Press release | 10.11.2010

5th Cohesion Report

Commission approach marred by obsession with GDP growth

The European Commission today presented its 5th Cohesion Report. The report outlines the Commission's plans on future priorities for and reform of EU cohesion policy. Commenting on the report, Green MEP and shadow on the reform of EU cohesion policy **Elisabeth Schroedter** said:

"We welcome the recognition in today's report that, in order to get a true overview of the well-being of European regions, it is necessary to look at a combination of factors, including social and environmental factors, and not rely solely on the macro-economic picture. Unfortunately, the Commission fails to draw the logical conclusion that this means abandoning GDP as the only indicator of progress in regional development. The Greens believe it is necessary to introduce additional indicators, including social and environmental indicators, in order to truly measure progress in the regions.

"We need a change of direction for EU cohesion policy. EU subsidies should not be used to simply build unnecessary infrastructure in the countryside in order to create a smokescreen of GDP growth. Europe's regions do not need golden calves with EU flags on them. Instead, cohesion funds should be used to address the real challenges faced by Europe's regions, such as climate change, social exclusion and demographic development. There is a growing recognition that GDP is a flawed indicator for measuring well-being: it is high time the Commission recognised this for EU cohesion policy."

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