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PUBLIC LISTENING OF BARROSO

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Speakers: José Manuel Barroso, Dany Cohn-Bendit & Rebecca Harms

Organizer/Organization: The Greens / European Free Alliance

Location: European Parliament & Online broadcast

Report: The current European Commission President Barroso took part at the Greens/EFA group hearing on his candidacy for a second mandate as Commission President. It was the only discussion that was open to the public. Socialists and Liberals talked with Barroso in closed session.

The start of the debate was marked by questions concerning the appointment of Barroso und the Nice Treaty whereas the other Commissioners are to be appointed under Lisbon Treaty. The Greens were questioning the legality of this appointment. Somebody who supports the Lisbon Treaty should want to be appointed under the same, stated Cohn-Bendit.

The Greens/EFA Co-Presidents Dany Cohn-Bendit and Rebecca Harms explained why they won't vote for Barroso as the next Commission President. In their opinion he didn't realize the promised goals in the last legislative periode and so they have the doubt that Barroso is going to achieve his presented policy guidelines for his second term. He was also criticized for serving the interests of the liberals and the industry.

He defended himself as a "reformer of the centre" and blamed the nation-states and their "narrow national interests" for the slow policy progress. He also stressed that he is always trying to reach consensus between the member-states, but that it has become more difficult with 27 states. As an example served the accession of Turkey to the European Union. Germany and France bear responsibility, if Turkey access will be granted or not.

On the global financial crisis, Barroso made the US financial system responsible for the current crisis. He was satisfied by the regulation proposals, but did not consider proposals by the Greens on tax havens and tax on financial transactions.

Concerning the upcoming conference on climate change in Copenhagen, the Green MEPs attacked for the 20% emissions reduction goal, which in their opinion is below the level of scientific advice. Barroso defended the goal again with the necessity to reach consensus among all the member-states. Nevertheless he recognized the importance of climate change and proposed to appoint a climate Commissioner.