

KEY ISSUE

EU 2020 - People, jobs and growth

In a debate in plenary on the follow-up of the Informal Council of 11 February 2010 - for the first time in presence of Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council - S&D Vice-President, responsible for the Social and Economic Model, Stephen Hughes stressed that 'Europeans deserve a more balanced and socially responsible policy approach', involving 'an 'entry strategy' into the labour market. The new strategy up to 2020 'should combine the macroeconomic policy agenda with structural policies in the economic, social and environmental fields to aim at the creation of at least 5 million net new jobs by 2015, particularly in the green economy'. 'Gradual fiscal consolidation in the different Member States needs to be combined with the preservation of key public spending in growth areas and key social policies', he said. The 2020 strategy 'is a chance to make Europe relevant to people and not just to markets, if it is indeed about people and about jobs'. Focusing on their area of responsibility, S&D Vice-President Marita Ulvskog called for a 'new green deal' and S&D Vice-President Stéphane Le Foll asked on the guidelines for discussions with Member States on the budgetary perspectives. A resolution will be voted at the next plenary session (8 - 11 March, in Strasbourg).

S&D leader Martin Schulz also intervened in this debate after right-wing MEP Nigel Farage's personal attack on the President of the European Council and his statement regarding one of the founding Member States. Schulz considered this to be unacceptable and proposed to Farage to resign his seat as an MEP, if he has such strong feelings against the EU and the Parliament. Our Group will take action against this undignified behaviour.

In SHORT

Fisheries reform - 'Our Group believes that the Common Fisheries Policy needs a radical reform to ensure its long-term sustainability and competitiveness', said Ulrike Rodust, S&D Spokesperson on fisheries. 'Overfishing is still a major challenge and European fishermen have to fight with limited means against illegal competition and high rates of infringements', she added. S&D Shadow Rapporteur Josefa Andres Barea stressed that 'any new policy must first prove to be environmentally, socially and economically viable'. The [report](#) was adopted with 456 votes in favour, 50 against and 65 abstentions. This initiative report is Parliament's response to a consultation by the Commission. The Parliament will later co-decide with the Council, using its new legislative powers in fisheries policy acquired with the Lisbon Treaty.

Implementation of Goldstone recommendations on Israel/Palestine - 'No democratic State can violate international law in impunity' said Vice-President Véronique De Keyser in the debate in plenary. 'For us war crimes must be held to account, allegations must be determined and Europe must show determination that they should', stressed Richard Howitt, S&D Coordinator for Human Rights. 'The acid test of our commitment to Human Rights and the rule of law is our response to the Goldstone report', stressed Proinsias de Rossa, S&D Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council. A resolution will be voted at the next plenary session.

Following the **Natural disaster in Madeira** and the **train crash in Belgium**, MEPs added debates to the agenda in a sign of solidarity and sympathy for the victims.

MEPs voted on the [Parliament's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva](#), on the [Beijing +15 - UN Platform for Action for Gender Equality](#), the [situation in Ukraine](#) and on [estimates of revenue and expenditures for the European Parliament](#). MEPs debated on the situation of civil society and national minorities in **Belarus** (vote: next plenary session).