

EPP Electoral Manifesto

(Approved by EPP Congress of 4-5 February 2004)

The EPP: Your Majority in Europe

25 Years of European Direct Elections

We call on citizens to vote for us in the first 21st century elections to the European Parliament. The reunited Europe will celebrate as a whole the 25th anniversary of the first direct elections. Voters from a EU with more than 450 million people can now directly influence the fate of the European Union by taking part in the European elections. The integration of nation states in the European Union is unique in human history, and ensures freedom, peace and stability, as well as economic prosperity, social progress and better care for the environment. Let us continue this joint success-story and improve on it.

The European Union is the right answer to the multitude of challenges posed by globalisation. A global communications network, with industries competing on a world scale, has been accompanied by new challenges to our security. Numerous third millennium problems are not susceptible to national solutions. So we need a strong European Union. It is the guarantee that the European nations and citizens can prosper in freedom and security. We want to strengthen the EU wherever it serves people, and where acting together makes a difference.

Europe as a Union of Values

The European People's Party (EPP) is the party of the common good in Europe. Our member parties, all strongly committed to European integration, have contributed decisively to building our common Europe. We see the European Union as a permanent and deepening process in which the advantages of acting together must be used for the good of the people.

It is our goal to establish an efficient EU based on democracy, a Union in touch with its citizens. For us, the EU is more than a common economic space; it is primarily a political community of citizens and their nations. Unalienable human rights, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, solidarity, justice, equal opportunities, and the equality of women and men, are the cornerstones of our values. They reflect our conception of man, which has above all been influenced by Christianity and the Enlightenment. At the same time these values are the element which links the EU to its partners all over the world, above all the United States of America.

Despite much we have in common in terms of culture, the EPP acknowledges, indeed celebrates, the variety of national, regional and local cultures that have developed over many centuries. We seek unity in diversity. The different cultural traditions in the European Union are an important framework of reference and orientation for people. It makes sense to take joint action at EU level if problems cannot be solved better by Member States, regions or local authorities. That is why we see the subsidiarity principle as an important criterion yardstick for joint European action.

For a Europe of Citizens

European integration is so attractive that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe have seen their liberation from communist dictatorships also as a chance to join the partnership of the European Union. The European Union enables citizens of its Member States to make the most of their talents by studying, working, living, travelling and investing freely within its territory. Exchange programmes such as SOCRATES and ERASMUS, are one way in which the European Union actively supports European citizens in enjoying the freedoms Europe offers to them. We want to extend these unique freedoms and opportunities, especially to the young, so that Europe's future is an even better one.

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For Prosperity and Social Security in Europe

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History has proved that a social market economy based on individual freedom and social responsibility is the most effective and the most just arrangement. Economic growth based on free enterprise, a stable currency and efficient national social security systems are the best prerequisites for more prosperity and social harmony throughout Europe.

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Unemployment is unjust. We believe that the human being, his/her motivation, qualification, creativity and ability to innovate, are at the core of our economic and social policy. That means that a consistent reduction in unemployment is the best social policy and an important expression of solidarity. Unlike the Socialists, who prefer bureaucratic regulations and state interventions, we create the right conditions for more – and more secure - jobs by ensuring favourable conditions for free enterprise throughout Europe. For us, competition is one of the most important sources of entrepreneurial initiative, innovation, investments and prosperity.

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Given demographic changes in European societies, EU Member States need to safeguard their health and pension systems on a long-term basis and establish a system which is fair to all generations, older, middle-aged, and young. Reforms in these areas are needed to consolidate our social security.

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Most important is economic growth, which we will only achieve if we transform Europe into a more dynamic and more competitive economic region. That is the reason why we are committed to reducing trade barriers and liberalising markets while supporting research in innovative and future-oriented technologies like biotechnology, and information and communication technologies. Knowledge is increasingly the most important asset our societies possess. Vocational and further training are pre-conditions for people to find their way in a rapidly changing world and confront new challenges. So, we believe that education and training systems in EU Member States need to be developed, access to education improved, theory and practice closely integrated, and education curricula examined very closely. Special emphasis should be given to learning foreign languages. We recommend to the Member States to alter their education system so that the teaching of two foreign languages becomes a reality.

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For a European Space of Freedom, Security and the Rule of Law

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Our common history proves that the European Union is a unique safeguard for political stability and security in Europe. We now need to strengthen our joint forces against new threats to our security.

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The EU should speak with one voice on all key foreign and security matters. This includes making European Security and Defence Policy in close cooperation with NATO. New threats such as international terrorism must be met with suitable strategies, new mechanisms of conflict prevention and management, as well as a reassignment of our defence capabilities. More cooperation and joint standards in the field of armaments may contribute to more efficiency and better use of national defence budgets.

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A Europe without frontiers requires joint efforts to master and manage immigration and combat illegal immigration, crime and trade in enslaved women. That means that the EU's external frontiers must be effectively guarded against such threats. This is primarily a matter for the relevant Member States, but a European border police corps should be available if requested to assist colleagues in Member States in reinforcing the EU's external borders. Illegal immigration must also be nipped in the bud through improved cooperation with source and transit countries. We support harmonised asylum procedures to be dealt with within six months, and repatriation agreements with third countries to provide for the safe, swift and unbureaucratic return to their home countries of asylum-seekers whose applications have been turned down.

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During the last years, terrorism has become one of the most important issues we have to face in the 21st century. Terrorist groups and all kind of organisations which support or tolerate terrorist methods, cross-border and organised crime call for resolute and effective action at European level.

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118 This requires a uniform and coherent institutional framework integrated into the structure of the
119 community, and covering all aspects of legal and internal affairs.

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121 Therefore,

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- 123 - Europol should be given more competencies to prevent and combat serious
- 124 international crimes;
- 125 - Eurojust should be developed to become a genuine communication and early warning
- 126 network linking national prosecution authorities;
- 127 - Definitions of crimes such as trading in enslaved women, drug trafficking, Internet
- 128 crimes, money laundering and acts of racism should be harmonised in all national legal
- 129 systems to establish common EU minimum standards;
- 130 - We support the creation of a European Public Prosecutor.

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133 **For Policies Based on Sustainability**

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135 Sustainable policies now increasingly require across-the-board cooperation of a kind which can
136 only be properly arranged at international level. Our responsibility towards future generations
137 means that we need to give careful attention to our environment and the natural world in which we
138 live. We support consistent environmental protection on the basis of strict rules throughout the EU,
139 rules based on the principle that the polluter pays, and that the rules are strictly policed.

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141 The global efforts being made to stop climate change should remain a top priority. A European
142 road map for more rapid implementation of the Kyoto Protocol is intended to make the EU a world
143 leader in this area. We want to reach this goal by supporting renewable energies, the use of
144 innovative technologies, and by transport policies which mean less damage to the environment.

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146 Past food scandals have shown that food security needs to be given top priority through ensuring
147 agricultural production which is more sensitive to the environment, through greater transparency,
148 and through effective monitoring of the entire food chain.

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151 **Your Vote Will Decide!**

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153 We call on people to turn out in force for the EPP member parties in the European elections. We
154 promise to ensure that the Union serves its citizens on the basis of our values.