Press release | 15.12.2010

EU budget

Big groups sell EP short in accepting nebulous declaration from EU presidency

The European Parliament today voted to adopt the broad headings of the EU budget for 2011, as agreed with the Council but a vote on the key issues of budget 'flexibility' and ITER was earlier postponed until the new year. The Greens are critical of a vague declaration from the EU presidency on the future role of the EP in EU budgetary negotiations, which was accepted by the large political groups (1). After the vote on budget, Green budgetary spokesperson **Helga Trüpel MEP** said:

"After all the brouhaha they made during the negotiations, the EP president and the presidents of the three main political groups have sold the Parliament short. The nebulous declaration from the Belgian EU presidency is not worth the paper it is written on and gives absolutely no additional guarantee that the EU will be effectively included in the future negotiations on the next financial framework. Meanwhile, they are engaging in the face-saving smokescreen of postponing the votes on the key issues of budget 'flexibility' and extra funding for the ITER nuclear fusion project until next year. It is huge lost opportunity for the EP and it is now ending in an unseemly and sorry charade.

"The Greens will continue to push to ensure that the EP has a full and substantial role in the negotiations on the next financial framework, and to ensure that this includes a proper consideration of own resources for financing the EU budget. A proper own resources system would reduce costs for national exchequers and end the annual budgetary squabbling. We will also continue to fight against further wasting public money on the white elephant that is ITER. That the European taxpayer should be expected to foot the bill for the ballooning ITER budget is simply wrong. The least costly option would be to abandon the project now before the main construction has started at all."

Commenting on the European Parliament's budget, **Helga Trüpel**, the parliamentary draftsperson/rapporteur, added:

"The challenge with the parliament's budget has been similar to that with the other budgets: ensuring the parliament can respond to the greater demands it now faces, while keeping budgetary growth in check. As rapporteur, I believe the budget adopted today meets this challenge. The Greens have consistently opposed the allocation of further funding for MEPs' office allowances, which we believe cannot be justified at present, and we welcome that the EP has decided to put the proposed increase on hold. Clearly, the onus is now on those charged with managing the budget to ensure it is utilised in a prudent manner."

(1) After the breakdown of talks on the 2011 budget, the Commission outlined a new proposal. The Belgian presidency backed this budget up with a 'declaration' on the role of the European Parliament in future negotiations on the EU financial framework. However, the Greens believe the new offer from the Council has no substance and gives absolutely no additional guarantee that the EU will be effectively included in the future negotiations.

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Helga Trüpel

Member

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