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President of the European Commission
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2009-11-09

Strong support for EU budget reform

Dear President of the European Commission

On November 24th the European Commission is due to publish its report on the budget review. Many are looking forward to this event. With two thirds of the EU budget and tax payer's money being allocated to farmers and regions through inefficient structures, it is surprising that the large majority wishing for a reform of the EU budget has been so quiet.

We believe that it is high time for the Commission, the Parliament and the Member States to fully take regard of the opinion of the very substantial body of European stakeholders which supports a thorough budget reform. As signatories of this article we represent a large portion of this group.

The key starting point for reforming the EU budget should be the results of the extensive public consultation made by the Commission in 2008 (Reforming the Budget, Changing Europe). This overarching consultation included all Member States' official contributions, over 2000 people in 20 countries who lively debated the EU budget reform, and which counted no less than 300 contributions from a broad range of stakeholders, including universities, the private sector and NGOs.

The results of the open consultation are clear. There is a broad consensus for a substantial EU budget reform, towards a modern budget which can help the EU tackling both current and future challenges. Among these common challenges are climate change, global competitiveness, energy supply and inequalities between countries and regions. The consultation gives strong support for a new direction in EU spending towards competitiveness, research and innovation, environment, climate change and energy. There is also support for redirecting cohesion spending to less developed Member States and regions and for reforming agriculture spending.

Taking into account the detrimental effects of the economic crisis on employment, growth and public debt, as well as the many other challenges ahead, it is imperative to invest our common resources in areas that bring European added value for the future. We thus urge the Commission to act on the basis of the results of the public consultation and to push strongly for a substantive reform of the EU budget.

Yours sincerely

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Xavier Durieu, Secretary General, Eurocommerce
Carl Johan Sandberg, Vice-President, Euroscience
Stephen Hale, Director, Green Alliance
Patrick Messerlin, Director, Groupe d'Economie Mondiale at Sciences Po (GEM)
Nick Mabey, CEO, Third Generation Environmentalism
Valentin Zahrt, Expert in WTO and trade in food, ECIPE
Urban Bäckström, Director General, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
Hans Skov Christensen, Director General and CEO, Danish Industries
David Frost, Director General, British Chamber of Commerce
Peter Egardt, President and CEO, Swedish Chambers of Commerce
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