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Activities Report to the General Assembly 2011

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Kangaroo Group

The last year has been marked by the debt crisis which is a fundamental challenge for our goals. Members of our Group have contributed to the creation of the European Currency which is now put into question by the international debt crisis.

Events

One of our main goals has been the stability of the Euro and the international monetary system, and it is not an accident that Mario Monti, who has now taken this very difficult task to be prime minister in Italy is a Honorary Member of the Kangaroo Group

We have followed with our meetings all the measures to strengthen the European and international monetary system.

We had debates about the instruments of crisis prevention, the role of the Rating agencies, the capital requirements directive, the legislation concerning mortgage credits and the regulation for OTC derivatives.

Our debates involved representatives of Commission and Council and Members of Parliament of different political groups. They were therefore a direct contribution to the legislative debate.

We have heard the advice of experts like Professor Snower of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy and followed the work of the European Parliaments Crisis Committee lead by our Member Wolf Klinz.

From these discussions, it became clear that the Kangaroo Group endorses those measures to strengthen the international monetary system and specially Wolf Klinz's Project of a European Rating Agency for sovereign debt.

Concerning the Internal Market, we have started two new Initiatives: The Forum on Intellectual Property and a working Group on Consumer Goods. Concerning Intellectual Property, we have debated about the Trade Agreement with India, illicit trade in tobacco products, Intellectual Property and Perfume Creation and the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement.

Last not least, we had a debate with the President of the Trade Mark Office about the Observatory on Counterfeiting and Piracy.

The Kangaroo Group has always had a close relationship with the Trade Mark Office which as far as I know is the only agency of the European Union which earns more money than it costs.

We therefore consider that they are well equipped to shoulder this additional responsibility.

Concerning European Consumer Goods, we had debates about the internal market for Fast Moving Consumer Goods, Modernisation of Customs and a Strasbourg Lunch on Consumer Rights.

We had several meetings concerning the innovative Potential of the Automotive industry and Meetings on Taxation, with a special attention to the Financial Transaction Tax, Vat and the Reform of Energy Taxation

Esko Aho, the former Prime Minister of Finland, spoke to us about the Role of the Digital Single Market.

The Kangaroo Groups first Project was the opening of the borders between the Member States. We were therefore most preoccupied by the announcement of Denmark that they planned to reintroduce border controls between Member States.

Fortunately, Cecilia Malmström could report to us at the Strasbourg Lunch in September that this problem could be solved in a satisfactory way.

But open borders between the Member States and common borders to the outside will continue to be a priority for the Kangaroo Group.

Concerning European Security and Defence, our main Goal is to make sure that civilian persons and soldiers in operations of the European Union dispose of the necessary equipment to fulfil their tasks.

We therefore have developed proposals to apply the rules of the internal market also in the field of security and defence and to work for better spending by more cooperation in research, development and production of security and defence equipment.

We therefore had debates about security in the Sahel Zone, the situation in Kosovo and the events in Libya.

Concerning the necessary equipment for these operations, we discussed the use of Satellite Communication for Crisis Management, Radio Spectrum Policy and Certification of Unmanned Aerial Systems.

We also discussed the potential of Permanent Structured Cooperation and the necessity to protect Strategic Defence and Security Assets.

We further participated with our advice to the Berlin Security Conference which this year had a high quality and attracted 800 Participants.

New offices

By the end of this year, we will have to move to a new location. The Eastman Building where we had our office as an intermediate solution will now be needed for the project of the House of European History.

We have found a new location in Rue Wiertz which is very near to the premises of the European Parliament.

Kangaroo Identity

In connection with the new Rules of Transparency, we had a discussion about the goals and the identity of the Kangaroo Group. Who are we?

The answer is given by our Statutes . Our main goals are the full implementation of the internal market, the stability of the Euro and a common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union.

We are a Group of Friends who work for these goals.

In connection with the new Transparency rules, we are being registered as a Think Tank. And as a matter of fact we have been a Think Tank for the European Institutions for the last thirty years.

New Members

During this year, 7 additional Members of the European Parliament have joined the Kangaroo Group , 2 new members from Academia and the Media and twelve new Members from Industry, Services and Trade

Since only two members have left us, we had a net increase of 19 members and our total membership is by now 105. This is an encouraging result.

The Kangaroo Group has been successful because we have concentrated our activities on concrete projects to foster the European Union and because we have been realistic. We have only worked on projects with a chance of realization of more than fifty percent.

Administration

All in all, we had 46 events during the year.

To organize these, we have one person full time employed and two further persons – Josefa and myself – who are self employed.

Many others have contributed to the work of the Kangaroo Group and I want to thank them all for their engagement and for their friendship.

Being your Secretary was not only work but also a pleasure for me.

These were our activities last year. They would not have been possible without the intensive work of Josepha and Eva, who have a difficult time just now with the General Assembly and the movement to the new office. I would like to thank them for their work in the name of all of us.