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Schulz questioned on Latvia intervention

Press release from Tatjana Ždanoka MEP

Latvian MEP **Tatjana Ždanoka** has asked European Parliament President Martin Schulz to explain his recent intervention in Latvian domestic politics.

Mr Schulz, a social democrat, gave an interview published in the Latvian media recently in which he expressed his admiration of the firmness shown by Latvian people in the face of the austerity measures of the Latvian government and described the Latvian economy as growing.

Latvia was one of the first European countries to implement deep austerity measures. Public sector salaries have declined and pensions and other social benefits for the less well off have been cut.

The right wing government of Latvia likes to use the phrase "success story" characterising the figures of growing national budget or the rising profit of big companies in the Latvian market. But Latvian people have not felt an end to the crisis and they continue to vote against the "success story" of their government by leaving the country.

Ms Ždanoka raised the issue in the European Parliament chamber this week.

Speaking in Parliament on Monday evening, Tatjana Ždanoka said:

"I would like to pose some questions to the President of our Parliament, who is still a member of his Socialist group, regarding his 3rd of April interview to the biggest Latvian website "Delfi". In that interview Mr Schulz expressed his admiration for the perseverance of Latvians and described our economy as steadily growing. These are not only my questions since a lot of ordinary Latvians after reading the interview were surprised with such a position taken by a former president of the S&D group.

"These questions are as follows.

"Whether Mr Schulz believes that the drastic austerity measures have led to stable economic growth?

"And even if that is so, whether the social price of these measures is not too high?

"The Latvian economy isn't growing. It is in decline. In January of this year, it was revealed that industrial output compared with December had declined by 3.5%.

"The social price people pay and will pay for the austerity measures hitting the most vulnerable in Latvian society can only be described as a catastrophe.

"In "a world rating of happiness", prepared for the UN on quality of life, Latvia was in 106th place – 8 places lower than Iraq, 105 places below Denmark.

"I call upon our socialist and democrat colleagues in this house to support people's struggle for social justice rather than supporting neoliberal dictatorship."

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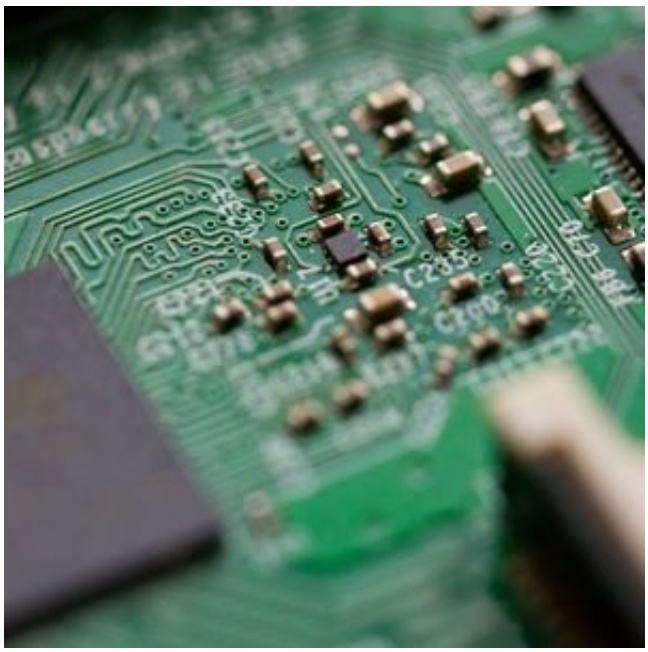


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