



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda
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Hannes Swoboda

Message from Hannes Swoboda

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Tuesday, 22 - May 2012

The harsh austerity policy pursued by Merkel and her partners are driving us into a catastrophe. This policy is economically wrong, socially unfair and politically dangerous. It is high time for Merkel to cope with reality and accept the need for action on growth and investment. We must follow an alternative policy without giving up on the goal of budgetary discipline. It is crucial to help Greece by supporting its economy through investment and here the EU can help - in Greece as elsewhere in the EU - with money from underused structural funds and the EIB. Greece must stay in the eurozone and for this the country needs a strong and responsible government, as well as help and solidarity from the EU. The European Union must help with additional policies for growth and employment. Greece must of course continue its efforts on tackling corruption and tax evasion as well as radical reform on tax collection. Greece needs also an agency for investment promotion.



Anni Podimata

Common system for taxing financial transactions

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Wednesday, 23 - May 2012

The financial transactions tax is an integral part of the Socialists and Democrats' strategy to exit the crisis. It will not only help curb speculation and bring the financial sector back to its primary function - financing the real economy - but it will also provide crucial new resources at a time when strict fiscal consolidation is strangling growth. It is only fair that the financial sector - whose bail-out will cost €4,5 trillion - pays its fair share for the crisis and helps to ease the burden on European citizens. Through the vote in the plenary next week we will be sending a strong message to the European Council and the most reluctant EU leaders.



Libor Roucek

Situation in Ukraine, case of Yulia Tymoshenko

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The S&D Group in the European Parliament has for many years supported the European integration process for Ukraine, one of the European Union's biggest and most important neighbours. It has therefore welcomed the conclusion of an association agreement (including a deep and comprehensive trade agreement) between the European Union and Ukraine as an important step in this process. However concern over the trial of the former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and the conditions of her imprisonment, have led to strong critical reactions from many European politicians and even to appeals to boycott the European Football Championships. The S&D Group is also of the opinion that Ukraine must fully adhere to the basic European values of respect for human rights and the rule of law. Therefore Ukraine must continue to undertake and implement the necessary reforms, in particular of its judiciary system. It must also assure that this year's parliamentary elections will be conducted in a free and fair way, and it must find a dignified solution, based on Ukrainian and European legislation, to avoid selective justice against former senior government figures. The European Union must conduct an active dialogue with the Ukrainian authorities and be willing to give them practical support to achieve progress in these areas. When Ukraine has committed itself to clear actions in this field, the signing and implementation of the association agreement can become an important instrument to contribute to the country's European future.



Véronique De Keyser

Statement on Sudan and South Sudan

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The S&D draft resolution supports the UN Security Council resolution of 2 May endorsing the roadmap for Sudan and South Sudan to end their hostilities and resolve their outstanding post-secession issues, including economic arrangements such as the use of oil. Sudan and South Sudan must immediately resume negotiations to address the security concerns of both sides. The S&D Group welcomes South Sudan's announcement that it is immediately withdrawing its forces from the disputed Abyei Area and calls on Sudan to do the same. The S&D Group believes that the EU must assume a more active and visible role in promoting and supporting the resolution of the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan. The EU has to work closely with its international partners, in particular the African Union and the United Nations, but also with players such as China, to ensure that the parties agree to resolve their differences and implement the mutually agreed solution.



Zita Gurmai

Amendment of the European Parliament Regulation implementing the European Citizens' Initiative

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As the Regulation on the European Citizens' Initiative is applicable from 1 April this year, it is the Parliament's responsibility to adapt our Rules of Procedure. It must ensure smooth organisation for the public hearings the creators of successful Initiatives are entitled to. One of the S&D Group's priorities is a strengthened dialogue with European citizens and this new tool aims to achieve this goal: to involve them in democratic political decision-making. We have to contribute to making the European Citizens' Initiative a strong, credible, agenda-setting instrument and a major tool for participatory democracy in the EU."



Kriton Arsenis

Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean

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"Atlantic bluefin tuna is on the brink of extinction, with a dramatic population decline of 80% within the last 40 years. Both the EU's position and the final outcome of the last ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) meeting failed to meet everyone's expectations. Setting a catch limit with only a 60% probability of achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield violates existing EU legislation such as the Marine Strategy Directive, as well as international legal obligations the EU has signed up to, and it fails to ensure the conservation of bluefin tuna. This could be the final blow for this important top predator of our marine ecosystems. It is a shame that the Council has not respected the Treaty of Lisbon on this issue. The European Parliament has agreed to a delicate compromise in order to achieve a first reading agreement, before the beginning of the bluefin tuna fishing season and in time for the next ICCAT meeting in November. This should in no way set a precedent for the effective delivery of future international conservation and management measures."



Emine Bozkurt

A 2020 perspective for women in Turkey

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Monday, 21 - May 2012

'A 2020 Perspective for Women in Turkey' is the third report written by Emine Bozkurt on the situation of women in Turkey. Her reports have been very influential in the progress on women's rights in Turkey. The report proposes a set of concrete action points towards achieving equality between men and women such as legislative changes, awareness-raising campaigns, and introducing role models for young girls and boys. Bozkurt calls for men and women in Turkey to unite to work for the future of their country and to achieve emancipation. She refers to this co-operation as the 'alliance of genders' which is much needed. Turkey cannot afford to have the majority of its population not participating fully in social, economic and political life.



Maria Irigoyen Pérez

Strengthening the rights of vulnerable consumers

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Monday, 21 - May 2012

It is important to make progress on protecting the most vulnerable consumers' rights to allow them to participate fully in the single market, ensure their wellbeing, contribute to their social inclusion and protect them from unfair business practices, misleading advertising and unfair contract terms. As all consumers may potentially become vulnerable consumers at some point in their lives, all member states should include specific measures in their legislation, especially in those sectors where the level of vulnerability has been shown to be greatest (telecommunications, access to justice, energy, transport, food, financial services, etc).



Judith Merkies

A resource-efficient Europe

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The resource-efficient Europe roadmap is a call for resource intelligence and fresh thinking. The use of resources needs to be maximised, so landfill and incineration should be replaced by a circular economy based on recycling and re-use. For the most efficient resource use, the hierarchy model should be applied, ensuring the highest added value of resource use without compromising the environment and encouraging partnerships between actors throughout the value chain.

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