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# Exchange of views with the President of the European Council

## Mr. Van Rompuy visited the Greens/EFA Group

The Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament met with European Council President Herman Van Rompuy on Tuesday 11 January to discuss his role as President thus far. Group Co-Presidents Rebecca Harms and Daniel Cohn-Bendit introduced Mr. Van Rompuy and chaired a lively discussion between him and a packed audience of Greens/EFA members and staff.

Mr. Van Rompuy spoke for some time about the nature of his role as Council President and the main challenges that had faced the Union since taking up his position a year ago. In particular he spoke about the challenges that have faced the Eurozone during the economic crisis, and how successful different initiatives have been at attempting to avoid recession. The importance of Europe's social model, its basic ideals and the need to protect all the factors that sustain the model at home, became a recurring theme throughout his statement and replies.

The division of duties between the Council President and the High Representative was also discussed as members looked at Mr. Van Rompuy's meetings with world leaders and the G20 and criticised his role in practice in foreign affairs. These were followed by questions and criticisms on international climate negotiations, human rights and the Council's response to events in Tunisia before returning to a more European focus and discussing Hungary's presidency and European governance. Mr. Van Rompuy also came in for criticism from members on the issues of trade agreements and migration, as well as for his style and rhetoric and an open and frank discussion followed on the role of the President. The meeting came to a close with a discussion on the state of the environment agenda and the social agenda, and the level of Europe's ambition in both.

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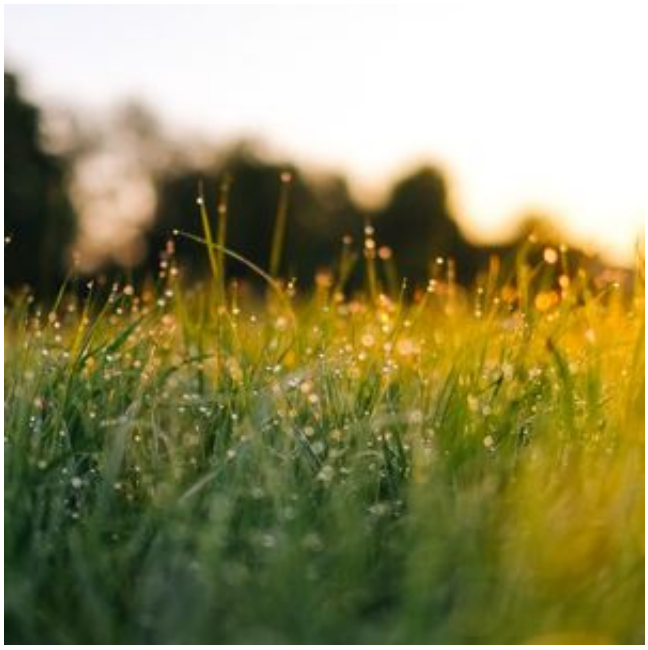
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Rebecca Harms

Member

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