

## **Jens Weidmann should not be the next ECB President! Call for a transparent selection procedure at the ECB and a monetary union that brings Europe together in solidarity**

The media are currently reporting that the President of the Bundesbank, Jens Weidmann, is to be anointed as successor of the current ECB President, Mario Draghi. We appeal to all those who want to see a reformed European Monetary Union promoting economic stability, upward convergence between the Member States and social solidarity to campaign actively against the nomination of Jens Weidmann and to call for an open and transparent nomination process.

The Euro crisis and the inadequate policy response to it have come at a heavy price, with many countries experiencing mass unemployment, impoverishment, labour market deregulation, a weakening of collective agreements and trade unions and public sector cutbacks. Notwithstanding the problematic role played by the ECB in the so-called “programme countries” as part of the “troika”, it was the ECB that made a decisive contribution to ending the crisis. The turnaround began with Mario Draghi’s “whatever it takes” announcement in the autumn of 2012. Since then, resolute monetary policy measures have been a necessary condition for the recovery, as belated as it has been. Had these decisions not been taken, the common currency would undoubtedly have imploded, with disastrous economic and social consequences. Yet the biggest obstacle to this policy came in the form of opposition on the ECB Council from the Bundesbank, represented by Jens Weidmann. He did everything he could to delay and weaken the measures needed to save the Euro, once it became clear that they could not be prevented entirely.

When the next economic crisis threatens, there would be substantial doubts whether an ECB presided over by Jens Weidmann would resolutely and swiftly take the required counter-measures. More likely the finger would be pointed at the countries in crisis, with injunctions to tighten their belt and “do their homework”. This fact alone, which would be „priced in” by the financial markets, would make the Euro Area more unstable and raise the cost of financing public budgets. It would also be more difficult to achieve sensible and even necessary economic governance reforms.

If Germany lifts Jens Weidmann into the presidential seat at the ECB it will be a major blow to the Euro Area countries just emerging from the crisis. His approach to monetary policy is a symbol of a regressive Europe of austerity. Weidmann as top monetary policy maker would narrow the scope for progressive reforms of EMU and the EU as a whole and for progressive economic, fiscal and labour market policies in the member states.

We need a monetary policy that is supportive of the broader goals of a social and solidaristic Europe. We support the appeal launched by Thomas Piketty and other prominent economists for top-level positions at the ECB to be filled according to transparent criteria and with the participation of the European Parliament and the wider public, and not in backroom deals between heads of national government.