Press release | 07.09.2010

State of the Union

Cohn-Bendit: Barroso the "absent president" of the EU Commission

European Commission president Barroso today delivered the first "State of the Union" address to the European Parliament. Responding to the address in plenary, Greens/EFA co-president **Dany Cohn-Bendit** said:

"The real state of the Union is one in which national politicians are increasingly seeking to put their own narrow interests ahead of any common or European interest, whether with regard to economic mismanagement in member states or the open flouting of basic rights as set out in the EU treaties. What Europe needs is a president who will defend the European interest and the rights of Europe's citizens; a president who is not scared to stand up to EU member states when they ignore those rights or act against the European interest. Unfortunately, what the European Commission has is an absent president.

"Regrettably, President Barroso seems to have no vision for Europe. Instead, he is concerned with appeasing and pleasing member state governments. His speech failed to mention the urgent need to reinvent our economic model, just as it failed to mention the EU's role in the ongoing UN climate talks. He is scared to explicitly criticise France for its clear and ugly discrimination against the Roma, despite the fact that this issue is a crucial test for the Charter of Fundamental Rights. He continues to ignore the elephant in the room with regard to Greece's budgetary woes: its enormous and pointless military budget. Despite talking about the state of the union for thirty minutes, we are left with no clear vision of how the Commission President intends to address the main challenges Europe faces."

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