

Letter by President Barroso to the Members of the European Parliament

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Letter by President of the European Commission Barroso to the Members of the European Parliament, September 7, 2010, Strasbourg

"Dear President Buzek,

One year ago I presented my political guidelines for the next five years to the European Parliament and I proposed a special relationship between the Parliament and the Commission. I am pleased to see that in the few short months since the present College of Commissioners took office we have been able to give political and practical meaning to that approach. In particular it was important to conclude our new Framework Agreement quickly so that we have a clear and agreed framework for our relations.

As you know, our Framework Agreement makes important changes in the way the Commission adopts its Work Programme. It foresees that the adoption of the Work Programme will be preceded by discussions between our institutions on the political priorities for the Union. It also includes the provision that the President of the Commission will make a State of the European Union speech to the plenary. In parallel with delivering this address, I would like to provide you with an outline of the main elements guiding the preparation of the Commission Work Programme. This should support an exchange of views between the Commission and Parliament which will help the Commission to finalise its work programme for 2011 by the end of October as foreseen in the Framework Agreement.

As you will see from this letter, there will be a strong emphasis on economic matters for the rest of 2010 and in the Commission's next Work Programme. This reflects the continuing priority to tackle the economic crisis. We will be tabling proposals and pursuing policies that aim to get the EU economy into better shape and also front loading proposals that can help to boost sustainable growth and create new jobs. These should give hope to our citizens throughout the EU and demonstrate the real added value of action at EU level. We hope that we can secure the agreement of the European Parliament and the Council to programme "fast track" negotiations on certain key proposals central to economic recovery and job creation. This would show how our decision-making system is able to respond to particular needs and particular urgencies.

In the rest of this letter I have grouped the main elements we are considering for our future Work Programme under the following headings:

Economic governance and financial services regulation

The Commission has presented ideas which have framed the debate on strengthening economic policy governance in the EU and the euro area. The cornerstone is enhanced surveillance of fiscal policies,

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macroeconomic policies and structural reforms. This should be backed up by firm enforcement mechanisms to prevent or correct the excesses that could endanger growth and jeopardize our common financial stability.

The Commission has moved quickly to implement the necessary adjustments to the "code of conduct" of the Stability and Growth Pact and will continue to take action on the measures falling under its direct competence. We will table legislative proposals at the end of September. These proposals will be obvious candidates for an inter-institutional programming agreement to "fast track" consideration and adoption of texts.

The European Parliament is very actively engaged in co-deciding the new regulatory framework for the EU's financial services sector. As we set out in June, the Commission will complete its financial reform programme by making further proposals including a set of crisis management tools for prevention and resolution of failing banks, improved market transparency, sanctions against market abuse, further strengthening of the bank capital rules and initiatives to improve corporate governance in the financial sector. In the coming days we will present legislative proposals to bring transparency and security to derivatives markets, and to address the issue of naked short selling including credit default swaps. Most of these proposals will be adopted by the Commission this autumn, with the rest to follow early next year, thus also ensuring that we have delivered on our international commitments to the G 20. We will want to work closely with the Parliament to accelerate decisions on these proposals.

The 2011 Work Programme will include:

- » The ongoing work to complete and conclude a new framework for economic governance, including legislative proposals.

- » The final measures to complete the comprehensive reform of the European financial system : MIFID review; UCITS rules on depositories and remuneration; legislation on packaged retail investment products; further amendments to the credit rating agencies regulation; legislation on crisis management and bank resolution funds; legislation on corporate governance. The Commission will also follow up on the conclusions to be reached this autumn in areas like taxes on the financial sector.

Europe 2020 - a growth strategy for the EU

The Commission's proposals for a new growth strategy for the EU are now established as the core framework for the future. The underlying assumption of Europe 2020 is that Europe's recovery and future are dependent on pursuing smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, with quantified goals and concrete actions at EU and national level. This has been widely welcomed and was endorsed by the European Council in June. Now work turns to implementing the strategy, with a particular focus on frontloading its growth enhancing elements. The Commission has already launched its Digital Agenda flagship and by the end of this year the Commission will present other key Flagship Initiatives, including on the Innovation Union, Industrial Policy, Youth on the Move, New Skills and Jobs and the Platform against Poverty. We will also take forward key elements of the EU flagship on resource efficiency, in particular in energy and transport, in coherence with our overall climate change strategy. A landmark for 2011 will clearly be the first year's implementation of the 2020 approach, with the Annual Growth Survey early in 2011 launching the new European semester of policy coordination.

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The right social platform for modernising Europe

Our societies are based on a social model, where growth and welfare, competitiveness and inclusion complement each other. It is a unique model, which provides opportunities for all, but which must also be constantly developed to be effective. In the face of the current crisis our efforts must focus on fighting unemployment by creating jobs. We must act, support, train and encourage, wherever there are possibilities. The EU must work with governments and social partners to ensure that we pursue all possible routes to creating worthwhile and sustainable jobs. In line with the commitments I made to Parliament, the Commission will propose to revise the Working Time Directive and will make a legislative proposal on the interpretation of the Posted Workers Directive.

Europe 2020 has recognised the central role of education as a foundation stone to build prosperity and social justice. The EU needs to look at the contribution it can make to help national governments reach their 2020 targets.

Also to be included in measures under the 2011 Work programme are:

- » A revision of the 2005 package on Services of General Interest, in particular in the light of the quality framework for public and social services

- » Initiatives on the European dimension in modernising higher education, in particular universities, and on ensuring equity in education

Unlocking the potential of the Single Market

The Single Market is one of the main achievements of European integration and our strongest asset to bolster competitiveness and create jobs. Drawing on the comprehensive report prepared at my request by Mario Monti, the Commission will present an ambitious "Single Market Act" containing a list of priority legislative and other proposals, to be tabled during 2011, all aiming at having direct benefits for companies and citizens. The "Single Market Act" will include improvements to public procurement rules, proposals for a common consolidated corporate tax base (CCCTB) and sustained efforts to reduce roaming charges for citizens in a borderless Europe, and the development of a framework for electronic identity and authentication. The target should be to make a real difference for SMEs and other key players in the single market.

European civil law offers additional possibilities for facilitating cross-border operations by plugging the holes in the Single Market. Frequent concerns of small and medium size enterprises include how to draw up a contract or how to get paid for goods or services delivered.

The 2011 work programme will include:

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Measures to be set out in the Single Market Act

- » A European framework of reference for contract law and action against the obstacles that businesses and citizens meet when trying to recover debt claims in other Member States. When access to capital is limited, rapid enforcement of claims is essential for the survival of businesses

- » An assessment of progress on the development of roaming services

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- » Revised rules on the re-use of public sector information

- » The conclusion of work on collective redress

- » Defining how the EU can contribute to addressing the huge challenge of pension reform

Smart regulation

In elaborating its proposals, the Commission will observe the highest standards of smart regulation and have a strong horizontal and soundly based approach to policy making, based on an integrated system of impact assessment and in respect of the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity. We will continue to make proposals to reduce the administrative burden on economic operators, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and are committed to working with other institutions to develop this approach.

The Commission will also continue its work to ensure sound and accountable financial management of the EU budget. It will work closely with the European Parliament and Council on the regulatory framework governing OLAF, the EU's anti fraud office.

Moving to a resource-efficient society

A core pillar of Europe 2020 is the need to generate more growth using fewer resources. European society needs a vision which promotes the long-term redirection of our economy towards truly sustainable growth. This means integrating the different strands of policy on climate change, energy, transport and the environment into a coherent approach on resource efficiency and a low carbon future. This should feed into preparations for the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012.

It is also clear that agriculture will play a major role in addressing some of the biggest challenges such as global food security, halting biodiversity loss and the sustainable management of our natural resources. Therefore the Commission will propose a substantial reform of the common agricultural policy to modernise it and make it responsive to the expectations of European society which wants a sustainable, competitive and environmentally friendly agricultural sector.

The EU will continue to lead the fight against climate change - both in our internal and external policies. We will continue to put in place the building blocks of the world's most ambitious programme of action to combat climate change, as well as seeking to conclude a global agreement to deliver the ambitious cuts in emissions we need.

In the coming months, energy policy will be high on our agenda, serving the established objectives of competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply. This year will already see the presentation of an energy action plan, which will be a strategy document laying out the priority action points for 2011-2020. This will be backed up by work to create the right environment for the modernisation of European energy infrastructure.

The 2011 Work programme will include:

- » Charting a low-carbon economy to 2050, and setting out the scenarios within which the EU can
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revolutionise energy and transport in the decades ahead

- » Proposals to mainstream climate change into EU policies

- » Proposals for the modernisation and reform of the common agricultural policy

- » An energy efficiency strategy mapping out how to reach the target of 20% for 2020, for example in the building, utility and transport sectors

- » Putting in place the right regulatory framework to pave the way for energy infrastructure, and prioritising smart grids in particular

- » A new approach to Europe's strategic transport infrastructure

- » A comprehensive look at the issue of airport capacity to boost competition, better serve consumers's interests and improve airports's environmental performance.

- » A new era for the Common Fisheries Policy

Citizens's involvement

The Commission will make proposals to strengthen citizen's rights as they move across borders. We should also aim to finalise work on the Citizens's Initiative, so that Europeans can fully enjoy this increase in their participatory rights.

The EU should continue to promote the direct relevance of its policies for citizens and to promote a distinctively European dimension to reflect the EU's cultural richness and diversity.

Making the EU a safer place

The Lisbon Treaty grants the EU new competences to help turn Europe into a more open space, where it will be easier to move around or conduct business, but also into a safer place, where an effective internal security strategy ensures that criminals and terrorists cannot exploit gaps in the system. The Commission has put forward a very ambitious programme for the coming years - the Stockholm Programme Action Plan - and we are determined to maintain the balance it reflects between the need for security and the imperative of freedom.

The millions of travellers crossing borders each day do not want a sudden rise in the burdens they face. We have to be open for international exchanges and see the economic benefits of international exposure. Immigration is a key resource for European society. But it needs to enjoy the confidence of citizens. This means a common immigration policy, with a clear distinction between legal and illegal immigration, and

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a system which properly manages the challenge of asylum. Next year we will suggest complementing the legal migration package that we have started to put in place since 2005. We will also pursue action in the field of illegal immigration, in partnership with countries of origin.

The 2011 Work Programme will include:

- » A proposal to support to victims of crime

- » The comprehensive legal framework for the protection of personal data in the EU

- » Developing work to ensure the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and parental responsibility

- » Proposals to make travelling easier for visitors while also controlling our external borders more effectively, with a Registered Traveller Programme and an Entry/Exit System

The next multiannual Financial Framework

The Commission will present its proposal for the next multiannual financial framework next year. Our spending must reflect the main challenges that Europe is facing and it must contribute to achieving our key policy objectives, in particular the Europe 2020 strategy. As a leading principle, the EU budget should be targeted to policies where it can make a difference and bring real added value. At the same time, the Union's system of Own Resources needs modernisation and rationalisation.

The Commission's Budget Review, to be presented in the coming weeks, will provide a good opportunity to discuss the main principles and options that should shape the next multiannual financial framework. The key landmarks in 2011 will include:

- » The core proposals for a new Multiannual Financial Framework, in the first half of 2011

- » Detailed proposals for the next generation of spending programmes. Particular landmarks will include the legislation to govern the Common Agricultural Policy from 2013; on policies for cohesion, tackling unemployment and for implementing the structural reforms of Europe 2020; on galvanising innovation and developing transport and energy infrastructure and inter connections as well as pursuing the digital agenda. Also key will be instruments to build up the Union's external policies and to apply policies in the areas of citizenship and freedom, security and justice.

A new direction in external relations

The EU's new structures for external policy, created by the Lisbon Treaty, will soon be up and running in full. The Commission will continue to support the new European External Action Service with which we will cooperate very closely.

With the structures in place, we now have an opportunity to promote a comprehensive and cohesive

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policy on the key external challenges we face today, focusing our efforts on strategic partners, and demonstrating that the EU is capable of speaking with one voice as a strong and reliable partner. The Commission will present its vision of how we can maximise the EU's role in the world to mark the first year of implementation of the Lisbon Treaty.

Part and parcel of this approach is to advance our values and our interests in a coordinated way across the whole range of EU external instruments. For the Commission, this must include an effective development policy, focused where it can have a real impact on those in need. Helping those affected by humanitarian catastrophes remains a central building block of the EU's world wide engagement; proposals to ensure that the EU can respond to humanitarian crises swiftly and effectively should be put in place as quickly as possible.

To ensure that the advantages of open trade can benefit to all, this autumn's new trade policy strategy will push for a further opening of the international economy both at multilateral and bilateral level. With our new international investment strategy the Commission has started to take on its new exclusive competence on foreign direct investment and set out the principal strategic orientations of EU investment policy while maintaining full legal certainty for investors through transitional arrangements. We look forward to cooperating with Parliament and Council to flesh out this strategy with concrete initiatives.

The 2011 Work Programme will include:

- » A major review of EU development policy and the European Consensus on Development, building on the review of the MDGs at the New York High Level Event

- » An adaptation of the scheme for trading preferences for developing countries, to apply as of end 2014

- » A major reworking of the instruments for humanitarian aid

- » Further strengthening of our crisis response capacity through proposals for pooling Member State capacity and logistics

- » Taking forward the enlargement process on the basis of the approach to be presented by the Commission in November 2010

- » A revised Neighbourhood Policy

In conclusion I hope that the new approach to programming that we have agreed will provide a strong basis for inter-institutional cooperation. The work of the Conference of Committee Chairs in the form of their summary report has already given valuable input into our reflections. I look forward to receiving

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the input of Parliament following a process of consultation between individual Commissioners and the relevant Committees, and to reviewing the whole process with you and the Conference of Presidents prior to the final adoption of the Work Programme by the College."

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