Press release | 01.07.2009

Swedish EU Presidency

Greens oppose July Barroso vote and demand climate summit strategy

As Sweden takes over the rotating Presidency of the European Union today, Greens/EFA Co-Presidents **Rebecca Harms** and **Daniel Cohn-Bendit** commented:

"The Greens remind the Swedish Presidency that there is no European Parliament majority in favour of a rush vote to give Barroso a second mandate as Commission President. Forcing the issue on the table in July would result in a negative start for the Swedish Presidency. There must be no vote on the Commission President before Lisbon is ratified. (1)

"The Swedish Presidency is the latest to at least nominally put climate at the top of its agenda but its programme and rhetoric suggests the EU is shrinking from its earlier commitments and may not scale up its effort under an international agreement. The Greens urge the Presidency to work on the basis of scientific advice, which means that the EU must commit to a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to have even a 50/50 chance of limiting warming below 2 degrees.(2)

International climate negotiations come to Sweden's doorstep in Copenhagen in a matter of months, yet the Presidency programme offers no fresh EU plan of action towards a global deal. The EU must set a strategy to raise the bar for climate protection across the world, not seek excuses to lower it on the basis of others' lack of ambition. The buck ends with the Swedish Presidency, who must secure a clear financial commitment to a climate fund for developing nations at the October summit of EU leaders. Without it, an international agreement will be impossible.

We welcome that the Swedish Presidency at least proposes a crisis response linking economic and environmental objectives. Climate is at last presented as an integral part of economic plans, not a sideshow to them. This represents the important first step towards the Green New Deal we have been calling for. This, together with proposals on carbon taxes, is more promising. It remains to be seen if the next six months will deliver.

The Swedish Presidency must lead a rethink of current EU migration policy, not oversee its reinforcement. This implies promoting legal channels to enter the EU, while supporting efforts to reduce migration pressures in regions beyond its borders. Return and readmission of migrants should not be allowed to countries that do not respect minimum human rights standards and asylum policy in Europe should be brought into line with the Geneva Convention."

Notes to editors:

(1) See the Greens/EFA campaign: Stop Barroso - Europe deserves better

(2) The IPCC 4th Assessment Report findings state that collectively industrialised nations must reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 25-40% domestically by 2020 (based on 1990 levels) to have a 50% chance of limiting warming beneath 2 degrees Celsius.

The Greens/EFA climate blog has further analysis on climate aspects of the Swedish Presidency programme.

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Responsible MEPs



Rebecca Harms

Member

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