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**Passion and responsibility:
Strengthening Europe in a Time of
Change**

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

European Parliament Plenary

Strasbourg, 15 September 2009

Monsieur le Président du Parlement européen,

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés,

Nous vivons des temps sans précédent – il y a un "avant" la crise financière et un "après".

Cette crise n'est pas seulement une crise financière, économique et sociale, c'est aussi une crise des valeurs.

- économie sociale de marché
- modèle européen de société

En même temps, la crise montre à quel point le monde du XXI^e siècle est devenu interdépendant.

- crise financière
- sécurité énergétique/sécurité alimentaire
- changement climatique
- leadership européen

C'est l'heure de vérité pour l'Europe: voulons-nous façonner la mondialisation à notre manière, en nous fondant sur nos valeurs et nos intérêts – ou allons-nous laisser l'initiative à d'autres et subir une mondialisation façonnée par eux?

Le choix est clair: soit nous relevons le défi ensemble, en reconnaissant notre propre interdépendance, soit nous serons marginalisés.

Nous avons l'expérience pour orienter et guider la mondialisation. L'Union a tous les atouts de ses institutions et politiques communes, et la masse critique d'une Europe à dimension continentale pour relever ce défi. Nous avons l'expérience de 60 ans de coopération supranationale – mais avons-nous aussi la volonté pour être le champion d'une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale?

L'heure n'est ni au statu quo, ni à la routine.

Plus que jamais, nous avons besoin d'une Europe forte – et avec le Traité de Lisbonne, nous serons plus forts demain. Mais plus forte ne signifie pas une centralisation des pouvoirs.

- subsidiarité/solidarité (traité de Lisbonne, volonté politique)

Nous avons besoin d'une Europe qui défend avec intransigeance l'intérêt européen, qui refuse tout protectionnisme et repli sur soi même, sans être naïf.

C'est cet esprit de volontarisme qui a inspiré mes orientations politiques.

- réunification
- nouvelle ambition

Last week, I had the opportunity to expand on that vision, on the basis of my political guidelines, when I met each of your parliamentary groups.

The guidelines have proven a useful springboard. They have enabled me to listen to propositions coming from a wide range of political points of view. It was a privilege to take part in such a diverse and constructive exchange of opinions. And I appreciated the frankness and openness of those exchanges.

The time has now come for us, together, to reach a broad consensus on the way forward. Together, to come to some agreement on the level of ambition and on the policy areas we wish to develop.

Before you all today, I formally pledge that I will apply those political guidelines during my second mandate, if I am confirmed by this Parliament, and that I will translate them, together with the incoming Commissioners, into the next Commission's legislative and work programme.

Now is not the moment to repeat those guidelines in their entirety. However, as a result of the discussions I have had with the different political groups, I'd like to make some of the elements in the guidelines more concrete, and take on board a number of suggestions you have made. In the interests of transparency, I would like to highlight those areas with you all now.

The key message of my political guidelines is clear: as we fully implement our recovery plan, in order to move out of the economic and financial crisis, we must also keep an eye fixed firmly on the future. We must reinvigorate our inclusive, social market economy. We will invest in new sources of sustainable growth. In smart, green growth. In the networks of the future, from digital infrastructure to supergrids for electricity and gas. All this to promote high levels of employment and social cohesion, and to reinforce our European model of society, while succeeding in an increasingly competitive world.

And solidarity must remain the guiding principle of our action. Apart from all the decisions taken and proposed in this crisis, in terms of structural funds and the doubling of balance of payment support, I commit myself to use all the instruments at my disposal to help those Member States with serious budgetary constraints, namely the new Member States, back onto the road to recovery.

We cannot and must not return to the previous growth model: it has clearly proved unsustainable. We have to create the conditions where the transition to a low carbon economy is:

- a source of competitive advantage for business;
- a source of jobs for workers; and
- a source of hope for future generations.

Yes, I agree with those of you who said: co-ordination is not enough. Yes, we need to map out a genuine European agenda. Yes, we need an integrated vision for a coherent *European* strategy. an 'EU 2020' strategy, that builds on open markets by combining new sources of sustainable growth. Employment and social cohesion. Our climate and energy security agenda. A fresh approach to industrial policy. And the move to a knowledge society. I stand for a particular emphasis on innovation and support measures for SMEs.

Yes, this means overhauling the Lisbon Strategy post-2010. Yes, we need a much more integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental strands of the different strategies. We need to link in the Stability and Growth Pact, the completion of the Single Market, our renewed social agenda, competition and state aid policy, the Sustainable Development Strategy, cohesion policy, the European Research Area, and more.

I said it in the guidelines: The economy needs a financial system that is more ethical, robust and responsible. Regulation and supervision have not kept pace with the integration and innovation of financial markets. Not in Europe, not at the global level. And let me say that I have been shocked by the scale of unethical behaviour we have witnessed. We cannot allow a return to business as usual. The issue of bonuses in particular requires urgent action.

We are now in a leading position in the G20. But yes, more needs to be done. Next week, on the eve of the G20 meeting in Pittsburgh, the Commission will adopt proposals to build a true European system of supervision, a system that reflects the integrated nature of our Single Market.

A review of our actions in three years will provide the opportunity to see what further action is needed. It is crucial that we get regulation that ensures the responsibility and legitimacy of the financial sector without suffocating innovation. I want Europe to keep its world leadership in financial services.

In my guidelines, I explained why the crisis calls for a much stronger focus on the social dimension in Europe at all levels of decision making. The financial sector may be showing signs of recovery, but the crisis is not over for those who have lost their jobs. So I would like to make my commitment to high levels of employment and social cohesion even more concrete through a number of actions:

I have clearly stated my attachment to the respect of fundamental social rights and to the principle of free movement of workers. The interpretation and the implementation of the posted workers Directive falls short in both respects. That is why I commit to propose as soon as possible a Regulation to resolve the problems that have arisen. This Regulation will be co-decided by the EP and the Council. A Regulation has the advantage of giving much more legal certainty than the revision of the Directive itself, which would still leave too much room for diverging transposition, and take longer to produce real effects on the ground. If we discover during the preparation of the Regulation that there are areas where we need to revisit the Directive itself: I will not hesitate to do so. And let me be clear: I am committed to fighting social dumping in Europe, whatever form it takes.

The issue of social impact assessments for all future proposals was also raised, and I agree that this is needed. The first test case for such a social impact assessment should be the revision of the working time Directive. On the basis of this impact assessment, the next Commission will consult social partners and will come with a comprehensive legislative proposal.

In the guidelines, I emphasised the importance of Services of General Interest for our European model of society. The Lisbon Treaty makes this point very clear. And yes, I am ready to work with you to develop a quality framework for Services of General Interest.

I also highlighted gender equality and the need to eliminate the gender pay gap. So I now commit myself to working with you on a Women's Charter as a way of commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Conference, in 2010.

In my guidelines, I express my determination to make the Lisbon Treaty innovations in external relations, including the European External Action Service and the post of High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission, work effectively. And yes, I commit to reinforcing co-operation with the European Parliament in the field of external affairs in general.

Europe needs the means to match its ambitions. As I said in the guidelines, this requires a root and branch reform of the EU budget, covering both the expenditure and revenue side. We need to move away from a narrow focus on net balances and move towards an approach based on solidarity, burden-sharing and equity.

And yes, this also includes the question of own resources. The EU must have a more transparent and efficient way of financing its policies, and I am ready, with the support of this Parliament, to take this battle to the Member States as we re-shape the Union's budget. I also want to work more closely with the European Investment Bank to look at innovative forms of financing.

I am also committed to smart regulation, and I want to reiterate that simplification of procedures and a reduction of administrative burdens on business, particularly SMEs, will remain a priority in the next Commission. This task, just like the Impact Assessment Board and ex-post evaluation, will be placed directly under my authority to fully reflect the priority I give to it.

I will defend the integrity of the Single Market. But why stop there? I want to complete the missing links to unleash its full benefits, for businesses and consumers.

Honourable Members,

I have committed to translating these priorities into the organisation of the next College, once I have been confirmed by the European Parliament. But I can already share with you today my commitment to some organisational changes:

- I will create a Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Civil Liberties including citizens' and minority rights, as a reflection that the EU is a community of rights and values.
- I will also create a Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, including security. One of the key tasks of this Commissioner will be to develop a truly common approach to migration in line with the political guidelines – promoting the integration of legal migrants, fighting illegal migration and related criminal activities, and ensuring solidarity between Member States.
- I will set up a Commissioner for Climate Action, to reflect the fact that climate change is a challenge that needs to be addressed across the whole range of our policies. A dedicated Commissioner for Climate Action will also send an important signal to the world that, independent of the level of ambition that comes out of Copenhagen, Europe is serious about maintaining momentum for action.
- We also need a fundamental review of the way European institutions access and use scientific advice. In the next Commission, I want to set up a chief scientific adviser who has the power to deliver proactive, scientific advice throughout all stages of policy development and delivery. This will reflect the central importance I attach to research and innovation.

Honourable Members,

What I propose is no less than a transformational agenda for Europe. In order to realise this ambition, I have suggested a special partnership between the Parliament and the Commission. We represent the two 'European' institutions par excellence, and this gives us a special responsibility to create a truly European public space for debate. I am committed to making my contribution to European parliamentary democracy.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this over the last couple of months with President Buzek, which led to many of the improvements proposed in my guidelines, like a regular Question Hour. Following my meetings with the groups, I am ready to take up the suggestion made by some of you to meet not only your Conference of Presidents on a more regular basis, but also to establish an appropriate dialogue with your Conference of Committee chairs. Very concretely, I will invite the Conference of Committee Chairs to meet the whole College of Commissioners every year, before the adoption of the Commission Legislative and Work Programme.

We are living through a period of flux, a period when many citizens are questioning the ethical behaviour of sections of our societies and the ability of governments to protect their interests.

Increased risk of the re-emergence of national egoisms. Real danger that our achievements in Europe over the last 60 years could start to unravel. Commission and Parliament together have to fight these national egoisms.

So let me finish with a plea to each and every one of you.

Now, more than ever, we need a strong Europe led by a strong European Commission.

A strong Commission has to be a political Commission. But a political Commission must not be a partisan Commission. As President of the Commission, my party is Europe.

The next College, like the current one, will contain an important number of members from a variety of political families. I am attached to having Europe's political diversity reflected in the College.

Will only realise this transformational agenda for Europe with a strong cross-party Commission relying on strong cross-party support from the European Parliament, a Parliament capable of mobilising the effective majorities necessary for a Europe of action. If you want a strong Commission that stands up to MS you should give this Commission the strong support it needs.

We all have our differing political convictions. But in times of crisis those differences need to make space for the greater common good, need to make space for an ethics of *European* responsibility.

Now I invite each and every one of you, with passion and a strong sense of responsibility to Europe: let's embark on this European journey together.