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EU needs real solutions, not just temporary or makeshift measures

The European Greens have said that the EU Council which has just ended in Brussels has shown that, even after the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in last week's referendum, the EU Prime Ministers and Heads of State are not prepared to act with the urgency and vision which is required if they are to regain the trust and support of EU citizens.

EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek, who is also an Austrian MP and is the Austrian Green Party's parliamentary spokesperson on Foreign Affairs said: "This council is further evidence that making deals behind closed doors is no substitute for an open and transparent democratic process. Postponing the decision on how to move ahead in the wake of the Irish "NO" Vote until the next EU Council in October may be a useful way of gaining some extra time but it does nothing to win back the trust of many citizens, not only in Ireland but throughout the EU. It should be obvious that many people feel completely disconnected from the EU and that the EU and its member states have failed miserably to communicate effectively. Remedying this situation with real actions and imaginative solutions should be the top priority of the EU's leaders but this summit has shown that this is unfortunately not the case. Indeed, it is symptomatic of the EU Council's "heads in the sand" approach that they did not even discuss the Greens' proposal for a European Act for Democracy which would be a good first step in winning back people's trust in the political union."

EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts continued: "The EU must not scramble around for temporary or makeshift solutions to the current crisis but must find real and sustainable solutions so that the EU can get on with enacting policies which will really make a difference to the key issues of climate change, the energy and food crises, and how the EU can best compete in the global economy while also demonstrating solidarity with the world's poorest people. Focussing their attention on these issues which are the political priorities of most EU citizens would in turn help regain their trust. As for the proposed investigation into the role of financial markets and speculators in the food and fuel crises, we in the EGP are disappointed that the Council did not agree to move in the direction of a financial transaction tax (also known as Tobin Tax), as has been consistently demanded by the Greens in the European Parliament as well as in several national parliaments. In terms of the few real decisions that were made at this Council,



we European Greens welcome the decision to fully lift sanctions against Cuba which were suspended in early 2005. However, it is crucial that the EU enters into a constructive but critical dialogue with Cuba so that the Cuban regime introduces democratic reforms and respects the fundamental human rights of the Cuban people, including the right to express dissent. On the issue of Zimbabwe, we agree with the Council that it is vital that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) deploy a large number of election monitors ahead of next week's elections. It is crucial that the EU and the international community in general put real pressure on the AU and the SADC as they are the only bodies that President Mugabe might still listen to. Mugabe's brutal regime and its terrible violence against the opposition can only be stopped by decisive African action and hard-hitting economic sanctions. "
