

JOINT LETTER

At the European Council on 28 and 29 October, we are discussing how the European Union can strengthen the mechanisms we have for ensuring Member States' fiscal discipline.

It is important that the Union takes the necessary steps to ensure that we have robust systems that allow us to support the substantial deficit and debt reduction strategies now in place in almost all Member States under the Stability and Growth Pact.

This discussion will take place against the backdrop of proposals from the Commission and the European Parliament for an increase in EU budget spending of around 6% in 2011. These proposals are especially unacceptable at a time when we are having to take difficult decisions at national level to control public expenditure.

The Council has proposed an increase in EU budget spending of 2,91% for 2011. We are clear that we cannot accept any more than this.