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EU spring summit

A summit of small-mindedness

Commenting on the result of the spring summit of EU leaders, **Rebecca Harms** and **Claude Turmes**, Vice-Presidents of the Greens/EFA in the European Parliament said:

"Compared with the Climate Summit in 2007, this summit seemed to be small-minded, as European excitement regarding the fight against climate change has disappeared. Instead, EU leaders indulged in a frenzy of bargaining for exceptions and further compromises.

The half-successful attempts to grant exemptions to energy intensive industries before it is known if there will be an ambitious international post-Kyoto agreement, is a fatal signal. With this attitude EU leaders demonstrated their scepticism for the chances of a successful outcome of the next round of international UN climate talks. However, the leading role in the fight against climate change, a position Europeans claim as their own, cannot be based on such a negative self-fulfilling vision. A strong international agreement requires the readiness of the EU to set an ambitious example.

Today's results confirm the suspicion that there is still no real move towards more sustainability. The spring Council has proved that economic interests still rank higher than environmental protection. Even the alarming scenario presented by Javier Solana regarding security policy challenges that will arise from climate change could not bring any improvements.

This Council meeting has shown that EU leaders, most of which come from socialist and conservative parties, have failed to grasp the challenges ahead. In the upcoming legislative process in the EP, the Greens and MEPs who support the fight against climate change, must ensure that the climate and energy package will not be watered-down. Following the summit, it is clear that the Commission must be supported and remain strong, especially when it comes to the emissions trading schemes. If all exemptions and weakening proposed prior to and during the summit were to be included, the 20% goal would be out reach and so would the EU's self-declared leading role in the fight against climate change."

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