



PRESS RELEASE

Memos to the New Commission Europe's Economic Priorities 2010 -- 2015

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Bruegel is publishing a collection of Memos addressed to the next Commission President and to the new European commissioners shortly to take office. Written by Bruegel Scholars and edited by Senior Research Fellow André Sapir, the Memos focus on key economic aspects of EU policy-making.

The new Commission will enter office at a challenging time for Europe, the EU and the Commission itself. The crisis has clearly exposed weaknesses in EU governance which need to be addressed and the memos make a number of concrete recommendations of relevance for major economic fields, as well as for the EU and Commission as a whole; it is clear that *"the stakes for Europe call for a transformational agenda. Lack of ambition would not appease, but rather vindicate the anti-European forces"*.

André Sapir and Jean Pisani-Ferry propose that effective leadership will be necessary to give strategic direction to the Commission, advising that the next Commission President *"should therefore be ready to fight for ideas and take risks"* in defining and prioritising the challenges and in taking the initiative in leading on the united responses Europe will need.

The crisis has also given rise to a deeper question: what is the *raison d'être* of the EU between the national level, at which citizens and corporations mainly rely to tackle the crisis, the regional level where the crisis has potential for destabilising repercussions, and the global level, with its growing significance. In the face of challenges which are themselves global?

The Memos answer these questions directly, suggesting that the EU will need to assert a position on commonly agreed rules, propose new solutions and, importantly, has an opportunity now to redefine the European narrative in the global arena.

The President is advised to consider the global agenda and the need for the EU to further enhance its role in shaping globalisation. There is a need to alter perception of the EU as a 'fragmented power', so that it speaks with a more coherent and effective voice on the international stage, while maintaining crucial regional responsibilities.

The next Commission must balance its priorities in finding bold initiatives to battling the short-term repercussions of the crisis against the longer-term social, economic and political tensions between individual member states. While crises are often a time for institutional reform, the Commissioner for Monetary and Economic Affairs *"cannot afford to be merely a servant of outdated procedures, and cannot afford either to be the advocate of institutional reforms at a time when everyone's attention is (rightly) focused on results."*

The Economic and Financial Affairs portfolio should be a priority for strategic change if the EU is to deter the prospect of economic nationalism. Dividing the role between two commissioners in the past only served to weaken these departments individually; internally in relations with Finance Ministers, and externally the EU's role and voice in international forums.

The crisis has exacerbated the deficits in government finances and there will be no new money for the EU Commission to draw upon. However, there is the opportunity to improve on the EU budget, with the postponement from 2008/9 of the planned budget review proposed by the EU Council. Sapir and Pisani-Ferry suggest that “[the president] should put forward without delay proposals for an immediate revision of the EU budget”, to be consistent with the EU Growth and Employment Programme and to allow for flexibility in considering new spending priorities.

The creation of new Commission portfolios such as Climate Change and Knowledge will consolidate the EU's efforts to be a global power. A coherent and united EU position will influence the outcomes of international policy-making in Copenhagen in December. The new Commission for Knowledge will provide an important step in defining the EU as a knowledge economy on the international stage. Both portfolios carry significant economic and social imperatives.

Focusing on the most important economic questions at EU level, the Bruegel memos are intended to be strategic, outlining the state of affairs that will be met by the new Commission and the key challenges and priorities they will need to consider over the next five years.

For further information and interview requests, please contact Naiara Martinez, naiara.martinez@bruegel.org or on 0032 2 227 4270.

Notes to Editors:

Below is the full list of Memos, the authors and the policy fields they address

Memos to the next Commission President and Commissioners

Memo to the President: André Sapir and Jean Pisani-Ferry

Economic and Monetary Affairs: Jurgen von Hagen and Jean Pisani-Ferry

Financial Services: Nicolas Veron

Competition Policy: Lars Hendrik Roller

The Single Market: Carlo Altomonte

Enterprise and Industry Policy: Andre Sapir and Nicolas Veron

Knowledge: from Bruno van Pottelsberghe

Climate Change: Reinhilde Veugelers

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity: Jakob von Weizsacker

Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy: Zsolt Darvas

Trade: André Sapir

Development: Indhira Santos

About Bruegel

Bruegel is a European think tank devoted to international economics. It started operations in Brussels in 2005 as a Belgian non-profit international organisation supported by European governments and leading corporations. Bruegel seeks to contribute to the quality of economic policymaking in Europe through open, facts-based and policy-relevant research, analysis and discussion. Bruegel issues a range of publications. The Bruegel Blueprint Series provides comprehensive analysis and policy recommendations on central questions of the moment. Bruegel Policy Briefs provide concise, topical analysis targeted at an audience of executives and policy decision makers, with an emphasis on concrete policy orientation. Bruegel Policy Contributions are responses to requests by policymakers or public bodies, including testimonies at hearings or responses to public consultation. Bruegel and its researchers also publish working papers, op-eds, collaborative papers with other organisations, and essays. Bruegel's research is independent and does not represent the views of its board or members. For a full picture of Bruegel activities and publications, visit the website at www.bruegel.org.