



MEPs' 2012 wish - successful resolution of euro crisis

New Year is traditionally a time for making resolutions and looking to the future so we asked EP political group leaders what they wish for 2012. Not surprisingly tackling the euro crisis was at the top of the list. "We need a new wave of political, economic and fiscal integration with reinvigorated determination" and central EP involvement in decision-making, said EP president Jerzy Buzek.

"My strongest wish for 2012 is the conclusion of the europact treaty, which will prevent any eurozone country from getting into excessive debt," chair of the Christian Democrats **Joseph Daul** said.

"Against the background of the crisis and of nationalist and authoritarian tendencies in certain member states we wish the EU to remain a union based on strong democratic principles and solidarity values," said Socialist group leader **Martin Schulz**.

"We hope that EU leaders will realise that they need to agree bold and concrete steps to save the eurozone from disintegration, with a form of debt mutualisation or enhanced intervention from the ECB," said Liberal leader **Guy Verhostadt**, while Green group co-chair **Rebecca Harms** said, "in 2012, the EU should take the euro crisis as a chance to build a true fiscal and political union.

Conservative chair **Martin Callanan** warned that the crisis can't "be dealt with by eurobonds, by never-ending bailouts, or by another navel-gazing discussion about treaties and institutions...this year will be economically hard unless our leaders are capable of acting in the interests of the whole eurozone and asking one or two countries to leave".

Nigel Farage, co-president of the right-leaning EFD group added: "Europe is becoming more poor and less free. I would like to see the PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain) countries escape from the economic prison of the euro so both their economies and democracies can revive.

Lothar Bisky, leader of the left-leaning GUE/NGL group, said, "our hope is that the crisis will not be solved at the expense of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups, like youth, workers and the elderly."

Focus on competition

The wishes of a number of MEPs also focused on growth. "Efforts should converge on stronger growth and more jobs," Daul said. "Competitiveness and economic growth are the only way forward to secure the EU's unique model of social market economy for our children."

Callanan said the EU should put competitiveness "at its heart...and put business and job creation first", while Harms said "the EU must accelerate its ecological transformation and put effort into remaining the frontrunner in the fight against climate change."

Foreign affairs

Looking beyond Europe and at the impact of the Arab Spring for "our partners on the shores of the Mediterranean", Buzek said, "Let's hope that this year their bravery, leadership and belief in dignity can be replicated in other parts of the world."

Bisky wished for "better progress towards a free and peaceful world". The focus should be on human rights and the support of peaceful solutions in conflicts in Northern Africa, the Middle-East and Western Sahara, he said.

And what they wish for the EP..

A number of MEPs focused on full EP involvement in negotiations on resolving the euro crisis. "I don't want the EP to be sidelined any longer by national governments in the crucial decisions on the response to the euro crisis," said Harms.

"In 2012 more than ever the Parliament will have to act decisively as the guardian of this united, democratic Europe of solidarity that we want," Schulz added.

ALDE wants the EP "to remain at the heart of the European project, defending the common interest against a cacophony of national vested interests and exercising full democratic control over EU laws and constitutional changes."

Farage called on the EP to campaign for national referenda on EU membership and related treaties "to allow the voices of the peoples of Europe to be heard".

And Callanan said, "my specific wish for the EP would be that we can finally end our monthly shunt between Brussels and Strasbourg."