

# **ALDE Strategy for the EU Budget 2012**

## **1. Zero-growth in real terms for existing objectives in 2012**

Given the current economic situation and the pressure for austerity, for the EU's budget 2012, the ALDE Group advocates a zero-growth in real-terms for all expenses related to objectives which have been duly budgeted within the multi-annual financial framework (MFF). Any further expenditure beyond this ceiling can only be acceptable to the ALDE, if they are based on objectives and priorities that have not been included in the existing MFF.

This strategy will both support member-states' in their efforts to achieve a stable budget and ensure that the European Union's legitimate policy goals can be met.

## **2. A clear "No" to returning unspent money to member states**

In parallel, the ALDE will in the future reject all amending budgets aiming at returning surplus funds to member-states, starting with the surplus of 2010, which amounts to 4.9 bn Euro, of which 2.7 bn Euro stem from unspent funds.

Indeed it is by no means good budgeting to return this money to national treasuries, where it has almost no impact on the overall level of member states' deficits (cumulating to more than 800bn Euro), while it can make a clear difference to the EU's annual budget (amounting to only 126.5 bn euro in 2011).

The annual surplus could provide for a constructive basis to fund important and additional priorities and objectives such as financing parts of the EU2020 strategy and supporting the Arab spring.

## **3. Council must respect legal commitments**

### **ALDE demands signal from Council to negotiate future MFF**

In addition to the use of unspent money for financing the payment side of new and additional priorities and objectives of the European Union, ALDE is determined to make full use of all flexibility tools provided by the still applicable Inter-institutional agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management of 17 May 2006.

At the same time, the European Parliament expects the Council to finally come up with a proposal for the next Multi-annual financial framework in line with the Treaty of Lisbon. ALDE demands that a budgetary conference including Commission, Council, European and National Parliaments be established to prepare the next MFF.