



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

PRESS CONFERENCE with Hannes Swoboda
Tuesday 14 January at 10.10 LOW N-1/201

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Hannes Swoboda

Programme of activities of the Greek Presidency

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Wednesday 15 January 2014

The Greek Presidency is an opportunity to highlight important issues and it is vitally important that the Greek government makes full use of the first months of its Presidency to deal with the real European priorities: growth, employment and social justice. It is also a moment for Greece to show that it is not disengaging from Europe or from the European solution-finding process. The Greek presidency must highlight the reality of the failure of the Troikas – as opposed to the mirage of austerity that some leaders still want to believe in. If the Troikas were abolished during the Greek presidency, this would be a great victory – for Greece and for Europe. The European Socialists and Democrats will support this Presidency in its work.



Marc Tarabella

Procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors / Rapporteur

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Tuesday 14 January 2014

Public procurement plays an important role in the overall economic performance of the European Union. In Europe, public authorities spend around 18-19 % of GDP on supplies, works and services to meet the needs of citizens and public administration; this represents a constant flow of public investment which has become even more important in times of economic crisis. Given the volume of purchases, public procurement can be used as a powerful lever for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. After the vote in the internal market and consumer protection committee, six months of intense negotiations took place between the Parliament and the Council. An agreement was achieved in July 2013 and the committee's negotiating team successfully defended most of its achievements. The deal was finally endorsed by the committee with an overwhelming majority on 5 September 2013.



Jutta Steinruck

Effective labour inspections as a strategy to improve working conditions in Europe / Rapporteur

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Monday 14 January 2014

Undeclared work in the EU amounts to 18.8% of Europe's total GDP – in some countries more than 30% of GDP – which leads to massive tax and social security losses for national budgets. This not only marginalises workers, but hinders fair competition in the single market. We ask for effective new tools at an EU level to strengthen labour inspections. These could include the introduction of electronic social security cards to store important employment records and adequate human resources to deal with 'letterbox' companies and complex subcontracting chains. Most importantly a social clause should finally be introduced in EU competition law to punish the most serious cases of labour-law abuse.



Maria Eleni Koppa

2013 progress report on Serbia / Shadow Rapporteur

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Wednesday 15 January 2014

The European Socialists and Democrats welcomed the adoption of the progress report on Serbia, as well as the Council's decision to open negotiations with Serbia on joining the EU. Under the timetable set by the Council, negotiations will be launched no later than January 2014, subject to the Serbian government honouring the agreement on normalising relations with Kosovo. With this decision we are sending the right signal that the EU is not abandoning its enlargement policy, despite the economic crisis and growing Euroscepticism. Above all, the decision is a fair recognition of the impressive progress Serbia has made in its reforms. We congratulate the people of Serbia on their efforts and this success. We are confident that this level of political commitment will strengthen their reforms, make a success of the Belgrade-Pristina agreements and bring Serbia into the European family.



Jörg Leichtfried

Future of EU-ASEAN relations / Shadow Rapporteur

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The S&D Group advocates the strengthening of relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and supports efforts towards closer political and economic integration among its member states. A European Union that wants to play a global role cannot and should not neglect this part of the world. The EU and the ASEAN share the political objectives of promoting well-being, co-operation and peace in their respective regions and they can greatly benefit from even closer co-operation.



**Libor
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European integration process of Kosovo

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Wednesday 15 January 2014

As the Parliament prepares to vote on its annual progress reports on Serbia and Kosovo, the S&D Group is pleased to see the normalisation process moving forward and delivering tangible results. In November, Kosovo successfully conducted its first ever nationwide local elections, an important milestone in the implementation of the EU-facilitated 'April agreement'. In the meantime, both countries have made great strides toward Europe: Serbia is commencing EU accessions in January; Kosovo launched negotiations on a stabilisation and association agreement in late October. The two progress reports reflect this positive momentum, but call on Belgrade and Pristina to sustain it by continuing to work towards normalisation of relations and implementing much-needed domestic reforms, especially as regards the rule of law.



**Marita
Ulvskog**

CO2 emissions from new light commercial vehicles / Shadow Rapporteur

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Monday 13 January 2014

To meet long-term objectives on sustainability – including reducing greenhouse gases, improving air quality and reducing oil dependence, the EU must step up its efforts. This will also help improve the competitiveness of Europe's automotive industry and bring health benefits, especially improved air quality in cities. We need cleaner vans to improve quality of life.

This regulation sets a target of 147g CO2/km by 2020 and looks towards a realistic and achievable target for 2025. The Commission will adopt a declaration to address the European Parliament's ambition for a target range between 105-120g CO2/km for 2025. Despite a lack of long-term targets we support the agreement reached as the timely adoption of this legislation will allow for adequate time to work towards setting a 2025 target. Long-term goals with a gradual increase in the level of ambition are an important part of a framework for climate and energy in the future.



**Silvia
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Recording equipment in road transport / Rapporteur

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The aims of the proposed regulation, replacing the current one adopted in 1985, are to make fraud more difficult, to better enforce social rules and to reduce the administrative burden by improving regulation and making full use of new technologies. The smart tachograph has two new functions: remote communication for monitoring purposes and recording of location data. The deadline for its introduction is 36 months after the regulation enters into force.

The Parliament introduced new guarantees on data protection and privacy and a mandatory deadline for EU countries to equip their control officers for remote communication. The role of control authorities has been strengthened and the Commission will define the training they receive, including guidance on a common interpretation of the social legislation. Monitoring of non-resident drivers will be improved by allowing them to use digital tachographs. The provision on transport companies' responsibilities has been amended to make the text clearer in relation to companies' obligations and liabilities.



**Gilles
Pargneaux**

Food crisis, fraud in the food chain and the control thereof / Shadow Rapporteur

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Horses treated with large doses of medicines harmful to man are transformed into beef, road salt becomes table salt, used tea leaves find many new uses... There are so many examples highlighting the scale of a phenomenon that was unknown just a few years ago: food fraud. Food fraud, which accounted for €49 billion in 2012 has increased by 60% since then. European legislation currently does not allow us to fight effectively against this scourge. This was brought to light in 2013 with the horsemeat scandal and the case of horses being used as guinea pigs in the pharmaceutical industry. Eating should not be a risky business. The report adopted today sets out our goals for fighting food crises and food fraud more effectively in Europe, requiring – among other things – mandatory labelling displaying the origin of meat in prepared dishes.

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