



STRATEGIC PROGRAMME

2009-2014



Alliance of
**LIBERALS and
DEMOCRATS**
for Europe

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ALDE Five year Strategic Programme for the European Commission

The European Union is turning a page and entering a new era of politics. Until now the Union has been largely governed by the European Council, which means by national interests. Today, through the Lisbon Treaty, the Union is faced with a Copernican revolution. The Parliament is now equal with the Member States. We now enter the age of a political Union that will be based on promoting the European interest. The European Parliament now has the power to lead the Union in a new, more ambitious direction. As a key force in the Parliament and the Commission the ALDE Group wants to take the lead and set the agenda in the next five years. The ALDE will vigorously promote a progressive pro-European agenda, taking into account the genuine interests of the Union and its citizens.

The ALDE firmly believes that the next five years will be critical for the European Union. The current economic and environmental situation requires a fundamental rethink of all the old assumptions and a bold step towards new ideas and thinking. This strategic programme intends to map some of these out and provide direction to the Union. It gives for every member of the European Commission a programme which we expect he or she should execute in the next five years. The support of the ALDE for each of the Commissioners will depend on his or her support for this programme.

The Programme has five main priorities: tackling the economic and financial crisis by a sustainable recovery, rethinking the budget and introducing real own resources, tackling climate change seriously with an environmentally integrated society, fighting for freedom and fundamental rights and promoting a coherent Europe strategy in the world.

Tackling the economic and financial crisis by a sustainable recovery

The economic and financial crisis is not over yet. And when it is, it does not mean that recovery will automatically start. Important measures need to be taken.

We must first determine what went wrong. The ALDE Group has taken the lead in the EU asking for the establishment of a temporary committee in the Parliament to assess and report back on the reason for the financial collapse.

But already now, two elements are clearly essential for recovery. First of all, we need a European Financial Supervisor. The lack of common supervision allowed the financial crisis to hit our continent very hard. In order to avoid a similar crisis in the near future, 'normal' products in the single market have to comply with stringent norms and are systematically tested in order to ensure that they conform to these norms. In the financial sector, none of these rules apply. There is little or no regulation, there is virtually no verification and both consumers and producers find themselves at risk. It is therefore essential that the financial markets within the Union are regulated and done so at an EU level applying EU determined norms.

Secondly, we need a bold European recovery strategy. We see Europe 2020, the new Lisbon Strategy as an opportunity. But prior to that we need to recognise the weakness of the Lisbon Strategy. With the old feeble "open coordination method", "peer pressure" and "best practices" we will never reach our goals. If we want the EU to be the most competitive economy in the world, we need an enforceable method and a coordinated economic governance with the European Commission in the driving seat.

Rethinking the Budget introducing own resources

In order to provide greater investment in areas where it is most needed, and to make use of the huge economies of scale the Union can provide, some form of EU long term financing is required. More specifically, the question of the Union's revenues needs to be addressed. The long overdue budget review is required in order to overhaul the Union's financial system. The only way to end the entrenched debate between those countries that contribute and those that receive is the introduction of genuine own resources. This will also involve the citizens directly with the European budget debate.

The euro is also of vital importance and in the crisis has proved that the Union stands stronger together. We need to move fast towards the extension of the euro zone thereby bringing much needed stability to some of our newer Member States. Whilst investment in infrastructure is currently required in order to pull us out of recession the precept of the stability pact must not be forgotten and all Member States must demonstrate their commitment towards renewed fiscal rectitude.

Taking climate change seriously with an environmentally integrated society

The environment and climate change are obviously defining challenges. Both must be central to all policies. For climate change, the Union must find the resources to follow through the commitments entered into and provide appropriate assistance to developing economies. Furthermore, a consideration must be given to the question of carbon tax, whether at a world or Union level, whilst replacing an equivalent national tax. But the way to create both jobs and wealth is to invest in new technologies providing us with the energy resources of the future. It is through new ways for creating sustainable and non polluting energy that the Union can lead in the world. It is also through creativity by imagining modes of behaviour that will also lead to reductions in emissions. This should include energy efficiency in buildings and transport solutions but also innovative ideas such as intelligent energy grids. And we should not forget more traditional measures such as the reduction in emissions from both transport vehicles and maritime vessels.

All of these areas are growth areas and job creating. As all parts of the world are faced with this problem, the lead we obtain today will pay off in the years to come.

Fighting for freedom and Fundamental Rights

Clearly fundamental rights are non-negotiable and cannot, in any event, be circumscribed. When limitations are introduced in the name of so-called security, the terrorists achieve their objectives.

It is imperative that we find solutions to the real threats posed by terrorism without compromising the very essence of our societies built on fundamental rights and freedoms.

The Commission must put some order in the area of freedom, justice and security. For many years, both the Commission and the Member States have been proposing and implementing a patch-work of measures, most of them adopted without real Parliamentary scrutiny and falling outside the purview of the ECJ. A radical review of all the measures in place is called for and a coherent package needs to be presented and decided upon with the full agreement of Parliament.

Furthermore, we believe that not enough prominence has been given to fundamental rights over recent years. With the entry into force of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, we want the Commissioner charged with this portfolio to take significant measures to combat discrimination at all levels and ensure that fundamental rights form the backbone of all EU policy.

We also insist on real progress in the freedom of movement of people. Insufficient emphasis has been given to citizens and their actual ability to move freely across our Union. This includes necessary progress in the area of civil law, so that citizens can be certain that their rights will be safeguarded wherever they are in the Union. Care should also be given to facilitating procedures for citizens that have chosen to move around the Union, in areas such as succession rights and divorce settlement.

Both Europol and Eurojust must be reviewed in order to ensure maximum scrutiny by parliament. And the European Public prosecutor's office should be established, initially dealing with financial fraud - and then ideally through the extension of its remit - to serious cross border crime.

Finally, freedom and fundamental rights also means a pluralist media and we will insist once again on the need to look at the concentration of media within the Union in a critical way and determine an appropriate way forward. In our mind this will require EU legislation in one form or another.

Promoting a coherent European strategy in the World

The development of a coherent European foreign policy is essential if the Union is to play a role in the world. The Union must focus on its traditional strengths and put a very strong and special emphasis on human rights and democracy promotion. Foreign policy must always promote and defend European values and in a way that reflects the uniqueness of the European Union.

The development of the External Action Service will be a key element in providing the Union with the tools for greater coherence and efficiency. The Union must develop its foreign policy potential enabling it to act in a way commensurate with its weight in financing development and peace building policies.

The Union must also have a clear agenda of human rights and bring its experience in conflict resolution and crisis management to bear. The Union must also be involved in humanitarian relief missions where either human conflict or nature have caused devastation.

Finally, the Union must develop its defence procurement thereby enabling the emergence of a truly common defence market, strengthening European defence and its technological and industrial base through the exploitation of economies of scale and ensuring European forces benefit from the best equipment when sent on ESDP missions.

Competition (ECON)

Joaquin Almunia

The economic crisis has exposed some of the weaknesses in Europe's economy and in its regulatory framework, thereby reinforcing the need to further strengthen our economic and financial framework. A well functioning single market is key to a healthy economy and vital for economic recovery. Anti-competitive practices and 'economic protectionism' must therefore be eliminated and for this reason a strict application of competition rules is essential.

ALDE supports a strong competition policy that creates the appropriate environment to guarantee healthy competition from being undermined by anticompetitive practices, abuses of dominant position and state aid that contribute to distorting competition. It is ultimately EU citizens who benefit from fair and open competition as it leads to lower prices, better quality goods and services and encourages innovation.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- Competition policy and the strict enforcement of competition rules are essential for the proper functioning of a competitive European market and for the protection of consumers, above all, in times of economic crisis.
- The separation of legislative, executive and investigative powers of DG Competition must be improved to ensure consistency of competition rules across the policy spectrum.
- The European Commission should publish a comprehensive report on the effectiveness of state aid granted for “green recovery”, - in terms of bringing about a substantial shift towards sustainability, in particular in the automotive sector - and state aid for environmental protection. It should also contribute to launching a discussion on state aid in the wider international competition arena.
- The focus on the customer needs to be strengthened in order to ensure that consumers can enjoy the benefits of Europe's open market. The creation of a business environment that encourages innovation and investment improves Europe's economic position in a global context.
- The European Parliament must be given a more prominent role in the development of competition policy, ultimately through the co-decision procedure.

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL)

Laszlo Andor

A clear consequence of the current economic crisis is the increasing unemployment rate. This combined with the growing demographic challenge will require a variety of policy responses at EU and Member State level. The impact of the crisis on the labour market and the related social consequences will significantly increase the need for a greater social Europe including measures to effectively tackle poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. The European Commission has a vital role to play by promoting the coordination of Member States activities and ensuring the full implementation of existing legislation and tools. These can play a key role in combating poverty and social exclusion throughout the EU, once careful consideration has been given at which level regulations can be the most effective.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The Commission must promote an environment that ensures effective cooperation between the EU institutions in order to provide for the full implementation of legislation and programmes as well as effective synergies between them. The Commission, in partnership with the Member States, must work to ensure that programmes such as the European Social Fund, including the new Microfinance facility, are fully supported and include combating poverty and social exclusion, fighting discrimination, promoting gender equality - including tackling the existing pay gap - and the promotion of longer and healthier lives.
- The implementation of the Agreed Flexicurity Principles and the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs must be further developed in the short, medium and long term in order to ensure that the EU can actively respond to the challenges of globalisation and address the increasing need to strengthen the EU's competitiveness and social cohesion.
- Especially in this period of economic crisis and following on from the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty which makes the Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding, the Commission will have to create and maintain a vigilant environment to ensure the full respect of fundamental rights including the effective implementation of existing EU legislation to outlaw discrimination in the workplace and the speedy adoption of proposed laws to outlaw discrimination on all remaining grounds in access to goods and services.
- The rising levels of unemployment will have a direct economic cost and will also have a social impact including increased crime, mental health problems, violence and social exclusion. These must be addressed in addition to policies addressing the economic effects of rising unemployment. The Commission must continue to develop policies to promote the increased participation of women, people with disabilities and older and younger people into the labour market.
- For the EU to effectively recover from the economic crisis the Commission must develop long term structural reforms to combat and address wider policy issues such as aging population, youth unemployment and the role of family carers.
- The reconciliation of work and family life is required in order to rise to the challenges of the XXI century.

Foreign affairs and Security policy (AFET)

Catherine Ashton

The development of coherent European foreign policy is essential if the Union is to play a role in the world. The Union must focus on its traditional strengths of conflict prevention and crisis management and put a very strong and special emphasis on human rights and democracy promotion. In order to do this successfully, the Union must arm itself with an efficient and community based European External Action Service (EEAS). Foreign policy must always promote and defend European values and in a way that reflects the uniqueness of the European Union.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- An ability to fulfil the promise of the Lisbon Treaty and deliver a more coherent, visible and consistent EU foreign policy.
- The High Representative must establish herself on the global scene as a key world figure, in line with her Lisbon Treaty based mandate.
- Successfully establish and run the External Action Service as an EU diplomatic service and come forward with a sound proposal for its organisation and functioning taking into account the expertise and counsel of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs. Consideration should also be given to the role the EAS could play in providing consular services to EU citizens
- Provide the EEAS with sufficient personnel on the ground, by strengthening EU presence and coherence at international fora such as the UN, by making sure that double structures are avoided and that EEAS resources are not eaten up by conflicting responsibilities between Council and Commission.
- Ensure, especially within the initial phase, that all Member States, including also the larger Member States, play a full role in the development and implementation of a truly common EU security and foreign policy Quickly come forward with a feasible budget plan including budgetary re-allocations to guarantee sufficient funding for EEAS staffing and infrastructure.
- Commit herself to informing the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs about her appointments to senior posts in the EEAS ex ante and agree to common hearings on request of the Committee.
- Safeguard and strengthen the community aspects of the EEAS and in the EU's overall external action.
- Successful "double-hatting"; draw strength from both Council and Commission while fully respecting her accountability to the European Parliament; in that respect, work from the start in close cooperation with her fellow Commissioners for international cooperation, for enlargement, development and trade while trying to avoid duplicating structures and work.
- Present human rights, international justice and democracy building as the keystone and integral part of all EU external action, including within EU military operations.
- Consider as priorities the reinforcement of the EU-US relationship, and the forging of a common approach to the Afghan crisis.

- Further strengthen the common defence capabilities of the Union, and improve the cooperation with NATO, while enabling the Union to autonomously conduct its own risk assessment. The revision of the Union's strategic priorities should also be considered. The Union should also further engage in promoting an ambitious agenda for the 2010 NPT review conference.
- Strong emphasis on building a strong civilian and military capacity; which should build on what has already been achieved whilst also addressing gaps in policy coherence and consistency. To achieve this, the EU should pool its resources and capabilities better.
- Back diplomacy with "hard power peacekeeping missions" when it comes to crisis management and conflict prevention. The European Union has to be able to take responsibility for contributing to crises in the world to which it is committed.
- The EU should not act alone in addressing global challenges. Moreover, the EU shares strategic objectives with many other regions in the world. CSDP could therefore be opened up to certain strategic partners in order to jointly develop common training schemes. This would consolidate common approaches and ensure greater effectiveness.
- CSDP should be exposed to more democratic scrutiny, in particular the launch of CSDP missions. More parliamentary debate on such issues will raise public awareness of CSDP missions and therefore their legitimacy.

Internal Market and services (IMCO / ECON/JURI)

Michel Barnier

The single market is the greatest achievement of the European Union. However, it is not yet complete. The free movement of goods, persons, services and capital still meets significant obstacles. Moreover, there is the risk of increased market distortion as some Member States in response to the crisis have installed anti-competitive measures to protect their industries. Citizens' confidence is reduced due to the negative side-effects of globalisation and the current crisis. Thus, it is more important than ever to reconcile the market with the social dimension and to establish a true European social market economy. It is in this context that the ALDE Group strongly supports Mario Monti's mission to propose ideas to relaunch the Single Market.

The crisis has also exposed weakness in the financial market sector and in order to remedy these shortfalls, a single financial supervisor for micro- and macro-prudential supervision of large cross-border financial institutions must be established.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The proper and uniform application of internal market legislation is an absolute priority. The internal market cannot operate effectively without rigorous enforcement of internal market legislation. Proper and timely implementation is in particular crucial with regard to the Services Directive as services represent over 50% of EU GDP. Of equal importance is the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and its impact on specific sectors - such as health professionals - and the new framework for goods and consumer related directives. Significant progress must be made in this area, whilst at the same time ensuring that the social dimension of the single market is strengthened.
- Financial market supervision must be strengthened by establishing a single financial supervisor for micro- and macro-prudential supervision of large European cross-border financial institutions.
- The Commission must provide an impact assessment to all new legislative proposals ensuring there is a strong economic justification for them. In this regard the ongoing efforts to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, especially in the area of company law, must be maintained. The Commission must ensure that there is a greater level of simplification and a reduction in administrative burdens for both companies and consumers. A proper implementation of Solvit is necessary to achieve better regulation.
- The elimination of national protectionism concerning public procurement is essential if the internal market is to operate effectively. Greater access to public procurement contracts must be made available to small and medium sized enterprises and contracts for tender must be available via local, regional and national authorities online at all times.
- The free movement of goods must be improved through better standardisation and market surveillance of goods. The results of the bi-annual consumer market scoreboard and the internal market scoreboard should be widely publicised. This will ensure that consumers can benefit from price transparency and that local, regional and national Governments can themselves witness where improvements must be made. In general, better and more targeted information should be made available to both citizens and businesses in order to make them aware of their rights.
- The setting up of an enhanced patent system as soon as possible particularly following the recent Council decision, making it easier and cheaper to attain and defend a patent, reducing the cost and administrative burden on EU companies and nurturing EU innovation and creativity.

- Promoting e-commerce, accompanied by appropriate consumer confidence building measures, is a good way of enhancing the internal market since it is a modern tool which could be an incentive for cross-border transactions.

Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

Dacian Ciolos

The ALDE believes that we need a strong and competitive Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) as a vital element for a successful development of the EU. The CAP accounts for more than 40% of the EU budget making it very important to reconsider the distribution of EU agricultural funds to meet the goal of a free and fair market whilst respect the environment and taking into consideration climate change. The Lisbon Treaty will provide for a new framework making agricultural policy both more democratic and accountable. .

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The reform of the CAP planned for 2013 must provide for a fundamentally renewed policy that combines an efficient production of common goods with the imperative of the fight against climate change. It should be emphasised that in order to ensure food security and improve competitiveness while mitigating climate change, farmers must have access to all means available to make agriculture more efficient. The financing of the future CAP must maintain and implement the ambitious and achievable objectives introduced in the “Health Check”.
- Maintaining the quality and added value of EU agriculture, namely, through the delivery of "common goods". The CAP should develop the right mechanisms in order to balance the work, expenses and efforts invested in the production of safe and high quality foods taking into account the imperative of landscape preservation and bio-diversity whilst also ensuring continuity of the EU heritage of land cultivation and rural development.
- Further increase the EU share in global agriculture especially through the production of high quality products. This will be achieved by the establishment of a free, fair and competitive global market.
- Increased efficiency and competitiveness by the reduction in red tape. The Union must reduce the burden of requirements imposed on farmers through simplification and better regulation concerning documentation requirements and the avoidance of duplication. The Union should also assist in detecting areas where cost-efficiency improvements can be introduced, thus enabling farmers to concentrate on their primary activity of producing high quality products. Reduction of bureaucratic burden on national administrations must also be brought forward.
- Food security and sustainable food supply. The Union has to ensure accessibility to quality and safe foods as well as adequacy, availability and stability of continuous food supply regardless of seasonal or yearly fluctuations, or price volatility. The European Union needs a long-term strategy for sustainable food supply.

Health and Consumer policy (ENVI / IMCO)

John Dalli

Health and consumer policy should be at the core of the internal market. The new Treaty considerably strengthens the EU's powers in the field of public health, and the new Commission should therefore seize the opportunity to formulate a more ambitious and coherent health policy benefitting all citizens.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- Priority must be given to ensure that there will not be a fragmentation of the internal market as the growth of e-commerce takes place. Consumers too must be protected if late payments arise in a cross border context. Protecting consumers from dangerous toys and a review of the EU package travel holiday directive must be implemented.
- The proposed directive on Patients' rights in cross-border healthcare - a first important step toward a free European patient area - must not be watered down by Member States. Given the recent failure by the Council to reach an agreement the initiative now needs strong backing from the Commission. The directive, which has the support of the Parliament, would ensure free movement of and better information for patients. Furthermore, it would increase cooperation between health care systems by sharing expertise, innovation and information.
- European patients' rights in general should be strengthened with an overall goal of guaranteeing equal access to safe and high-quality health services and treatment for all citizens, also including the right to information about the medicines we take and about health services available. Therefore the Commission should resist the attempts in the Council to block the directive on information to patients.
- More coherence of EU policies is needed in the field of environmental health, with climate change and new forms of environmental pollution bringing new challenges for the health of European citizens. The same goes for the impact of food quality on human health, which should be addressed in an integrated way, involving other policy areas such as the CAP, research policy and the internal market.
- Addressing the wider factors determining health, and strengthening measures to prevent disease and health risks should be key elements of the EU public health strategy, which must be sustained and reinforced. The inclusion of health concerns into all EU policies to ensure coherence in policy development should be reinitiated. A smoke-free environment in all public and work places should for instance be a concrete objective for the Commission.
- More attention should be given to health literacy which should be part of a comprehensive and coherent strategy for health at EU level.
- The impact of ageing on public health and healthcare systems in Europe should be given high priority in EU health policies, for instance in establishing the successor to the Second Health Strategy Programme, which expires in 2013. The fight against health inequalities across the EU must be at the core of future public health initiatives at EU-level.
- Given that the responsibility for pharmaceuticals is now for the first time under the same Commissioner as health issues, and given the new powers in this field provided by the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission should develop a strong health policy with the full integration of medicinal products.
- All decisions on genetically modified organisms should be taken based on the best scientific advice. Given the public concern about GMOs, it is essential to have clear rules for their authorisation. Therefore, the Council conclusions of December 2008 calling for an improved implementation of the legal framework on GMOs should be fully implemented. It is important to ensure that EU legislation on risk evaluation of GMOs is respected by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), especially in the assessment of long-term effects of GMOs.

Maritime affairs and Fisheries (PECH)

Maria Damanaki

In the field of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has far-reaching consequences concerning the decision-making process at European level. The European Parliament is now co-legislator laying down with the Council the legislative framework of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). As far as international fisheries agreements are concerned, the Parliament will have to give its approval before the Council can conclude any agreement.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- Under the new Treaty rules, the Commission should stick to a strict interpretation of the exception to the ordinary procedure on the 'fixing and allocation of fishing opportunities' and it should use the delegation of powers in the framework of comitology only in exceptional cases.
- The focus of the legislators in the upcoming five years will be on the reform of the CFP. A fully-fledged renewal of the current provisions and mechanisms are required and the reform should mainly address the following aspects;
 - A clearly defined exemption within the CFP for small-scale fisheries, with particular reference to small coastal islands where there is often no alternative source of employment. Thus, establishing a de-bureaucratized, liberal and separate regime for small-scale coastal fisheries.
 - A new impetus must be given to the aquaculture sector. Besides the necessity of creating a legal framework, the goal should be to develop a sustainable European aquaculture industry that respects the environment, increases its economic viability and offers consumers greater guarantees. However, aquaculture in itself will not be the single solution to overfishing.
 - The CFP must be seen within an integrated maritime policy. This includes many measures such as a roadmap towards maritime spatial planning by Member States, a European network of maritime 'clusters', a European marine research network and a European network for maritime surveillance.
 - The fight against illegal and unreported fishing, as well as discards (fish or other organisms simply thrown back to sea), must be stepped up. For this, solutions have to be found together with the Regional Advisory Councils and the fishermen - including possible incentives. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing has to be tracked and emphasis should be put on the control regulation which should be standardised across the EU, with administrative sanctions - not criminal sanctions - being the standard across the EU.
 - A specific and long overdue eco-labelling scheme for fisheries products should be established. This forms part of a compromise within the European labelling scheme that should apply to all products.
 - Measures to prevent the social implications and the serious damages to fisheries, caused by fish predators (i.e. cormorant populations) should be considered.

Trade (INTA)

Karel de Gucht

In the past years, trade policies have been increasingly linked to development, social and environmental policies. The ALDE group wants a globalisation with a human face. Trade tools should be used to promote sustainable economic development and reduce poverty. The EP will be involved in the negotiating mandates and must be regularly informed on the progress of negotiations (at an early stage and with a stronger voice).

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The EU's role at the world level must be strengthened and the Commission must actively promote tangible progress in the ongoing WTO negotiations in order to conclude the Doha Round by the end of next year. The Commission must pursue the objectives set out in the negotiating mandate, namely concerning protection of geographical indications and IPR, market access for industrial goods and services and public procurement in both developed and developing countries, and, finally, minimal requirements for environmental and social standards. The EU should play an active role as a bridge between the US and emerging countries as well as promote the full participation of developing countries and LDCs in global trade.
- The WTO should be reformed in order to include mechanisms to address global imbalances in trade relations and the EU should play an active role in the future institutional reform of the WTO. This should include the promotion of a WTO parliamentary assembly.
- Through its Commercial policy, the Union should promote its core values such as the promotion of human rights, democracy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms, the defence of the environment and the promotion of ILO and social standards. The strengthening of existing and the conclusion of new bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements must be considered as a complementary strategy and not as an alternative to the multilateral framework. In terms of bi-lateral agreements, greater concrete development is required in the trading relationship with the Mediterranean countries, the Americas, Asia and the Eastern Partnership countries.
- The Commission should foster regional integration when negotiating trade agreements (Latin America, Asian countries, Euromed area). The Commission must ensure coherence between European trade and development policies, so that trade contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- The Commission may want to revisit its strategy on Economic Partnership Agreements as the negotiations are progressing very slowly. An impact assessment of EPAs should be regularly undertaken. The Commission should also insist on setting clear benchmarks based on economic indicators for each separate EPA and also ensure that they lead to real regional integration.
- The regulation on the origin marking of certain imported products (Made in) must be adopted in order to protect consumers and the competitiveness of European industry. A compulsory origin marking, which is not a protectionist measure, would be an important step towards more complete information about social and environmental production and processing standards.
- The EU customs legislation must be amended in order to end the detention, seizure and destruction of legitimate generic medicines in transit through the EU. Whilst there must be an effective anti-counterfeiting policy, this must be balanced between illegal counterfeit medicine and legitimate generic medicine. The EU should therefore respect its commitments of the 2001 WTO Doha declaration.

Enlargement and Neighbourhood policy (AFET)

Stefan Füle

Enlargement has been one of the most successful policies of the Union and it will remain an essential policy for the Union through the coming years. However, the forthcoming enlargements are likely to be more controversial and scrutinised than previous ones.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- The successful management and conclusion of negotiations with Croatia leading to its accession at the earliest possible time.
- A responsible handling of sensitive relations with Turkey, where the membership process plays a crucial role. Ensure that negotiations with Turkey continue, and support the internal reform process in the country.
- Explain the success and potential gains from previous and future enlargements, inside and outside the EU.
- Reinforce, and if needed, re-evaluate, EU policies towards the Western Balkans and finally secure tangible results in terms of political stability and economic growth after years of significant EU and IC support.
- Develop the Eastern Partnership through real issues like visa free travel, the establishment of a free trade area and gradual inclusion in community policies, matched by adequate EU funding.
- Base medium and long-term action on openness and inclusion and work for freer movement of people and goods, inclusion and co-operation and tirelessly fight protectionism, isolationism and the emergence of an inward looking European Union that would lack the self-confidence to meet the challenges in its neighbourhood.

Research, Innovation and Science (ITRE)

Maire Geoghegan-Quinn

If the European Union wants to stay competitive vis à vis its main competitors, the European Union should raise the level of research and development (R&D) as quickly as possible. Furthermore, R&D can accelerate the EU's transition to an eco-efficient economy using substantially fewer fossil fuels.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- Transition to an eco-efficient economy as agreed by the EU environment ministers in October. So far the Commission's consultation on the EU 2020 strategy provides no concrete proposals. The Commission must strive to make low carbon technology, and wind energy available to all countries by enhanced cooperation between universities, the Commission and business. With over 40% of CO2 emissions coming from inefficient buildings, zero-emitting buildings must be a priority. The Commissioner should, with the Commissioner in charge of the budget, explore the possibilities of allocating a higher level of structural funds towards improvements in the efficiency of buildings.
- Improvement in the functioning of Public Private Partnerships is required as they are currently not working due to the inflexible financial set up of programmes. Red tape must be significantly reduced and the Commission should implement a more risk-tolerant and trust-based approach in EU programmes. Less paper and more action.
- The EU must remove barriers to the free movement of knowledge by creating a 'fifth freedom' to be added to the four original principles. Cross-border mobility of researchers, students, scientists and university teachers must be boosted. Labour markets and work conditions for European researchers must be improved and higher education must be reformed. Furthermore, talented people from outside the European Union must be encouraged to study and work within it.
- The Union needs an ambitious innovation strategy with a major overhaul of the EU budget. An increase in funds is needed for R&D and innovation, which should be achieved by transferring money from other areas of the EU budget. A future R&D Framework Programme should have double or triple the volume of FP7. Europe should also make greater use of the Structural Funds to boost R&D and innovation.
- R&D efforts in the field of health must be strengthened, in order to ensure both public health outcomes and European competitiveness in medical technologies and treatments. The benefits of health innovation must be assessed with an overall health technology assessment approach, thus ensuring the swift and effective delivery of public health outcomes.

Regional policy (REGI)

Johannes Hahn

Regional policy, driven by the principle of solidarity, aims at reducing development gaps between Member States and regions through the reduction of persistent social and economic disparities and preventing uncontrolled migration which can have expensive consequences. Cohesion policy has significantly contributed to enhancing convergence between Member States and regions. However the EU Regional policy will have to face a number of major challenges in the near future which will need to be taken into account in the new architecture of structural funds from 2014 onwards.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- The main objective must be the removal of disparities in the levels of development between various EU regions and Member States. Future Regional Development policy should support regions which are weaker and geographically difficult. It should strengthen quality and justice, counterbalance the concentration of economic activity, support the Lisbon Strategy in order to improve competitiveness and exploit all EU resources.
- All EU regions should be able to benefit from cohesion policy. However, the main target should be the poorest regions, but cohesion policy should also cover the wider EU territory in order to exchange best practices and reinforce cross-border and inter-regional cooperation. Funding to regions with geographical handicaps and urban areas with deprived neighbourhoods should be strengthened. The urban dimension should be strengthened and cities should be mobilised into sharing their potential and cooperating with the surrounding communities so as to increase interaction between rural and urban areas.
- Responsibility for regional development should be shared between the EU, Member States, regional, sub-regional and local levels. Allocation of competence at various levels should be made clearer, reinforcing the role of all relevant levels of governance. The guidelines and objectives should be set at the EU level; strategies in cooperation with national and regional levels; implementation at the regional and local level. Programmes should be directed at regions and sub-regions as much as possible. The governance capacities of each of the administrative levels needs to be assessed.
- Cooperation and coordination between policy areas should be increased at European, national, regional and local levels in order to achieve the regional objectives. Regional policy should be better coordinated with research, education, transport, agriculture and energy sectors.
- A successful, innovative regional policy can reduce social, ageing and environmental problems. More emphasis should be put on greener technology and on help schemes against exclusion of the elderly and disabled people. Furthermore, the Structural and Cohesion Funds may be a key element in dealing with the effects of current economic and financial crisis. Optimisation of EU Funds will allow better compensation with regard to the effects of the crisis.
- For improved governance within cohesion policy, simpler rules must be developed both at Community and national level. Greater transparency and less burdensome procedures are preconditions for better governance. The current modifications of the General and ERDF Regulations are welcome as an important step in this direction but they cannot simply be a temporary adjustment in times of economic crisis. Rather, they should become sound principles guiding the negotiations on the future cohesion policy and be included in the Structural Funds legislative package.

Climate Action (ENVI)

Connie Hedegaard

Climate change is a global challenge that will determine our common futures. It is also the area where the Union is the world leader. The Union must maintain its clear leadership but also ensure that climate change is integrated into all policy areas.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- Moving towards the implementation of our 30% emissions reduction commitment whether agreed upon in Copenhagen or not.
- Ensuring that our Emissions Trading Scheme is compatible with emerging schemes elsewhere in order to ensure a global market in emissions trading.
- In the event that no agreement has been reached by December 2011 within the International Maritime Organisation as regards reducing emissions, the Commission should come forward with legislative proposals to include the maritime sector in the ETS.
- In spite of recent agreement with the Council on energy efficiency package, move towards binding efficiency targets, including for buildings which currently account for approximately 40% of total emissions.
- Launch the move towards long-term climate policy goals such as how to envisage the 80%-95% reductions foreseen for 2050 and what are the means of achieving this.

International cooperation, Humanitarian Aid
and Crisis response (DEVE)
Rumiana Jeleva

Humanitarian Aid is sadly often the only visible face of the Union in third countries. It is also a policy concerned directly with saving lives. As such, it must remain a central part of the EU's foreign action and integrated into the Union's development policy.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- Humanitarian Aid must continue to conform to the principles of international law and neutrality. It will be necessary to reflect on how to deal with third countries, which close their borders after natural disasters thereby making intervention difficult or even impossible.
- Humanitarian Aid is always a response to a failure and it is therefore vital to try to pre-empt problems. This requires a coherent policy. In this context, it would be good if the Union was to adopt the Conclusions of the UN General Assembly (The Responsibility to Protect, Resolution 63/308).
- Concerning civil protection, the Commission will need to ensure that it has access to and authority over all the services likely to be called upon in order to deal with natural disasters such as forest fires, flooding and storms. The Commission will also need to give reality to the principle of solidarity now incorporated in the Lisbon Treaty and make concrete proposals in this regard.

Digital Agenda (ITRE/JURI/CULT)

Neelie Kroes

Information and communication technologies offer tremendous opportunities for the future in absolutely all fields of life, but the fast speed of development and innovation creates a challenge for the legislators and regulators. This means that the focus should be on creating the conditions for competition in the market, for openness and access to all consumers and potential entrants in the market, while protecting fundamental rights and privacy and increasing confidence.

Freedom of media and of expression are core European democratic values. Developments in new media and technology have a significant impact on several fields of competence at the EU level.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The protection of fundamental rights, privacy, freedom of expression and information on the internet are essential. In this context, the European Commission should monitor with due attention the compatibility between national legislation and the Telecom package, in particular the guarantee that prior to any measure restricting internet access, there is a fair and impartial procedure, the respect for privacy, the presumption of innocence and the right to be heard.
- Openness and fair competition need to be observed in the market, in particular through the monitoring of "net neutrality" and the tackling of any possible problems through market based solutions. The future proposals for the next generation of networks should focus on achieving a competitive single market for communications, ensuring a level playing field for all operators and opportunities for choice and innovation.
- The access by consumers to communication technologies and content needs to be facilitated. This should be done at EU level through supporting investments in infrastructure (broadband), through a legal framework for online commerce which leads to an increase in confidence of consumers, through improvement of public electronic services. Additionally, e-learning should be promoted as a facility to enhance opportunities for citizens in the fields of education, research, innovation and creativity which in turn will assist the EU in achieving its future Growth and Strategy targets. Finally, an extensive and detailed debate must be held on the issues relating to intellectual property within electronic communications.
- Further work needs to be undertaken in areas where EU action in the field of telecommunications has a direct impact on citizens. This includes the roaming regulation that has been a public success, achieving an important reduction in prices. However, the focus should now be on achieving a long-term solution, by looking at alternative ways of regulating, without intervening directly on the level of retail prices. The 112 single emergency number has also been a success, but we must ensure that all available technologies are used in order to save lives. This is especially the case for the e-Call system and the caller location technologies albeit with adequate safeguards for privacy.
- Information and communication technologies need to be mainstreamed with other policies areas. This is especially the case within climate change, energy policy, research and

innovation, agriculture, transport, product safety (with a specific emphasis on fighting counterfeit goods) and home affairs.

- Media pluralism and freedom of expression in the EU must be guaranteed with vigour, also in the online sphere. The promotion and adaptation of traditional media to new communication technologies should be prioritised. The impact of new media on the life of European citizens is a cross-cutting issue, which requires an interdisciplinary approach.
- Concerning copyright a balance must be found between the inherent value and appreciation of creative and artistic content (art, literature and science), as well as consumer rights. Digital harmonisation and the online sphere are essential in fostering economic growth, creativity, and a competitive knowledge economy. The long-term competitiveness of European cultural industries must be ensured by protecting intellectual property rights, creating European copyright and patents, achieving increased integration of European markets including the digital markets, and establishing properly defined support mechanisms.
- Europe's young generation consists of digital natives, and educating youth in an era of new media is changing all levels of education.

Transport (TRAN)

Siim Kallas

The ALDE underlines the added value of transport networks in the achievement of the 2020 strategy, the Union's climate change goals and greater social, economic and territorial cohesion, while providing timely support for sustaining aggregate demand in Europe.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- Within the internal market in the transport sector, existing legislation should be implemented in all modes of transport, especially the achievement of the liberalisation of national traffic in the rail sector and a complete cabotage liberalisation for the road sector. The completion of the internal market in this sector could play a key role for loyal and fair competition inside the EU and for the Union's overall competitiveness.
- As a means to come out of the economic crisis, and in order to face up to an increasing demand for better co-modality, the Commission should insist on investments in all type of transport infrastructures and develop new methods for financing them.
- Within Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), investments should be sufficient and the choice of projects should be undertaken in a transparent manner and with an economic interest. New modes of funding should be developed, like Public Private Partnership (PPP) or tolls. The implementation of the TEN-T is important for infrastructure development and within the economic crisis could be a way of increasing investments and relaunching competitiveness.
- Sustainable transport models must contribute to fighting climate change. The internalisation of external costs should be taken into account and have a real proposed methodology. 25 % of the CO₂ emissions arise from transport, and therefore significant investments should be made to develop low carbon emission vehicles. The European Commission should also use the programmes (Marco Polo, for example) or the existing legislations SESAR and Eurovignette.
- Passenger and consumer rights should be further developed in all modes of transport, especially for people with reduced mobility. Accessibility, security, safety and comfort should be taken into account. The respect for the privacy of transport users (ie personal name record, data protection) should be defended when using transport (and e.g. when buying tickets or packages).
- Safety in all modes of transport should be ensured, especially in the airline field but also on roads.

Budget and Financial programming (BUDG)

Janusz Lewandowski

The Union's budgetary system must be reformed. Following 4 revisions of the multi-annual financial framework over 3 years, the creation of new institutions and of new policies flowing from the Lisbon Treaty, combined with new priorities such as Europe 2020 and new challenges, such as tackling global warming and investing in a new future-oriented economy: the Union can no longer wait. The European Commission, as the motor of European construction, must take all the necessary initiatives and make the appropriate budgetary proposals in support of an ambitious European project.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- In order to determine the size and shape of the new budget, the Commission must undertake a clear assessment of the financial impact of the Lisbon Treaty.
- The Commission must undertake the long awaited mid-term review and revision of the current multi-annual financial framework 2007-2013 (MAFF). The current system does not work as is clearly demonstrated through the numerous recent revisions of the MAFF. The Commissioner for budget must undertake a mid-term review and propose a mid-term revision of the financial programming (2007-2013) in the course of the first year of his mandate.
- The Treaty of Lisbon provides for multi-annual programming and its articulation with political programmes. In good time for 2014, the Commission must propose a calendar paving the way for the adoption of the next MAFF. The framework should be based on a fundamental review of the multi-annual budget priorities to ensure a budget that not only matches our political ambitions but that also gives greater emphasis to flexibility. Special attention needs to be paid to EU external relations, the new endeavours of stimulating research and innovation and to maintain solidarity.
- A post 2013 MAFF should mainly be based on a transparent and, if possible, independent system of own resources. The Commissioner for budget must launch an in-depth reflexion on this issue as soon as possible, associating the Council, the European Parliament as well as national parliaments.
- A simplification of the financial regulation to enable an easier and accelerated implementation of EU programmes and funds (such as the 7th Research and Development Framework Programme and the Structural and Cohesion Funds, for instance).

Home affairs (LIBE)

Cecilia Malmström

A citizen's Europe must not only respect and protect, but also actively promote and reinforce human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the Rule of Law: these are the principles and values that are at the core of the European project. ALDE expect that the implementation over the next five year of the Stockholm programme will set out a more ambitious agenda with a better balance between the need for security and the protection of our personal freedoms. European citizens have perfectly justified expectations that our external borders are protected to a high and uniform level, and that firm action is taken to fight illegal immigration. At the same time, any measures to combat illegal immigration and to step up external border controls must be compatible with the safeguards and the fundamental rights of the individual, notably the right to asylum and the respect of non-refoulement.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The entire asylum policy of the Union needs to be progressed forcefully towards a credible, fair and humane, common system in a spirit of solidarity between Member States. This includes proposals on revisions of asylum procedures, qualifications, reception conditions, Dublin II and Eurodac as well as the establishment of the European Asylum Support Office. Correct application and enforcement must be ensured.
- A common legal migration policy must be urgently established. This will include measures with regard to the global competition for talent. There must also be solutions found in order to combine work and residence permit for seasonal workers.
- The pressure of illegal immigration is ever increasing and needs to be address through tackling the push- and pull factors. In other words, the solution must not only be stricter border controls but also found through reducing the incentives to immigration which can be achieved through improved development policy. Furthermore, a coherent and humane return policy must be developed in co-operation with third countries. Finally, European readmission agreements must be agreed as bilateral readmission agreements are false and short term investments. Agreement on the guidelines 'Law of the Sea' is a matter of urgency.
- A comprehensive European Border Management plan must be established. This obviously involves a review of Frontex, both its mandate and resources. The long delayed SIS II and VIS must be implemented but a fundamental review of the necessity of further data collection and database systems must be carried out. The Union must continue pursuing visa liberalisation with neighbouring countries.
- The fight against organised crime and terrorism must be strengthened through enhanced co-operation between law enforcement agencies. But most importantly, effective parliamentary and judicial scrutiny of Europol must be set up as a matter of urgency. The office of the European Public Prosecutor must be established, with a view to enlarging the competences beyond financial fraud. An effective transatlantic system for reciprocal exchange of data and intelligence must be developed, respecting privacy and legal safeguards. A special emphasis must be given to the fight against human trafficking.

Energy (ITRE)

Günter Oettinger

50 years after energy issues played a crucial role in the launch of the European project (with the ECSC and the Euratom Treaties), the Union is given a clear competence in the field of energy, with full co-decision powers. Energy is the food for our entire economy and the security and sustainability of our energy supply at competitive prices is essential. The current situation and future forecast are not ideal, with an unfulfilled potential for energy efficiency, high CO₂ emissions, fluctuating prices compounded by our reliance on energy imports (50%).

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- Ensure that the energy efficiency and saving measures are used to their full potential. This is critical in order to reduce our dependency on foreign imports. To address this, an ambitious and comprehensive Energy Efficiency Action Plan which should include binding targets, should be adopted in early 2010. The legal framework must be improved by revising and, and if necessary, extending the scope of existing legislation. The implementation of the current directives must be facilitated, through financing mechanisms and exchange of best-practice (in particular for the buildings directive).
- The Union's security of energy supply must be strengthened. The principle of solidarity must be applied, including by the adoption and the application of the proposed regulation on security of supply. Furthermore, clear positions must be taken when certain actions and projects risk undermining energy solidarity and security of supply. For example, political and financial support should only be provided to gas projects that are clearly economically viable and contribute to the diversification of energy supplies (such as Nabucco, ITGI, LNG terminals).
- The full establishment of a competitive and liberalised EU internal market for energy is a key priority. The appropriate implementation of the Recovery Plan adopted in the March 2009 European Council, should be followed by a coherent plan to develop fully interconnected electricity and gas grids. The implementation of the internal market package must be monitored so as to ensure that it provides the desired benefits to consumers.
- Support renewable energy and delocalised energy production. A study should be undertaken and a report published on the removal of barriers to decentralised energy production, especially concerning the role of SMEs. Binding requirements for biomass sustainability and indirect land use will also have to be adopted and a review conducted in order to eliminate subsidies for non-climate friendly energy sources.
- Energy policy priorities must be mainstreamed throughout all policies, especially in foreign policy, where the EU should speak with a single voice and have united positions towards main suppliers. The EU should assist neighbouring (and developing) countries with energy technology and efficiency. The revision of the budgetary framework and of the structural funds, as well as the new research framework should facilitate investments in energy efficiency (in particular for buildings), renewable energy and smart grids. Finally CAP reform should take into account the potential for energy production and energy savings in rural areas.

Development (DEV)

Andris Piebalgs

Development policy plays an essential role not only in assisting less developed countries, but also in the context of climate change and migratory policy. The ALDE is committed to maintaining an effective and well funded development policy.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- The Union must stick to its international commitments, in particular to achieve the MDGs by 2015. It must therefore ensure not only that deadlines for achieving existing ODA targets are met, but also that the financial resources required to deal with the new challenges, such as climate change, are additional funds and not a simple reallocation of existing funds. Significant progress needs to be made on new and alternative ways of financing development policy.
- The Treaty of Lisbon provides strong legal bases in order to ensure greater coherence between policies that deal with development. In this context, the agenda of priority areas of action needs to be reviewed. However, the new division of competences within the Commission, with on the one side the development portfolio and on the other Humanitarian Aid is not the right step in that direction. Furthermore, the breakdown of responsibilities between the Development Commissioner and the High Representative could also pose serious problems. Therefore, it is essential that the Development Commissioner keeps within his competences the identification, programming and execution of policy. As such, he must remain the primary interlocutor on development policy for all partners.
- Ensure that the Economic Partnership Agreements are development focussed and enable developing countries to prepare for the opening of their economies to the global market. In this context, the promotion of regional cooperation will be essential.
- The clear insufficiencies in governance will need to be addressed both with our direct partners and at the global level. Whereas the agreements found within the IMF, WTO and on climate change all impact directly on developing states, recommendations by the ILO remain essentially without effect. The strong link that exists between poverty, bad governance and insecurity therefore leads to the conclusion that global solutions must be found at a global level.
- Propose that partnerships be established concerning not only the access to basic medical facilities, but also the access to vaccines and anti-retroviral drugs in the context of the fight against AIDS. The Commission should take the initiative and define a real joined-up strategy using its services responsible for research, health, trade and development. Such an approach must be inclusive, that is to say, it must be open to contributions from third countries as well as to UN organisations and NGOs.

Environment (ENVI)

Janez Potocnik

The EU needs to raise the game when it comes to implementing its own laws and putting its own goals into practice. Just as climate action, environmental protection in general should be seen as an integrated part of EU policies with the potential of bringing economic and social progress as well as ecological benefits.

The key points for the ALDE Group are:

- EU action to protect biodiversity has to be stepped up significantly in order to reach the goal of halting biodiversity loss, initially set for 2010. This will require a more effective enforcement of key legislation such as the Birds, Habitats, and Water Framework Directives. But new ways to target biodiversity will also have to be found as will a coherent approach to the double challenge of climate change and biodiversity loss. Of vital importance will be the increase in coherence and sustainability required between EU policies in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, transport, and energy. The new financial perspective after 2013 will also need to address this challenge.
- Equal and effective enforcement of existing and future legislation in all Member States is a key to achieving high environmental standards and a level playing field across the Union. Today, one fourth of all infringements against EU legislation are in the field of environment. The effectiveness and implementation of EU environmental legislation needs to be evaluated continuously and the Commission needs to find new ways of ensuring that environmental goals are actually implemented.
- The principles of sustainable development must be integrated into the economic strategy of the EU, as outlined in the EU 2020 strategy paper. Finding new ways of promoting EU competitiveness and jobs in the framework of a green, eco-efficient economy should be a high priority for EU environmental policy. This must include a more efficient use of resources, clearer economic incentives, and new ways of internalising external costs of resource use and pollution.
- Reaching the goal of clean water and sustainable use of water resources requires stricter enforcement of EU rules, in particular the Water Framework Directive. The Commission should closely follow the implementation of the Directive and take action if progress is too slow.
- Much more can and should be done to reduce air pollution, keeping in mind that the most environmentally friendly installations are also often the most competitive. At the same time legislation needs to remain streamlined to avoid duplication. In concrete terms, the industrial emissions directive (Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, IPPC) should set binding minimum requirements for industrial pollution across the EU. The Commission should come forward with a review of the National Emissions Ceilings Directive in order to reduce the adverse effects of acidification, ground-level ozone, and eutrophication.

Justice, Fundamental rights and Citizenship (LIBE/JURI)

Viviane Reding

The ALDE Group welcomes the creation of a specific commissioner's portfolio for fundamental rights and antidiscrimination. The Commissioner should defend strongly free movement of people, free press, procedural safeguards for defendants and strong and universally applicable data protection rules. Fighting terrorism or criminals by suspending the freedoms and right to privacy of the individual is anathema to liberal political philosophy. Europe can only deliver a full freedom of movement, with a properly functioning Internal Market, when there is a European civil and commercial justice system that is coherent and user friendly, and this facilitates the daily lives of European citizens and enterprises in all their civil acts and transactions. This should also include areas such as family law, succession rights and divorce settlements.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- Fundamental Rights must be respected, protected, reinforced and promoted throughout the Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights must be fully implemented through concrete actions and initiatives. This includes monitoring Member States' compliance with fundamental rights (eg freedom of the press, media concentration, discrimination) and a willingness to invoke Treaty sanctions if required. A widening of the Fundamental Rights Agency's mandate should be undertaken, and the Union must proceed with the accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Free movement of persons, including through full mutual recognition of all same-sex legal partnerships (national civil documents), shall become a reality. In this context, the application of the principle of mutual recognition and procedural rights in the framework of judicial proceedings in both criminal and civil law, must be implemented. Eurojust and Europol must also be subject to appropriate judicial and parliamentary scrutiny. Human trafficking must be seen as a cross-border crime and adequate measures to fight it must be adopted.
- Anti-discrimination laws, including the application and enforcement of current legislation, must be brought forward, especially the approval of the horizontal directive. Stronger action has to be taken to fight discrimination and the protection of children's rights, women's rights and gender equality must be promoted. Elimination of gender based violence through adoption of EU legislation must be encouraged.
- Data protection rules both internally and externally (eg related to Swift and PNR) must be reviewed and enforced, notably Directive 95/46 EC as must be the regulation concerning access to documents.
- To ensure European-wide access to civil and commercial justice, full use must be made of e-justice possibilities to ultimately allow the direct processing of cross-border legal claims under the Payment Order and European Small Claims procedure; further efforts are required to facilitate redress for citizens, including through the introduction of collective redress mechanisms; likewise, there should be greater encouragement given to mediation and other alternative dispute resolution methods with a speedy follow-up on the implementation of the Mediation Directive.

- The continued reliance on a complex and growing system of conflict rules must, where appropriate, be supplemented by the furtherance of European options such as the European Contract Law Project. This should lead to the early adoption of a Common Frame of Reference as a binding inter-institutional legislative tool on the basis of the 'comply or explain' principle by the European legislator; with, alongside, a European optional instrument with optional standard form contracts for use by consenting parties especially for, but not limited to, e-commerce transactions.
- A truly European judicial and legal culture must be fostered and supported by Member States, underpinned where necessary by additional national funding to ensure the proper and continuing European legal education of judges and other legal professionals. Judicial exchange programmes should be encouraged and a European Judicial Academy using existing establishments and structures such as ERA should be developed.
- Considers that a more effective communication policy is essential in order to promote better understanding by citizens of EU action. A pan-European debate must be encouraged with the aim of creating a European public sphere and investigative journalism across borders. New media allows for increased open interaction between citizens and EU politicians and institutions, and should be used to contribute to greater transparency and democratic participation.

Economic and Monetary affairs (ECON)

Olli Rehn

The world has been shaken by the recent financial and economic crisis. Although the European Union is on the track to recovery, shock waves can still be felt. Rising unemployment, low industrial productivity and excessive public debts are hampering Europe's growth potential. Therefore the EU has to develop a more coherent and integrated economic policy agenda which prioritises low-carbon and resource efficient growth, jobs and competitiveness. It also needs to enhance economic governance, especially in the Eurozone. The Commission should present a plan on efficient and sustainable Eurozone enlargement. The EU also has to take the lessons learned from the crisis seriously. This means making micro- and macro-prudential supervision more efficient by setting up a single European financial supervisor for the large cross-border financial institutions. This also means developing crisis management capabilities and a coherent crisis response at EU-level including coordinated exit strategies.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) must be made to work better. A strategy has to be developed on how to implement the SGP more effectively and how its rules can be better enforced.
- The European Union needs improved economic governance and cooperation within the euro area. The Union must develop a strategy for efficient enlargement of the Eurozone and, using the provision of the Lisbon Treaty, ensure that the EU has a single representation in international economic fora. The representation of the Eurozone at the international level should also be enabled where and when appropriate.
- The "EU 2020" strategy must prioritise growth, jobs and competitiveness based on a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy. Essential to its success is the abandoning of the "open method of coordination" and the creation of more integrated and legally binding instruments.
- The EU needs effective micro- and macro-prudential supervision of cross-border financial institutions which can only be achieved with a single European financial supervisor.
- It is important that the EU has a common and coordinated exit strategy from the financial and economic crisis. The EU must also develop EU crisis-management capabilities and coordinate a crisis response at EU level.

Interinstitutional relations and administration (AFCO)

Maros Sefcovic

The new Lisbon Treaty framework will enable the Union to be effective both internally and in its relations with the world. However, the correct implementation of the Treaty will have to be monitored and the exploitation of all the novelties will need to be encouraged.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- The full and rapid implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and the effective deployment of Parliament's new scrutiny, budgetary and legislative powers.
- The successful establishment of the External Action Service as a powerful deliverer of an active and comprehensive foreign policy according to the provisions of the Treaty.
- The adoption of a law on the European Citizens' Initiative and its first practical use.
- Radical reform of the electoral procedure of the European Parliament in time for 2014 to include a transnational list (Duff Report).
- Assessment towards the end of the current legislature of the implementation of the Lisbon treaty, and proposals to make further treaty modifications.
- Passage of a law on administrative cooperation between the institutions, which would replace *inter alia* the financial regulation.
- Framework regulation for agencies.
- Amendment of Protocol on Privileges and Immunities.
- A comprehensive revision of the staff regulation.

Taxation and Customs Union, Audit and Anti-Fraud *(ECON / IMCO / CONT)*

Algirdas Semeta

The global economy has been hit by the worst recession in decades and coordinated action at EU and international level is necessary. Aid for the financial sector and the need for fiscal stimulus have resulted in a major increase in government expenditure. Declining tax revenues puts pressure on governments' finance yet they must finance their budgets. Measures have to be taken to make full use of the Single Market, to dismantle tax obstacles, to promote fair tax competition, as well as to prevent tax fraud, tax evasion and tax haven abuse.

Sound and transparent use of tax payers' money is essential, both by the Member States and by the Commission as well as other EU Institutions and bodies. Besides the National Declarations by Member States and individual responsibility for Commissioners, the pending reform of OLAF will remain one of the top priorities.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- Good governance in tax matters should be used as a tool to reinforce the fight against money laundering, the financing of terrorism, combating cross-border tax fraud, tax avoidance and tax evasion. The European Union must introduce strong measures to combat tax havens.
- Tax obstacles currently prevent individuals and businesses from operating freely across borders and must be tackled to ensure greater competitiveness and sustainable development. Furthermore, growing in-equalities both among and within Member States have to be addressed by firming up market integration and by moderating tax competition.
- The principles of transparency, information exchange and fair tax competition must be promoted both inside and outside the EU.
- Better co-operation is needed between Member States to combat tax and customs fraud. The focus of customs control must be in the areas of security and safety and environmental protection as well as the fiscal aspects of customs work.
- Consumers and businesses must be protected in the area of counterfeiting at a time when the illegal market for counterfeit goods and pirated goods is soaring.
- In 2004 the Commission promised that by 2009 it would achieve a positive Declaration of Assurance (DAS) on the reliability and legality of transactions. Despite certain improvements this has not happened. This remain a fundamental priority
- The introduction of National Management Declarations by Member States remains crucial yet uneven. The Commission should ensure correct implementation by all Member States.
- The College takes collective responsibility when signing the Annual Activity Reports but the Commissioners should take individual responsibility for their portfolio.
- The reform of OLAF remain a high priority and the Commission must bring it forward.

Industry and Entrepreneurship (ITRE / IMCO)

Antonio Tajani

European multinationals and SMEs are of vital importance to economic growth and the creation of jobs. Therefore it is of paramount importance that they can operate in an environment free of bureaucratic hurdles. The European Commission should create an environment in which entrepreneurs can get the most out of themselves and their business.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- Since November 2005 when the Commission presented a new SME policy 'Think Small First', there has been no real improvement in partnership building with SMEs. Today, SMEs with creative ideas still complain about red tape, incomprehensible forms and procedures in order to receive subsidies for innovative projects. The Commission should prioritise the real implementation of an SMEs strategy.
- Reducing red tape is considered by SMEs to be the most pressing issue, with reports showing that they bear a disproportionate regulatory and administrative burden. It is estimated that while a big company spends €1 per employee on regulatory duties, SMEs spend up to €10. The Commissioner must set up a one-stop shop for company registration ideally dealing with a single Commission official speaking their own language. Online interfaces should also be promoted.
- The EIB should play a major role in financing research and innovation activities of enterprises, especially industrial innovation projects and clean technologies. This could be achieved by developing a new facility within the EIB that focuses on the financing of innovation and follow-up financing of high-potential projects/companies.
- Public procurement rules should be made greener. In order to reduce emissions emanating from public owned facilities, green public procurement rules should be made obligatory thereby forcing public authorities to only procure products in the highest energy efficiency class.
- Galileo must remain a top priority for the Union and this despite set backs, such as the recent Court of Auditors report. The Parliament must be informed of all developments and able to scrutinise an important but expensive public project. Galileo must be deployed on time and without further escalation of costs.

Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth (CULT)

Androulla Vassiliou

Education, Youth, Culture, Media and Sport must play a more central role in EU policy in order to bring the EU closer to citizens, to foster a competitive knowledge economy and to sustain European values. Developments in new media and technology have a significant impact on education, youth, media and culture.

Access to high quality education, culture, media and sports for all Europeans will be key in further developing European societies. Inclusiveness needs to be actively stimulated to overcome discrepancies. United in diversity, says the motto of the European Union itself. ALDE needs to make sure that we live up to the motto and defend our diversity, which exists only through the prosperity of all our minorities and languages.

The keys points for the ALDE Group are:

- Education is the key pillar of democratic open societies. Europe needs to meet ambition with means so as to become the beacon of talent in the global knowledge economy. Action needs to be undertaken in order to overcome the significant shortfalls within education and research and development, including at the level of universities. European universities must regain their position as centres of excellence and poles of innovation. Student and teacher exchange programmes, such as Erasmus and Comenius need to be enhanced and become more inclusive.
- The new challenges being faced by youth in Europe today such as employability, IT literacy, entrepreneurship, social inclusion, civic participation, health & sport must be addressed pro-actively and inclusively at the European level. The 'EU 2020' strategy should be bold and ambitious, and Member States should be kept to their commitments. Investing in future talent is important, especially in times of economic and financial crisis.
- Culture and artistic expression has inherent value while cultural development is essential in fostering economic growth, creativity and international competitiveness. The long-term competitiveness of European cultural industries must be ensured by protecting intellectual property rights, creating European copyright and patents, achieving increased integration of European markets including the digital markets, and establishing properly defined support mechanisms. European exchanges among artists and Europeans working in the cultural sector need to be fostered to increase cooperation and appreciation of Europe's cultural diversity.
- Within sport, initiatives must be taken to ensure a fair and non discriminatory framework for professional sport consistent with its growing economic significance while respecting its specificity.
- Multilingualism lies at the very heart of European cultural diversity. Action must be taken to preserve this important cultural heritage, notably through analysing the situation of languages in Europe, with an emphasis on minority languages, and through exchange of good practices in different member states. In some cases it may be necessary to develop strategies towards improving the protection of minority languages, and to facilitate development of legislation, policies, and practices in compliance with minority rights as an integral part of fundamental human rights and according to principles of non-discrimination.