Press release | 28.09.2011

State of the Union

Commission president Barroso must follow through on promises

European Commission president Barroso today delivered his 'State of the Union' speech to the European Parliament. In the context of the debate, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"President Barroso correctly sought to head-off those who want to pronounce the demise of the Euro by clearly ruling out Greece's exit from the Eurozone. We also share his analysis that more Europe is the answer to the crisis: a true economic and political union is essential for the monetary union to function effectively.

"This unified Europe needs strong and democratically-controlled European institutions, not haggling between heads of government. We do not need new institutions; we already have an institution responsible for the economic governance of the EU - the European Commission - and for the oversight of this - the European Parliament. The Greens also reject the proposals for new intergovernmental institutions. For too long Barroso has caved in to national governments and we hope his strong speech today marks a shift in tack. He must follow through on his promises to renew Europe.

"The growing injustice in the EU, which has intensified since the crisis as a result of political decisions, is a major problem for Europe. First, the massive costs of the banking crisis were socialised. Now the burden of assisting indebted governments is being carried by the poor and people on low and middle incomes. If we want to put our economy back on track, we cannot rely on spending cuts alone. We also need future-oriented investment, such as in education and sustainable economic development and combating poverty. Stemming the loss in public confidence, will require not just more Europe but a more just Europe.

"Climate and environment policy remains a big weakness of this Commission and its president. Despite the long-acknowledged fact that it makes far more economic sense to invest ambitious climate protection than to foot the bill for the consequences of climate change, the EU is heading into the forthcoming UN climate talks in Durban with no vision and no impetus. Barroso has failed to outline a clear plan for sustainable development, which prioritises climate protection and resource efficiency."

** The full speech by Rebecca Harms can be viewed at the following URL:*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts0q7zVnf9Y

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Rebecca Harms

Member

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