Conclusions of the European Council meeting (16 September 2010)

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On 22 September 2010, the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, reported, for the first time, back to MEPs on the outcome of the last EU Summit.

The main issues raised during the plenary debate were the following:

Foreign policy: the need for a coordinated and strong foreign policy was confirmed (EPP). The representative of the S&D group underlined that the role of the European Parliament was to favour the community method in this context. The European Commission stressed the importance of speaking with one voice on the international scene.

Economic governance: the Task Force on economic governance has made progress and will produce its final report for the October Council with the Commission due to present legislative proposals at the end of September. The representative of the ALDE group highlighted the urgency of the situation and called for proposed measures as fast as possible. The Greens stated that the President of the European Council and the Task Force should have the responsibility to move the EU out of the crisis.

The situation of the Roma people: the European Council's key message is that a Member State has the right to uphold the rule of law within their territory, while the Commission has the right and the duty to conduct investigations to ensure the application of European law. The Commission insisted on its responsibility to be the guardian of the Treaties and to defend European values.

The EPP leader stated that he respected the Commission's right to check that European law is implemented correctly, but regretted the language used during the discussions on the Roma. He underlined the importance and duty of Member States to try to integrate minorities and the minorities' duty to show the will to be integrated. He called for the Roma situation to be resolved and called human dignity an inviolable issue. He also stressed that European law has to be accepted and enforced by Member States. The ALDE leader welcomed the fact that the Commission treats every State equally, no matter how big or small.

The GUE/NGL group asked for concrete and specific actions to be taken in the case of the Roma and in combating poverty, unemployment, famine and climate change.

In conclusion, Herman Van Rompuy confirmed the European Council's commitment to work towards a better integration of minorities, including the Roma people. On the issue of the economy, he stated that citizens will not make judgements on the method used but rather the results achieved.