



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

José Manuel Barroso
President
European Commission

Brussels, 22 November 2012

Mr President,

In the report it published on "[Labour Market Developments in Europe 2012](#)", the European Commission set out a series of so-called "Reforms potentially leading to better employment outcomes".

The Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament is deeply concerned about the Commission's publication and the spirit therein. At a time of reform, the EU's policy should not be to reduce rights, citizens' participation and social protection.

Social Partnership is a core element of the European Union's labour market model. It ensures the participation of both employers and workers in labour market reforms, wage-setting and other measures and is a core element of participative democracy. European citizens need to be assured that the European Commission will not attack core labour and social rights and that the European Commission as "guardian of the treaty" will respect the Treaty, also when it comes to Title X "Social Policy" and to the Fundamental Rights Charter.

We were therefore shocked to see that under this heading in their report, the European Commission claims that such "employment-friendly reforms" should result in, for example:

- an overall reduction in the wage-setting power of trade unions
- introducing/extending the possibility to derogate from higher level collective agreements
- reforming labour law to reduce protection in the case of dismissals
- for temporary contracts: in increasing the duration and amount of serial contracts
- reducing access to and amount of unemployment insurance and assistance

These proposals run counter to the Treaties, the values of the European Union and the EU2020 strategy. Reducing Social Partner involvement in wage-setting is in contravention of Article 152 of the TFEU (1) on the recognition and promotion of social partners. It is a violation of the autonomy of the social partners. Reducing unemployment benefits, along with many of the other measures outlined in the Annex, is a measure endangering the EU2020 target of poverty reduction, especially when used as an activation measure in times of high unemployment.

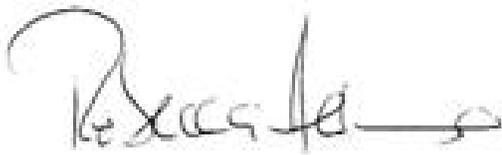
We find ourselves wondering as to how policy coordination is managed and understood within the Commission and thus within the Council. How can one come to advocate reforms which undermine the stated goals of the European Union as expressed in the Treaties and its agreed strategy?

The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament therefore calls on all the responsible Ministers of Economic Affairs, Finance and Labour in the Council to:

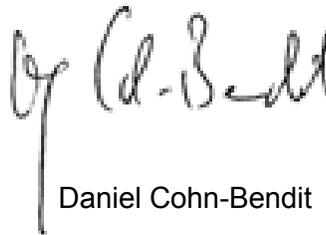
- call on the European Commission to replace the published report "Labour Market Developments in Europe 2012" with a corrected report that shows respect for the Treaty and values of the European Union and that suggests reforms in line with the EU2020 and the Treaty
- stress at the next Council meeting that such "reform" proposals are not in line with the EU2020 strategy
- call on Commission President José Manuel Barroso to publicly state the European Commission's commitment to Social partnership and the respect for the Social Partners, their autonomy and their role in wage-setting
- together with the European Parliament, monitor the Commission in relation to policy coherence
- stress that such reform proposals are not the EU's policy

We trust that you will ensure the Treaties are observed

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Harms



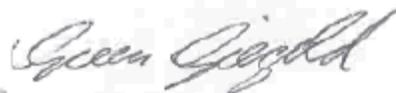
Daniel Cohn-Bendit

Co-Presidents
Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament



Jean Lambert

Greens/EFA
EMPL Coordinator



Sven Giegold

Greens/EFA
ECON Coordinator

(1) Article 152 TFEU:

The Union recognises and promotes the role of the social partners at its level, taking into account the diversity of national systems. It shall facilitate dialogue between the social partners, respecting their autonomy.

The Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment shall contribute to social dialogue.