

Speeches



Address by the President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek to the European Council

Brussels -
29/10/2009

Dear Presidents,

Dear Prime Ministers,

Dear Colleagues,

Our meeting will deal with some of Europe's key questions. In my opinion it is crucial that in even the most heated part of our discussions we do not forget the main aim which is strengthening the solidarity of twenty-seven member states. In this globalized world, only through using the community method can we be effective.

The first issue I wish to say a few words on is:

THE LISBON TREATY

On 9 October during my meeting with President Vaclav Klaus, during an open and frank discussion, he underlined that he was looking for a pragmatic solution.

As he put it himself - for reasons connected to the past - he wishes that the Czech Republic be added to the protocol on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights with the UK and Poland.

The Czech President made it clear that he saw no link to his demand with the decision of the Czech Constitutional Court.

I believe that if we want the Lisbon Treaty to be ratified soon we should accept this request, which can be included in another follow up treaty on accession as will be the case with the Irish guarantees.

Dear Colleagues,

I think it is important for us to start with a new Commission in office as soon as possible.

I would like to assure you that the European Parliament will be ready as of the 25th of November.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that by December we can find an agreement as to the new procedures, and the new cooperation which will exist between the Parliament and the Council once the new treaty is in force.

Dear Friends,

My second point deals with:

THE ROLE OF THE NEW PRESIDENT, OR THE NEW MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The European Parliament believes that this person should assure the continuity of the work and chair the sessions. The person should be a "chairman or woman" rather than a "President" in the traditional sense of the word.

As I heard a number of times, with my election, we have symbolically shown the unity of our continent - unity between old and new Europe. Perhaps it is time for another symbolic decision. Let us take a look around us, how many women are present? Should we not appoint a woman to this post? There are a number of suitable women candidates and I urge the Council to consider this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The third important issue to discussion is:

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SECURITY

What we do today, what you decide in this hall, will benefit our children and grand children.

In Copenhagen we have to find a legally binding agreement for the entire planet which will encompass the signatories from 2013 onwards. An agreement based on the Kyoto protocols.

The European Parliament has taken the lead in the debate on the protection of the environment. You know my views on this, and you know that I will be working with you to find a compromise which is both beneficial for the natural environment and our economies.

The fight against climate change does not stand in the way of development. It is important to stress that economies can grow while keeping emissions low. But we need to help those who do not have the funds to invest in new technologies.

In the European Union emissions keep falling, which is why it is so important for us to have an agreement with other partners on the issue of "carbon leakage".

It can not be that EU member states through hard effort cut back CO2 emissions, but at the same time, those emissions will rise in countries outside of the Union.

What is very important at this meeting of the Council is that we find an agreement on sharing the burden between EU member states. If we want to show solidarity to the less developed countries in the world, we need to first start with solidarity at home.

It can not be that the most developed member states will carry the least costs and will achieve the most gains from selling their technology to countries outside the European Union who are fighting climate change.

For years the key used regarding burden sharing and donations has been a countries GNP. I believe we should use this criterion again. Even at this Council. Going to Copenhagen we should give an example of being able to work together and demonstrating a just division in costs in the spirit of European solidarity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For some citizens, energy policy is the fight against climate change, for others it is about energy security.

This past January we experienced what the lack of proper community mechanisms means in this question. The threat to the disruption of gas supply is still real.

I call on you to first of all accelerate the work on the regulation on the security of gas supply, so that in case of a crisis a mechanism of energy solidarity will work.

What will we tell our citizens about EU solidarity when their homes and hospitals are cut off from gas? That we were unable to reach an agreement? I call on you to maintain the timetable proposed by the European Commission!

About energy security we need to talk today and here. Other issues have a general character. In March the Council should accept a new plan on Europe's Energy Policy, which should deal with better transport and diversification of gas, both to and within the Union.

We need new financial instruments to build infrastructure. We need a decision on common purchases of gas.

I will end with the following statement: in the 20th century, Europeans needed the Coal and Steel Community and Euratom, in the 21st century we need a European Energy Community.

Dear Colleagues,

My fourth point relates to the:

ECONOMIC CRISIS

Although the economic situation appears to be stabilising, we should not claim victory yet and withdraw the support we are giving.

We need to find ways of stimulating growth and getting people back to work.

We need to hit the iron while it is hot, when the situation normalises it will be difficult to continue the necessary economic reforms we need to make. We need to be better prepared. The crisis may return.

The European Parliament will work closely with the Council on the establishment of the European Systemic Risk Board, and when a proposal is put forward in December, on the European Supervisory Authority.

But regulation of the financial markets can not be the only outcome. I believe we have to re-launch the ideas that were in the Lisbon Strategy and invest in new technologies and in education.

Dear Colleagues,

The next meetings of the G20 should be prepared on the Community level.

Europe has to always speak with one voice, and member states present need to be the voice of the whole European Union.

This leads me to my fifth point which is the importance of the
EU'S EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

Building a common, integrated and reunited Europe is for me the key of all our work.

As a man who fought with Solidarnosc against the Communist regime, and who could only look with envy at the achievements of Western Europe, I can tell you one thing - let us not waste this opportunity

This world does not necessarily share our values. In order to promote and defend our vision of the world, we need a strong diplomatic service. I am convinced that there should be as much synergy as possible in security, development policy and diplomacy, so that Europe can speak with one voice.

The Parliament's Brok report passed last week makes it clear that the EEAS should be incorporated into the Commission's administrative structure. Not to strengthen the competences of the Commission, but to continue developing the 'Community model' in the Union's external relations.

Dear Friends,

The High Representative, and Vice President of the Commission, should not have his hands tied. We feel that the report approved by COREPER should be a recommendation and not a blue print for action. The Parliament has to be consulted, and the Commission has to agree.

The Parliament strongly believes that it is important this new service is geographically balanced in terms of its staff. Not only among the diplomats delegated from their national ministries, but the whole service should accurately reflect the European

Union of twenty-seven member states in all its diversity.

I know that some are concerned that their national diplomatic services will be undermined if the EU's External Action Service becomes too strong. But this is why we have the Lisbon Treaty, so that we can work more effectively, sharing our experiences.

Nine years ago, as Prime Minister, I argued in the Polish Sejm that we need a strong Commission and that the Community Method benefits all EU member states. I still believe this is true!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The last issue I wish to raise is:

IMMIGRATION

We need to show greater solidarity with Malta, Cyprus, Greece, Spain and Italy, who are facing a growing problem of illegal immigrants

As we build an area of internal freedom, justice and security which our citizens expect, we need to also address this issue.

We need to fast track concrete measures to implement the European Pact on Asylum and Migration. At the same time, we have to complete the European Asylum Policy.

Europe has to remain open to immigration, but legal immigration, because we increasingly need the workforce. I hope that we will be able to finalise ideas such as the "blue card".

We need to strengthen FRONTEX. Perhaps it is time for us to consider equipping FRONTEX with its own resources so that it has a greater enforcement capacity?

In conclusion,

It has become abundantly clear that the most important issue on the table today is the final ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and its implementation. I believe that we can take a step forward on this issue.

The Parliament is ready to work with the European Council, the Council and the new European Commission. We need to find concrete solutions to the challenges we face, whether climate change, energy security, illegal immigration, or the economic crisis.

I am certain that under Lisbon the European Parliament will be a constructive partner, and a co-legislator open to discussion and where necessary, compromise.

Thank you.