
Berès: "I'm not convinced measures to tackle crisis have always been the right ones"

The question of how to resolve Europe's economic woes continues to divide the European Union. MEPs debate and then vote on a report evaluating the EU's economic governance during plenary on Wednesday 24 June. French S&D MEP Pervenche Berès, who wrote the report, told us in an interview that there was a clear division between those who believe current rules are not working and those who say they not been correctly implemented.

The plenary session, which can be followed live online, starts on Wednesday at 14.00 CET. The report on economic governance is the fourth item on the agenda. Once approved, Parliament's final position can be fed into the European Council on 25-26 June where the economic governance of the euro zone will be discussed.

Have the reforms and actions taken in the EU after the financial and economic crisis borne fruit? What is missing?

The crisis forced us to take drastic measures, but I'm not convinced they have always been the right ones. They enabled us to resolve some of the issues in the short term, but they have not led to the completion of the economic and monetary union.

Have austerity policies decided in the economic governance framework contributed to traditional parties losing seats to new ones?

Some say these rules should be scrapped as they have not worked because they have only led to more austerity. And others say that Europe isn't doing well because these rules have not been implemented. There is a lack of confidence between those two camps.

It's about finding the means to convince people that things have to be changed, that some rules have led to austerity, deflation and unemployment and therefore have to be changed.

The fact that Jean-Claude Juncker was obliged to come up with an investment plan at the start of his mandate is for me a sign that something is wrong with the current rules.

Could international creditors push Greece to default and leave the eurozone by insisting on reform?

I don't have a crystal ball, so I don't know what the results will be of these negotiations. However, I know a lot of time has been wasted on posturing. I sincerely hope that Greece will stay in the eurozone, but for that to happen both sides have to be willing to make concessions.

How could parliaments be more involved in the European semester cycle?

I definitely believe that the European Parliament and the national parliaments should become more involved in economic governance. When the next cycle starts, the European Parliament will be fully committed to coming up with an analysis of the situation in the eurozone, both in terms of diagnosing the problems and suggesting guidelines.

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Pervenche Berès