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Greens/EFA Group demands for the next EU Commission

Towards a Green New Deal

This autumn will see the launch of a new five-year mandate for the European Commission and its chosen President. Europe needs the Commission to play a vital role as it responds to the triple economic, social and environmental crisis. The Greens/EFA Group have outlined two essential considerations for the new Commission: an appointment procedure that is legally and democratically sound and a political programme that will respond to the critical situation we face.

A new Commission appointed under a new treaty

The Greens/EFA Group deplore pressure from the Council and current Commission President José Manuel Barroso to steamroll through a decision on the next Commission President in September, under the terms of the Nice Treaty. Weeks later it is likely that the Irish referendum will remove the last major hurdle to ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. The Treaties clearly establish that the President and all Commissioners are part of one, indivisible body, which should be elected according to one set of rules. Appointing the President under Nice and other Commissioners under Lisbon would therefore be a clear violation of the legal procedures. All acts adopted by such a Commission could be considered illegal and challenged at the European Court of Justice.

A new direction

Under the mantra of economic liberalisation, the term of the current European Commission led by its President José Manuel Barroso has promoted and defended big business and special interests at the expense of Europe's citizens, the wider social good and the environment. In fact, the deregulatory policies of the Commission played a contributory role in the factors behind the financial crisis and it has proposed a myopic and misguided recovery plan in response. Given his track record, the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament has made clear that it will not support a new term for Mr Barroso.

It's time for a fresh start. The Greens/EFA Group is calling for a European Commission that will make the necessary changes in its policies, action and approach to deliver a Green New Deal for Europe a sustainable economic recovery to respond to the social, environmental, climate and energy crises.

In particular, the new Commission and its President urgently need to change course in the following six

areas:

1. Reregulate financial markets and globalisation

The new Commission must take substantial measures to tame financial markets, in particular to regulate derivative markets, over-the-counter and securitised products. It should clamp down on all tax havens and take action to deter and mitigate financial speculation, including proposing a tax on financial transactions. It must redress past lack of supervision by proposing a strong EU level supervisor and an enhanced role for the ECB in this domain. It should promote the idea that the WTO must respect ILO Conventions, as well as Multilateral and Environmental Agreements.

2. Get serious about an interlinked climate, energy and industrial policy

The new Commission must step up the ambition of EU climate policies to the level outlined as necessary by the scientific consensus: i.e. industrialised countries must collectively commit to domestic emissions reductions of 25-40% (from 1990 levels) and the EU to at least 40% by 2020, without offsetting. The Commission should also work to ensure that industrialised countries finance additional emission reductions in developing countries (including to avoid deforestation) as well as provide aid for adaptation, to which the combined annual EU contribution should reach ?35 billion by 2020. The Commission must propose action to further renewable energy and energy savings and it must desist from promoting risky nuclear energy. These commitments should be part of a broader framework of converting industrial policy towards green innovation, sustainable development and creating millions of 'green-collar' jobs.

The Commission must respect its commitments to integrate biodiversity in all policy areas (including agriculture, transport, fishing, industry, etc)

3. Set an ambitious social agenda

The Commission must act to improve workers' rights, notably by reviewing the working time directive with a view to end the existing opt-out clauses and reviewing the posting of workers directive, setting it on the double legal basis of free movement of services and workers. It should also carry out an in-depth evaluation of actions taken to liberalise public services and propose EU framework legislation on services of general interest to guarantee quality and affordability.

4. Uphold democracy and fundamental rights in Europe and beyond

The new Commission must put democracy and respect for fundamental rights at the heart of all its policies. The Greens call for a European Commissioner to be given a portfolio for citizen's rights, equality and non-discrimination. The Commission should also end its passive stance on the alleged use of European countries for theillegal detention and transport of prisoners to third countries, notably Guantanamo, support a real investigation into past practices of certain Member States and ensure Member States adhere to conventions against torture if they accept the transfer of former Guantanamo detainees. The Commission should use its strong competences in trade negotiations to target poverty and to introduce and enforce human rights clauses. Democratic reform of its own institution should make participation and extensive financial disclosure mandatory in its lobbyist register and extend public access to documents.

5. End the GMO drive and promote sustainable agriculture and fisheries at home and abroad

The Commission must end its forcing agenda for GMOs. No new varieties can be authorised until their long-term effects on the environment, non-target organisms and human health are adequately assessed. The

Commission should instead focus on making legislative proposals for far-reaching reform of the Common Agricultural Policy beyond 2013, which should make public financing of the farming sector and the food industry conditional on fulfilling ecological, social and public health criteria and aim at strengthening the position of farmers and consumers against the increasing market power of food traders and supermarket chains. Urgent reform should also be proposed to the existing, self-destructive Common Fisheries Policy.

6. Set a budget based on own resources

The Commission should present a concrete proposal for a new five-year financial perspective to run from 2012 to 2016 on a system of own resources, based on Member States' gross national income, a capital transaction tax and a kerosene tax.

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