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Brepoels calls for reform during Belgian Presidency

Press release by EFA MEP Frieda Brepoels

Flemish MEP **Frieda Brepoels** (N-VA) has called for the debate on institutional reform with the EU to continue during the Belgian EU Presidency even though the circumstances surrounding its start 'are not ideal' (for example the government dealing with current affairs, the ongoing government negotiations and so on).

Brepoels was speaking in the European Parliament's debate on the priorities for Belgium's six month European Council Presidency which began on 1 July. Outgoing Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme took part in the debate as did European Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

Speaking in the debate on Wednesday morning, Frieda Brepoels said:

"The circumstances surrounding the start of this presidency may not be ideal, but they do give an opportunity to focus on the true mission of a presidency under the new institutional rules.

"I do see another opportunity to steer the institutional debate, not just in Belgium but also in other EU states. Globalisation has led to a debate on the role of nation states. As Europe gains more powers, so can more powers be transferred to Flanders, Wallonia, Scotland, Catalonia, Corsica, Wales and so on.

"This is a natural process that reflects the reality of today's EU. It's completely logical that these nations should claim their place at the European table where they can play an important role in aiding the economic recovery.

"During this Presidency, Ministers from 'regional' level will also chair various Council meetings, including education, sport, fisheries, environment, regional policy and so on. This could well provide the impetus for the very necessary and far more extensive multi-level governance of the European Union."

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