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S&D GROUP IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT KILL ACTA

The highly controversial Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, widely known as ACTA, will not come into force in the European Union after an overwhelming majority in the Parliament, rejected the ratification of the international agreement. S&D Euro MP David Martin, author of the parliamentary report, said to the media in Strasbourg:

"ACTA is now dead in the EU thanks to the European Parliament. I am very pleased that the Parliament has followed my recommendation and rejected ACTA". S&D president, Hannes Swoboda, pointed out that:

"For the first time the Parliament has used the powers granted by the Lisbon Treaty to reject an international trade agreement. The Commission and the Council will now be aware that they cannot override the Parliament, which represents and defends citizens.

"We regret that the EPP has consistently disregarded people's concerns and Parliament's advice on ACTA's threat to fundamental rights. They tried to bring secrecy and delay to this vote until the very last minute. Fortunately we put together a big majority to defeat their call for a postponement of the vote".

"But now it is time to look forward and tell the Commission that we are willing to work hand in hand on fighting counterfeiting and protecting copyright, but with full respect for fundamental freedoms. This time we will insist that the Commission listens to public opinion and we shall involve a wide range of citizens and stakeholders from the start.

[Click here to view the Parliamentary debate on ACTA](#)

RELAUNCHING EUROPE - AN ALTERNATIVE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Following the last European Council summit, European Socialists and Democrats gathered in Florence on June 29 to launch a new initiative on the future of the European Union. The initiative, called '**Relaunching Europe – an alternative vision for the future**', will run over the next two years and events will take place in countries across Europe.

The economic crisis Europe is facing today has highlighted the EU's institutional and political weaknesses. The European project is not only in danger; it is at risk of collapsing. The S&D Group is therefore creating an opportunity for in-depth reflection and analysis of the founding values of the European Union. This aims to broaden decision-makers' perspectives and encourage a move away from daily crisis management towards a longer-term view and a reflection on what Europe and Europeans need.

Italian MEP from the region Leonardo Domenici welcomed the S&Ds to Florence for the first debate, which focused on the fundamental construction of the European project and debated three key topics: institutions, democracy and citizenship. Commenting on the future of the initiative, MEP and author of a manifesto calling for a new vision, Harlem Désir, told the media in Florence:

"Europe needs immediate decisions and practical measures to tackle the crisis in Europe and to manage the pressure from the markets. For those measures to take effect in the long term, we need an entirely new project on social progress and democratic integration to engage citizens with Europe." The next debate on 'Relaunching Europe' will take place in Brussels this autumn.

[Read more on our alternative vision for the future](#)

IN SHORT

Reacting to the European Council - The latest European Council conclusions go mostly in the right direction in tackling the Eurozone crisis but the situation is so urgent that the Commission must table legislation by September, says the EP in a resolution passed in Strasbourg setting out its formal response to last week's summit.

The resolution, adopted by a large majority (501 votes to 132, with 38 abstentions), welcomes the steps taken to break the vicious circle between banks and sovereign debt and the commitment that fiscal consolidation must be made growth-friendly. It hails the summit conclusions as "an important step on the road to a fully fledged banking union"

[Click here to view the adopted resolution on the European Council](#)

Pilot Testing Project Bonds An important EU commitment of €230 million in guarantees to back the private issuance of "project bonds" for transport, energy and information technology infrastructure projects was approved by the House. The decision allows pilot testing of this innovative plan to attract private investment in transport, energy and information technology network projects.

[Click here to view the speech of Göran Färm \(S&D rapporteur\) on Financial aid in the field of the trans-European transport and energy networks](#)

S&D Group Push for Bank Services Available to All - All citizens, regardless of their social situation, their resources or their place of residence should be able to have a bank account and carry out their banking transactions at a reasonable cost. As the European Union has not made sufficient progress in this area, the Parliament called for the Commission to act, in a resolution adopted with a large majority and with the support of all S&D MEPs. It is estimated that 7% of the adult population, about 30 million people in Europe, do not have a bank account. Large discrepancies exist from one country to another.

"Having a bank account these days is just as indispensable as having a telephone", stressed Olle Ludvigsson, negotiator for the S&D Group. "You need a bank account in order to receive a salary or social allowances or to pay rent and bills. It facilitates access to jobs, health care or accommodation for people living in disadvantaged circumstances", explained the Euro MP.

[Click here to view the adopted resolution on Access to Basic Banking Services](#)

Schengen Violation - "The EU cannot rely on European governments to assess their own application of the Schengen rules on free movement" argue European Socialists and Democrats after Commissioner Cecilia Malmström reported in Strasbourg on infringements in ten EU countries (Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Sweden). S&D vice-president Sylvie Guillaume MEP said:

"EU governments cannot be players and referee at the same time. If the peer-to-peer evaluation system the Council wants were already in force, these ten countries could vote together to block any sanctions against their infringements. The proven violations by these ten EU countries strengthen further the argument for a European Schengen evaluation mechanism. This should form the basis of a common EU response, in which the European Parliament must play its role. The European Commission, as guardian of the treaties, must not hesitate to launch infringement procedures to ensure the correct implementation of Community law, in particular where the right of free movement for our citizens is concerned."

[Click here to view the debate on Breaches on Schengen Rules](#)

Stop to West Bank and East Jerusalem Settlements - Ending the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians would further not only their own vital interests, but those of the wider region and the EU too, said European lawmakers in Strasbourg. In a resolution calling on both parties to resume talks on a two-state solution without delay, they also call on the Israeli Government to stop all construction and extension of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which the EU views as illegal.

[Click here to view the resolution on EU policy on the West Bank and East Jerusalem](#)

Enforcing Animal Welfare Rules - Animal welfare rules must be better enforced, existing loopholes closed and offenders punished, not least because they also protect human health, by preventing the spread of animal-related diseases and antimicrobial resistance, says Parliament in a non-binding resolution passed by a show of hands in Strasbourg.

[Click here to view the resolution on Protection and Welfare of Animals](#)

Conservatives Block Action on Forced Labour in Georgia - The European Parliament gathered in Strasbourg has voted on the trade aspects of the Eastern Partnership. S&D Euro MP George Cutas tabled an oral amendment which "encouraged Georgia to perfect its legislation, including the implementation of international labour rights conventions, in particular concerning the elimination of forced child labour." However, members of the conservative EPP Group in the European Parliament used a procedural manoeuvre to prevent a vote on the amendment, despite the support of all other political groups.

[Click here to view the speech of S&D Vice President Libor Roucek on behalf of the Group](#)

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