

### Committee news

After a short absence due to the August break in Brussels the EMiL Newsletter is back with a variety of reports on what has been going on in the EU during September. This issue features a new section, 'The View from Brussels', which will host every month different MEPs sharing their views on what is happening in the home of the EU institutions.

In other developments the national AGM took place on 12 September in Birmingham and was attended by several members of the European Movement in London. A new National Council was elected, which subsequently met in London on 3 October to elect the new National Executive. To see the election results please click [here](#). The Branches Forum met at the margins of both meetings.

Last but not least, EMiL now has its own Twitter page. Follow us at <http://twitter.com/EMinL>

The Committee

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### The View from Brussels

The EU may seem remote. But, even if unreported, there is a great deal going on.

The newly-elected European Parliament assembled in July - and UK Liberal Democrats punched far above their weight. We acquired a key

committee chair, a vice-presidency of the parliament, and a Quaestor (myself, elected to see that the parliament is run for its members and not for the euro version of Sir Humphrey). Not a bad haul for only 11 MEPs out of 736 in all.

The Tories have got themselves into an awful mess. Their MEPs used to be closely allied with the largest party, the Christian-Democrat MEPs, with the approval of Mrs Thatcher. This gave them enormous leverage for winning legislative votes, deciding expenditure, and future EU policy. But, Cameron and Hague have been very foolish indeed, and have damaged the UK's vital interests, by withdrawing their MEPs from the powerful alliance in order to appease right-wing MPs in the Commons. His MEPs have ended up in a small group of no importance with strange bedfellows on the right-wing of politics. If ever - heaven forbid - Cameron and co get into power, he would find he had seriously damaged Britain's ability to influence EU laws and EU positions in the world.



Source: European Parliament

The Lisbon Treaty will heap new democratic responsibilities onto the European Parliament. Come and visit us in Brussels : the parliament is a vibrant, very open, place, bubbling with ideas and opinions, and real power.

You can sit at the back of a committee and listen to debates - about Climate Change and the world summit at Copenhagen in December, about the world financial crisis, about every aspect of our citizens' lives where European cooperation is more effective than isolated action by an individual country.

The Treaty will also affect the other legislative chamber, the Council of Ministers. It will have to hold its meetings in public from now on, so we can all see what goes on - impossible until now.

Bill Newton Dunn, MEP (Liberal Democrats)

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### Barroso re-elected for another term

José Manuel Barroso was re-elected as Commission president on 16 September. 382 MEPs (out of the 718 present) voted for Mr. Barroso giving him an absolute majority. Mr. Barroso ran unopposed so he needed the biggest possible endorsement from the directly elected European Parliament. A simple majority would have undermined his effort to assert his authority during his 5 year term in office. Mr. Barroso had the support of the centre-right EPP and the Tories' anti-federalist Conservative and Reform Group. He secured the support of the European Liberal party just days before the ballot, after satisfying a series of conditions their leader, former Belgian PM Guy Verhofstadt, had laid down as a condition for his party's support.



Source: European Commission

Mr. Barroso is now expected to nominate his Commission. The process of horse-trading, political deals and positioning among the Member States and European political families that characterizes the allocation of Commission portfolios has already begun but until the ratification process in Poland and the Czech Republic is complete Barroso is keeping his cards close to his chest.

Petros Fassoulas

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### Ireland votes in favour of Lisbon Treaty

The Irish voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Lisbon Treaty. The final result of the referendum was:

YES: 67.1%

NO: 32.9%

58% of the population turned out to vote.

Ratification is still pending in Poland and the Czech Republic. MPs in both countries have voted in favour of the Lisbon Treaty. But the signatures of the Polish and Czech Presidents are required for the new rules to come into force. Polish President Lech Kaczynski has previously indicated that he will sign the document as long as the Irish vote in favour. Mr Klaus, his Czech counterpart, a critic of the Lisbon Treaty, is keeping his cards close to his chest and has said that he will await the Czech Constitutional Court's ruling to a complaint against the Treaty handed by 17 Czech senators (from

Mr Klaus party) before signing the document. The hearing is expected to take place around the end of November and the timing of the ruling has not been confirmed.

That has caused a certain degree of uncertainty regarding the appointment of the new Commission (the current Commission's term in office expires at the end of October) as well as the appointment of a permanent President of the EU Council and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs, two posts created by the Lisbon Treaty. Even if the Treaty has not been ratified by the end of October the current Commission's mandate can be prolonged until a new Commission is appointed. But that means that several initiatives that were possibly awaiting the appointment of the new portfolio chiefs will be delayed until the new Commissioners are in place.

Despite the ensuing uncertainty, horse-trading among Member States and European political groups about who will get what post has already commenced.

Petros Fassoulas

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### [Commission proposes new supervisory architecture for the financial sector](#)

On 23 September the Commission adopted a package of draft legislative proposals intended to strengthen the supervision of the financial sector in Europe. At the heart of these proposals is the creation of:

- a **European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB)** to monitor and assess risks to the stability of the financial system as a whole ("macro-prudential supervision"). The ESRB will provide early warning of systemic risks that may be building up and, where

necessary, recommendations for action to deal with these risks. and;

- a **European System of Financial Supervisors (ESFS)** for the supervision of individual financial institutions ("micro-prudential supervision"), consisting of a network of national financial supervisors working together with new European Supervisory Authorities, created by the transformation of existing Committees for the banking securities and insurance and occupational pensions sectors. There will be a European Banking Authority (EBA), a European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA), and a European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA).

This package of proposals is now passed to the European Parliament and Council. Adoption is expected during 2010.

Petros Fassoulas

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### [The new European Commission vision for supporting young people in Europe](#)

Employment, Health, Education and young citizens in the world are the new focus for a strategy for young people in the European Union from 2010-2018. These ideas were set out by the European Commission in their Swedish Presidency event held on the 12-14 September in Stockholm and are contained in the EC communication, 'An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering'. European Union youth policy, which is now more than 10 year old, has previously focused on anti-discrimination, volunteering, non-formal education and participation. However, the priorities have changed due to the current economic crises hitting in particular young peoples' lives through increased unemployment

and greater competition for education and training policy. The new policy focus is more cross-sectorial and aims at mainstreaming youth within wider policy circles. It is intended to support national youth ministers with greater cooperation with other ministries which have traditionally larger budgets and greater power. The challenge for this new direction is to assure this cooperation between ministries whilst at the same time maintain the distinctiveness of the youth field and thus to maintain the support of democratic and anti-discrimination values with which youth policy at a European level has been associated.

This policy strategy was under consultation with young people and youth ministers at the Swedish presidency conference and these discussions form part of the structured dialogue between young European citizens and policy development in Europe. The adoption of the new policy which will use the open method of coordination as its tool is likely to occur in council meeting on the 26-27 November.

For more information please visit the links below:

[http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings\\_news/2009/9/12/conference\\_on\\_the\\_future\\_eu\\_cooperation\\_in\\_the\\_youth\\_field](http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/9/12/conference_on_the_future_eu_cooperation_in_the_youth_field)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/news1604\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/news1604_en.htm)

Bryony Hoskins

### Not that expensive after all...

Despite efforts from eurosceptics to over-inflate the 'cost' of EU membership the report on the 2008 EU budget published by the European Commission on 22 September puts things in their right place. The UK's annual net contribution to the EU

budget fell from €4 billion in 2007 to less than €1 billion in 2008. Also the UK rebate went up to €6.25 billion compared to the €5.19 billion the UK got back in 2007.

The report also revealed that the proportion of the EU budget devoted to agriculture fell again and it now represents 37% of the total budget. The biggest proportion on the 2008 budget (40%) was spent on measures linked to growth and competitiveness, with strong emphasis on jobs. Among other things the EU spent €6 billion on research and €1 billion on student mobility programmes like Erasmus.

The total budget for 2008 was €116.5 billion, which represents 0.94% of the EU Gross National Income. The biggest net contributor was Germany, which paid about €8.8 billion more into the 2008 EU budget than it received. On the other hand Greece's net receipts were €6.3 billion, the highest in the EU.

Over 90% of the EU budget's funds or €105bn was spent directly on the ground in the EU's 27 Member States.

Petros Fassoulas

### Dates for the Diary - September

- **12 October, Committee Meeting** (agenda will be available on the website and facebook page shortly).
- **15 October, EMiL Monthly Social** at 18.30 at the Royal Horseguard Hotel, Whitehall, London.