

Speech by Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament, to the European Council
Brussels -

10/12/2009

Dear Presidents,
Dear Prime Ministers
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate the European Council. When we met last time, we did not have the nominations. I would like to express my congratulations to you.

The European Parliament is determined to carry out all the work needed to have all the EU institutions fully operational.

(We would welcome the proposal on initiating a procedure for the new 18 MEPs to be decided on during the European Council)

On 11th January, the Parliament will start holding hearings for all the Commissioners-designate. We will check whether the nominees are suitable for the posts they are to hold.

Much is expected of the new Commission. It therefore needs to be a 'winning team', made up of Europe's best and brightest.

It will be a transparent process. The hearings will be fully accessible to the public, not least through our web television.

One of our next steps is to set up the European External Action Service. Europe needs to speak with a strong voice. The service should reflect the diversity and strength of an EU of 27 Member States. That is why we should not forget about geographical balance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is our first meeting since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force.

We have the new Treaty in place. We must implement its provisions quickly and efficiently. The European Parliament is ready to do so without unnecessary delay. We expect the same from the Council and Commission. We should recall that the Lisbon Treaty requires new procedures for cooperation between the European institutions. The Parliament is willing and able to rise to the challenge.

Today, the most important policy issue currently facing us is climate change. This is true for this meeting as well. Finding a solution in Copenhagen is not an easy task. Time is against us. The world's eyes are on Copenhagen and on true global leadership.

We are looking for swift, binding, global decisions.

We have called on the developed countries to reduce emissions by 25 to 40% by 2020, and expect developing countries to achieve cuts of between 15 and 30%. We know approximately how much this will cost the Union - no less than 30 billion euro per year. It is important for this burden to be shared fairly among the Member States. We should respect the principle of mutual solidarity.

This meeting is decisive. This meeting will determine the funding for the immediate aid required by developing countries from next year to 2012, - before the new agreement comes into force.

I call upon you: 'Put a figure on the table!'. We demanded this in the European Parliament resolution in November.

As I have stated many times, climate change and energy are absolutely linked. The Lisbon Treaty gives us new possibilities in terms of energy solidarity. We are very close to creating a true European Energy Community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let's be frank with each other, the Lisbon Strategy has proved useful, but it has not produced the expected results.

So we must redouble our efforts. We must learn the lessons of what went right and what went wrong.

The Commission's new 'EU 2020 Strategy' is geared to building a more modern and greener social-market economy. It has the potential to help steer Europe out of the current crisis. It should also help to prevent similar crises from occurring in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Next year, we will be conducting a review of the EU Budget. We will be starting discussions on a new multiannual financial framework. We need forward-looking budgets for 2014 and beyond. Budgets that will provide properly for all of our targets and goals.

The new multiannual financial framework must enable us to develop the single market. The long-term EU budget must also pursue economic reform still further. We must invest in the skills we need for a competitive and innovative economy. It must also give a central role to a modernised cohesion policy encompassing the entire Union. A cohesion policy that we may use - as we have done this year - to mitigate the impact of crises and combat climate change. EU Cohesion policy must help us rid the Union of its continuing disparities in development.

Ladies and gentleman.

Today you will be adopting the Stockholm Programme. The European Parliament expects the programme to deliver better police, judicial and customs cooperation between the 27 Member States. We see it as an up-dated version of the Hague Programme that will help bolster citizens' rights and make Europe a safer place in which to live.

Ladies in gentleman

In conclusion, we have to create momentum for the European economy. We can do this by identifying and implementing a major European project by 2020. The single market, a Europe without internal borders and the creation of euro were milestones in European integration.

What is next? Today, we need to think outside of the box - Where can we create real European added value?

The European Union needs new "grands projets". We need to be brave and take risks and be open to blue-sky thinking. 40 years ago, man landed on the moon. At that time we did not know the potential benefits of this great project. It led to new technologies being developed which benefit ordinary citizens on a daily basis. Europe needs to show the same courage and creativity.

Is it the green economy, space policy, defence? Or perhaps a true European Energy Community? I leave you Presidents and Prime Ministers with this thought for this meeting and the future to come.

Thank you very much.

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