



STOP BARROSO

Resolution of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament 24 March 2009

Top politicians should not be reappointed without taking stock of their performance. The record of José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, does not stand up to scrutiny.

Too often he has abdicated his responsibilities, demoting the Commission from 'guardian of the treaties' to lapdog of the most dominant Member States and most influential industries. When he has attempted to lead, he has pulled in the wrong direction. His policies have contributed to the financial and economic crises and failed to respond to them. They have consistently put the interests of unfettered trade and big business ahead of the environment, social issues and individuals. The Greens urge Europe to resist taking the wrong road for another five years.

Barroso's nomination for a further mandate as European Commission President has already been supported by the political family of the European People's Party and by certain heads of government, among them socialists. This prejudices the results of European Parliament elections. To the attention of all who wish to change European politics for the better, here are 25 reasons to oppose Barroso's candidacy.

A passive approach to the financial and economic crisis

- Barroso and Commissioner McCreevy consistently ignored Parliament concerns on hedge funds and private equity.
- For years, Barroso's Commission rejected moves to better secure savings through revising the Deposit Guarantee Scheme, finally taking action once the crisis was already underway.
- The Commission only came forward with measures to mitigate the effects of the financial crisis when it came under pressure from Council.

Reckless deregulation at the cost of social policy

- The Commission has refused to bring forward a Directive on Services of General Interest (SGI). Citizens, NGOs and Unions want to protect these services and give local authorities the right to finance and organise them as they see fit. Barroso's Commission prefers to subject basic needs to market forces and rules, by keeping services of general interest under the scope of the Services Directive.
- Barroso's Commission has ignored the repeated requests of the Parliament to review the Posted Workers Directive, even though its principle of "equal pay for equal work at the same workplace" has been jeopardised by recent European Court of Justice rulings that favour market freedom over worker protection.
- Barroso has misappropriated the "Better regulation" agenda to promote deregulation in the name of competitiveness. Unaccountable "high level groups" of experts, often favouring free marketeering, have flourished under Barroso. This weakens the Parliament and even the Commission itself.

Competition and liberalisation at the price of development and solidarity

- The regulation of working time in road transport aimed for more alert transport drivers and safer roads. A 2002 Directive to include self-employed drivers was never enforced by the Commission and self-employed drivers were simply dropped by the regulation in a 2008 Commission revision. This also opens the door for social dumping in the name of competition.
- Barroso's Commission is negotiating "Economic Partnership Agreements" (EPAs) with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), which include some of the world's poorest states. The EPAs are designed to aggressively increase competition, open procurement markets and liberalise financial services and capital flows. ACP leaders have spoken out against the betrayal of development policy and bullying tactics by Barroso's negotiators.
- In the midst of the financial meltdown in October 2008, the Commission concluded a trade agreement with 14 Caribbean states, including 8 listed as tax havens by the OECD. The agreement includes the freedom to place any new financial product, such as speculative derivatives, on the EU market. This makes any future regulation of the financial sector in the EU subject to dispute and penalisation. The Commission is persisting in negotiating the complete liberalisation of financial services with countries from Asia to South America.
- As the economic downturn becomes global, Barroso's Commission warns trade partners not to protect their markets and to continue with liberalisation. Meanwhile the Commission re-installed export subsidies for milk and meat products, which distort the agricultural markets of many developing countries.

Neglect of climate change and environmental degradation

- Barroso's Commission wasted years to propose mandatory targets for car CO₂ emissions, only stepping in after the car industry itself admitted that it would not meet even its own voluntary targets. Barroso ignored his Environment Commissioner who proposed a target of 120g/km by 2012 and supported Enterprise Commissioner Verheugen, who openly contested this target, postponed the publication of the Commission's proposal, and ultimately watered the target down to 130g/km.
- Overstepping the Commission's remit, Barroso is trying to force through authorisation of GM crop varieties in the EU, against the will of a majority of Member States and consumers, who have concerns on public health, biodiversity and agriculture. Council has consistently rejected these attempts, yet Barroso persists in claiming that a WTO ruling regarding EU legislation on GMOs puts into question the right of the EU Member States to ban GMOs - a false assertion since the ruling merely sets out the criteria for a ban.
- In 2005 Barroso promoted a refocusing of the Lisbon Strategy orientated exclusively at a short-sighted growth and job approach, putting the environment in the waiting room instead of getting serious with the implementation of the sustainability strategy of the integrated Lisbon-Gothenburg approach
- Barroso publicly came out in favour of nuclear energy, signalling an end to the Commission's traditionally neutral position on this issue.. The Commission promoted the creation of the European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF), which has institutionalised the privileged status of the nuclear lobby and industry that is planning a nuclear renaissance.



- Facing the need to reduce waste and protect human health through better waste treatment, the Commission put forward ill-advised deregulation of key provisions of the current waste framework directive, proposed no action at Community level on waste prevention, reuse and recycling and instead boosted waste incineration by reclassifying it as 'recovery'.
- In contempt of Parliament's strong commitment to curb NO_x emissions and to include aviation in the legislation on a Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), Barroso's Commission failed on its own promise made to co-legislators to take action by the end 2008. So far, it has not introduced a single measure to curb the climate impact of NO_x emissions from aviation.
- Since 2007, Barroso has held back a proposed review of legislation on National Emission Ceilings for air pollution, a crucial issue for environment and public health. The Commission had already lowered its initial ambitions in a 2005 strategy on air pollution that was watered down at the request of industry.
- Under Barroso, assessments on environmental issues systematically overstate short-term economic gains against long-term environmental goals. The review of the "Sixth Community Environment Action Programme" was so skewed as to provoke a Parliament resolution saying "that such unbalanced impact assessments are counterproductive with regard to environment policy itself and its integration into other EU policies".
- A key objective of REACH is the substitution of substances of very high concern (SVHC), defined as carcinogenic, mutagenic, toxic to reproduction, or persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic. REACH contains a list of ca. 800 substances that clearly satisfy the criteria for SVHC. However, the current candidate list adopted in October 2008 only contains 15 substances. The Commission's almost complete inaction makes a mockery of the objective of REACH, deprives consumers of their right to information, and turns a blind eye on SVHC in import articles.
- In June 2008, Barroso's Commission adopted a Communication on the regulatory aspects of nanomaterials, stating despite all scientific evidence that existing legislation covered the potential health, safety and environmental risks. The Parliament criticised the Commission for being "effectively blind to its risks" and insisted on the principle of "no data, no market" for all applications of nanomaterials in consumer products.
- The Health Claims Regulation specifies that food cannot be promoted as being healthy if certain reference values, e.g. for salt, sugar and fat, are exceeded. The Commission sets some of these values so high that even patently unhealthy food can make the grade. Barroso made a bad situation worse by caving into pressure from the food industry and personally intervening to promise exemptions for staple foods such as bread, fruit and meat.

Failure to promote democracy and human rights in the EU

- Barroso made a promising start on the issue of fundamental rights, declaring the Commission would be human rights "champions" and committing to create a Working Group of Commissioners on Human Rights. So far no such group has materialised. The Commission has also been passive following Parliament committee recommendations on CIA extraordinary renditions, which violate EU treaties and international human rights conventions. The toothless new Fundamental Rights Agency was given no mandate to monitor fundamental rights in the Member States.



Barroso promised a Directive to extend anti-discrimination protection in 2004 but it took four more years of intensive pressure to bring it forward.

- Barroso claimed in 2006 that the correct application and implementation of laws would be a "high priority", as well as the "need to manage infringement proceedings efficiently". In reality, his Commission has largely delegated its role as the guardian of the EU Treaties to the Member States that the Commission itself is supposed to be supervising. Accordingly, Barroso's Commission has not threatened infringement proceedings regarding the Directive on the Right to Move and Reside Freely of 2004, legislation that has not yet been fully implemented by a single Member State. The Commission also failed to enforce EU legislation and specific Treaty articles on gender equality, despite a rapidly growing gender pay gap in the EU over the last five years.
- The Commission has faced a series of legal actions regarding lack of access to documents, for example concerning its secretive negotiations on an international agreement that potentially could lead to even minor copyright violators being detained at borders (ACTA). A report by the Parliament asking explicitly for full access to ACTA documents did not make any difference. Despite losing many cases, instead of improving transparency the Commission has sought to revise the existing regulation by the back door, through changing the definition of 'public document'.
- The shadowy activity of lobby groups in Brussels is one of the main concerns of EU citizens, many of whom feel excluded from any meaningful participation in EU decision making. In May 2008 Parliament proposed a comprehensive list of meaningful actions. The Commission's response was to set up an entirely voluntary register with little pressure or incentive for real disclosure. By January 2009 only 20 % of the estimated 2,600 Brussels-based lobby groups registered and only half of all lobby groups intend to do so. In any case the Code of Conduct proposed by the Commission is even less demanding than the existing voluntary codes drawn up by the lobby associations themselves.

