



EuroElections 2009 : EPP-ED

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This post is the first in a series of posts looking at the policies in the field of energy proposed by the main political parties/blocks running for the 2009-2014 term at the [European Parliament](#). This series will look into the guidelines on Energy Policy that each party is proposing to euro-citizens, based on the information made available on-line, found in home-pages, electronic leaflets or booklets.

Starting this series is the EPP-ED, the Christian-Democrat block that has held the largest number of seats at Strasbourg since the Assembly's first day.



An audio version of this log entry can be downloaded [here](#).

EPP-ED is a coalition of regional Conservative or Christian-Democrats parties plus a few scattered Liberal parties. Most of these parties have rotated power at the state level and can be seen as the largest molders of what the European Union is today. With the largest electoral base, both at state- and at union-level, the party is also home to the ideas behind most of the policies and legislation put in place by the Commission and the Parliament.

The present Commission was shaped by the EPP-ED, largely influencing the choice of names for Commissioner positions. Commission President, José Manuel Durão Barroso, although a Liberal, is a member of EPP-ED through his home state party – PPD/PSD – a Liberal party that has the largest militant base in Portugal.

[The party's home-page](#) is pleasant looking and well organized; although more focused in showing the work already made or in development by the parliamentary group. There's also [an entire webpage solely dedicated to this year's election](#), a good place to learn more about the party's stance and proposed programmes in other fields besides energy.

It didn't take much time to find [a booklet presenting the party's political guidelines](#) for the 2009-2014 term. This booklet is very good, presenting not only the political programme but also a summation of the party's ideology and its place at the present geo-political landscape. After messages from the group's parliamentary leaders, there is a section that explains the values at the core of the party's ideology, which reads as follows:

The European Union needs to update, reassert and modernise its values: freedom, democracy equality, the rule of law, along with respect for human rights, including those of minority groups. These values are common to all Member States, in a society characterised by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women.

The essential pillars of our political activity must be to safeguard family values – particularly in response to challenging demographic trends and a falling birth rate – and to defend freedom of education. After all, the family is the basic unit that enables people to overcome crises, help each other, and prepare for the future. Our policy must be to strengthen families, ensure inter-generational solidarity and the passing on of values and heritage. The EPP-ED Group supports the laicism of the State, where this is a positive secularism that protects freedom of religion in a spirit of cooperation based on dialogue, mutual respect and reciprocal independence.

Economic rights are not secondary rights. They must be forcefully reasserted. Our Group believes that freedom of education, research, enterprise and competition are individual rights and the basis of a healthy and prosperous economy. There can be no justification for infringing these rights, which must, on the contrary, be further enhanced.

The value of effort, work, ownership and saving is insufficiently upheld. The current reforms aimed at reducing the burden on those wishing to work, save and invest must be continued.

A full page of this booklet is dedicated to Energy Policy. The header for this page is

Developing a coherent energy policy in the context of measures to combat climate change and sustainable development.

The party's vision is summarized in a single paragraph:

The EPP-ED Group supports the establishment of a diversified energy mix, promoting higher energy efficiency in all activity sectors, the completion of the internal energy market and the development of a coherent foreign energy policy.

And after it four strategic lines are laid down:

Towards a zero or low-CO₂ emitting energy mix

The EPP-ED calls for:

- more investment in R&D for clean technologies such as carbon capture and storage, hydrogen and methanol energy, biofuels, biogas and biomass, which will allow us to rely on indigenous sources of energy in a sustainable way;
- more emphasis on clean energy technologies such as nuclear energy on the part of those States that favour it, the use of clean technology when using fossil fuels and the use of renewable wind, marine, solar and thermal energies;
- large-scale renovation of the cities (building stock, district heating systems, public transport);
- increased cooperation and dialogue between Member States in order to avoid

drastic consequences for the price and quantity of imported sources and for the overall levels of the EU's CO₂ emissions.

The first four elements put forward are CCS, hydrogen and methanol “energy” and biofuels, which are even called “indigenous sources of energy”. A worse starting would be hard to imagine, leaving a lot to be desired for on the party's understanding of what is energy. On the positive side, there is a reference to urban planning and its role in Energy Policy. Still, one can't stop thinking that these lines are simply a gathering of names that have a good echo with the press; yes, Nuclear is there, but lightheartedly, but only for those who want it.

Energy efficiency as a key driver of competitiveness and respect for the environment

Energy efficiency in all sectors represents the most cost-effective and rapid way to reduce our energy dependence on imports, rationalise consumption in households and industry and drastically reduce our CO₂ emissions. This requires the involvement of all economic and social sectors.

The EPP-ED Group advocates:

- fiscal incentives for citizens and companies undertaking renovation works in the building sector and for the purchase of energy efficient vehicles and appliances;
- providing users with accurate information so that they can rationalise their energy consumption, encouraging new technologies such as smart meters in particular;
- continuing the rapid development of cogeneration in our energy-intensive industries and encouraging other sectors of industry to follow suit.

Things get better at this stage; the efficiency message is now well absorbed by the political class who understand how simple and light tactics can have an important impact in energy consumption (like the [Labelling Directives](#)). Naturally, one may or may not agree with specific tactics as fiscal incentives for vehicles substitution, but nonetheless, the election of Efficiency as a priority is quite welcome.

The internal energy market as enabler of open competition, higher efficiency and cost-reflective prices

Completion of the internal energy market is essential to the success of our security of supply and environmental goals. However, many obstacles to the free movement of gas and electricity within the EU still remain: lack of interconnection capacity between Member States; lack of harmonisation of basic technical rules; political protectionism; and the coexistence of 27 different regulatory frameworks.

The EPP-ED Group supports:

- further technical and regulatory harmonisation, placing all companies on a level playing field so that they can serve customers throughout the Union, increase interconnection capacity, and create competition in isolated and closed-off areas;
- setting up social programmes for vulnerable sectors of society without interfering

with the market;

- encouraging a truly integrated and open market in order to ensure that energy prices reflect actual production costs; a n efficient market is also essential to encourage the significant investment necessary for the introduction of renewable energy sources.

Using rhetoric similar to that of the Commission, EPP-ED sets forth its belief that increasing the competition in the internal market can secure energy supplies from abroad and moreover, foster investment in renewables. On the latter, [Jérôme had the opportunity to explain just recently why this isn't the case](#). As for the former, why more competition between, say Portuguese and Spanish companies can bring more oil from, say Angola to Europe is something that only this party and the Commission seem to know – especially in the face of natural depletion. None of this suggests that liberalizing the internal market is an undesirable objective; while its priority is mainly an ideological choice, its effect on the problems Europe is facing today is quite limited.

Creating supportive energy diplomacy.

The EU represents more than 500 million consumers and therefore needs to establish a real energy diplomacy.

Solidarity mechanisms need to be established between Member States in case of emergency situations. The gas supply crisis over the past two years as well as the two EU-wide blackouts have demonstrated the need to improve physical interconnection and rapid reaction mechanisms, in order to avoid the potentially critical consequences these events can have on the economy and on society.

Reading the header of this section one could even get the idea that the EPP-ED is proposing a European Foreign Minister/Ministry, but that's not exactly the idea. Nonetheless, solidarity and physical interconnection are some of the added strengths the Union can provide and mentioning them is welcome.

All in all, this programme doesn't differ much from [what the Commission stood for](#) during the term that now ends. The booklet's section on energy is close to a condensed version of the [Commision's Energy Reviews](#). Being so, the same problems are present: it is understood that something is wrong, although not quite well what; the recipe: throw at it all that the hand can reach, well mixed with a liberalized internal market. It turns out that some of what is being thrown at the problem is actually lumber into the fire.

One positive element is the attempt to build a thorough Energy Policy, composed of four strategic lines, underlying an integrated vision. These strategies are not properly realised by concrete goals, which even at this level of contact with the broader public should be possible. A few tactics are put forward, that as explained above, do not exactly conform to the vision and strategies outlined. A sense of lack of commitment ends up emerging from the programme as a whole.

Calling CCS an “indigenous source of energy” is one of the most hilarious things ever included in an energy policy statement.



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