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# THE EUROPEAN

The European View

A European policy for justice and home affairs

Developing an agenda for Europe's centre left

Poland's priorities for the EU Presidency



REGENT'S COLLEGE  
LONDON

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## The European View

In the past few weeks the revelations over the phone hacking scandal have not just exposed the illegal and immoral practices employed by some tabloid papers. They have also laid bare the close and cosy relationship between Britain's political establishment and the people that control News Corp and its UK arm, News International.

The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and many of their colleagues in the Labour and Conservative party have, in unique moments of honesty, admitted that they allowed Mr Murdoch to exert far too much influence over government and parliament. The implications are indeed startling and the extent to which leading politicians were prepared to pay homage to tabloid papers makes for uncomfortable reading.

But there is one area where it seems Mr Murdoch has had overwhelming influence. When Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's chief of staff from 1997 to 2007, admits openly that the former PM's stance towards European integration was influenced by Mr Murdoch then what was suspected for years is profoundly confirmed.

For decades tabloid headlines from the Murdoch stable and beyond, full of malicious and mendacious myths and, in many cases, outright lies, have misrepresented the effect the EU and its policies have on Britain and as a result they have grossly and deliberately misinformed the British public. They fuelled a generation strong public prejudice against the EU, stirring up an irrational mistrust towards the process of European integration.

But Mr Murdoch's influence was not limited to intimidating the Government with titles hostile towards the EU. It seems that his influence was more

direct, dripping poison in the ear of successive British PMs, urging them to pursue a relationship with the EU that suited his own personal and commercial interests.

In this context the situation that has unfolded over the past few weeks presents us with two opportunities.

First of all, the inquiry set up to look into press practices should devote a significant part of its time in investigating the way the tabloid press (mis-)reports the EU. It is unacceptable to allow a sector with so much power over public opinion to get away with plainly untrue statements on their front pages. The UK's membership of the EU is of outmost importance to the country. The debate around the benefits of European integration can no longer be allowed to be dominated by lies and myths printed by the most-read newspapers. We will never be able to have a grown up, rational and informed argument about European integration until we rid ourselves of the suffocating stranglehold the tabloid press has over the public perception of the European Union and Britain's membership of it.

Second, now that the political classes have finally rediscovered their long lost bravery *vis-à-vis* the tabloid papers and the Murdoch empire they should also free themselves of the disproportionate influence certain sections of the press have on politicians' attitude towards the EU. It is time they stand up against the hostility and prejudice shown by News International and others against the most important attempt to international co-operation and supranational integration. Mr Murdoch always saw the EU's Competition policies as a threat to his efforts to expand his satellite TV empire across Europe and as a result declared war against the EU's institutions and the process of European integration.

By dismantling the hold Mr Murdoch has on British politics, British politicians also have the opportunity to free the debate on European integration from Mr Murdoch's undue influence. The question is whether they want to.

**Petros Fassoulas**

## **A European policy for justice and home affairs**

As Liberal Democrat European justice & human rights spokeswoman and a leading member of the European Parliament's justice & home affairs committee and human rights sub-committee, issues around protection of the safety and rights of individuals are top of my agenda. I focus on European measures to combat crime, uphold civil liberties, control borders and manage asylum & migration, and am a strong advocate for EU leadership on human rights at home and abroad. Being vice-chair of the European Parliament's delegation to the United States, I am often involved in transatlantic discussions.

The international terrorist threat is of course one of the big challenges we face today and governments are devising ever more complex counterterrorism strategies. I am very supportive of EU and transatlantic cooperation between police, prosecutors and border agencies to protect us from those who wish us harm, but insistent that this must not come at the expense of our civil liberties.

One of the major challenges is to ensure that information-sharing projects, for telecoms data, DNA, fingerprints and flight details and so on, are strictly constrained so that data collection is targeted and safeguards such as tough independent supervision (including beefing up our own Information

Commissioner's Office), right of redress and penalties for misuse built in.

The test must always be whether the data collection that police and governments want is not only useful, but necessary and proportionate.

Ever since 'underwear bomber' Umar Abdulmutallab (a former student of University College London) tried to blow up a flight to Detroit on Christmas Day 2009 with plastic explosives hidden in his clothes, governments in Europe and in the US have introduced 'naked' full-body scanners at airports. The desire for airline security is one we all share, but the problem is that these scanners produce rather explicit black-and-white images of passengers' nude bodies. Not only can they be pretty revealing about anatomy, but in searching for dangerous objects concealed under clothes they will also reveal medical or personal hygiene items like colostomy bags. This is clearly a major intrusion on privacy.

The European Commission wants to authorise the use of body-scanners EU-wide. But I am pushing for authorisation of only latest-generation scanners that produce a stick-figure mannequin instead of actual naked images. I also think passengers should be given the right to choose between a naked scan and a physical pat-down hand search, as they can in the US and in the trials in Germany and the Netherlands, but not currently here in the UK.

I have consistently supported the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) – if carefully used – because traditional extradition was far too slow and bureaucratic to keep up with nimble-footed criminal suspects. Let's not forget that it brought back would-be London bomber Hussain Osman from Italy to trial here within six weeks. But I have long campaigned for much better suspects and defendants' rights and to raise the quality of criminal justice across the EU which can be patchy to say the least.

This has led to terrible injustice such as in the case of my constituent Andrew Symeou who was extradited to Greece in 2009 under an EAW on a flawed manslaughter charge based pretty obviously on mistaken identity and involving allegations of police abuse of witnesses. Once there, Andrew was refused bail because he was a foreigner and locked up in some of the worst prisons in Europe for almost a year. He has now thankfully been acquitted, but only after two years of suffering, time which he will never get back. Two key issues I campaign on that came up in Andrew's case are for a court (say in the UK) to be able to refuse 'surrender' of a person on human rights grounds and for someone facing trial abroad to get bail to return home while awaiting the trial date.

A decade ago I was heavily involved in the – successful – battle to save the 'plane-spotters' from prison for alleged espionage in Greece. While in court they had no proper interpretation. That experience fed directly into my role last year in piloting a landmark new law on criminal justice language rights for suspects through the European Parliament and to agreement with EU governments. This will guarantee that suspects and defendants will get interpretation to be able to understand what is going on at the police station and in the courtroom and translation of key documents. We are currently working on new rules to

make sure people are informed of their fair trial rights when arrested anywhere in the EU, are allowed to call their workplace or family to let them know what has happened and are given access to a lawyer.

I am active on a range of human rights causes and was a prime mover in the MEP inquiry into collusion with rendition and torture. I recently launched a campaign to put an end to drugs produced by EU companies being diverted from their legitimate medicinal use as sedatives to be used in the lethal cocktail for executions in the US, or other countries that regrettably still use capital punishment. Although EU law prohibits the export of other tools of execution and torture, there are as yet no end-use controls on such trade. This makes a mockery of the EU's high-profile diplomatic efforts to convey its opposition to the death penalty worldwide.

I am delighted to have been involved in the pressure which prompted LibDem Business Secretary Vince Cable to ban UK exports from being used to kill death-row inmates in the US. Now we need this to apply EU-wide. It seems victory is in sight, thanks to the European Parliament 'written declaration' I initiated last month, the pressure NGOs Reprieve and Amnesty International and I have been putting on the Commission and a campaign meeting in Strasbourg. EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton has now ordered her officials to review the law, and hopefully the export of European pharmaceuticals to kill people will soon be prohibited, a good result.

**Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP**

**Liberal Democrat, UK**

## Developing an agenda for Europe's centre left

The key question which all Europeans face is not whether Britain should be in or out of the EU, but what kind of Europe we want to see. This means going beyond the sterile debate in Britain between the increasingly assertive Eurosceptics in the Tory Party and UKIP and supporters of Britain's continuing membership, and instead understanding the 'political' agenda which now holds sway across the EU and its institutions.

The overwhelming majority of national governments in the EU are right of centre, the Council of Ministers is driven by a right-wing agenda of economic orthodoxy, the European Commission is increasingly doing as it is told by the Council and is aping its politics, and the European Parliament is led by the centre right European People's Party. The overall result is that Europe's political trajectory is being determined by those whose 'vision' of Europe is far removed from that which inspired Jacques Delors and a generation of centre left pro-Europeans.

If progressives are to once again seize the initiative and promote a pro-European message then we must do two things.

Firstly, we need to set out a clear and realisable vision of the kind of Europe we want. A Europe based on the values of social cohesion and solidarity, environmental sustainability, fairness, equality and justice, while at the same time demonstrating that a Europe upholding these values can also be competitive and economically efficient.

Secondly, the centre left needs to be prepared to criticise the policies of Europe's centre right whenever and wherever they are pursued. Whether it is their reluctance to introduce meaningful carbon emission reduction targets or whether it is the right's insistence in pursuing 'austerity only' economic policies which will inhibit growth for decades to come, the centre left must not be afraid to put forward trenchant criticisms. This is an important point. Because all too often the left fall into the trap of believing that the 'European project' is by definition a left wing construct and that the 'politics' which are promoted within it are very much a secondary consideration. This will not do. We, on the centre left, must not be afraid of developing a strong political critique of Europe's dominant political ideology and practice, while, at the same time, inspiring people with a fresh approach towards international and European co-operation.

Some might see such an agenda as too tall an order. But nothing less is needed if we are serious about creating a Europe which is able to tackle the complex issues of the present and the challenges of the future. Our goal should be nothing less than a European Union which is progressive and relevant to the everyday needs and long term aspirations of its citizens. In short, our rallying cry should be a people's Europe!

**Wayne David MP**

Shadow Europe Minister

## Poland's priorities for the EU Presidency

On 1 July 2011 Poland took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. A member of the EU since 2004, we are pleased to have acquired an in-depth understanding of the organisation and are grateful for the generous support from our partners in preparation for the six months ahead. We would like to thank Hungary for its fine work and advice during the first half of 2011, as well as Denmark and Cyprus for their close cooperation in preparing the Trio programme for the next 18 months of EU operations.

2011 marks 22 years since Poland's elections in 1989, ending the reign of Communism. Today, Europe is peaceful and united – this story of success and solidarity is a story unique to Europe. However, the future presents some complex challenges which Europe must successfully face in order to continue with its significant global role.

As Poland assumes this leadership role, we cannot ignore the fact that within the EU, public debt is on the rise, unemployment is stubbornly high and new jobs are not being created quickly enough. We face difficult strategic questions regarding long-term energy supplies, migration and border control, fierce economic and political competition from other parts of the world, not to mention instability across North Africa and the Middle East.

Poland is well equipped to take on board the challenges of the months ahead. This is where the country's lessons of the past come into play: Poland embodies the boldness and prowess necessary to make transformative and far-reaching decisions. In line with this, our approach over the next six months will focus on three areas: growth, security and openness.

To secure growth, Europe needs to stabilise its financial markets. At present, all eyes are riveted at the Eurozone and its common currency, not to mention the unspoken question of whether or not it will survive. Certainly, the manner in which the crisis is handled will be one of the most pertinent issues on the Polish Presidency agenda. Poland strongly believes that enhancing economic governance in the EU and regaining confidence of the financial markets is the way forward allowing the EU to set the scene for using all available instruments in securing growth for its member states.

An instrument that has the capacity to play a key role is the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The Polish Presidency will start discussions on the proposals presented by the European Commission, keeping in mind that the new financial outlook should take on the role of an investment tool, strongly linked to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, enabling Europe to be more competitive on the global markets. It goes without saying that an important part of the MFF discussions will be the aim to reform different EU policies, however, the Cohesion Policy should be regarded as one of the basic rules when working together toward a better future for Europe. The Common Agricultural Policy is positioned highly on the agenda and the Polish Presidency will make every effort to translate discussions into a policy that supports modernisation and competition, as well as accounting for food security and development of rural areas of member states.

Poland also aims to work very hard at assisting all members of the EU-27 to take full advantage of one of the greatest achievements of the integration process – the Single Market.

In the next six months, the Presidency will also focus on developing the Internal Market – this will include expanding the digital agenda, taking into account that

the so called 'e-market' has so far been largely untapped. Together with the Presidency's support of the European Commission's initiatives regarding small and medium enterprises, it will also aim at finalising work on the European patent system that could provide an environment for more transparent and 'user-friendly' growth.

Europe's human capital will receive special consideration during the next few months as it represents a unique source for economic growth in the EU. The Presidency will ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to create cohesion between EU policies and initiatives that further the growth of intellectual capital, at the same time promoting and supporting the so-called 'knowledge triangle'.

Keeping in mind the aim for a secure Europe, the Presidency will also pay special attention to strengthening the position of the European Union in the international energy environment.

At the same time, security is primarily dependent on maintaining confidence – in our policies, institutions, communities and ourselves.

A reasonable and orderly migration processes will help Europe; pressures on Europe's borders provoked by historical events create serious new problems for many member states, subsequently challenging the free movement of citizens. Keeping this in mind, the Polish Presidency will look to assist FRONTEX and member states in dealing with unexpected crises.

Security at the most basic human level comes down to food. A secure Europe means being able to cope with shocks to global food supplies. Security also comes from biodiversity: balancing economic development with essential environmental protections. The

Common Agricultural Policy has served Europe well, however, it requires reform. The Presidency will combine market-based reforms with continuing support, keeping in mind less developed rural areas.

A secure Europe articulates a credible and united voice in international affairs. The Lisbon Treaty provides for new ways of deploying different types of power, policy making and collective impact. The Presidency means to develop these options, fostering external actions by the EU, including possible civilian and military operations, and supporting the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Ashton, as she builds up the EU's collective external policy networks. Poland will also act for advancing European external energy policy, which will increase the EU's overall energy security.

As far as openness is concerned, a high importance will be placed on the liberalisation of the European market and negotiations under the WTO/Doha Round, as well as of trade contracts with third countries, keeping in mind, however, the need to address e.g. the issue of non-tariff barriers imposed by non-EU countries.

In relations with countries covered by the Eastern Partnership, the EU will aim to advance negotiations with Ukraine on a deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA) in the framework of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (with the hope the negotiations can be concluded by the end of 2011) and to initiate similar DCFTA negotiations with Moldova and Georgia, make progress in the process of visa liberalisation and deepen sectoral cooperation (especially in the fields of energy, regional development, agriculture, education and science).

All these policies and initiatives will come to a head in September in Warsaw at the Eastern Partnership Summit, an event that will bring together EU and Eastern European nations. The event marks a vital new step in the integration of our continent and shows that Europe is not only focused on internal politics but also views relationships with its neighbours as equally important.

The Presidency will also work to set up a new framework of cooperation between the EU and Russia. Poland, of all countries in Europe, is aware of the significance of good and friendly relationship with its largest neighbour.

To the South, as dramatic events continue to unfold in North Africa and the wider Arabic region, people are demanding accountable governments and an end to clumsy oppression. History tells us that it is one thing to end a destructive system, but quite another to build a new, strong and sustainable one. The changes in this region will take years and these countries will need to foster their own path. The EU will support them with the democratic solutions, in the best spirit of European co-operation and mutual respect.

Our Presidency aims to get the right policy mix. The EU draws on Poland's hard won experience and those of other countries that have successfully cleared the rubble of oppression. In light of this, a high level conference is scheduled for December 2011 to share and discuss best practices based on our transformation and assist the facilitation of change and democratisation in the Southern Neighbourhood. Poland is fully prepared to implement the programme of our Presidency. At the same time we are prepared for the unexpected in the months ahead and we are ready to act in flexible manner, securing the smooth functioning of the EU. Poland is ready to lead the European Union through significant changes in the spirit of solidarity, optimism and learning lessons from the past to work together for our common future.

**H.E. Barbara Tuge-Erecińska**

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the UK

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