



**PRESS RELEASE**

### **Brussels think tanks join forces to debate ‘the State of the Union’**

**Brussels, 14 January:** On Tuesday 12 January nine leading Brussels think tanks, in cooperation with Agence Europe, held the first annual Forum to debate the European Union's politico-strategic agenda for the coming year. This is the first time the Brussels think tanks have collaborated to discuss the future of the EU, demonstrating their common goal of contributing to European policy-making and debate, with a general assessment and with concrete policy proposals.

At the Opening Plenary ‘From Lisbon Treaty to Global Recession: out of the frying pan into the fire’ policy analysts looked at the institutional implications of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU and the economic crisis and the EU’s external performance in an increasingly multilateral world.

The session was followed by four workshops, where participants debated the following issues:

- how to develop the EU climate policy model following the Copenhagen debacle;
- how to deal with Europe’s economic challenges;
- Stockholm Plus, transforming political goals in coherent policies on migration social cohesion and human rights;
- developing new global governance in a new global order and the EU’s position.

#### **President Barroso ‘upbeat’ about future prospects**

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso addressed the closing plenary on ‘Defining an EU Action Agenda for 2010-2014’, and in contrast to the scepticism that had pervaded some of the workshops, delivered what he termed a ‘message of confidence’ about EU future prospects.

While he acknowledged the Copenhagen Climate Change meeting had failed to meet its objectives, he insisted the EU would live up to its commitments in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and would lead by example. Looking at the EU’s economic future he said it “made common sense” to have closer economic cooperation between EU Member States.

During his speech President Barroso thanked the think tanks for their “contribution to a stronger Europe” and stressed the need for increased communication and cooperation with the Brussels think tank community.

#### **Notes to editors:**

The nine think tanks are: the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Bruegel, the Centre For European Studies (CEPS), the Egmont Institute, the European Policy Centre (EPC), Friends of Europe-Les amis de l’Europe, the Institut français des relations internationales (Ifri), Madariaga-College of Europe Foundation and the StiftungWissenschaft und Politik (SWP).

Agence Europe will shortly publish a special report on the Forum.

For further information on the issues discussed at the Forum please contact:

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**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.

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