Achievements of the **ECR Group**

Making the **EU** work better for **YOU**

2014 - 2019

EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES AND REFORMISTS

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1. Foreword by Raffaele Fitto MEP and Ryszard Legutko MEP

Co-Chairmen of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group

Dear readers,

The ECR Group was formed in 2009 because we were not satisfied with the direction in which the EU was travelling. The ECR Group wants to see an EU that goes back to basics, and delivers results on the core reasons why Member States joined the EU in the first place.

We became the only mainstream organisation in the European Parliament committed to making the EU focus solely on areas where the EU can add value, such as opening markets and supporting cross-border cooperation. The ECR Group believes that at the heart of every decision the EU makes, should be the consideration of whether or not the EU is adding value for hard working people paying taxes across the EU.

The ECR Group is working hard to ensure that the EU decentralises powers back to national capitals, town halls and to families and individuals.



In the European Parliament, the ECR MEPs have “rolled up their sleeves” and immersed themselves in the detail of the work of the European Parliament and are delivering common sense solutions.

Our efforts have delivered results. Many of these results do not always make good headlines in newspapers, but they improve people’s lives every day nonetheless.

The ECR Group will continue to promote a wide agenda for European reform as a means of making the EU more flexible, open and economically vibrant. On a daily basis, our MEPs work to deliver tangible benefits to the people and taxpayers of Europe.

For a new group often swimming against the federalist tide, we have a strong record of delivering in Brussels and Strasbourg for the peopleS of Europe. Here are just a few exampleS of how we have begun to take the EU in a direction where it does less, but does better.

There is still a long fight ahead of us, against EU waste, ever increasing centralisation and federalism. With your support and the continued efforts of the ECR MEPs, we believe that an EU that respects the wishes of its citizens, spends tax payer’s money responsibly, and respects the sovereignty of its national governments, is an EU that can build a stronger future which better serves its citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Raffaele Fitto and Ryszard Legutko
Co-Chairmen of the ECR Group
in the European Parliament



Making the EU work better for YOU

Ryszard Legutko, Polish (1949-)



Raffaele Fitto, Italian (1969-)

2. An EU immigration system that works

Since the formation of the ECR Group, we have pointed out the flaws in the EU's migration system and been the voice of reform and change for the Common European Asylum System. As one of the ECR Group's founding principles, this is a key priority. The EU system currently in place is not effective in dealing with the modern challenges of globalisation, regional conflicts and poverty.

First and foremost we need a migration system which respects the voice and wishes of its Member States and its citizens. For any EU migration system to be sustainable, it needs to have the full backing of all of its Member States and the people of Europe. The EU cannot continue to impose an immigration system which is backed by only a few of its Member States.

Instead, the EU should be focusing on getting the basics right, by providing more support for Member States to protect our external borders, increasing the rate of returns for failed asylum seekers to their country of origin, and continuing to work with third countries to reach cooperation agreements to prevent migrants making the life endangering journey across the Mediterranean to the EU. A system of cooperation rather than compulsion must prevail.

Protecting infrastructure during the migrant crisis:

The migrant crisis impacted all elements of EU policy making, including the transport sector. The ECR Group led discussions that called upon the European Commission to work closer with transport companies and businesses, and to offer financial assistance to increase the safety of truck drivers. Transport is the bloodstream of the European economy. Every serious disturbance of its functioning brings losses to entrepreneurs, and delays in deliveries.

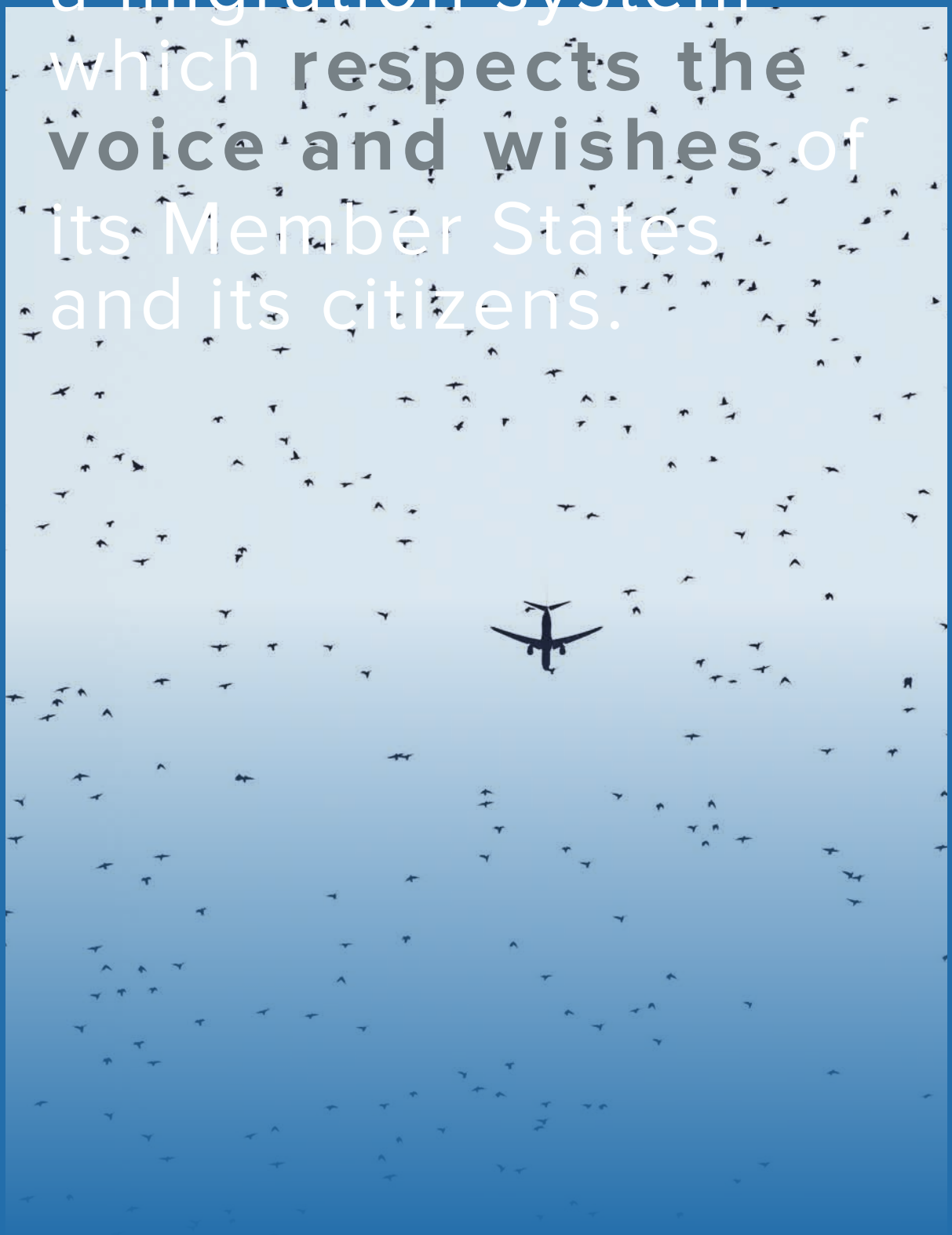
Increasing the rate of returns for failed asylum seekers:

The ECR Group understands that in order for immigration in the EU to be sustainable, and for the genuine and most vulnerable asylum seekers to be able to be helped first by the EU, it is essential that Member States are able to return failed asylum seekers to their country of origin.

The ECR led important legislation which provides Member States with a standard European travel document to speed up the return of non-EU nationals staying irregularly in EU Member States without valid passports or identity cards. A key aim of the ECR Group was to strengthen the form's security features and technical safeguards, so as to promote its acceptance by third countries.

Before the introduction of this document, third countries were reluctant to accept the return documents provided by Member States, for reasons that include inadequate security details and varying formats. However, this document addresses many of these flaws in the system. Whilst this is not a magic solution, it is an important step towards combatting abuse of the EU's asylum system, and increases the EU's ability to reduce the number of failed asylum seekers still residing in the EU. Since this document has been introduced by Member States, the number of returns has increased.

We need
a migration system
which **respects the**
voice and wishes of
its Member States
and its citizens.



3. Value for your money

The ECR Group has continued to be the leading voice for putting an end to the European Parliament's monthly shuttle between Brussels and Strasbourg which sees 750 MEPs, 3000 staff, and a number of lobbyists and other officials relocate to another parliament in the French city of Strasbourg for four days. Estimates of the relocation costs are between 102 million and 180 million Euros per year. The move causes the unnecessary release of 20,000 tons of CO_2.

As the arrangement is enshrined in the EU's treaties, it requires unanimous agreement of the EU's leaders to change this arrangement. However, the ECR Group has built unprecedented levels of support across all political groups and nationalities to change this arrangement, and we will continue to highlight the extreme budgetary and environmental costs involved, in the hope that one day this will change!

An economic area that respects all Member States:

The Euro crisis was the defining issue of the last European election. Now the European Union is looking to build a future for the Eurozone which prevents the crisis from happening again. The ECR Group believes that the decisions we make now will have serious long term consequences for all Member States, whether in the Euro zone or not. The ECR Group believes we must carefully consider the consequences of hastily implemented Euro policies.

More Europe, more bureaucracy, and another EU institution is not the solution to the crisis. Taking the wrong political direction could cause long lasting budget constraints, systematic risks to the monetary system, and ultimately, unemployment in Member States. The ECR Group believes we should be focusing on managing the Eurozone better rather than deepening political links to the EU.

The ECR Group believes that enforcing the European Stability Mechanism to share liability, is not the best way to recover competitiveness in Eurozone countries. Fiscal disciplines, an independent European Central Bank without a political agenda, and respecting the decision of Member States not to adopt the Euro, are the key ingredients of preventing future economic shocks.

The fight for economic risk reduction:

Central Counterparties (CCP), a little known but vital part of our financial markets, will be governed by stricter rules thanks to the ECR Group. The ECR Group worked hard to ensure that end investors (pension funds and SMEs) are protected. The key purpose of these new rules was to ensure that every possible measure is in place to prevent tax payers from having to pay for CCPs - either through central bank money or direct public intervention. This was achieved by incentivising good governance, and making sure that those with a say in the risk management of CCPs ultimately bear the brunt of the burden should these fail.

The ECR Group also successfully stalled the plan to agree a risk sharing plan that would see some European countries offer-ing to pay for others. The bank deposits of some countries would be guaranteed by the bank deposits in others. The ECR Group believes that it is only fair for all European countries to demonstrate eco-nomic and fiscal responsibility. National economic prudence should be encouraged, not penalised.

Learning from our mistakes:

If the Euro and its institutions are to create a stable currency and enable growth within the EU, then the European Central bank needs to be held to account. This includes ensuring that any assessments and annual reports provide an honest picture of what the current situation is. Without a transparent and honest approach to these evaluations, it is difficult to put in place the important reforms and changes that need to happen to stabilise the Euro.

Transparency is one of the key priorities for the ECR Group, and following significant pressure from the ECR Group, the most recent reports on the ECB have given a more honest and critical assessment of the work of the ECB than ever before. This includes acknowledgment of the negative consequences of the unconventional monetary policy measures for individual savers, pensions and insurance schemes, which risk the build-up of asset bubbles.

Whilst there is still a long way to go in making sure the Euro functions better, acknowledging the flaws in the system both past and present, is an important step to building a more stable economic future. The ECR Group will continue to ensure that the ECB and the EU is held accountable for its policies on the Euro.





Reducing burdens on business:

A key priority for the ECR Group is cutting much of the suffocating regulation that the EU has adopted and applied to businesses, whilst ensuring this does not happen in the future. The EU needs regulation that provides a level playing field for businesses and the protection of consumers.

ECR MEPs have been the leading voice in the European Parliament for increasing transparency and accountability when it comes to cost over regulation. The ECR Group is constantly identifying where Member States and the EU are implementing EU rules in an unnecessarily bureaucratic and complicated way. The ECR Group has led the way on common sense policy making, and in ensuring that the EU properly implements the competitiveness test, particularly for small and medium sized businesses.

The competitiveness test identifies any potential negative impact of EU legislation on the competitiveness of businesses and the economy when drafting and applying EU rules. By ensuring the EU is being held to account over unnecessary regulation, businesses will be better able to grow, remain competitive and profitable, and able to provide more jobs.

It was also the ECR Group that led the way on recommendations which will ensure that any new laws proposed or introduced by the EU, will first be assessed for their potential impact on small and medium sized businesses.

Protecting whistle-blowers and protecting tax payers' money:

The ECR Group is fully aware that every penny the EU spends is money from the pockets of European tax payers. The ability for people to report the misuse of European money is absolutely vital. The ECR Group guided through the European Parliament recommendations which would ensure that there is a safe space for whistle-blowers to report misuse, misconduct and illegal activity related to public administration and private companies, organised crime, tax evasion and tax avoidance.
The ability for individuals to report wrongdoing is a fundamental aspect of our democracy. Ensuring that companies, politicians and public institutions are acting in the best interests of the public is pivotal to the proper functioning of society. If the EU does not take financial abuse seriously, the trust of the voters, tax payers and the people of Europe will be seriously eroded.

The ECR Group has worked hard to counter the negative perceptions surrounding whistle-blowers, and has created recommendations to help increase reporting irregularities, increase the levels of ethical standards, and encourage employee training in order to help create a "speak up culture".

The ECR Group secured agreement within the Parliament to call upon the Commission to insert a standard clause in contracts and grants, requiring beneficiaries and persons working for those beneficiaries to report serious irregularities to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



Increasing transparency and **accountability** when it comes to **cost over regulation**

4. Connecting people and business across Europe

Connecting Europe's railways:

The ECR Group believes one of the best ways to improve the lives of EU citizens on a day to day basis, is improving the basic infrastructure and accessibility of transport for its citizens.

It was the ECR Group that championed high quality transport links as being fundamental for Europe's economic activities and quality of life for citizens. Readily accessible and well-connected transport networks for both passenger and freight transport is at the heart of promoting economic, social, and territorial cohesion between Member states in the EU.

Despite significant progress, there remained severe gaps in the accessibility and connectivity of transport infrastructure throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

The ECR Group led the campaign to overcome these gaps, showing that increased connectivity of transport services would increase economic growth and employment opportunities for citizens and businesses across the EU.

The ECR highlighted the need to boost the development of North-South transport corridors, such as the 'Via Carpathia' route and the 'rail Baltica' high speed railway line, connecting Baltic States with Central Europe, therefore, connecting all of Europe.

The ECR Group also led the way on opening the market for domestic rail passenger services to competition. These new measures will help the rail sector become more attractive for passengers and more competitive amongst other modes of transport.



Rail companies will now be able to offer new high quality, reliable, safe and efficient rail services on domestic lines. A more competitive environment for railways will mean more choice for passengers, leading to better quality rail services for consumers. These important reforms also mean that railway operators will be able to cut costs, enable the rail industry to operate cross border carriages, and get security certification from the EU Railway Agency. By improving the technical capabilities of railway infrastructure and better connecting railways across the EU, we will ensure quicker, smoother travel options for passengers. Bon Voyage!

Protecting citizens and emerging technology:

ECR MEPs drafted key recommendations which were adopted by the European Parliament, which looked at how the EU can develop the use of non-military drones, and protect citizens with regard to their use. The ECR Group believes a pragmatic and sensible approach to this emerging technology is important.

The ECR Group believes that EU rules must ensure that the safety of its citizens is always paramount. ECR MEPs stressed the need to develop strict rules to protect the privacy of citizens, and the need for technology such as geo-blocking to prevent the misuse of drones in hazardous areas such as airports and power plants.

Drones are used by businesses across the continent in diverse ways - from farmers using drones to check their crops, to entertainment companies filming concerts. Therefore, when it comes to emerging and still developing technologies, there should not be a one-size-fits-all approach that would hinder their development and continued innovation.

These common sense guidelines led by the ECR Group gained widespread support throughout the Parliament and have provided the base for the future development of this technology. The ECR Group believes that fostering innovation and protecting citizens' privacy should always work side by side.

Improving the efficiency of cars:

In 2015, news broke that Volkswagen had been installing emissions cheating defeat device software in millions of diesel vehicles sold worldwide. This scandal triggered an international call for the EU and its Member States to take action.

In response, the ECR Group steered a new law through the European Parliament which put in place important new rules to prevent this from happening again.



These new rules will be put in place across the whole EU, and will stop car manufacturers from cheating on safety and emissions testing. It will also give more powers to national governments to check if cars meet the appropriate standards, and set out financial penalties for car manufacturers who break the rules. The new EU rules will also make sure that when motorists buy cars from a dealership, they can trust that their cars will perform as advertised.

For independent garages and repairers, the ECR Group championed new opportunities for them, by opening up the flow of information from car manufacturers, so that they are able to repair new generations of vehicles which are increasingly controlled by computers. This keeps local businesses thriving and offers consumers more choice and lower prices when seeking car repairs. This is good news for the consumer, businesses and the environment!

An App championed by ECR Members, provides a single source of advice for dispute resolution with companies. These rules now form the centrepiece of new EU consumer protection rules.

The App brings together several existing services and enable users to easily access the help they require.

The ECR believes that online marketplaces should be more transparent about who is selling products and services.

There are already a range of services for consumers, but they are fragmented, and many people are unaware they exist. This App would identify what assistance users require, whether it is information about their rights, help in securing a refund or the resolution of a long running dispute, and this App will direct them to the correct source.

With more and more people making purchases via apps, it makes sense for them also to be able to turn to one when things go wrong.

Sometimes it is impossible to discover the ultimate seller of a product, yet this information is important. For instance, where a seller is based can affect the buyer's rights.

Consumers should not be deterred from buying online because they feel it may be difficult to return products. That is in no-one's interest, so the ECR is doing all it can to ensure that the single market works better and more efficiently for consumers.



5. A secure future for farming and fishing

Protecting our fishermen and our seas:

The ECR Group has been the voice of common sense within the European Parliament when it comes to striking the right balance between ensuring a prosperous fishing sector for national fishermen, meeting the demands of consumers, and ensuring that the yield of fishing in the EU is sustainable.

The sea is one of our most rich resources on the planet, and we need to protect it whilst feeding a growing population. The ECR Group led on the multi-annual plan for small pelagic fish stocks in the Adriatic Sea. This includes fish such as sardines and anchovies.

The ECR Group objected to the Commission's attempts to regulate fishing by laying down total catch volumes and establishing a quota system. The Mediterranean fishing sector has been in crisis for more than twenty years. New provisions which have not been properly thought through and lack flexibility have significant effects, and can bring about the ruin of the entire sector.

The ECR Group was successful in preventing the introduction of a quota system advocated by Brussels.

Competitive Sustainable Economy







Science and common sense should work hand in hand:

A sustainable fishing and farming sector is one which protects the environment, provides sustainable produce for consumers, and protects its fishermen and farmers. The ECR knows that science is a major component in the future of farming and fishing. It is important that we harness technology for the good of producers and consumers.

The ECR Group has campaigned for a science led approach in farming. Farmers are the major stewards and protectors of our environment, and in order for them to keep producing more food to feed an ever increasing population, farmers and producers need continued access to innovation and new technology.

The ECR underlines that ensuring a level playing field for farmers in the EU single market requires full alignment of the level of direct payments between Member States.

The ECR emphasise that a modernised and well-funded Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), one of the most integrated policies, plays a crucial role in delivering key EU objectives including food security by providing high-quality, safe food at affordable prices to consumers, the preservation of landscapes and the natural environment and ensuring a fair standard of living for farmers.

The ECR Group has ensured that the Parliament and Brussels keep looking to crop research, precision farming, precision breeding and plant protection as important issues to debate, discuss and consider when moving forward in this sector. Precision lasers can be used to apply droplets of pesticides on crops to replace widespread pesticide usage. What does this mean? Healthy, nutritious, and safer foods produced in a sustainable, cost effective way

The ECR Group also believes that we should be using more science in the sea. The ECR Group introduced into EU law making the idea that fishing management should be based on the “best available scientific evidence”. This was introduced into the North Sea multi-annual fisheries management plan. By Brussels adopting this strategy, it means that this requirement must apply to all fisheries management plans. As a consequence, the Baltic Plan was changed retrospectively to align with this concept.

Making sure the food we eat is safe and sustainable:

Scientific and technological progress has led to changes in food production, generating new ingredients and new production methods, such as nanotechnology. Increased tourism and migration has boosted interest in foods which are not part of traditional diets in the EU, such as insects or tropical fruit. This has increased the need to reassure consumers about the safety of new products on the market. The ECR Group led new rules through the Parliament which facilitate the free movement of novel foods on the EU’s single market whilst preserving a high level of food safety for these new products on the market. These new rules are good for business, and good for food buyers. Bon Appetit!







Farmers are the major **stewards** and **protectors** of our **environment.**

6. Protecting and respecting Member States

The ECR Group believes that one of the key priorities for the European Union should be protecting its citizens from the threat of violence, criminality and terrorism. The ECR group has been the leading voice within the European Parliament on issues relating to security, data privacy and safety since its formation in 2009.

Where many other political groups within the Parliament have sought to delay or weaken essential anti-terror and police information sharing agreements, the ECR has been the determined voice of reason within the walls of the European Parliament to ensure that the security of its citizens stays firmly on the top of the European political agenda.

The ECR Group believes that the expedient and thorough sharing of vital information between national law enforcements authorities is of utmost importance in Member States' efforts to prevent, investigate and prosecute cross border criminality.

Exchanging flight passenger information to boost security:

The ECR Group was the leading political force for the introduction of the Passenger Name Records (PNR) deal between EU Member States. The EU-PNR system requires Member States to exchange basic passenger information between airlines and police authorities before a flight takes off. This helps detect, prevent, and prosecute serious crime and terrorism.
PNR data includes basic passenger information such as a passenger's route, travel dates, and method of payment. PNR data has helped to capture hundreds of murderers, paedophiles, human traffickers, sexual attackers, kidnappers, drug dealers, and major terrorists, including those involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the foiled Times Square bomber.

Exchanging criminal record information across Europe:

The ECR Group steered the adoption of new rules through the European Parliament which give national authorities the power to establish quickly and efficiently whether another Member State holds a criminal record on a non-EU citizen entering their country. The European Criminal Records Information System is an impor-tant tool for European prosecutors, judges and police forces to prevent the move-ment of criminals across Europe and aid with prosecutions taking place.

The new rules adopted allow other agencies such as EUROPOL and EUROJUST to access this information. This is an important step in increasing inter-connectivity between Member States law enforcement authorities and therefore increase the EU's ability to fight cross border criminality.

The ECR Group has also been keen to ensure that throughout all of these law enforcement measures, the highest possible data protection standards are in place, and that the rights and privacy of EU citizens is respected. The ECR Group believes that protecting privacy and data should go hand in hand with making use of data by law enforcement authorities.

Protecting the EU's external border:

The ECR Group understands that protecting the integrity of the Schengen area and maintaining freedom of movement goes hand in hand with the EU and its Member States maintaining internal security

and protecting the EU's external border. Thanks to the work of the ECR Group, Member States are now obliged to carry out systematic checks against relevant databases at the external borders. This measure was a response to the rise of the terrorist threats in Europe. This measure will ensure that foreign terrorist fighters, irregular migrants and human traffickers will be detected at the external border and prevented from entering and moving around the EU.



Protecting victims of terrorism:

The ECR Group believes that protecting the citizens of the EU doesn't just mean preventing and prosecuting crimes, but ensuring that we look after the victims of terrorism after these tragic events have taken place. The ECR Group was a leading voice in securing a million Euro pilot project that will provide vital services for the protection of victims of terrorism by establishing a Terrorism Response Coordination Centre.

This centre will help national authorities implement EU legislation designed to protect the victims of terrorism, and provide victim support services such as counselling. The centre will also provide the necessary expertise and training to assist Member States in the event of a terrorist attack.





7. A global approach

More open trade means more jobs, increased business opportunities, and cheaper goods for the consumer. That is why the ECR Group has been the driving force within the European Parliament on putting in place a number of important international agreements that will break down the barriers currently in place which prevent European companies trading with major economic powers around the world. The ECR Group believes that looking for emerging markets, as well as dealing with developed markets, is an important way of growing the EU's marketplace and therefore growing the EU's economy. It was the ECR Group that led on the most comprehensive trade agreement ever concluded with a developing country: the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement.

The ECR Group has been the voice of common sense within the Parliament when it comes to discussing the opportunities and challenges of free trade. This was vital when adopting the Canada-EU Trade Agreement also known as CETA. Amidst a highly negative and misleading campaign from political groups on the left, which was intended to obstruct the adoption of this agreement, the ECR Group and its members played an integral part in confronting these misconceptions and providing real facts for the public. As a consequence, majority support within the European Parliament was secured, and CETA was adopted.

It is estimated that CETA will bring EU businesses an extra 590 million Euros a year, the amount paid in tariffs by EU businesses on goods exported to Canada. As of the 21st of September 2018, duties on 98 percent of products that the EU trades with Canada will do not apply. What does that mean? It means that EU companies have a better chance than ever to bid on public procurement contracts, and sell European products into Canada.

The ECR Group knows that there are concerns about globalisation and widening the EU's trading market. It is essential that we protect certain EU sectors from any shock effects. Therefore, under CETA, the EU has opened its markets for certain competing Canadian products in a limited and controlled way, whilst ensuring improved access to the Canadian market for key European export products such as wine, spirits, fruit, cheese and vegetables.

The ECR Group has also been at the forefront of pushing the EU's trade deals with Japan and Singapore which are both in the final stages of being ratified. The deal with Japan covers 30% of global GDP and once in place will cut more than 90% of tariffs currently imposed on EU exports. While only having a population of 5.6 million people, Singapore is the EU's 14th largest trading partner with trade be-tween the two countries worth over
€50 billion a year. Over 10,000 European companies have set up their offices/regional hubs in Singapore and the agreement will significantly cut barriers to both exports and investment between the two parties.

We believe that the EU's free trade agreements will benefit consumers by offering them more product choice, a wider choice of services, and greater mobility for company employees. The ECR Group is vitally aware that free trade and globalisation must benefit everyone, and that in any international trading agreements reached, law makers must be mindful of their effects on wages, jobs, local industry and the future of the EU's economy.







More open trade
means **more jobs,**
and **cheaper goods**
for the **consumer.**







Protecting freedom and **human dignity,** are at the **heart** of **ECR's** foreign **policy aims.**

Protecting democracy and religious freedom across the world:

The ECR Group's efforts to create a global facing EU extends beyond just trading with nations across the world, but looks towards creating a more democratic, freer world for all.

The ECR has placed the plight of persecuted Christians prominently on the EU foreign policy agenda. Around the world the persecution of Christians is on the rise. More than any other group, Christians are a target of religious violence. A long ignored situation by the EU foreign policy, ECR Group members were among those who pressed for more action. The ECR Group will continue to fight for more action to help those who are persecuted for their faith.

Protecting freedom and human dignity are at the heart of the ECR's foreign policy aims. The ECR Group continues to ensure that the human rights agenda of the European Parliament respects national interests as well as maximising the collective power of the EU as a whole when it comes to ensuring third countries fulfil their international obligations. The ECR Group has led the way on a number of widely supported resolutions and campaigns regarding the persecution of Christians and the Rohingya people. The ECR Group believes that the EU does not need a centralised foreign policy to bring attention to pressing international issues and have an impact upon human rights violations.

Driving economic growth across the world:

By using EU money to encourage private enterprise and economic growth within developing nations around the world, the EU is reducing poverty, creating future trading partners, and helping to support democratic stability and human rights in the process. The groundbreaking idea of using private enterprise to help reduce poverty around the world was an idea put forward by the ECR Group. This idea was taken up by the European Commission and as a consequence the EU created a fund which mobilised 44 billion Euros of investment starting in Africa and the EU's Southern and Eastern neighbourhood. The ECR Group is proud that we have pushed the European Commission to move away from short term solutions and handouts, and instead move towards a system which helps countries and communities build long lasting stronger economies and industries.

By using this fund to provide money for private enterprises in developing countries, we are helping innovation grow in developing nations, giving people their dignity back through work, and addressing the root causes of mass migration to the EU: poverty. For the first time in the history of the European Parliament, the private sector has been recognised as a crucial actor for development and wealth creation.

8. Common sense and sustainability

If the EU and its global partners really want to tackle issues such as climate change, recycling, waste, emissions and pollution, then the EU needs to adopt sensible and sustainable measures which do not place unnecessary and costly burdens on businesses and Member States. Rather than unrealistic targets which will never be fulfilled or properly implemented, the ECR Group supports an ambitious, incremental and sensible approach that all Member States can support.

Protecting wildlife & endangered animals:

The world is experiencing an unparalleled surge in the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. This is threatening to overturn decades of hard-won conservation gains. The illegal trafficking of wildlife and wildlife products has become one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide, with estimates of its total value lying between 8 - 20 billion Euros annually.

The illicit wildlife trade not only has a devastating effect on biodiversity, but also has a negative impact on regional development and the rule of law, given its close link with corruption.

ECR MEPs led a report which outlines the very serious challenges and obstacles needed to be overcome by the EU and countries worldwide if they are to succeed in reducing, and ultimately eliminating these awful crimes against wildlife. In this report, the ECR Group provides a number of recommendations and solutions for the EU, its Member States and the international community to act upon in order to deal with this growing problem. The ECR Group will continue fighting to keep animal welfare and crimes against wildlife at the top of the political agenda.

Lowering emissions:

The ECR Group led through the Parliament the EU's Emission Trading Scheme also known as ETS. The agreement reached was a world first, and to date, the largest agreement for cutting man made greenhouse gas emissions. The scheme puts a monetary value on carbon emissions, in order to reflect the costs of climate change and the opportunities for low-carbon options to be introduced into the EU's production and consumption choices. The ETS includes emissions from electricity, industry, and aviation - covering approximately 40 percent of its total emissions.

The changes introduced by this scheme, strike the right balance between the EU's long term climate commitments, whilst also ensuring that European industries are protected from being undercut by external competitors operating lower emissions standards.

They also take into account the situation of poorer Member States by providing additional free allowances for the modernisation of their energy systems and saving more free allowances for district heating.

Keeping Europe's air clean:

The ECR Group also led the way on the important issue of air quality and the need for clean air in Europe. Poor air quality is an urgent public health issue. Air pollution does not recognise national borders, therefore, it is essential that we work together with our EU neighbours to tackle it. Poor air quality contributes to premature death, to sickness absences from work, significant healthcare costs, crop yield

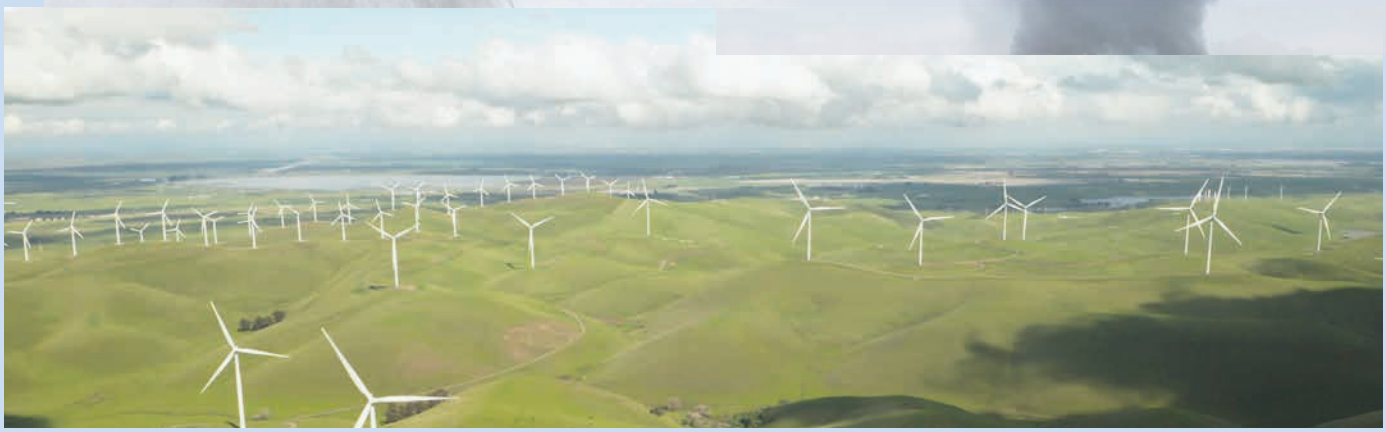
loss and damage.

In Europe, the total external health-related costs to society from air pollution are colossal, and estimated to be in the range of 330 - 940 billion Euros per year. With these new commitments in place, which set new air quality ceilings on emissions for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ammonia, and aligning targets for 2020 with international commitments and more ambitious targets through to 2030, the health impact of air pollution is estimated to be reduced by about 50 percent in 2030 compared to 2005.





Protecting wildlife and endangered animals



EUROPEAN
CONSERVATIVES
AND REFORMISTS

Making the **EU** work better for **YOU**

The future of the EU does not have to be a simple choice between destroying the EU, or a fully federalised EU. We in the ECR Group believe that there is third way.

We believe the EU needs to bring back common sense to the way it works.

We have led the way in advocating for the equal treatment of all Member States, pushing the EU to be more responsible with people's money, finding new ways to connect people and business, finding solutions to the migrant crisis and the terrorist threat, as well as pushing for a more global approach to increase EU competitiveness on the world stage.

Only an EU that truly listens to its people can offer real solutions to the problems we face today.

With your support and the hard work of our ECR MEPs, we will continue to build a better future for both you and the EU.


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