

Open letter to
Prof. Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament, and
Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission,
by
the Central- and Eastern European Network
of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Brussels / Salzburg, 25 September 2009.

The Central- and Eastern European Network¹ (CEEN) wishes to express its hope that Prof. J. Buzek and Mr. J. M. Barroso will take note of the below deliberations:

1. It falls to the newly elected European Parliament and the Barroso-2 European Commission to provide vision and leadership to address the current crises and move European Union forward for the benefit of all its citizens.

This difficult – but privileged – opportunity must be optimally used while ensuring responsibility towards all of humanity and nature.

2. The European Union is currently facing the greatest challenges in its history. And, these are global challenges.

There is a pressing global need. Humanity is facing unprecedented global challenges and transformations. These are warning signs that humanity – including Europe – may be on the verge of an irreversible decline. Global solutions must be found and the European Union should lead.

3. In order to be able to resolve the pressing issues, contemporary thinking on development and the European way of life have to be re-examined. It will necessitate more understanding, greater tolerance and solidarity. It is the only way in which these issues will be resolved not only for the immediate future of our own generation, but also for the long-term future of Europe and humanity.

Grandiose plans, high-flying declarations by political leaders and international scientific conferences are admirable and can be useful. But in isolation they are insufficient and create false hopes and expectations - in the worst-case, they lead to confusion and result in no further action.

Against this background, CEEN urges the European Union to introduce greater realism into its political objectives and bring the related measures closer to the people. The European Union must also ensure more breathing space for new, innovative and un-bureaucratic approaches and “out-of-box” thinking. CEEN welcomes Mr. Barroso’s recently announced “**A Vision for EU 2020**”.

The CEEN wishes to urge that the following fundamental principles should guide European Union leaders for the coming years and become part of a new and visionary “**Pact with the European Citizen**” *that puts people at the heart of the agenda*:

1. Provide realistic political leadership: Leave behind the over-used notion of the “Lisbon strategy”. It has lost its meaning and attraction to most people.

Priorities must be meaningful and include those the individual is most concerned with, i.e. job security, quality education, quality health services, clean environment, individual’s personal security, etc. Success of political leadership must be measured against these.

2. Lead responsible economic progress: Weigh economic progress against the cost of environmental deterioration and diminishing natural resources. Cost-benefit analysis should be made for every new policy objective and related measure.

Whenever appropriate and possible eco-innovation should be promoted.

3. Inspire the rest of the World: Promote more determined the values that have made European societies stable, peaceful and attractive for millions of immigrants.

These values are: human rights, democracy, rule of law and a pluralistic society.

CEEN also wishes to advise that the overall objectives of the Pact should be:

Ensure prosperity, sustainability and security for Europe and its citizens.

A Pact with visionary objectives and implementable prospects will help rebuild confidence in the “European Union project” and rejuvenate and strengthen the European social model.

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¹ Platform for dialogue among the Presidents of National Academies of Sciences from the countries in Central/East- and South/East Europe.