

## Priorities

It is far more difficult than it seems to set goals, priorities and objectives for the next EU legislature. Quite often the agenda is too broad and overloaded, and as a result every item becomes a priority.

Setting priorities does not mean downgrading other fields of activity, but there are areas and issues where I feel that Parliament should make an extra effort over the coming years.

1. **Economic Recovery.** It is becoming increasingly evident that the European financial and economic recovery plan must receive top priority.
2. **Climate Change.** Europe has to become a serious prime motor in the battle on climate change and use of alternative energy.
3. **Illegal Immigration.** The issue of irregular and illegal immigration needs to be given more urgent attention and should be effectively addressed through tangible and concrete initiatives.
4. **Fair Deal.** European citizens should get a 'fair deal' as consumers and their rights should be fully safeguarded.
5. **Gender Equality.** Legislation on gender equality should be enforced in all member states.
6. **Discrimination.** New impetus must be given to the fight against discrimination, xenophobia and social exclusion in all its forms.
7. **Poverty.** We must tackle the problem of increasing poverty emanating from the high cost of living and the unacceptable level of unemployment, which are affecting the citizens' quality of life.
8. **Special Needs.** There are sectors of society which are marginalised and forgotten; their special needs must be addressed.
9. **ESP.** We need to work for a new European Social Pact in which we set realistic goals and standards relating to social welfare, health and education. All European legislation should be assessed in terms of its social impact.
10. **Agriculture and Fishing.** Farmers and fishermen need to be helped to become sustainable in the modern global economy.
11. **Development Policy.** Economic policy should be used as a significant tool to lift up millions of people living below the poverty line.
12. **Regional and Cohesion Objectives.** More funds should be allocated to make a substantial impact on the less-developed pockets of the EU.

For the EU to deliver on the above, however, there needs to be a drastic change in the way the EU's institutions themselves operate:

- More transparency in European institutions.
- Simplification of legislation and less bureaucracy and less expenditure in enforcing it.
- An improvement in the communications between the EU's institutions and the ordinary citizen.