



16<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

## **MEP welcomes Barroso's intention to appoint immigration Commissioner**

MEP Simon Busuttil welcomed the announcement of Jose Manuel Barroso to nominate a Commissioner with specific responsibility for immigration.

He was addressing the European Parliament's plenary session on Tuesday afternoon in Strasbourg which was debating Mr. Barroso's nomination as President of the European Commission for the next five years, ahead of today's vote which confirmed him with 382 votes in favour, 219 against and 117 abstentions.

In his address, Barroso said that he would create a Commissioner responsible specifically for Internal Affairs and Immigration and a separate one responsible for Justice, Human Rights and Civil Liberties.

Currently all these areas are covered by just one Commissioner in one single all-embracing portfolio which is deemed too large.

Taking the floor during the debate Busuttil, who leads the EPP group on justice & home affairs, called upon Mr. Barroso to invest more energy on delivering a Europe of Justice, Freedom and Security.

*"Europe is not just about the single market", he said, "There is also the citizenship dimension which is equally important."*

Busuttil said that citizens were directly affected by issues such as citizens' rights, visas, free movement, the fight against criminality, terrorism and also the fight against illegal immigration.

He added that should the Lisbon Treaty enter into force, the European Parliament would be given full powers alongside the Council on all decisions in the area of justice and home affairs. This placed the Parliament in a stronger position to work for a Europe of the citizens.

Busuttil welcomed Mr Barroso's intention to appoint two separate Commissioners dealing with justice and human rights on the one hand and with internal affairs and immigration on the other, stating that this could bring about renewed energy in setting up a European space of justice, freedom and security.

He called on the Commission to team up with the European Parliament to put citizens at the centre of Europe.

*"Let's work for a Europe of the citizens; a Europe that defends citizens' rights, that protects their freedom and their security."* Busuttil concluded.

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