

## **Karl von Wogau** **Annual General Meeting 2009**

Welcome to all present at the Annual General Meeting of the Kangaroo Group in 2009.

Let me start by thanking all the Members of the Group for their active participation and the work they have contributed to the events and activities we have organised this year. Our common effort made it a success.

I will now report about the activities of the Group in 2009 and give an outlook for the next years. Then our Treasurer David Doyle will present the financial report and the budget. This will be followed by the election of the Board.

2009 was an active year for the Kangaroo Group. We have again followed our approach to identify the most important and promising projects in the European Home Market and to work for their step-by-step realization.

As usual we had our **monthly Strasbourg lunches**. Let me only mention the discussion about the **Lisbon Treaty** with *Jean-Luc Dehaene* and our discussion about **Intellectual Property** with *Luis Cobos*.

The **Working Group Financial Services** chaired by *Othmar Karas* has met twice before the European Election.

In February we had Commissioner *Neelie Kroes* talking about “Competition Policy in the financial Sector in Times of financial crisis” and in March Dr Onno Ruding from the “De Larosière”-High Level Group talking about the “Reform of financial regulation and Supervision”.

Taxation is an area with major barriers to the European Home Market, as taxation remains a domain of national sovereignty of the Member States.

Our **Working Group Taxation** chaired by Professor *Christa Randzio-Plath*, former chairwoman of the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Committee, met in April with the Czech Deputy Minister of finance, talking about "Perspectives for Taxation Policy in the EU from the Czech Presidency's point of view".

And next week we have Walter Deffaa, Director General from DG Taxation, who will talk about "European Tax Policies on Energy and climate change on the way to Copenhagen 2009".

Our **Working Group on the Automotive Industry** with *Jorgo Chatzimarkakis* and *Ivan Hodac* is dealing with the wide EU legislation concerning this major European industry, CO2 emissions, road transport, intellectual property and taxation.

In January we have organised a breakfast debate with Georgette Lalis, Director for consumer goods from DG Enterprise about "State of play: The Economic situation of the car industry in the EU".

A new **Working Group Space** has been set up chaired by *Etelka Barsi-Pataky*. The launching event took place in April with Daniel Sacotte from ESA, who was talking about the "Perspectives for the European Space Policy". A second meeting was organised in October with Paul Weissenberg, who has responsibilities for Aerospace, GMES, and Security. In December this will continue with a meeting about climate change.

Our **Working Group on Security and Defence** chaired by myself tackled the following issues:

in February the "Common Technical Standards for Defence Goods",  
in March "Bridging the Helicopter Gap for Missions of the European Union",

in October we discussed the question "Do we need a White Book for Security and Defence" and

in December we meet again and we will hear from Elmar Brok about the "External Action Service".

We had **two Social Events** this year:

The Spring Party in March to mark the Czech Presidency and the “Welcome Reception” for new members after the European Election in July in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

All this would not have been possible without an efficient secretariat. I would therefore like to thank Josepha von Metternich who has taken over from Liselotte Hallen and Eva Desloover for all the work they are putting into these events.

The coming year will bring new challenges to the Kangaroo Group. The fact that the Lisbon Treaty will now definitely enter into force strengthens the role of the European Parliament and adds new possibilities for the Kangaroo Group.

The Motto of the Kangaroo Group is Free Movement and Security. We always strive to find a good equilibrium between those two goals.

For the coming year I see the main challenge in the reconstruction of the international financial systems and the return to a normal application of the Maastricht rules of stability.

Another challenge will be the fight against pandemics and I think we should make this one of our priorities.

In the domain of Security, our priorities will be the External Action Service and the White Book, which has been proposed by the European Parliament. We will also work on Space and on the Security of Energy Supply.

So quite a lot of interesting work is ahead of us. I will step down as Chairman of our Group, but if you wish and give me your confidence, I will continue as your Secretary General. The Kangaroos have always been a Group of Friends. So I want to thank you for your friendship over the last years. This has always been an important element of my work in Strasbourg and Brussels.

I am confident that the Kangaroo will continue to jump over many barriers for many years to come.