

Procedure file

Basic information		
RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	2012/2586(RSP)	Procedure completed
State of the Union		
Subject 8 State and evolution of the Union		

Key players		
European Parliament		
European Commission	Commission DG Secretariat-General	Commissioner BARROSO José Manuel

Key events			
12/09/2012	Debate in Parliament		Summary
12/09/2012	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2586(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Resolution on statement
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 132-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

State of the Union

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, gave his third State of the Union speech. Before Members of the European Parliament, he:

- stressed that in the face of the economic crisis, which saps public confidence in political action and fuels populism and extremism in Europe and elsewhere, Member States could not deal individually with the problems with which they were confronted;
- laid out his vision for a deep economic union based on a political union in the form of a federation of nation states. In this regard, he announced that the Commission would present concrete proposals for Treaty change before the next European elections in 2014.

In response to the President of the Commissions speech, Members wanted to focus the debate on the implications of the economic crisis for the future of the European Union and ways of bringing the Union closer to its citizens.

Federation of nation states:

- The leaders of the ALDE and Greens/EFA groups were critical of the idea of a federation of nation states, judging it redundant and not ambitious enough. They advocated a union based more on the needs of citizens.
- The leader of the EPP group, for his part, stressed the need better to explain the challenges facing Europe in order to raise public support.

Social safeguards and growth: Members emphasised the need to work on maintaining a social Europe, even in the face of the mounting crisis.

- Stating that there was an alternative to budget cuts, the S&D group leader favoured a social pact, adding that his group could not support the Commission without a social Europe.
- The leader of the GUE group said that what citizens wanted was solidarity and that it was unacceptable to push a culture of punishment in Europe.

An ambitious European budget: the main political groups made the case for an ambitious budget for the EU. They stressed the fact that sufficient resources must be allocated to it given that it was the primary instrument for investment and growth.

Less European Union: the EFD and ECR groups had critical words about Mr Barroso's proposals, believing that the challenge was to see better Europe rather than even deeper integration.

In response to Members' views, Mr Barroso:

- announced a proposal on European political parties in order to promote European democracy. He added that it was time to have truly transnational political parties which would make the case for the EU and called for these parties each to propose a candidate for the post of the next European Commission President;
- insisted on the need for undertaking difficult reforms, whilst maintaining that the social dimension remained critical to the European project.