

# THE EUROPEAN

Issue 5-December 2009

## The European Movement in London Newsletter

### Committee news

This month sees the completion of a long and complicated process of institutional engineering in the EU with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December. We plan to celebrate this important development at our Christmas Dinner on Thursday 3 December (for more details see the 'Date for the Diary' section at the end of our Newsletter).

The December issue features another article from an MEP, this time we have Charles Tannock, Conservative MEP, contributing. We are grateful for the opportunity to hear first hand details on MEPs activities in Brussels and Strasbourg.

The Committee

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### The View from Brussels

As the Co-ordinator on the Foreign Affairs committee for my new group I have been active in drafting the section on Montenegro (where I am country EP rapporteur for the next 2.5 years) for the Albertini report on EU Enlargement Strategy. The Conservatives support enlargement generally and regard the enlargement process as essential to drive reforms against corruption, organised crime and inter-communal strife especially in the western Balkans, where a terrible bloodshed took place a decade ago.

I also recently spent 4 days in Edinburgh attending the NATO

Parliamentary Assembly plenary in my capacity as Vice-Chairman of the EP delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. This enabled networking with national MPs from 40 countries who are members of the NATO Partnership for Peace and of course the main topic was the war in Afghanistan and the need to stay the course. The point was also made that our NATO allies must pull their weight more because global security no longer starts at national borders but in far away places such as Afghanistan. Allowing Afghanistan to return to a Taliban regime threatens not just stability in south and central Asia but also that of nuclear armed Pakistan. Not to mention that an unstable Afghanistan will serve as a base for global jihadism, increasing the threat of possible future attacks in European capitals.



Source: European Parliament

In the November 2009 plenary in Strasbourg I was co-author and spoke in the debate on EU-Russia relations ahead of the forthcoming summit. I believe that Russia is sadly turning its back on our shared common values of democracy and human rights. We do need to engage more with Russia over issues like energy security and nuclear non proliferation but at the same time we need to firmly rebutting their outdated concepts of near abroad and

the existence of special spheres of influence. It is such notions that leads them to believe they can veto EU and NATO enlargement to European countries like Ukraine which are now independent and occupy militarily parts of countries like Georgia.

In January 2010 the enhanced powers under the Lisbon Treaty become evident as for the first time the EP holds in my committee a confirmation hearing for the nomination of the High Representative along with the entire new Barroso Commission in the different committees of Parliament. This High Rep is a powerful post and we must have a suitable candidate to do this job whether we approve of the office or not. Similarly the new External Action Service will kick in and MEPs with their budgetary powers must maintain scrutiny in the way it works and gives value for money to the taxpayer. In December the climate change conference in Copenhagen will be uppermost in all our minds even for those of us not directly involved as climate change impacts on all aspects of our life including global security as small Pacific and very large south Asian countries face being flooded and the polar caps melt and there is a scramble for natural resources in the high north.

The work schedule now in the new Parliament is beginning to accelerate as we also envisage a barrage of new legislation targeted at the financial services sector such as the alternative investment fund directive aimed at regulating hedge funds and private equity. Although again not my direct brief but as it materially affects the City of London I have maintained more than a passing interest as it winds its way through Parliament.

Charles Tannock, MEP (Conservative)

### [EU leaders make appointments for new EU posts.](#)

On 19 November the European Council appointed Belgian PM Herman Van Rompuy to be the first President of the European Council and Baroness Catherine Ashton to take over the enhanced post of High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. Mr Van Rompuy will chair the European Council meetings, facilitating the work of the Council, offering continuity and communicating the policies of EU Member States. Baroness Ashton will head the new EU diplomatic service, chair the External Relations Council and be one of the Commission's Vice-Presidents.

The appointment of two somewhat unknown politicians signals Member States' reluctance to relinquish leadership of the EU project to individuals that could dominate rather than co-ordinate EU policy. It is worth noting though that the appointments aim to do exactly what the Lisbon Treaty envisions, make decision-making in the EU more effective and efficient. Policy making will remain the domain of Member States, the President of the Council as we all as the High representative are there to co-ordinate and communicate the common positions of the EU, rather than come up with them.

This very fact disappointed many of those who were hoping that the newly created posts would allow the EU to increase its influence on the international stage. But it is policies, not individuals alone, which make the difference. The institutional innovations that the Lisbon Treaty introduces provide for the necessary decision-making mechanisms that will enable

the Union to adopt more quickly and more effectively common positions necessary to defend the interests of its citizens successfully and promote globally principles like democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, economic co-operation etc. that lie at the core of the European integration project. Ultimately, what really matters is that the EU is capable of agreeing such common policies, not who will be the individual who will communicate them to other world leaders.

Petros Fassoulas

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### [Barroso nominates new European Commission.](#)

On Friday 27 November Commission President Manuel Barroso announced his appointments for the [next European Commission](#). With Britain securing the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy for Baroness Ashton, making her one of the Vice-Chairs of the Commission, the 'battle' focused on who will get one of the influential economic portfolios. The French managed to secure the important Internal Market and Services portfolio for Michel Barnier, a former Commissioner and Foreign Minister. One of the most powerful portfolios, that of Competition policy, was given to Mr Almunia of Spain. Economic and Monetary Affairs was allocated to Ollie Rehn of Finland. Germany got Energy, and by not competing for one of the economic jobs signalled its intention to go after the Presidency of the European Central Bank when Mr Trichet's terms of office runs out in 2011.



Source: European Commission

Mr Barnier's appointment has been hailed as a triumph for French diplomacy by Mr Sarkozy, causing alarm in the City and generating a strong response from Mr. Darling. The truth of the matter is that Sarkozy's comments were mostly for internal consumption. A Commissioner can propose but not impose policy, legislative proposals are made collectively by the College of Commissioners, requiring the agreement of all 27 Commissioners. Furthermore, the decision making process in the EU leaves up to the Council and the EP the final prerogative on the shape and nature of the legislation adopted. It is thus very important for every British Government to remain engaged in the decision-making process in the Council if it wants to influence legislative developments. It is also important to continue working constructively as part of the mainstream in the European Parliament.

The next step in the process is the confirmation hearings in the European Parliament, which are due to take place from 11 to 19 January 2010. Commissioners-designate are required to appear before the relevant EP Committee and present their programme for the next 5 years. Following the hearings the EP is expected to vote on 26 January in Plenary on whether to approve the Commission or not. The EP has the power to dismiss Mr Barroso's appointments, and MEPs have in the past refused to confirm the

appointment of Commissioners-designate. MEPs also make, in some cases, confirmation conditional to certain policy guarantees.

The new Commission is expected to take up office on 1 February 2010.

Petros Fassoulas

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**[Commission launches Public Consultation on new EU 2020 Strategy to replace the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs.](#)**

A sustainable social market economy which is smarter and greener is the new vision for Europe in 2020 proposed by the European Commission and which is currently under public consultation. The key drivers for the new vision are knowledge, innovation and better use of resources.

EU 2020 replaces the Lisbon Strategy, and its revised 2005 version that signalled an emphasis on 'growth and jobs'. There are distinct improvements from this position which had been widely criticised due to having focused on individualism and competition at the expense of the European Social model. The new vision sets Education and skills back at the heart of the future of Europe. Education is considered the tool for both economic recovery through innovation and high level research, and social inclusion through the wider provision of basic skills and the prevention of early school leavers.

In terms of social cohesion it is the Danish system of flexicurity which is promoted as the solution for Europe, a system that encompasses a high level of social protection with a flexible labour force. Along with this system there is a strong social inclusion

agenda in the area of employment that addresses some of the barriers faced by marginal groups who find difficulties in the labour markets such as migrants, women and those in poverty.

Another of the most notable of improvements on the Lisbon strategy are the central place reserved for climate change measures highlighting the need for conserving energy through the regulated targets for reducing CO2 emissions, tax reforms, grants and public investment for research and innovation.

The text picks up from the revised 2005 Lisbon strategy with the major lines on competition, the single market, with competition remaining as the fundamental element for economic success. However, little guidance is given on how to manage the balance between competition, social inclusion and sustainability.

The major limitation of the 2020 strategy is in terms of improving the democratic processes for taking policy decisions. The Council has been highlighted as the driver of the implementation of the strategy but the European Parliament's role and the role of social partners is limited. The European Parliament is encouraged to express its view on the EU2020 to the 2010 Spring Council. Whilst, the social partners are only asked to actively support the implementation process and are not described as partners in the dialogue of constructing these policies.

Finally, a public internet consultation is a good idea for gaining the views of the citizens but only allowing less than 1 month for the process leaves little time for deliberation. The closing date for submission of responses to the

consultation is the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010. However, the Commission will publish all entries on their website so visitors will be able to see for themselves to what extent public opinion has been used within the final version of EU 2020. The links for the consultation document are attached at the end of this article and so is the link for submitting a response to the consultation. Individuals, organisations and public authorities are encouraged to participate.

To read the EU 2020 European Commission working document  
[http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/eu2020\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/eu2020_en.pdf)

To submit your opinion to the public consultation  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat\\_general/eu2020/consultation\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/eu2020/consultation_en.htm)

Dr Bryony Hoskins

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### Dates for the Diary – December-January

- **3 December, EMiL Christmas Dinner**, 19.00. Val Toro Restaurant and Wine Bar 32 Orange Street, WC2H 7HQ
- **7 January, Committee Meeting** (agenda will be made available on the website and facebook page).
- **21 January, EMiL Monthly Social** at 18.30 at the Royal Horseguard Hotel, Whitehall, London.