

# **Free and open debate on the future of the euro and EU must be supported and not suppressed by EU leaders – Statement by EUDemocrats 28 September 2012**

The EUDemocrats support a democratic, open and tolerant Europe. We consider a climate of free and open debate a prerequisite for any well-functioning political system. Recent statements by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs Olli Rehn and President of the Eurogroup Jean-Claude Juncker, which urged suppression of comments on the euro crisis, are contrary to the European tradition of open, free and fact based political debate.

In her most high-profile interview this summer, Chancellor Angela Merkel told German state broadcaster ARD that everyone should “choose their words carefully” when discussing the situation in Greece. Meanwhile her colleague, Jean-Claude Juncker, the head of the Eurogroup and Prime Minister of Luxembourg, told those who ceaselessly call for Greece to exit the euro, to “shut up” so the “progress” of the Greek reform programme is not threatened. Previously he labelled debate over Greek Eurozone membership “unhelpful.” Rounding up the concerted action of debate suppression, Commissioner Olli Rehn, speaking at a gathering of ambassadors in Helsinki complained that Finland has succeeded in creating an image of a country that doubts its role in European integration and is considering an exit from the euro.

European leaders should not support this type of concerted suppression of critics of the EU's policy-response to the economic crisis. Eventually it will lead to less objective debate and inevitably worse decision making, as citizens and representatives of alternative points of view are excluded from the debate on the future of the euro and the EU.

Alternative approaches must be explored and allowed to exist, even in public, otherwise Europe risks more Brussels-based group-think and prolonged economic hardship. If an open and serious debate had been allowed to take place across Europe prior to the launch of the euro currency, many questions raised by critics at the time could have led to a less economically and democratically harmful currency policy. Once again attempting to suppress open debate is not the answer. The EUDemocrats wholeheartedly support free speech and constructive debate, and exceptions cannot be made for euro-related issues or EU policy.