

KEY ISSUES

EU 2020 - People, jobs and growth

MEPs sent a clear message on what they expect from the EU 2020 strategy: full and high-quality employment, for both men and women; ambitious social agenda; better coordination of economic policies and economic governance. Vice-President Stephen Hughes took the lead on the negotiations of the EU2020 Parliament's resolution, ensuring that the resolution reflects our key requests. The S&D Group set out six priorities for a [new model for development](#) of the European economy: a deal for sustainability with 10 million jobs in the green economy by 2020; full employment in quality jobs, with decent working conditions and social integration for men and women; fighting poverty, inequality and insecurity; the development of a knowledge economy with high productivity; solidarity between people and regions in Europe; making globalisation work in a way that is efficient and profitable for everyone.

This EP resolution is just a first step and Parliament will put forward a more detailed resolution on bottlenecks, problems and flagship projects in time for the June summit. The [resolution](#) was adopted by 462 votes to 140, with 58 abstentions. The debate took place during the February plenary session.

This week, the S&D Group also called for EU legislation to govern factory closures by multinational firms, publishing a [six-point plan](#) to save the European car industry, following Opel's closure plans in Europe. 'We need a European framework to govern company restructuring and we call on the Commission to come forward with proposals', said S&D leader Martin Schulz. 'At present, company closure plans effectively pit one factory against another across Europe. This must stop'.

European External Action Service

During a debate on Foreign and Security policy with Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative Cathy Ashton, S&D key players in this field presented their vision for the External Action Service.

'We need an institution which should be built not only on the principle of political and budgetary accountability but also on the principle of effectiveness, and not a service which preserves the old national competition or the present bureaucratic structure', stressed S&D Vice-President Adrian Severin. 'We will not accept a re-intergovernmentalisation of a European policy', said S&D Vice-President Hannes Swoboda. Parliament will contribute to make this Service 'a structure capable of ensuring an efficient and coherent external action of the EU, reinforcing and progressively extending the community method', added Roberto Gualteri, S&D Shadow Rapporteur in Foreign Affairs Committee on the EEAS.

S&D leader Martin Schulz declared the EEAS 'must act within the framework of the whole of the EU's interests and not within the framework of the specific interests of the Member States. There is a need for effective parliamentary control of this Service by the European Parliament'.

The VP/HR Cathy Ashton also attended a meeting of the Conference of Presidents to exchange on this matter.

In SHORT

Financial transaction tax - At the initiative of the S&D Group, MEPs adopted a resolution calling on the European Commission to study all options for a financial tax. 'It would be unfair to make our citizens bear the costs of the

financial markets' mistakes. The EU should take the lead and move forward', said Udo Bullmann, S&D Spokesperson for economic and monetary affairs. The [resolution](#) was adopted with 536 votes to 80, with 33 abstentions.

Implementation of Goldstone recommendations on Israel/Palestine - The EP [resolution](#), endorsing UN efforts to ensure accountability for alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law during the Gaza conflict, was adopted - without the support of the right-wing - by 335 votes to 287, with 43 abstentions. 'Investigations must be independent, impartial, transparent, prompt and effective on all sides and the EU and its Member States should take into consideration their outcomes and the implementation of the Goldstone recommendations in their relations with all parties referred to in the Report', said Richard Howitt, S&D Spokesperson on Human Rights.

International Women's Day - Speaking on the International Women's Day in the beginning of the plenary session, S&D leader Martin Schulz said: 'As long as men and women get different pay for the same work, we can not speak of a society based on equality of rights. Gender pay gap must stop - this is a central question of social justice'. Zita Gurmai, PES Women's president and S&D MEP declared that 'we now expect the Commission to come up with a concrete action plan (and budget) to define, with the EP and civil society, a European Charter of Women's Rights and to prepare an EU directive for the elimination of violence against women'.

World without nuclear weapons - Parliament became the first EU institution to back US President Obama's commitment to a world without nuclear weapons. 'We also expect EU ministers to support this commitment and to propose an ambitious timetable for achieving it', said S&D leader Martin Schulz. The S&D Group officially endorsed withdrawal of nuclear weapons deployed in EU countries four years ago, with S&D delegation leaders from the countries directly concerned (Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium) giving the move their full support. [Read the text.](#)

Roma inclusion - Ahead of the second European Roma Summit (8 April 2010, in Cordoba, Spain), leading S&D MEPs tabled oral questions to the Council and the Commission. Despite EU efforts there is to date no integrated and comprehensive EU policy specifically aimed at the Roma. This would secure real change in the life of ten million Roma in Europa, who continue to face unacceptable levels of prejudice. 'We are missing concrete steps on the EU, national and regional level', said S&D MEP Kinga Göncz. 'We also need to make sure that existing legislation is actually implemented', said Claude Moraes, S&D Coordinator for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. The resolution will be voted in the March II session.

ACTA - The EP [resolution](#) adopted by 633 votes in favour, 13 against and 16 abstentions, calls on the Commission and the Council to grant public and parliamentary access to the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) negotiation texts. No parliamentary approval was sought for the negotiating mandate and there is a lack of transparency in the negotiations. 'Refusing Parliament this right, is ignoring citizens', said S&D Spokesperson on International Trade, Kader Arif, who took the initiative of this resolution.

MEPs also voted on the [Common Foreign and Security Policy](#), the [implementation of the European Security Strategy and the CSDP](#), [Cuba](#) (death of Orlando Zapata), [consumer protection](#), [accounting rules for micro-entities](#), [investing in low carbon technologies](#), [escalation of violence in Mexico](#) and the [case of Gilad Shalit](#).

APPROACHING...

- 15-18 March - S&D Group delegation to the United States (Follow-up on SWIFT);
- 24-25 March - Plenary Session in Brussels;