

J. Buzek : "Under the Lisbon Treaty, the Parliament is stronger than ever before"

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During his official visit to Paris on Tuesday, 2 February, Touteurope.fr interviewed Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament. Former Polish Prime Minister and member of Solidarnosc, he explains the new reforms contained in the Lisbon Treaty and presents his priorities for his mandate.

To see the video recording and to read the whole text of the interview, click [here](#) and visit the site of "Toute l'Europe".

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Can we speak about a reunified Europe today or has more still to be done?

I think it has happened because we don't have today an altered new Europe - we have common responsibilities and we have a common future. We think together about how to solve to the important questions and how to respond to expectations of our citizens. Europe is really united after a big enlargement five years ago. We are moving strongly towards reintegration in many places where it is still necessary. From this point of view, I am very optimistic.

What are the priorities of the European Parliament for the next five years?

For me as a President the main priorities are to organise the European parliament and vote on the next European commission. Relations with the European council and the rotating Spanish Presidency are very important, as are our new relations with national parliaments. This is a new possibility offered by the Lisbon Treaty. We will build connections with national parliaments. Of course, for our citizens we would like to solve the most important problems for them. This is our first responsibility. Energy supply, the economic crisis, creating more jobs, the issues of migration and demographic problems, solving the climate issue and promoting a strong European foreign policy are the priorities of the European Parliament.

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What changes will the Lisbon Treaty bring for the European Parliament?

We are much stronger than we were before. It is clear now that we are responsible for almost all of the EU legislation. This is positive for all the decisions taken at EU level. The Parliament has a key role in cooperating with the Commission and Council and now also in liaison with national parliaments who are now responsible for EU legislation as well. We are trying to respond to the expectations of citizens by doing all that is necessary to build a strong and successful Europe.

Given the high level of abstention at the last European elections, how will the European Parliament reconnect with citizens during your mandate?

We are trying to do a number of things to change this tendency. Our contacts with national parliaments will bring us closer to our citizens. We have introduced retransmissions on TV and on-line of our committee meetings. This on-line transmission could be interesting for citizens. We are also seeking to find ways of informing the public that are similar to national parliaments. The "question time" session with the President of the European Commission will be similar to what citizens know in their national parliaments when deputies can ask questions of their Government. This is watched by citizens at national level and it could be of interest for them to follow this at EU level as well. Introducing some of these parliamentary features at EU level, which are familiar, should help us reconnect with citizens. After all, national elections have usually a higher turnout than European elections.

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