



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

**PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda**  
**Tuesday 12 March at 10.10 LOW N-1/201**

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**Hannes Swoboda**

### Preparations for the European Council meeting (14-15 March 2013)

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**Wednesday 13 March 2013**

We need to send a clear message to the next Council meeting calling for a flexible response to national deficits, to allow countries the time to develop policies for growth and employment. After many negative messages, the Council must finally send a positive one, giving some hope for the future to the many unemployed people hit by the crisis. We need to see alternative policies in place, focusing on growth and social inclusion.

### Impact of the economic crisis on gender equality and women's rights / Shadow Rapporteur

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**Monday 11 March 2013**

The current crisis has harshly affected women and only deepened the gender divide. The situation of women has also been aggravated by austerity measures through budget cuts in public services and welfare. This report calls on the Council, the Commission and member states to better integrate a gender perspective into all policies. This is especially urgent in relation to economic and social legislation in the context of the immediate and long-term impact of the crisis and the austerity measures. On the occasion of International Women's Day, the S&D Group made clear commitments to gender equality and called for broad support for this report in the European Parliament.



**Zita Gurmai**

### Asbestos-related occupational health threats and prospects for abolishing all existing asbestos / Rapporteur

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**Wednesday 13 March 2013**

This is an own-initiative report, instigated by the S&D Group, which focuses on an issue which has been a priority for us for many years. It was adopted at committee level by an overwhelming majority. The process has been very positive and compromises were reached on all major issues, including:

- A call for the removal of asbestos from all public buildings and buildings requiring regular public access by 2028.
- An EU model for asbestos screening and registration, and a road map for removal.
- Recognition of the dangers of white asbestos (also known as chrysotile).
- Proposals for qualifications and training in working with asbestos, and calls for a specific directive on this issue.
- Calls for the recognition of asbestos-related diseases.
- A demand that the EU works towards a global ban on asbestos.



**Stephen Hughes**

### Common Agricultural Policy reform (CAP) / Rapporteur

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**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

The clear objectives for Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform are:

Viable food production, sustainable management of natural resources and climate actions, balanced territorial development to keep the structure of the CAP revolving around 2 pillars (direct payment regulation and rural development regulation).

The CAP reform package includes also the Single CMO (Common Market Organisation) Regulation and the Financing, Management and Monitoring - Horizontal Regulation.



**Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos**

### Alternative dispute resolution for consumers / Rapporteur

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**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

In November 2011, the Commission put forward a legislative package on out-of-court consumer dispute resolution, based on a directive on ADR (alternative dispute resolution). This package deals with contractual disputes between consumers and traders, and is accompanied by a regulation on ODR (online dispute resolution), which sets up an electronic platform for ADR schemes, intended specifically for cross-border disputes. The aim of the proposal is to guarantee that any consumer can resolve a dispute with a trader in relation to goods or services purchased at home or abroad within the EU, without having to go through lengthy and expensive court procedures. Examples of this kind of issue are when a seller refuses to repair a laptop which broke while under guarantee, or if a consumer cannot come to agreement with a travel agent over a refund for a ruined holiday. The fact that it will be mandatory to set up high-quality ADR mechanisms in all the EU countries represents a practical way of enforcing consumer rights and guaranteeing affordable, rapid solutions and providing redress for commercial disputes involving consumers. Well-functioning ADR systems will create increased consumer confidence and therefore more economic growth within the single market.



**Louis Grech**



**Kathleen Van Brempt**

**Energy roadmap 2050 / Shadow Rapporteur**

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**Monday 11 March 2013**

The initiative report 'Energy roadmap 2050' is the European Parliament's reaction to the Commission's communication on the topic in December 2011. The report looks at the different elements of the future energy landscape and the possible paths towards it. The goals of the EU's energy policy up to 2050 are sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness. The right decisions need to be taken now, as energy infrastructures and installations typically take many years to complete and have a very long lifetime. To guide investments in the right direction to reach our 2050 goals, it is crucial to set the right targets for the short, middle and long term. Therefore, we need to emphasise the importance of setting a policy framework towards 2030 based on 'no regrets' options, including ambitious targets for energy efficiency, renewable energy and greenhouse-gas emissions.



**Véronique De Keyser**

**Egypt: Statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

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**Wednesday 13 March 2013**

As Egypt is a key EU partner in the Southern Mediterranean, we cannot ignore the alarming political and social tensions. The EU should make further efforts to support the Egyptian people in this challenging period of transition but should also put into practice the 'more for more' principle – a cornerstone of the European Neighbourhood Policy which offers greater benefits to countries who commit to greater democratic reforms – in its relations with the Egyptian government.



**Patrice Tirolien**

**Financing of EU co-operation for African, Caribbean and Pacific states and overseas countries and territories for the 2014-2020 period / Rapporteur**

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**Monday 11 March 2013**

Progress on the Millennium Development Goals is uneven and millions of people still live in extreme poverty in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The European Development Fund (EDF) should be directed primarily to the poorest and most marginalised (women, children, minorities), which is why we ask that at least 20% of the next EDF (the 11th) is used to meet basic social needs (education, health, nutrition and access to water and sanitation). The EDF is a comprehensive instrument (part development, part humanitarian) and thus helps strengthen the links between security, development and humanitarian efforts. This is the only way, for example, to fight effectively against the serious threats posed by the proliferation of terrorism, piracy and smuggling of all kinds in the Sahel region. The Council agreement on February 8, which provides €27 billion for the 11th EDF, is not enough to meet these challenges. The current budget constraints should encourage the EU to adopt new funding sources, such as the financial transaction tax.



**Sylvie Guillaume**

**Strengthening the fight against racism and xenophobia: Council and Commission statements**

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**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

The S&D Group will strongly back a resolution to urge member states to transpose measures agreed at EU level on fighting extremism and racism into national law. Many crimes still remain unreported because of lack of trust in the reaction of institutions, particularly in the context of an economic crisis where scapegoats are easily blamed. Hate crimes and political parties encouraging racism must be properly investigated, offenders prosecuted and punished, and victims better protected.



**Roberto Gualtieri**

**Composition of the European Parliament with a view to the 2014 elections / Rapporteur**

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**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

The Lisbon Treaty requires the European Parliament to send a proposal to the Council on the distribution of seats for the next European elections, in order to include the newly-elected Croatian MEPs and to reach a final total of 751 MEPs. The Gualtieri-Trzaskowski proposal aims to respect the principle of degressive proportionality (as established by article 14.2 TEU) as far as possible, applying it in a pragmatic way to minimise the seats lost for small and medium member states and avoid gains for the larger states. Therefore the proposed redistribution of seats follows the principle 'no member state loses more than one seat', so 12 countries will lose just one seat and no country gains seats. The Parliament's resolution also calls for the establishment of a durable system for allocating seats, alongside a revision of the Council voting system. These issues should be dealt with at a convention by the end of 2015.

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