Press release | 01.07.2010

Belgian EU Presidency

Hope of new life for the common European project

Commenting on today's start of the Belgian EU-Presidency **Rebecca Harms** and **Dany Cohn-Bendit**, Co-Chairs of the Greens / EFA in the European Parliament, said:

"We expect from the Belgians, who are traditionally committed to the European idea, that their presidency becomes a catalyst for the common European interest, which is more than just the sum of national interests. After the increasingly strong trend towards re-nationalisation, which came to light particularly during the euro crisis, Europeans must again revive their common project. We hope that in doing this the Belgians will succeed in giving a new reason for the existence of a rotating EU presidency.

Belgiumwill have to ensure the full implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and strengthen the new balance of the EU institutions. This closes the circle, for it was under the then Belgian Council President Guy Verhofstadt that the European constitutional process that led to the Lisbon Treaty was launched in 2001.

Only with a new common European purpose rather than an inter-state focus, will the Belgian Presidency be able to master the challenges Europe faces. These include the immediate introduction of effective financial market supervision, which has real powers at the European level, and is not only a patchwork of national regulators. Almost two years after the outbreak of the economic and financial crisis, it is now time to act without waiting any longer for global solutions which may never come.

This also applies to the crucial climate negotiations in Cancun later this year. It is up to the Belgians to now increase the European target for CO2 emissions reductions by at least 30% by 2020 without waiting for other countries make a move. The Commission and some member states have long since recognized that the increase is not only necessary to give the international climate negotiations a new impetus before the summit in Cancun, but it also creates massive benefits for European industry and job creation. The Belgian Presidency of the Council must ensure that Europe becomes the leader of international climate policy once more."

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