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EU-US bank data transfers

EU Parliament calls on Council to suspend SWIFT agreement

Following a Greens/EFA request, today's European Parliament Conference of Presidents agreed that EP President Jerzy Buzek will send a letter to the EU Council to call for a suspension of the EU agreement on providing bank transfer data from the SWIFT system to the US. The interim agreement is due to enter into force on 1 February.

Greens/EFA Co-President **Rebecca Harms** and Green MEP **Jan-Philipp Albrecht**, a member of Parliament's civil liberties committee, commented:

"The EU Council has no right to allow the SWIFT agreement to take effect without the agreement of the European Parliament. Parliament must not be bypassed by the Commission and Council, which would be a breach of the Lisbon Treaty. Citizens' rights must be safeguarded.

It is shameful that the Council has said it intends to supply the text of the agreement to the EU Parliament only next week, when it has already been published in the EU Official Journal. Parliament simply cannot cooperate on this basis.

The major shortcomings we highlighted in November are still there. Legal protection of citizens' rights is severely lacking and there is no role for any independent data protection body. Parliament is not being told what data will be taken, which authorities will receive the data and under what conditions they will do so. All this information is hidden in secret annexes. Under these conditions, the interim agreement must be suspended."

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