

Brussels, June 18th 2010

To: Mr José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
BE - 1049 - Brussels
Cc: Mrs Catherine Day
Secretary-General

"Reforming the budget, changing Europe" – What next?

Dear President Barroso,

Reform of the EU budget is a defining challenge of your time in office, and a clear test against which you will be judged. We are looking to you for the personal leadership required to ensure that the EU budget plays a full role in tackling climate change and demonstrating the value of the EU to its citizens.

The 2007-2008 consultation "Reforming the budget, changing Europe" delivered an unequivocal request for change. Stakeholders expressed the clear view that the EU budget must invest in Climate, Energy and Competitiveness as the EU makes the transition to sustainable development. Such a budget would tackle the problems of the future, rather than continuing to spend on the priorities of the past. The consultation process provided the Commission under your leadership with a clear mandate for change. Nothing that has occurred since in the worsening economic crisis has taken away from this mandate.

The next EU budget must be in line with the EU's long term commitments to fighting climate change and accelerating the EU's transition to a renewable, resource efficient society in 2050. It should seize hold of the opportunity to deploy clean energy generation and promote sustainable consumption patterns in this current decade, building a new green economy out of the rubble of the old.

In your own words the reform of the budget is a "once in a generation opportunity" to achieve the goal of an EU that meets its future challenges. It is therefore imperative that EU budget reform is comprehensive and genuine – and not greenwash. The failure to match the EU's spending to its priorities for tomorrow's world is simply unacceptable. The EU cannot afford to enter the 2020s with a budget designed for the problems of 50 years ago.

Furthermore, the importance of political leadership and public discussion on the reform of EU spending is even more acute today as we face the continuing economic crisis and cuts in public spending. The EU budget is the clearest example of the EU's priorities in action. The European Commission must ensure that the EU budget works for the public interest and thereby enhances the credibility of its capacity to serve public needs.

Coalition for Sustainable EU Funds

We are deeply concerned that the postponement of the budget review process and the increasing time pressure to shape the next Multiannual Financial Framework threaten the possibility for much-needed serious reform. We are therefore writing to appeal to you to put discussions about the future of the EU budget back in the public domain.

We call upon the European Commission to announce a clear and transparent EU budget reform process that builds on the outcomes of the previous consultation. This process must also guarantee space for public discussion – at both the EU and national level – on the EU's future spending priorities.

Yours sincerely,

Magda Stoczkiewicz, Director



Mark Fodor, Director



Angelo Caserta, Regional Director
- European Division



Dr. Anselm Görres, Director



Matthew Spencer, Director



Jos Dings, Director



Gunnar Boye Olesen, Leader of the
Secretariat



Gérard Magnin, Director



Claire Roumet, Secretary General



E3G