

KEY ISSUES**Run-up to the European Council (29-30 October)**

The Parliament sent clear messages to the European Leaders during a debate on the preparation of next week's European Council.

On the fight against Climate Change, 'Copenhagen is one of the most important decisions to take', said S&D Vice-President Hannes Swoboda. 'We need binding objectives, not general statements'.

Turning to the economy and employment in Europe, he added that it is provocative to see how bonuses are again paid, clearly showing 'managers still do not understand how things should be in the new financial system and their responsibility towards the people'.

Vice-President Swoboda asked for new stimulus to promote employment and welcomed the emerging consensus on employment policy for the coming years, after both Council and Commission identified employment as the most important problem.

On the Lisbon Treaty, he said 'institutional and personal questions should not jeopardize a Treaty that stands for more democracy, more parliamentary control and more efficiency'.

2010 Budget: funding the recovery plan and dairy fund

The European Parliament's basis for the coming negotiations with the Council on the EU 2010 budget (first reading of the budget) was adopted by 528 votes in favour, 68 against with 39 abstentions. Vladimír Manka's report on the institutions' administrative budgets was adopted by a show of hands.

The Parliament broadly restored the Commission's Preliminary draft budget after Council's cuts, but voted more money for two spending priorities:

- € 1,5 billion 'fresh money' for the recovery plan, rather than taking money from other budget lines;
- € 300 million for the dairy fund;

An S&D amendment to increase the dairy fund to € 600 million was not put to the vote and the Group then reluctantly voted to secure the € 300 million. According to S&D Spokesperson on Agriculture, Luís Capoulas Santos, 'the EU could do more for milk producers'. S&D Vice-President Stéphane Le Foll added this is 'too little, too late'.

'The budget needs to be a tool not only for growth, but also for equity and justice', said S&D Shadow Rapporteur Francesca Balzani. The final budget will be put to the vote in December.

Freedom of information in Italy and other Member States – no resolution

Members of Parliament rejected two joint resolutions on the freedom of information in Italy and other Member States. All group resolutions were voted down as well.

Despite a unanimously united S&D Group, the S&D, ALDE, Greens and GUE joint resolution received 338 votes against, 335 in favour, with 13 abstentions. The EPP, ECR and EFD resolution was rejected by 322 votes to 297 with 25 abstentions.

The debate took place during the last session.

SAKHAROV PRIZE

And the winner is...

The Russian civil rights defence organization Memorial, and their representatives Oleg Orlov, Sergei Kovalev and Lyudmila Alexeyeva, as well as all other human rights defenders in Russia were awarded the European Parliament's 2009 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

The prize ceremony will take place on December, 16.

IN SHORT

First Question Hour to the President of the Commission

S&D Vice-President responsible for Economic and Social Policy, Stephen Hughes, stressed the need for a further stimulus and for the promotion of green and youth jobs. He called for a labour market entry strategy, 'aimed at protecting viable employment and creating new jobs, in promoting intelligent work sharing' and on a single strategic platform 'to bring together all key actors to work together on growth, innovation and jobs in each sector'.

During the 'catch-the-eye', Pervenche Berès, Chair of the Employment committee, asked what mandate and what attribution of portfolios were foreseen for the new Commission so that it helps Europe out of the crisis. Alejandro Cercas, S&D Coordinator for that committee, stressed the need for the Commission to play a leading role in order to 'give hope to a whole generation of Europeans'.

European External Action Service

MEPs voted a report stating that the European External Action Service should be part of the Commission set-up and fall within the EU budget, as it is fundamental to preserve the community model in the Union's external relations.

[Read the full report.](#)

EU-US Summit

Ahead of the EU-US Summit, to be held in Washington on 2-3 November, the Parliament adopted a resolution on transatlantic relations and on a reinforced partnership to deal with common global challenges. Vice-President Hannes Swoboda stressed that there is now space for a new cooperation - on the common transatlantic market, on climate change - and that US policy should not discriminate between the Europeans. Vice-President Véronique de Keyser insisted on a strategy for Afghanistan, including civil presence, and based on stabilisation, poverty eradication and the development of the country.

[Read the resolution.](#)

APPROACHING

- Group Delegation to the United States;
- EP Plenary Sessions: 11-12 November (in Brussels) and 23-26 November (in Strasbourg);
- Joint Parliamentary Forum on the Stockholm Programme 'Building a Citizen's Europe' - 16-17 November, in Brussels
- Hearings of the new Commissioners (exact date to be confirmed).

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