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The first European Semester and its contribution to the EU2020 Strategy

A study commissioned by the Greens/EFA

Behind the rhetoric on EU 2020

The Commission doesn't care about the objectives it sets for itself. This is how we could summarise the study realised for the Greens on the European Semester. This study is the first of its kind to check through all the recommendations that the EU has addressed to the 27 member states and to analyse their coherence with regard to the performances of these member states and their country-specific objectives. More broadly, it also seeks to evaluate the added value of new instruments such as the European Semester and the economic governance package.

The study demonstrates that the proliferation of new EU tools aimed at curbing the crisis and at making the member states' priorities consistent, does not contribute to the fulfilment of the economic, social and environmental objectives of the EU.

Objectives in terms of R&D, poverty reduction or energy performance had been adopted unanimously in 2010. Yet, none of these are reflected in the recommendations. This in turn does not stimulate member states to move forward on these issues, whilst the social crisis is badly hitting Europeans, whose perspectives are getting darker day after day, and whilst the ecological crisis is becoming more patent. Moreover, the fact that emerging countries are moving up the value chain shows that competitiveness does not depend on wages anymore. However, the EU seems to still be pushing in that direction, despite the Treaty and economic governance rules that prevent it.

The overall effectiveness of the European Semester is also undermined by the lack of prioritization in the recommendations. Indeed, countries with very high employment rates for example are singled out in the same way than countries with very poor employment performance.

Finally, the EU 2020 Strategy seems to be making the exact same mistakes than its predecessor's. Like the Lisbon Strategy, it fails to actively involve national parliaments, social partners, civil society, etc. No lesson seems to have been drawn from recent mistakes, despite the fact that we are at a critical point in time for the future of European integration and for the well-being of European citizens'. It is increasingly evident that no improvement in terms of economic coordination will be achieved without further

democratisation.

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