



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda
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Hannes Swoboda

For the European Council meeting (28-29 June)

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Wednesday, 13 - June 2012

The EU should work on allowing banks direct access to aid from the European financial stability fund (EFSF) to be replaced by the European Stability mechanism (ESM). On a longer term and as rightly underlined by the European Central Bank President Mario Draghi last week, the EU needs to move forward towards a "banking union". This means that we need to strengthen supervision of the banks at EU level and the powers and means of action of the European Bank Authority. EU governments should also unblock a legislation to ensure that banking deposits of our citizens and businesses are properly covered in case of bank failure. We called on strong rules for capital requirements for banks which are currently under discussion. This is the least the EU should do to avoid banks being bailed out by tax payer's money.



Pervenche Berès

Employment package towards a jobs rich recovery

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Following 'The Employment Package' presented by Commissioner Andor in April, the resolution reaffirms the importance of reaching the social and employment targets set out in the EU 2020 strategy. Notably, it sends a clear message on how minimum wages fight in-work poverty, reduce inequalities and boost aggregate demand. It also calls for the implementation of a European Youth Guarantee which would give young people the opportunity to start work or training after a maximum period of four months of inactivity. More broadly, it reiterates the urgent need for strong response to the high and rising level of unemployment and brings a new dimension to the debate within the Commission on the policy mix around the issue of the demand side.



Elisa Ferreira

Economic and budgetary surveillance of member states with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability in the euro area

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The Gauzès report was voted in the economics committee on 14 May with 26 votes in favour, 14 abstentions and 3 votes against. The S&D Group abstained as the report did not go far enough concerning public investment (or a golden rule to be in for estimating that the two cluded in the Ferreira report). The Commission proposal significantly increases the budgetary surveillance for two types of eurozone member states: countries that the Commission decides to place under enhanced surveillance and countries receiving financial assistance, which are automatically placed under enhanced surveillance. The enhanced surveillance consists mainly of reporting on the financial situation of its financial institutions, stress tests, and monitoring macro-economic imbalances. Enhanced surveillance can lead to the Commission recommending a member state seeks financial assistance and drawing up a macro-economic adjustment programme for it.



Bernd Lange

EU- Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement

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The planned Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru has raised strong criticism from trade unions and civil society due to the ongoing violence against trade unionists, indigenous population and human rights activists. At the same time the high rate of impunity remains a serious problem, especially in Colombia. The resolution requests Colombia and Peru in view of the planned trade agreement to work out a binding and transparent road map with concrete measures for the improvement of the human rights situation and the implementation of labour and social standards. The Commission will be requested to assist Colombia and Peru with the establishment and implementation of these road maps and to regularly report to the European Parliament. The trade agreement will have to be complemented by mechanisms for the strengthening of civil society, for the improvement of the human rights situation and for the implementation of social, labour and sustainability standards in form of a binding road map. Such a road map will be the condition for the S&D group to also give its consent to the trade agreement itself.



Gianluca Susta

EU trade negotiations with Japan

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Monday, 11 - June 2012

Japan is an important trade partner for the European Union. The Commission has finalised the scoping exercise and it will soon seek the mandate from the Council to launch the free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. Nonetheless, there are still concerns over its consequences: the FTA needs to be ambitious but at the same balanced and above all it should promote growth and jobs in Europe. In the resolution to be voted next week, the Parliament therefore asks the Council not to authorise the opening of trade negotiations until the Parliament has stated its position and expressed its views with a resolution from the international trade committee.



Edit Herczog

European external energy policy

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Monday, 11 - June 2012

With greater interconnection in the EU internal market, we will see changes to resource dependency and regional dependencies across the EU and some of the main bottlenecks will already be eliminated. We have seen the impact of the internal market for goods and services, and it will be similar in the case of the energy internal market once the pipelines and electricity cables are connected. Therefore, we have to optimise our bargaining power at European level. As we look ahead and face the serious trends in energy (new large markets emerging, democracies developing, climate and demography changes) our approach must be changed. We must secure access to energy for our citizens and for our enterprises in the longer term, while making sure that we respect the environment.



Libor Roucek

A new strategy for Afghanistan

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As NATO prepares to wind down its military operations in Afghanistan, the EU urgently needs a new strategy for its non-military engagement and assistance. Our Group advocates a number of specific recommendations, including better co-ordination and transparency for aid, changes to the EUROPOL mandate and a five-year plan to eradicate opium, in co-operation with Russia and others. These proposals were also set out in a comprehensive report on a new EU strategy for Afghanistan, adopted by the Parliament in 2010. So far however, the Council, the Commission and the External Action Service have done little to take the Parliament's ideas on board. Our Group will continue to raise the issue, not least because Afghanistan receives approximately €1 billion in annual assistance from the EU and its member states.



Ricardo Cortes Lastra

Defining a new development cooperation with Latin America

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Monday, 11 - June 2012

In the aftermath of the current economic crisis, the Commission proposal for a new development cooperation instrument does not provide the appropriate answers to the development challenges faced by many Latin American countries in which the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. We are concerned by the fact that 180 million people whose income is below the poverty threshold live in Latin America and so now is not the time to abandon them. Socialists believe in the need to grant added value to our aid, not only by means of a quantitative increase in aid, but mainly by means of a qualitative improvement, with a firm pledge to redistribution policies, to fight poverty and inequality as well as to the strengthening of social cohesion. For the socialist family, Latin America cannot cease to be a priority for the EU in the new development cooperation architecture. We should be jointly responsible for new cooperation strategies and for a common response to the global challenges such as the achievement of the MDG's or the fight against climate change.



Evelyne Gebhardt

Single Market Act: The Next Steps to Growth

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Wednesday, 13 - June 2012

The main political challenge of this resolution in plenary relates to the issue of the 'growth initiative' on which the S&D Group has tabled a strong amendment calling for a 'growth regulation' based on a EU common investment strategy. This would balance the tight fiscal rules which alone will never create growth, employment and social inclusion. Other key amendments relate to the empowerment of consumers, such as those asking for an EU collective redress system. The S&D is convinced that a single market based on balanced development of the economic, social and environmental dimensions would represent a formidable drive for a successful, sustainable and inclusive growth strategy for the EU.

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