration, decriminalising the provision of humanitarian assistance to migrants in distress, strengthening the international obligations for Member States on search and rescue at sea, and increasing the legal channels to the EU for migrants and asylum seekers.

"As long as the EU and the Member States do not adopt a comprehensive approach to interlinked migration issues, there will still be a growing number of people resorting to smugglers or criminal networks and risking their lives by embarking on increasingly dangerous roads. It's about time that everyone shoulders their responsibilities and seeks a comprehensive EU migration policy, addressing both the symptoms and root causes, in order to avoid future tragedies such as those we have witnessed in the last few weeks". Please [click here](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131021STO22715/html/We-are-the-richest-continent.-We-can-do-more-President-Schulz-on-migration) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131021STO22715/html/We-are-the-richest-continent.-We-can-do-more-President-Schulz-on-migration> to read the adopted text in full.

CONSERVATIVES WANT TO SET WOMEN'S RIGHT BACK 30 YEARS

S&D Euro MPs slammed the conservatives in the European Parliament for opposing a resolution supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, in Europe and beyond. Under the pressure of "pro-Life" activists, the text will now be sent back to the women's committee. S&D Euro MP Edite Estrela who drafted the resolution said after the vote:

"I deeply regret the decision taken in the House. On several occasions, this Parliament has recognised the right for everyone to make their own informed and responsible choices on their sexual and reproductive life. The draft resolution was approved by the women's committee with a strong majority of 17 votes in favour, 7 abstentions and 7 against. By not respecting the outcome of the vote in parliamentary committee, the conservatives want to set women's rights back 30 years. This is not acceptable. The socialists and democrats will stand firm to protect women's rights to abortion and access to quality health services". Please [click here](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22633/html/MEPs-send-resolution-on-sexual-health-care-and-education-back-to-committee) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22633/html/MEPs-send-resolution-on-sexual-health-care-and-education-back-to-committee> to read the adopted text in full.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND GOVERNMENTS MUST STEP UP FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME

The European Socialists and Democrats backed a breakthrough set of proposals to step up the fight against mafias and corruption, as the Parliament's special committee delivered its final report on organised crime following a year of hearings and fact-finding missions. According to the findings of the report adopted in Strasbourg, organised crime, corruption and money laundering result in tremendous social and economic losses every year for Europeans. Almost €193 billion in VAT revenues (1.5 % of GDP) was lost in 2011, whereas the cost of corruption in public procurement in 2010 amounted to between €1.4 and €2.2 billion in eight member states alone.

Moreover, criminal organisations make a profit of €25 billion every year through modern-day slavery. 880,000 people are victims of forced labour each year in the EU – 270,000 of whom are the victims of sexual exploitation. The economic and social crisis has further added to this drastic problem, often forcing irregular migrants to become slaves of criminal organisations because of their situation. S&D spokesperson on organised crime Tanja Fajon told the media in Strasbourg:

"This report does not only include recommendations for governments and the European Commission but also practical measures to address people's needs. It takes into account the most vulnerable groups of people, victims of crime and human trafficking. We also particularly welcome the proposal to establish a European day for the victims of organised crime. We have argued for seized criminal assets to be reused for social purposes, redirecting funds back to victims and communities who have been devastated by drugs and organised crime, and using them to fund crime-fighting locally as well as across borders." Please [click here](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22665/html/Cracking-down-on-organised-crime-corruption-and-money-laundering) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22665/html/Cracking-down-on-organised-crime-corruption-and-money-laundering> to read the adopted text in full.

IN SHORT

Sakharov Prize - Myanmar human rights legend Aung San Suu Kyi finally received her Sakharov Prize on 22 October, 23 years after it was awarded. "Freedom of thought begins with the right to ask questions," she told MEPs. Please [click here](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131021STO22708/html/Aung-San-Suu-Kyi-receives-Sakharov-Prize-awarded-in-1990) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131021STO22708/html/Aung-San-Suu-Kyi-receives-Sakharov-Prize-awarded-in-1990> to read the adopted text in full.

S&Ds welcome new regulation for safer medical devices - Medical devices – from breast and hip implants to surgical instruments and pregnancy tests – will be monitored much more effectively in the EU when the regulation passed in Strasbourg by the House. The S&D Group welcomed the new legislation because it will ensure a state-of-the-art assessment procedure for medical devices. However, in order to achieve a compromise with the right-wing majority in the Parliament the S&D Group had to drop its request – supported by doctors and patients – for a

central system of pre-marketing authorisation. The Parliament's rapporteur, S&D MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, said:

"This is a step in the right direction, but unfortunately it is not a milestone. My initial intention was to establish a system of pre-marketing authorisation for high-risk products such as heart valves, breast implants or pacemakers to ensure that only safe products will be used in or on patients. This system would have given a stronger role to the European agency for public health, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) which would have made sense as in future we will see many devices incorporating or administering medicines. However, due to aggressive and uninformed lobbying from the industry it was not possible to achieve this". Please [click here](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131021IPR22721/html/Medical-implants-better-controls-and-traceability-to-ensure-patients%E2%80%99-safety) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131021IPR22721/html/Medical-implants-better-controls-and-traceability-to-ensure-patients%E2%80%99-safety> to read the adopted text in full.

EU Environmental law - Parliament called on member states to enforce EU environmental law more rigorously in Thursday's vote endorsing a deal with the Council of Ministers on the seventh EU environmental action programme, to run until 2020. This programme will structure the EU's entire environmental policy, from water management to climate change. Please [click here](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22645/html/Seventh-environmental-action-programme-on-the-path-to-green-growth) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22645/html/Seventh-environmental-action-programme-on-the-path-to-green-growth> to read the adopted text in full.

Current education systems need new impetus - The S&D Group in the European Parliament welcomed the positive vote in the plenary on the report 'Rethinking education', which responds to the Commission's communication on the topic. In the current economic climate, with an alarming number of young people struggling with unemployment across the Union, the report on rethinking education addresses the specific role of education not only in combating unemployment but also in preparing individuals for life and as active citizens. There are several clear messages within the report highlighting the key role of education and training in innovation and economic growth.

S&Ds call for active democratic participation in use of EU funds for sustainable development - The S&D Group welcomed the adoption of the resolution on 'Local authorities and civil society: Europe's engagement in support of sustainable development'. The resolution supports the empowerment of local authorities and civil society organisations, ensuring an enabling environment to involve them in policy formulation, programming and implementation, and putting in place monitoring mechanisms to achieve this. S&D Group rapporteur Corina Crețu told the media in Strasbourg:

"With the vote today, the S&D group has secured an active democratic participation in the partner countries on how the EU's money is spent as opposed to a top-down approach which the EPP sought. We have encouraged dialogue between public administrations, local authorities, civil society organisations, the private sector and citizens, based on increased transparency in official and non-official aid flows as well as on a participatory approach to development and accountability."

Fisheries Fund - The S&D group succeeded in directing the EU fisheries fund for 2014-2020 towards the creation of new jobs instead of using it to subsidise the purchase of brand new

vessels, as the right-wing EPP rapporteur had wanted. The fisheries fund will provide €6 billion to finance up to 60% of the subsidies to support fishermen during forced periods of inactivity, to encourage fleet reduction and to make fishing vessels safer and more environmentally friendly. Moreover, the House backed an S&D request to use the money to create new jobs by granting up to €40,000 over two years for fishermen over 50 years old who hire young employees and provide training on sustainable fishing. Please [click here](#) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131018IPR22631/html/Fisheries-Policy-reform-MEPs-agree-on-rules-for-%E2%82%AC6.5-billion-EU-aid-fund> to read the adopted text in full.

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