

10 WAYS THE ECR GROUP HAS MADE CITIZENS' LIVES BETTER



**European
Conservatives
and Reformists
Group**

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The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group in the European Parliament was formed in June 2009. It brings together 55 Members of the European Parliament from 9 countries with a non-federalist and centre-right agenda. The creation of the ECR Group – the genuine and positive reforming force in the European Parliament – is the first step towards a reform of the European Union. It is an attempt to break through the political status quo in the Parliament and respond to voters’ desire to see changes made to the European Union institutions. The ECR Group also aims to cut red tape and end waste and mismanagement in the European Union.

Our Members have worked hard for practical achievements in a range of aspects of everyday life.

1. We have saved the taxpayer €15 million and 16,000 tonnes of CO₂.

An ECR proposal to reduce the number of monthly trips between the European Parliament’s two homes in Brussels and Strasbourg by just a single trip will save the European taxpayer an astonishing €15 million. It will also save 16,000 tones of CO₂, the equivalent of 1,200 transatlantic flights. The ECR continues to fight against the “travelling circus” between Brussels and Strasbourg and hopes that in the long term it can help save taxpayers €200 million a year by locating the European Parliament in Brussels on a permanent basis.

2. We have helped make it easier for citizens to have a direct say in the affairs of the EU.

The ECR Group has made it easier for citizens’ voices to be heard. The European Citizens’ Initiative forces the European Commission to look at proposals made by a people’s petition of 1 million signatures. The previous rules for the European Citizens’ Initiative required that signatures come from at least one-third of Member States. With ECR Group efforts, this has been reduced to only one-quarter, making it easier for grassroots organisations to have their say.

3. We have stopped fruit and vegetables becoming more expensive at a time of rising food costs.

European bans on straight bananas and curly cucumbers have not only made the EU a figure of fun, but have contributed to enormous amounts of food wastage and a rise in the price of fruit and vegetables. Wonky fruit and vegetables don’t taste any different and when a group of MEPs tried to re-impose “perfect” standards on fruit and vegetables, the ECR Group prevented a return to these silly standards. The EU does not need to be regulating the shape of fruit and vegetables, not least because prices have fallen by up to 40% since the wonky fruit ban was lifted.

made citizens' lives better

4. **We have introduced the same rights for bus and coach passengers as for train and air passengers.**

Train and air passengers in the EU enjoy rights to compensation if their train or plane is delayed or cancelled, but what about bus or coach passengers? Thanks to the ECR Group, passengers travelling longer distances (over 250km) by bus and coach will be entitled to accommodation and meals if their journey is cancelled or delayed and compensation if their luggage is lost or damaged. Assistance must be offered in the event of an accident and payments will be made for personal injury or death. The rights of disabled passengers have also been reinforced.

5. **We have fought against online piracy and protected intellectual property.**

The ECR Group successfully took on the Socialists in the European Parliament who denied the existence of online piracy and its consequences for the economy. Online piracy poses a real threat to the creative industries in Europe. It costs hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of Euros each year. The ECR Group's support for the strengthening of intellectual property rights will help the European economy grow.

6. **We have proposed increased protection for pets, especially cats and dogs.**

Animal welfare is a top priority for the ECR Group. The ECR Group has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that pets such as cats and dogs are given the same protection as other animals at the European level. The ECR supports pets' rights to be free from pain, injury and disease and to ensure that owners do not mistreat their animals.

7. **We have removed unnecessary regulation for manufacturers of electrical goods.**

The ECR Group is campaigning to ensure that EU regulations do not interfere with free enterprise. Any EU regulations on hazardous substances in electrical goods must be based on science and not politically motivated. The ECR Group has successfully pushed to prevent a ban on substances in electronic equipment which posed no risk to human health, yet would have increased production costs for electronics manufacturers.

8. **We have fought against the introduction of European Contract law, reducing unnecessary regulation for businesses and consumers.**

The ECR Group has crusaded against the European Commission's proposals to create a system of European Contract Law. The benefits of such a law are not clear and the new system would be confusing for consumers and costly for business. The ECR Group has also worked against unnecessary standardisation, preventing a transfer of power from national standardisation authorities to the European Commission. This helps to cut red tape and to support the recovery of the European economy.

9. We have helped to ensure that the post-crisis development of financial regulation in the EU does not adversely affect our competitiveness.

Lessons needed to be learned from the 2007-2008 financial crisis to ensure that a new system of oversight and regulation could prevent and contain similar events in the future. Nevertheless, for too many the instinct was to over-regulate at the EU level, restraining competitiveness and innovation in the hugely important financial services industry. The ECR Group has argued that regulation in such areas as hedge funds and private equity, and in derivatives and commodities trading, must be done in such a way as to ensure that as much of this stays in the EU as possible. We have also led the opposition to calls for non-global financial transaction taxes.

10. We have prevented the over-fishing of at-risk species in the Baltic Sea.

Industrial fishing of flounder and turbot has caused the depletion of stocks in the Baltic Sea. The ECR Group has pushed for a ban on the practice of throwing unwanted flounder and turbot back into the sea after they are caught in trawlers' nets. Ending the practice of discarding surplus fish will help promote the sustainable fishing of flounder and turbot and stop the negative impact on fish stock in the Baltic.

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