

PRESS CONFERENCE with MARTIN SCHULZ
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The Hungarian Presidency's programme of activities

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Wednesday, 19 - January 2011

In the forthcoming six months, we will require strong and courageous contributions to finding solutions to urgent problems, both within the European Union and for the EU on a global scale. We require solutions to the following:

- To cope with the crisis of the financial markets and to combat menacing currency speculations.
- Budget problems on national and European level require successful cooperation.
- Ensuring high levels of employment in all EU Member States is a pivotal common task, which is to guarantee the social basis for all citizens of our countries.
- The protection of our natural environment is our obligation; after all, your country was recently hit by an ecological disaster of dramatic scale.

The Media Act adopted by the Hungarian Parliament has become the centre of an international controversy and in the meantime also a burden for Hungarian Presidency. We therefore ask for the withdrawal of this Act and that more time is taken to reflect on a media law for the country that is in line with our common European basic rules and common values.

The situation in Tunisia

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Monday, 17 - January 2011

The S&D Group in the European Parliament has strongly condemned the firing of live rounds at demonstrators in Tunisia and urged the country's president, Ben Ali, to order the police and the army there to uphold the fundamental freedoms of all citizens and stop shooting at civilians. Confronting demonstrators with live rounds, as happened in Tala et Kasserine, is a disproportionate and incomprehensible reaction which breaches international law and violates human rights. The only way to handle the explosive situation is by political means. We call for the immediate release by the Tunisian authorities of all those arrested during the protests in recent days.

EC-Serbia agreement

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S&D Group supports Serbia's bid for EU membership. Further progress will depend on Serbia's full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The Socialists and Democrats support Serbia's European aspirations. The country has taken important steps in the last years and daily proves its true commitment to join the EU. However, the path to EU membership requires the fulfilment by Serbia of the Copenhagen Criteria and Serbia's full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The arrest and extradition of the two remaining fugitives to the ICTY remains essential. Our group believes that the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina must take place as soon as possible to the benefit of all inhabitants of Kosovo and regional cooperation.

European initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias

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Tuesday, 18 - January 2011

This own initiative report is EP's reply to the Commission Communication on a European Initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementia's. Its key objectives are the promotion of early diagnosis and quality of life; improvement of epidemiological knowledge of the disease and coordination of existing research; support of solidarity between Member States through sharing of best practices and finally respect of rights of people living with dementias. A European Strategy on dementia should put more emphasis on the social dimension of people living with dementia and their carers while further supporting research into prevention and early diagnosis.



Martin Schulz



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EU-Libya Framework Agreement

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Wednesday, 19 - January 2011



Ana Gomes

The EU-Libya Framework Agreement can be a positive step to promote mutual understanding but the European Parliament cannot accept an agreement that is not in compliance with European fundamental values. For the S&D Group, the treatment of migrants and refugees by the Libyan authorities is a priority concern. Libya must accept a legal presence of UNHCR in the country and a readmission agreement could only be envisaged for irregular immigrants, excluding those who declare themselves asylum-seekers, refugees or persons in need of protection, thus reiterating the principle of 'non-refoulement'.

Patients' rights in cross-border healthcare

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Tuesday, 18 - January 2011



Dagmar Roth Behrendt

The proposal on cross-border healthcare aims to ensure that there are no obstacles for a patient to seek healthcare in another Member State than his home country. It seeks to implement what the European Court of Justice has already laid down in many rulings. Moreover, it tries to provide sufficient clarity about patient's rights to be reimbursed while ensuring high-quality, safe and efficient cross-border healthcare. For the S&D Group health should never be treated as any other service of the market, thus the freedom to provide health services cannot threaten national health systems. This directive will clarify the reimbursement of costs for treatments that patients have received in another Member State and will ensure the good functioning and the financial balance of national health systems.

Haiti's reconstruction one year after the earthquake

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Tuesday, 18 - January 2011



Thijs Berman

The EU needs to redefine its priorities for humanitarian aid and response. Reconstruction, sustainable agriculture, food security as well as health and education should be implemented in the UE's strategy. The S&D Group stressed the importance of the full implementation and respect of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. The S&D Group insists that all commitments made during the International Donors conference in New York on the 31 March, should be kept and the engagements to Haiti's short and long-term recovery should be pursued and implemented. The Action Plan presented by the Haitian government should become operational following the principles of coordination and coherence.

Interim Partnership Agreement between the EC and the Pacific States

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Monday, 17 - January 2011



David Martin

The Rapporteur considers that the European Parliament should give its consent on the Interim Partnership Agreement on condition that the Commission and Council ensure:

- provision of the share of funds for trade resources. That the funds are additional resources and not repackaging of EDF funding. The funds conform to the priorities of Papua New Guinea and the Republic of the Fiji Islands and are in line with national and regional strategic development plans;
- that a Parliamentary Committee be set up to monitor the implementation of the Agreement;
- inclusion of a revision clause and a global impact assessment within three to five years after signature to determine the socio-economic impact as well as the costs and consequences of the agreement.

Consequences in the EU of the dioxin animal feed incident

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Luis Capoulas Santos

The Group asks the European Commission to urge Germany and all countries involved to impose penalties and ensure that anyone involved in the dioxin scandal bear full responsibility for the vast damage caused to the farming sector, retailers and consumers. The fact that some animal feed producers were aware of the contamination with dioxin since March 2010 without reporting it to public authorities is totally unacceptable to farmers, consumers and, especially, the Commission who is responsible for the Rapid Alert System for Food & Feed (RASFF).

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