



Believe in *People*



**ANNUAL**  
**ACTIVITY REPORT 2014**  
OF THE EPP GROUP  
IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT





# Table of Contents

## Table of Contents

Foreword by the Chairman .....	7
<b>1</b> The EPP Group .....	9
1. The EPP Group Structure .....	9
2. How we Work .....	9
3. Description .....	10
➤ The EPP Group Presidency .....	12
➤ Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations .....	14
➤ EPP Group Members of the European Parliament's Bureau .....	18
➤ EPP Group Chairs of the Parliamentary Committees .....	19
➤ EPP Group Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees .....	20
➤ EPP Group Chairs of the EU Joint Parliamentary Assemblies, Joint Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Parliamentary Delegations .....	23
4. The President (EPP) of the European Council .....	25
5. Members (EPP) of the European Commission .....	25
6. The 219 Members the EPP Group .....	26
7. The EPP Group Secretariat: Staff Management .....	29

<b>2</b>	<b>External Meetings and Events</b> .....	31
➤	Hearings and Conferences.....	51
<b>3</b>	<b>Parliamentary Work Service</b> .....	63
➤	Standing Working Group ‘Economy and Environment’.....	65
➤	Standing Working Group ‘Legal and Home Affairs’.....	71
➤	Standing Working Group ‘Budget and Structural Policies’.....	77
<b>4</b>	<b>External Policies, Committees and Delegations Service</b> .....	81
➤	Standing Working Group ‘Foreign Affairs’.....	82
➤	Interparliamentary Delegations.....	87

<b>5</b>	<b>National Parliaments Service</b> .....	97
<b>6</b>	<b>Mediterranean Policy and Intercultural Activities Service</b> .....	109
<b>7</b>	<b>Press and Communications Service</b> .....	125
<b>8</b>	<b>The European People’s Party (EPP)</b> .....	133



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

## Foreword by the Chairman, Manfred Weber

## Foreword by the Chairman, Manfred Weber

2014 was an exciting year for the EPP Group. The EPP Group was the clear winner of the May European elections; we are once again the strongest political force in the European Parliament.

Throughout the past legislative term the EPP Group was the voice of reliability and reform, working hard at national and European level to overcome the current economic and financial crisis. Our EPP-led Governments in Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Portugal and Ireland demonstrate that hard work pays off. Spain, Portugal and Ireland returned to the financial markets. Greece and Cyprus have made impressive progress. In the European Parliament, we worked hard to improve the system of economic governance, regulate financial markets, and establish the right framework to enable companies to create new jobs.

Following the elections, our EPP candidate Jean-Claude Juncker received wide support as President of the European Commission. His Commission is a Commission for citizens, providing an ambitious programme to re-launch growth in Europe, respecting the subsidiarity principle, and cutting red-tape. The EPP Group will ensure we can push forward our policies in close cooperation with the Commission. I am equally proud that the EPP also managed to secure the Presidency of the European Council, and I am looking forward to working together with our friend Donald Tusk.

2015 will be a year of hard work. We are ready to take up the challenge and deliver results, boosting growth and employment, making our continent a safer place, and ensuring that Europe speaks with one voice on the international scene.

The economic and financial crisis, instability in Europe's immediate neighbourhood, and this year's 10th anniversary of the 2004 Enlargement – an event marking the end of Cold War divisions – remind us of a key lesson: united we are stronger. It is this spirit that guides the action of the EPP Group, and which will continue to form the basis of our work.

**Manfred Weber**  
Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament



# The EPP Group

# 1 The EPP Group

Founded as the Christian Democrat Group on 23 June 1953 as a fraction in the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, the Group changed its name to the 'Group of the European People's Party' (Christian-Democratic Group) in July 1979, just after the first direct elections to the European Parliament, and to 'Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats' in July 1999. After the European elections in 2009, the Group went back to its roots as the 'Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)'. It has always played a leading role in the construction of Europe.

## 1. The EPP Group Structure Constitutive of the EPP Group – 1 July 2014

The Chairman of the EPP Group is Manfred Weber MEP. He chairs its governing bodies and **speaks for the Group in keynote debates** in the European Parliament.

He is supported by **Coordinators** on each of the Parliament's Committees and by **Heads of the National Delegations** represented in the Group.

The operational needs of the Group are serviced by a Group Secretariat, providing policy and organisational support.

The Group runs its own think-tank - **the European Ideas Network** - which brings together opinion-formers from the worlds of politics, business, academia and civic society across Europe, to discuss the major policy issues facing the European Union.

## 2. How We Work

The Group of the European People's Party (EPP Group) is the largest in the European Parliament with **219 Members**.

It brings together centre and centre-right pro-European political forces from the Member States of the EU. Most of the parties represented in the EPP Group also belong to the **European People's Party**. The EPP was the first-ever transnational political party to be formed at European level, and has the strongest representation in the European Council of Ministers. EPP parties came together to advance the goal of a more competitive and democratic Europe, closer to its citizens, and based on a social market economy.

As the largest political group in a Parliament where non-Socialist parties now enjoy a clear majority, the EPP Group is in a strong position to set that body's political agenda and to win its most critical votes. This strength is reflected in the fact that, since 1999, the EPP Group has been on the winning side of more votes than any other group in the European Parliament's monthly plenary sessions.

Strength numbers also ensures that EPP Group Members hold a range of key positions within the Parliament - 6 of its **Vice-Presidencies**, **Chairs** of 8 of the EP's 22 Committees or Subcommittees and 2 of its 5 Quaestorships. Within the **Parliamentary Committees**, EPP Group Members are best placed to secure the right to author the EP's position on key pieces of draft legislation and other major reports: the Group gets more of these "rapporteurships" on more important subjects, than any other group.

The task of the **European Parliament** - which is elected every five years by direct universal suffrage - lies in exercising democratic control over the decision-making process in the European Union on behalf of Europe's citizens.

Composition: there are **751 Members** of the European Parliament, representing more than 500 million Europeans.

### 3. Description

With 219 Members the EPP Group is the largest political Group in the European Parliament.

Its Membership is made up of:

 34 Members from <b>Germany</b>	 5 Members from the <b>Netherlands</b>
 23 Members from <b>Poland</b>	 5 Members from <b>Slovenia</b>
 20 Members from <b>France</b>	 4 Members from <b>Belgium</b>
 17 Members from <b>Spain</b>	 4 Members from <b>Ireland</b>
 17 Members from <b>Italy</b>	 4 Members from <b>Latvia</b>
 13 Members from <b>Romania</b>	 4 Members from <b>Sweden</b>
 12 Members from <b>Hungary</b>	 3 Members from <b>Malta</b>
 7 Members from <b>Bulgaria</b>	 3 Members from <b>Luxembourg</b>
 7 Members from the <b>Czech Republic</b>	 3 Members from <b>Finland</b>
 7 Members from <b>Portugal</b>	 2 Members from <b>Cyprus</b>
 6 Members from <b>Slovakia</b>	 2 Members from <b>Lithuania</b>
 5 Members from <b>Greece</b>	 1 Member from <b>Denmark</b>
 5 Members from <b>Austria</b>	 1 Member from <b>Estonia</b>
 5 Members from <b>Croatia</b>	

### The Presidency

The Presidency consists of the **Group Chairman** and ten **Vice-Chairs**. The Members of the Presidency agree among themselves on the allocation of tasks, including the Group Treasurer and the Chairmanships of the Standing Working Groups, which shall be brought to the notice of the Group.

### The Bureau

The Bureau, the Group's political organ, consists of:

- > The Presidency
- > The Heads of National Delegations
- > The President and Vice-Presidents of Parliament belonging to the Group
- > The Chairmen of Parliamentary Committees belonging to the Group
- > The Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees belonging to the Group
- > The Chairman and the Secretary-General of the European People's Party if they are members of the European Parliament
- > One co-opted Member for every 10 Members of a National Delegation

### The four Standing Working Groups

#### Working Group 'Foreign Affairs'

- > Committee on Foreign Affairs
- > Subcommittee on Human Rights
- > Subcommittee on Security and Defence
- > Committee on Development
- > Committee on International Trade

**Chairman: Jacek Saryusz-Wolski**

#### Working Group 'Legal and Home Affairs'

- > Committee on Culture and Education
- > Committee on Legal Affairs
- > Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- > Committee on Constitutional Affairs
- > Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- > Committee on Petitions

**Chairman: Esteban González Pons**

#### Working Group 'Economy and Environment'

- > Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
- > Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
- > Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
- > Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
- > Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection
- > Committee on Transport and Tourism

**Chairwoman: Françoise Grossetête**

#### Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies'

- > Committee on Budgets
- > Committee on Budgetary Control
- > Committee on Regional Development
- > Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
- > Committee on Fisheries

**Chairman: Marian Jean Marinescu**

The EPP Group Presidency



**Manfred WEBER**  
Chairman



**Lara COMI**  
Vice-Chairwoman  
Communication Strategy and EPP Youth  
Strategy



**Mariya GABRIEL**  
Vice-Chairwoman  
Mediterranean Union and EUROMED



**Esteban GONZÁLEZ PONS**  
Vice-Chairman  
Working Group 'Legal and  
Home Affairs'



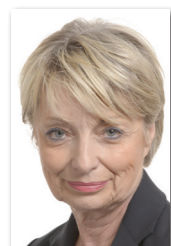
**Paulo RANGEL**  
Vice-Chairman  
EIN / Future of Europe / Treasurer



**Jacek SARYUSZ-WOLSKI**  
Vice-Chairman  
Working Group 'Foreign Affairs'



**József SZÁJER**  
Vice-Chairman  
Parliamentary Work



**Françoise GROSSETÊTE**  
Vice-Chairwoman  
Working Group 'Economy and Environment'



**Sandra KALNIETE**  
Vice-Chairwoman  
Neighbourhood Policy and EURONEST  
and European Values



**Esther de LANGE**  
Vice-Chairwoman  
Relations with National Parliaments




**Marian Jean MARINESCU**  
Vice-Chairman  
Working Group 'Budget and  
Structural Policies'

The EPP Group Presidency



Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations


 **Federal Republic of Germany** (34 Members)



**Herbert REUL**



**Angelika NIEBLER**


 **Poland** (34 Members)



**Jan OLBRYCHT**




**Andrzej GRZYB**

 **France** (20 Members)




**Alain LAMASSOURE**

 **Italy** (17 Members)



**Elisabetta GARDINI**

 **Spain** (17 Members)



**Lorenzo CESA**



**Esteban GONZÁLEZ PONS**

Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations

 **Romania** (13 Members)



**Theodor Dumitru STOLOJAN**




**Adina-Ioana VĂLEAN**

 **Hungary** (12 Members)




**András GYÜRK**

 **Bulgaria** (7 Members)



**Mariya GABRIEL**

 **Czech Republic** (7 Members)



**Luděk NIEDERMAYER**


 **Portugal** (7 Members)



**Paulo RANGEL**




**Nuno MELO**

 **Slovakia** (6 Members)




**Anna ZÁBORSKÁ**

Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations

 **Austria** (5 members)




**Othmar KARAS**

 **Croatia** (5 Membres)



**Dubravka ŠUICA**

 **Greece** (5 Members)



**Manolis KEFALOGIANNIS**

 **The Netherlands** (5 Members)



**Esther de LANGE**

 **Sweden** (4 Members)



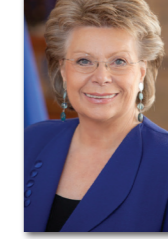
**Gunnar HÖKMARK**

 **Finland** (3 Members)




**Sirpa PIETIKÄINEN**

 **Luxembourg** (3 Members)



**Viviane REDING**

 **Malta** (3 Members)



**David CASA**

 **Slovenia** (5 Members)



**Milan ZVER**

 **Belgium** (4 Members)



**Ivo BELET**

 **Ireland** (4 Members)



**Seán KELLY**

 **Latvia** (4 Members)



**Krišjānis KARIŅŠ**

 **Cyprus** (2 Members)



**Eleni THEOCHAROUS**

 **Lithuania** (4 Members)




**Gabrielius LANDSBERGIS**

 **Denmark** (1 Member)



**Bendt BENDTSEN**

 **Estonia** (1 Member)



**Tunne KELAM**

Heads of the EPP Group National Delegations

EPP Group Members of the European Parliament's Bureau



**Antonio TAJANI**  
Vice-President (Italy)



**Mairead McGUINNESS**  
Vice-President (Ireland)



**Rainer WIELAND**  
Vice-President (Germany)



**Ramón Luis VALCÁRCEL**  
Vice-President (Spain)



**Ildikó GÁLL-PELCZ**  
Vice-President (Hungary)



**Adina-Ioana VĂLEAN**  
Vice-President (Romania)



**Élisabeth MORIN-CHARTIER**  
Quaestor (France)



**Andrey KOVATCHEV**  
Quaestor (Bulgaria)

EPP Group Chairs of the Parliamentary Committees



**Elmar BROK**  
Committee on Foreign Affairs



**Jerzy BUZEK**  
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy



**Alain CADEC**  
Committee on Fisheries



**Ingeborg GRÄBLE**  
Committee on Budgetary Control



**Giovanni LA VIA**  
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety



**Czesław Adam SIEKIERSKI**  
Committee on Agriculture



**Pavel SVOBODA**  
Committee on Legal Affairs



**Danuta MARIA HÜBNER**  
Committee on Constitutional Affairs

EPP Group Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees



**Cristian DAN PREDA**  
Committee on Foreign Affairs



**Michael GAHLER**  
Subcommittee on Security and Defence



**Daniel CASPARY**  
Committee on International Trade



**Petri SARVAMAA**  
Committee on Budgetary Control



**Andrzej GRZYB**  
Subcommittee on Human Rights



**Davor Ivo STIER**  
Committee on Development



**José Manuel FERNANDES**  
Committee on Budgets



**Burkhard BALZ**  
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

EPP Group Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees



**David CASA**  
Committee on Employment and Social Affairs



**Krišjānis KARIŅŠ**  
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy



**Wim van de CAMP**  
Committee on Transport and Tourism



**Albert DEB**  
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development



**Peter LIESE**  
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety



**Andreas SCHWAB**  
Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection



**Lambert van NISTELROOIJ**  
Committee on Regional Development



**Gabriel MATO**  
Committee on Fisheries

EPP Group Coordinators in the Parliamentary Committees



**Sabine VERHEYEN**  
Committee on Culture and Education



**Monika HOHLMEIER**  
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs



**Constance LE GRIP**  
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality



**Tadeusz ZWIEFKA**  
Committee on Legal Affairs



**György SCHÖPFLIN**  
Committee on Constitutional Affairs



**Peter JAHR**  
Committee on Petitions

EPP Group Chairs of the EU Joint Parliamentary Assemblies,  
Joint Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Parliamentary Delegations



**Manolis KEFALOGIANNIS**  
Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee



**Alojz PETERLE**  
Delegation to the EU-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee



**Teresa JIMÉNEZ-BECERRIL BARRIO**  
Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee



**Othmar KARAS**  
Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee



**Andrej PLENKOVIĆ**  
Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee



**Fulvio MARTUSCIELLO**  
Delegation for relations with Israel



**Michèle ALLIOT-MARIE**  
Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula



**Janusz LEWANDOWSKI**  
Delegation for relations with Iran

EPP Group Chairs of the EU Joint Parliamentary Assemblies,  
Joint Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and Parliamentary Delegations



**David McALLISTER**  
Delegation for relations with the  
United States



**Werner LANGEN**  
Delegation for relations with Southeast  
Asia and the Association of Southeast  
Asian Nations (ASEAN)



**Michael GAHLER**  
Delegation for relations with the  
Pan-African Parliament



**Luis DE GRANDES PASCUAL**  
Delegation for relations with the countries  
of the Andean Community



**Bogdan Andrzej ZDROJEWSKI**  
Delegation for relations with Belarus



**Paulo RANGEL**  
Delegation for relations with the  
Federative Republic of Brazil



**Monica MACOVEI**  
Delegation to the EU-Albania Stabilisation  
and Association Parliamentary Committee



**Eduard KUKAN**  
Delegation to the EU-Serbia Stabilisation  
and Association Parliamentary Committee

4. The President (EPP) of the European Council

**Donald Tusk**

5. EPP Members of the European Commission

President

**Jean-Claude Juncker**  
President of the European Commission  
Luxembourg (CSV)

Vice-Presidents

**Kristalina Georgieva**  
Budget & Human Resources  
Bulgaria (GERB)

**Jyrki Katainen**  
Jobs, Growth, Investment & Competitiveness  
Finland (Kokoomus)

**Valdis Dombrovskis**  
Euro & Social Dialogue  
Latvia (Unity)

Members

**Günther Oettinger**  
Digital Economy & Society  
Germany (CDU)

**Marianne Thyssen**  
Employment, Social Affairs, Skills & Labour Mobility  
Belgium (CD&V)

**Johannes Hahn**  
European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations  
Austria (ÖVP)

**Dimitris Avramopoulos**  
Migration, Home Affairs & Citizenship  
Greece (ND)

**Elżbieta Bienkowska**  
Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs  
Poland (PO)

**Miguel Arias Cañete**  
Climate Action & Energy  
Spain (PP)

**Tibor Navracsics**  
Education, Culture, Youth & Sport  
Hungary (Fidesz)

**Carlos Moedas**  
Research, Science & Innovation  
Portugal (PSD)

**Phil Hogan**  
Agriculture & Rural Development  
Ireland (FG)

**Christos Stylianides**  
Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management  
Cyprus (DISY)

## 6. The 219 Members of the Group

### Germany (34)

BALZ, Burkhard  
 BÖGE, Reimer  
 BROK, Elmar  
 CASPARY, Daniel  
 COLLIN-LANGEN, Birgit  
 DEß, Albert  
 EHLER, Christian  
 FERBER, Markus  
 FLORENZ, Karl-Heinz  
 GAHLER, Michael  
 GIESEKE, Jens  
 GRÄßLE, Ingeborg  
 HOHLMEIER, Monika  
 JAHR, Peter  
 KOCH, Dieter-Lebrecht  
 KUHN, Werner  
 LANGEN, Werner  
 LIESE, Peter  
 LINS, Norbert  
 MANN, Thomas  
 McALLISTER, David  
 NIEBLER, Angelika  
 PIEPER, Markus  
 QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL, Godelieve  
 REUL, Herbert  
 SCHULZE, Sven  
 SCHWAB, Andreas  
 SOMMER, Renate  
 VERHEYEN, Sabine  
 VOSS, Axel  
 WEBER, Manfred  
 WIELAND, Rainer  
 WINKLER, Hermann  
 ZELLER, Joachim

### Poland (23)

BONI, Michal  
 BUZEK, Jerzy  
 GRZYB, Andrzej  
 HETMAN, Krzysztof  
 HÜBNER, Danuta Maria  
 JAZŁOWIECKA, Danuta  
 KALINOWSKI, Jarosław  
 KOZŁOWSKA-RAJEWICZ, Agnieszka  
 KUDRYCKA, Barbara  
 LEWANDOWSKI, Janusz  
 ŁUKACIJEWSKA, Elżbieta Katarzyna  
 OLBRYCHT, Jan  
 PITERA, Julia  
 PLURA, Marek  
 ROSATI, Dariusz  
 SARYUSZ-WOLSKI, Jacek  
 SIEKIERSKI, Czesław Adam  
 SZEJNFELD, Adam  
 THUN UND HOHENSTEIN, Róza Gräfin von  
 WAŁĘSA, Jarosław  
 WENTA, Bogdan Brunon  
 ZDROJEWSKI, Bogdan Andrzej  
 ZWIEFKA, Tadeusz

### France (20)

ALLIOT-MARIE, Michèle  
 CADEC, Alain  
 DANJEAN, Arnaud  
 DANTIN, Michel  
 DATI, Rachida  
 DELAHAYE, Angélique

GROSSETÊTE, Françoise  
 HORTEFEUX, Brice  
 JOULAUD, Marc  
 JUVIN, Philippe  
 LAMASSOURE, Alain  
 LAVRILLEUX, Jérôme  
 LE GRIP, Constance  
 MORANO, Nadine  
 MORIN-CHARTIER, Élisabeth  
 MUSELIER, Renaud  
 PONGA, Maurice  
 PROUST, Franck  
 SAÏFI, Tokia  
 SANDER, Anne

### Italy (17)

CESA, Lorenzo  
 CICU, Salvatore  
 CIRIO, Alberto  
 COMI, Lara  
 DORFMANN, Herbert  
 FITTO, Raffaele  
 GARDINI, Elisabetta  
 LA VIA, Giovanni  
 MARTUSCIELLO, Fulvio  
 MATERA, Barbara  
 MUSSOLINI, Alessandra  
 PATRICIELLO, Aldo  
 POGLIESE, Salvatore Domenico  
 SALINI, Massimiliano  
 SERNAGIOTTO, Remo  
 TAJANI, Antonio  
 TOTI, Giovanni

### Spain (17)

AYUSO, Pilar  
 de GRANDES PASCUAL, Luis  
 del CASTILLO VERA, Pilar  
 DÍAZ DE MERA GARCÍA CONSUEGRA, Agustín  
 ESTARÀS FERRAGUT, Rosa  
 FISAS AYXELÀ, Santiago  
 GAMBUS, Francisc  
 GONZÁLEZ PONS, Esteban  
 HERRANZ GARCÍA, Esther  
 ITURGAIZ, Carlos  
 JIMÉNEZ-BECERRIL BARRIO, Teresa  
 LOPE FONTAGNÉ, Verónica  
 LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE, Antonio  
 MATO, Gabriel  
 MILLÁN MON, Francisco José  
 VALCÁRCEL, Ramón Luis  
 ZALBA BIDEGAIN, Pablo

### Romania (13)

BUDA, Daniel  
 BUŞOI, Cristian-Silviu  
 HELLVIG, Eduard-Raul  
 MACOVEI, Monica  
 MĂNESCU, Ramona Nicole  
 MARINESCU, Marian Jean  
 MUREŞAN Siegfried  
 PREDA, Cristian Dan  
 SÓGOR, Csaba  
 STOLOJAN, Theodor Dumitru  
 UNGUREANU, Traian  
 VĂLEAN, Adina-Ioana  
 WINKLER, Iuliu

### Hungary (12)

BOCSKOR, Andrea  
 DELI, Andor  
 DEUTSCH, Tamás  
 ERDŐS, Norbert  
 GÁL, Kinga  
 GÁLL-PELCZ, Ildikó  
 GYÜRK, András  
 HÖLVÉNYI, György  
 KÓSA, Ádám  
 SCHÖPFLIN, György  
 SZÁJER, József  
 TÖKÉS, László

### Bulgaria (7)

GABRIEL, Mariya  
 KOVATCHEV, Andrey  
 MALINOV, Svetoslav Hristov  
 NOVAKOV, Andrey  
 PAUNOVA, Eva  
 RADEV, Emil  
 URUTCHEV, Vladimir

### Czech Republic (7)

NIEDERMAYER, Luděk  
 POLČÁK, Stanislav  
 POSPÍŠIL, Jiří  
 ŠOJDROVÁ, Michaela  
 ŠTĚTINA, Jaromír  
 SVOBODA, Pavel  
 ZDECHOVSKÝ, Tomáš

### Portugal (7)

COELHO, Carlos  
 FERNANDES, José Manuel  
 MELO, Nuno  
 MONTEIRO de AGUIAR, Cláudia  
 RANGEL, Paulo  
 RIBEIRO, Sofia  
 RUAS, Fernando

### Slovakia (6)

CSÁKY, Pál  
 KUKAN, Eduard  
 MIKOLÁŠIK, Miroslav  
 NAGY, József  
 ŠTEFANEC, Ivan  
 ZÁBORSKÁ, Anna

### Austria (5)

BECKER, Heinz K.  
 KARAS, Othmar  
 KÖSTINGER, Elisabeth  
 RÜBIG, Paul  
 SCHMIDT, Claudia

### Croatia (5)

MALETIĆ, Ivana  
 PETIĆ, Marijana  
 PLENKOVIĆ, Andrej  
 STIER, Davor Ivo  
 ŠUIČA, Dubravka

### Greece (5)

KEFALOGIANNIS Manolis  
 KYRTSOS, Giorgos  
 SPYRAKI, Maria  
 VOZEMBERG Elissavet  
 ZAGORAKIS, Theodoros

### Netherlands (5)

de LANGE, Esther  
 LENAERS, Jeroen  
 SCHREIJER-PIERIK, Annie  
 van de CAMP, Wim  
 van NISTELROOIJ, Lambert

### Slovenia (5)

BOGOVIČ, Franc  
 PETERLE, Alojz  
 ŠULIN, Patricija  
 TOMC, Romana  
 ZVER, Milan

### Belgium (4)

ARIMONT, Pascal  
 BELET, Ivo  
 ROLIN, Claude  
 VANDENKENDELAERE, Tom

### Ireland (4)

CLUNE, Deirdre  
 HAYES, Brian  
 KELLY, Seán  
 McGUINNESS, Mairead

### Latvia (4)

KALNIETE, Sandra  
 KARIŅŠ, Krišjānis  
 PABRIKS, Artis  
 VAIDERE, Inese

#### Sweden (4)

ADAKTUSSON, Lars  
CORAZZA BILDT, Anna Maria  
FJELLNER, Christofer  
HÖKMARK, Gunnar

#### Finland (3)

PIETIKÄINEN, Sirpa  
SARVAMAA, Petri  
VIRKKUNEN, Henna

#### Luxembourg (3)

BACH, Georges  
ENGEL, Frank  
REDING, Viviane

#### Malta (3)

CASA, David  
COMODINI CACHIA, Therese  
METSOLA, Roberta

#### Cyprus (2)

CHRISTOFOROU, Lefteris  
THEOCHAROUS, Eleni

#### Lithuania (2)

LANDSBERGIS, Gabrielius  
SAUDARGAS, Algirdas

#### Denmark (1)

BENDTSEN, Bendt

#### Estonia (1)

KELAM, Tunne

## 7. The EPP Group Secretariat - Staff Management



**Martin KAMP**  
Secretary-General



**John BIESMANS**  
Deputy Secretary-General  
Head of the Internal Organisation  
Service



**Joanna JARECKA-GOMEZ**  
Deputy Secretary-General  
Head of the External Policies –  
Delegations Service



**Paolo LICANDRO**  
Deputy Secretary-General  
Head of the Mediterranean  
Policy and Intercultural Activities  
Service



**Juan SALAFRANCA**  
Deputy Secretary-General  
Head of the External Policies –  
Committees Service



**Natacha SCRIBAN-CUVELIER**  
Deputy Secretary-General  
Head of the Parliamentary Work  
Service



**Pedro LÓPEZ DE PABLO**  
Head of the Press and  
Communications Service



**Johan RYNGAERT**  
Head of the Presidency Service



**Beatrice SCARASCIA MUGNOZZA**  
Head of the Relations with  
National Parliaments Service





## External Meetings and Events

## 2 External Meetings and Events

The EPP Group hosts meeting and events both in the European Parliament buildings and within individual Member States. Many of these meetings and events are organised by the Political Strategy Unit.

The Unit offers a valuable mechanism for further developing the Group's political identity by increasing the number of forums for debate:

- > **Meetings of the EPP Group Bureau outside the three working seats of the European Parliament:** they aim to deepen relations with Member States and to express support to EPP sister parties.
- > **Study Days:** they are organised in a different Member State each year, as understanding the different national realities allows a better grasp of the political themes that are important at national level.
- > **European Ideas Network:** the EIN represents an open pan-European think-tank designed to promote new thinking on the key challenges facing the European Union.

## EPP Group Bureau meetings outside the three working seats of the European Parliament

Krakow, Poland  
EPP Group Bureau Meeting – February 2014

The Bureau of the EPP Group met in Krakow, Poland on 20-21 February. The speakers were invited to intervene on the following themes:

> **Situation in Ukraine**

The EPP Group expressed its great concern regarding the political developments in Ukraine, and insisted on the necessity to protect the lives of the people and avoid any further escalation of violence. It acknowledged a regime crisis and called on the Ukrainian authorities to urgently agree on a negotiation strategy towards free and fair presidential and legislative elections. The participants showed solidarity with the Ukrainian people and supported the sanctions decided against those responsible for exactions.

> **Optimising EU funds to get out of the crisis**

Economic, social and territorial cohesion is a catalyst for growth and jobs in Europe. For the EPP Group, the EU cohesion policy is an investment policy. Speakers promoted public investment and an EU funding that focuses more on innovation. The Group also recalled its priorities: support for SMEs, infrastructure development, digital economy, a multilevel governance principle and consolidation of the Single Market.

> **Reshaping the EU's energy policy**

The same conditions among Member States on the energy market need to be created to guarantee the effectiveness of the internal market. The EPP Group spoke in favour of a competitive internal energy market as part of the EU's exit strategy from the crisis. It therefore called for the immediate implementation of existing and new legislation by Member States. A strong effort should be made to create an energy market allowing clean, affordable and accessible energy to all.



*l-r: Janusz Piechociński, Deputy Prime Minister of Poland and President of the Polish People's Party, and Andrzej Grzyb MEP, Vice-Chairman of the Polish Delegation (Polish People's Party) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*



*l-r: Jean-Pierre Audy MEP, Head of the French Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Etienne Davignon, Vice-President of GDF-SUEZ Belgium, Jan Olbrycht MEP (Poland), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Janusz Piechociński, President of the Polish People's Party and Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, Manfred Weber MEP (Germany), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Joanna Jarecka-Gomez, Deputy Secretary-General, Head of the External Policies-Delegations Service, Michel Barnier, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Dominique Ristori, Director-General for Energy, European Commission, Bogusław Sonik MEP (EPP Group, Poland), Vice-Chairman of the Budgetary Control Committee of the European Parliament*



*l-r: Jean-Pierre Audy MEP, Head of the French Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and Etienne Davignon, Vice-President of GDF-SUEZ Belgium*

Jūrmala, Latvia  
EPP Group Bureau Meeting – November 2014

The Bureau of the EPP Group met in Jūrmala, Latvia on 19-21 November. Participants focused on the following themes:

- > **EU Response to the Crisis in Ukraine:** The EPP Group pledged to support the deep and comprehensive economic, social and political reforms necessary to foster a competitive economic system, underpinned by a functioning financial structure that will enhance democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine. Regarding the threat posed by Russia, the EPP Group urged togetherness; by supporting the stabilisation of Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression Europe will provide security for its citizens. The enhancement of the EU's energy security will moreover decrease dependency on Russia. Through the promotion of European values our Group will help Ukraine to sustain its independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.
  
- > **Reforms and Investments for Growth:** The EPP Group is determined that Europe reclaims its position as a leader in research, innovation and education. Towards this end we will orient our work around the following five priorities to spur sustainable growth and help create jobs, in particular for young Europeans, who currently suffer from the highest levels of unemployment:
  - Ensuring a basis for growth and stability
  - SME access to capital
  - Smart regulation for a dynamic European Single Market
  - Making investments reach the recipient
  - Strengthening industry in a connected Europe

Regarding growth programmes and political priorities like the European Social Fund (ESF), the EPP Group will not tolerate any cuts, delays or mismanagement which threaten the vital impulses on which both Parliament and Council have agreed. The EPP Group is committed to finding a solution to the recurrent shortage of payment appropriations in the EU budget in order to ensure that growth and jobs in Europe are adequately financed.



r-l: **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, **Jyrki Katainen**, Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, and **Krišjānis Kariņš** MEP, Head of the Latvian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament



*l-r: **Wilhelm Molterer**, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank, **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, **Kai Wynands**, Head of the Working Group 'Economy and Environment', **Françoise Grossetête** MEP, Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Chairwoman of the Working Group 'Economy and Environment', and **Krišjānis Kariņš** MEP, Head of the Latvian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*



***Laimdota Straujuma**, Prime Minister of Latvia, centre, **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and **Valdis Dombrovskis**, Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner responsible for the Euro and Social Dialogue*

## EPP Group Study Days

Dublin, Ireland

EPP Group Study days – March 2014

The EPP Group study days were held in Dublin, Ireland on 6-7 March. Ahead of the European elections of May 2014, the meeting centred on key issues for European citizens:

- > Restoring confidence in Europe
- > Time for growth and recovery
- > Relaunching the social market economy

All speakers agreed that courage and bold decisions were needed. It was stressed that the crisis was not only economic, but also one of values. The message given to EU citizens must show the EPP Group's ability to fight the crisis without surrendering its values. The EPP Group insisted that the Union had not failed and that solutions were provided at economic and institutional levels. The European economy has stabilised. The courageous reforms undertaken by the Portuguese, Spanish, Irish and Greek Governments are paying off. Now the priority is to create the right conditions for new and sustainable growth and jobs by encouraging private investment, completing structural reforms, supporting entrepreneurship, promoting vocational training, strengthening the EU's industrial base and lowering energy costs.

The social market economy is the cornerstone of EPP Group policy. It balances the principles of freedom and solidarity and promotes an inclusive society. Banks must serve the people and enterprises, bureaucracy must be reduced and SME must have better access to finance.

The EPP Group requested that all economic policy measures are measured as to their impact on industrial competitiveness and job creation.



*Mairead McGuinness* MEP, Head of the Irish Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament and Chairwoman of the Working Group 'Foreign Affairs, and *Joseph Daul* MEP (France), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and President of the European People's Party



*Joseph Daul MEP (France), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, centre, Mairead McGuinness MEP, Head of the Irish Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and Chairwoman of the Working Group 'Foreign Affairs', and Martin Kamp, Secretary-General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*



*l-r: Sean Kelly MEP (EPP Group, Ireland), Member of the Regional Development Committee of the European Parliament; Brian Hayes, TD, Irish Minister of State for Public Service Reform and the Office of Public Works; Janusz Lewandowski, European Commissioner for Budget and Financial Programming; Valdis Dombrovskis, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia; Gunnar Hökmark MEP (EPP Group, Sweden), Vice-President of the EPP in the European Parliament, responsible for Neighbourhood Policy and EURONEST; Martin Kamp, Secretary-General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; Maria Luis Albuquerque, Portuguese Minister of State and Finance; Jim Higgins MEP (EPP Group, Ireland), Quaestor of the European Parliament, Member of the Transport and Tourism Committee of the European Parliament and Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Vice-President of the European People's Party*

## Albufeira, Portugal EPP Group Study days – June 2014

The EPP Group Study Days were held in Albufeira, Portugal on 16-18 June. In light of the results of the European elections, the meeting aimed to set the challenges ahead of the EPP Group and the European Parliament for this coming legislature, and to discuss political strategy for the next five years. It also focused on the need to strengthen our relations with national parliaments.

### > **The EU's political challenges 2014-2019:**

The crisis is not yet behind us. Many Member States know a worrying unemployment rate. The EU is facing increasing global competition and an aggravation of its demographic situation.

The EPP Group therefore believes that priority must be given to growth and jobs. Europe needs to increase its competitiveness and use all its potential to defend its social model and create jobs, in particular for young people.

This can only be achieved through fiscal credibility, solidity and justice. The EPP Group insists on the need for targeted investment, the potential of a Digital Single Market, and an open global trade market.

The speakers also voiced their concern regarding the increasing number of populists and nationalists, but recalled that actions speak louder than words. The EPP Group wants Europe to be big on big things and small on small things.

As the largest group in the European Parliament, the EPP Group will ensure that the Parliament fully assumes its strong role and will insist on the application of the community method.

### > **Strengthening relations with national parliaments:**

Speakers all insisted on the decisive role of national parliaments in the control of the activity of national governments in the Council. The EPP Group has therefore increased its inter-parliamentary action to allow a better flow of information. It is now up to the national parliaments to adapt their agendas to that of the European Parliament and to the European Semester to further facilitate cooperation.



*l-r: **Joseph Daul**, President of the European People's Party; **Viktor Orbán**, Prime Minister of Hungary; **Herman Van Rompuy**, President of the European Council; **Jerzy Buzek**, MEP (EPP Group, Poland), former President of the European Parliament; **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; **Martin Kamp**, Secretary-General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; **Paulo Rangel** MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (PSD) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; **Nuno Melo**, MEP, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (CDS-PP) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; **Carlos Silva e Sousa**, Mayor of Albufeira*





*l-r: **Pedro Passos Coelho**, Portuguese Prime Minister, PSD President; **Antonis Samaras**, Prime Minister of Greece, President of Council of the European Union and **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*



***Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*

## The European Ideas Network (EIN)

The EIN is an EPP Group initiative to bring together a range of actors to generate policy ideas for the European centre-right. It is a network of over 600 policy-makers and opinion-shapers from nearly 30 countries who come together to discuss the future policy direction of the European Union and its Member States.

Members come from diverse backgrounds: elected political office, research institutes, political foundations, academia, business and non-governmental organisations.

The EIN organises a number of different types of activity to create a dynamic and lively centre for debate to stimulate fresh thinking and positive responses to the challenges faced in a rapidly changing world:

### > **Breakfast Meetings and Working Group Seminars**

In 2014, the EIN organised an active programme of breakfast meetings and seminars in the European Parliament to offer a forum for both elected policy makers and political researchers in Brussels to discuss subjects of topical interest stimulated by opening remarks by leaders in their field.

Throughout the year, numerous seminars were also organised by the EIN working groups.

### > **Summer University**

The climax to the annual programme of the EIN is the Summer University. This year's event took place on 19 June 2014 in Albufeira (Portugal).

The theme of the event was: *"EIN: achievement and its role to play in the future - The Success of the Political Networking"*

Summaries of the EIN meetings are published on the network's website [www.ein.eu](http://www.ein.eu) along with papers and presentations which formed the basis for its meetings.



*r-l: Francesca Traldi, Secretary-General, Magna-Carta Foundation, Jim Kolbe, Vice-Chairman of the International Republican Institute (IRI) Board, former Congressman; Antonio López Istúriz White MEP (Spain), Secretary-General of the European People's Party, Secretary Treasurer of the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies; Jaime Mayor Oreja MEP (Spain), Outgoing Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Political Strategy and the European Ideas Network; Manfred Weber MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; Guillermo Martínez Casán, Network Director EIN, Javier Fernández-Lasquetty, Former Secretary-General, FAES Foundation, Member of the Assembly of Madrid; Michael Borchard, Head of the Department of Politics and Consulting, Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS); Pascale Joannin, General Director; Robert Schuman Foundation*

## Preparation of the 2014 European Elections

The Political Strategy Unit had provided a major contribution to the EPP Group information and communication activities ahead of the 2014 European elections. Its role consisted of providing knowledge and thematic support to MEPs and candidates, as well as gathering political intelligence. In the context of the lingering economic crisis and lack of positive narratives on Europe, it was crucial to underline the EPP family's decisive and responsible action in restoring stability and leading Europe back on a path to economic recovery.

### 1. Providing Knowledge and Support

- > **Active contribution to the EPP 2014 Electoral Programme:** The EPP Group Members provided a strong contribution to the substance of the EPP Electoral Programme by developing core messages at an early stage and adding the Group's political expertise in the form of amendments. The Action Programme adopted at the EPP Dublin Congress on 6-7 March 2014 had a notable EPP Group signature.
- > **Successes of the EPP Group in the 2009-2014 Legislature:** Based on contributions of Coordinators, the Strategy Unit developed the 30 EPP Group main achievements in the form of dedicated notes. These notes were made available on the EPP Group internet in all EU-languages.
- > **EPP Group Priorities for the 2014-2019 Legislature:** Five central priorities were defined on the basis of the priority papers and core messages submitted by EPP Group Coordinators, and approved by the Presidency: 1) Economic Recovery and Jobs, 2) Successful Small Businesses and Industry, 3) the Future of Young People, 4) a Safe Society and 5) Global Peace and Stability. Each core topic contained a series of priorities for action, in total 25, for which an argumentation note highlighting the main aims and areas of disagreement with other political families were drafted.

- > **Sensitive topics and crucial dossiers of the 2009-2014 legislature:** A series of 60 notes covering sensitive topics and crucial issues were drafted with the support of the Advisers in the Parliamentary Work Service.
  - > **EPP Group-EPP Party Extranet:** The various supporting material, was made available in all EU-official languages to EPP Group candidates on the joint EPP Group/EPP Party Extranet site by the end of January 2014, making them easily consultable via mobile devices.
- ### 2. Gathering Political Intelligence
- > **Rapid response team during the election campaign:** The asset of the EPP Group is knowledge and a good command of EU-dossiers. Throughout the election campaign period, members of the Strategy Unit in connection with Advisers in the Parliamentary Work Service were at the disposal of EPP candidates for questions and requests.
  - > **Voting pattern of opponents:** The Strategy Unit carried out an analysis of voting patterns of other political groups on key issues, and highlighted a contradiction between certain voting records and statements made in the course of the campaign.
  - > **Reacting to the anti-EU campaigns and populist arguments:** The Strategy Unit complemented the work of the Centre for European Studies (CES), the now Martens Centre. It provided argumentation papers to respond to populist arguments on topics such as 'leaving the Euro will save the economy', and proposed counter-arguments to the speech put forward by populist parties.
  - > **The preparatory work for the information campaign** was concluded by the end of January 2014, putting at the disposal of EPP Group candidates a broad range of information material and monitoring data at an early stage, thus providing an effective added-value and support before the 2014 European election campaign.

## Hearings and Conferences

On top of the meetings organised by the Political Strategy Unit, the EPP Group hosted a series of Hearings and Conferences with experts and stakeholders to discuss themes that are of relevance to the European Parliament and to EU citizens.

The EPP Group's stands at the Open Days at the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg attracted a large number of visitors, presenting an ideal opportunity for citizens to find out more about the EPP Group's political priorities.

21/01/2014  
EPP Group Conference on Work-free Sundays



*Thomas Mann MEP (EPP Group, Germany), host of the Conference*

22/01/2014

EPP Group Hearing on Youth Unemployment



r-l: **Dubravka Šuica** MEP (EPP Group, Croatia), host of the Hearing, and **Othmar Karas** MEP (EPP Group, Austria), Vice-President of the European Parliament

23/01/2014

EPP Group Conference on Persons with Disabilities



**Filip Kaczmarek** MEP (EPP Group, Poland), centre, host of the Conference, with Members of the European Parliament

29/01/2014

Conference on Young Farmers



r-l: **Joseph Daul** MEP (France), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, **Elizabeth Köstinger** MEP (EPP Group, Austria), Member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament and **Nuno Melo** MEP, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (CDS-PP) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament

30/01/2014

EPP Group Hearing on the EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement



**Alojz Peterle** MEP (EPP Group, Slovenia) Chair of the Hearing and European Parliament Rapporteur for the EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement, centre, HE **Kojiro Shiojiri**, Japanese Ambassador to the European Union, and **Viorel Isticioaia-Budura**, Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Action Service (EEAS)

30/01/2014

Hearing on the Implementation of EU Policies by NGOs



*Ingeborg Gräßle* MEP (Germany), EPP Group Coordinator in the Budgetary Control Committee of the European Parliament (EP) (speaking), **Paul Rübig** MEP (Austria), EPP Group Vice-Coordinator in the Industry, Research and Energy Committee of the European Parliament, and **Manfred Kraff**, Deputy-Director General, Accounting Officer of the European Commission, DG for Budget (DG BUDG)

12/02/2014

Conference on the Mobility of Bulgarian and Romanian Citizens: Myths and Reality



*l-r: Mariya Gabriel* MEP (EPP Group, Bulgaria) and **Viviane Reding**, Vice-President of the European Commission, European Commissioner responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship

19/02/2014

EPP Group Hearing on Horizon 2020 and the European Institute of Innovation & Technology



**Maria Da Graça Carvalho** MEP (EPP Group, Portugal), Moderator of the first panel, (centre), **Joana Lamego**, Instituto de Medicina Molecular, and **Christos Vasilakos**, Greek Presidency of the European Council

18/03/2014

EPP Group on Hearing 'Football for Roma inclusion' under the framework of the WG on Roma inclusion



**Livia Járóka** MEP (EPP Group, Hungary), EP Rapporteur of the EU's Strategy on Roma Inclusion

18/03/2014  
Hearing on Territorial Cohesion



r-l: **Joseph Daul** MEP (France), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and **Paulo Rangel** MEP (EPP Group, Portugal), host of the Hearing, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments

02/04/2014  
Conference on EU-Russia Relations: Return to the Cold War or New Geographical Paradigm



r-l: **Tunne Kelam** MEP (EPP Group, Estonia), Head of the Estonian Delegation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, host of the Hearing, and **Elmar Brok** MEP (EPP Group, Germany), Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament

02/04/2014  
EPP Group Hearing on Internet Today and Tomorrow



r-l: **Angelika Niebler** MEP (EPP Group, Germany), Chairwoman of the EPP Group Working Group 'Internet Today and Tomorrow', **Neelie Kroes**, Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner responsible for Digital Agenda, **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and **Benjamin Edelman**, Associate Professor at the Harvard Business School

03/04/2014  
EPP Group Hearing on the Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions in Europe



r-l: **Vladimir Urutchev** MEP (EPP Group, Bulgaria) and **Mariya Gabriel** MEP (EPP Group, Bulgaria), hosts of the Hearing

04/05/2014  
Open Days of the European Institutions in Strasbourg



*Open Days in Strasbourg*

17/05/2014  
Open Days of the European Institutions in Brussels



*Open Days in Brussels*

25/05/2014  
European Election Night 2014



*l-r: EPP TV Presenter **Chris Burns**, **Theo Georgitsopoulos**, EPP Group Secretariat, EPP TV presenter **Katie Owens**, **Antonio López-Istúriz White** MEP (EPP Group, Spain), Secretary-General of the European People's Party, and EPP TV presenter **John Holland***

04/06/2014  
Election of new EPP Group Chairman



*l-r: **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and **Joseph Daul**, President of the EPP Party, outgoing Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*

15/07/2014

Vote in plenary on the election of the President of the European Commission



*Manfred Weber* MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament (on the right), congratulates **Jean-Claude Juncker** on his election as President of the European Commission

01/10/2014

Hearings of the candidates for the new Juncker European Commission



*Marianne Thyssen* MEP (EPP Group, Belgium), Commissioner-Designate for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

18/11/2014

Conference on Migration, Europe and the Economic Crisis - The role of the Church and the EU's commitment



*l-r: Jorge Nuño Mayer*, Secretary-General of Caritas Europa, **Jan Olbrycht** MEP, Chairman of the Polish Delegation (Civic Platform) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, HE Mgr **Alain Paul Lebeaupin**, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union, **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and **Mariya Gabriel** MEP (Bulgaria), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED

19/11/2014

Hearing on the European Meat Forum



*l-r: Renate Sommer* MEP (EPP Group, Germany), far right, host of the event





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- 7
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## Parliamentary Work Service

### 3 Parliamentary Work Service

The Parliamentary Work Service assists EPP Group Members in their daily legislative work.

The Group's staff uses its expertise and experience in ensuring that the EPP Group, as the largest political Group in the European Parliament, can maximise its objectives in all political undertakings.

The following outlines the successes and achievements of three of the four Standing Working Groups throughout 2014.



*Françoise Grossetête MEP (EPP Group, France), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and Chairwoman of the Working Group 'Economy and Environment'*

## Standing Working Group 'Economy and Environment'

### Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON)

After several Member States almost defaulted on their sovereign debt, the European economic governance framework was improved. The new framework implements structural reforms to achieve sound and sustainable public finances. In 2014 our Group aimed to correctly apply this framework. The fact that only 10 percent of the Country Specific Recommendations are fully implemented in the Member States needs to be addressed.

In response to the financial crisis our Group's priority was to create a safer and sounder financial sector for the Single Market. We promoted the establishment of a Single Supervisory Mechanism and a Single Resolution Mechanism for banks. An important achievement was thus the completion of the legislative work necessary for the establishment of the Banking Union. The Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) places the European Central Bank (ECB) as the central prudential supervisor of financial institutions in the Euro area and in those non-Euro EU countries which choose to join the SSM. Since November 2014 the ECB directly supervises the largest banks, while the national supervisors will continue to monitor the remaining banks. The main task of the ECB and the national supervisors, working closely together within an integrated system, will be to check that banks comply with the EU banking rules and to tackle problems early on. The Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) applies to banks covered by the SSM. In cases when banks fail despite stronger supervision, the mechanism allows a resolution of banks to be managed effectively through a Single Resolution Board and a Single Resolution Fund, financed by the banking sector. Its purpose is to ensure an orderly resolution of failing banks with minimal costs for taxpayers and to the real economy.

The single rulebook is the foundation of the Banking Union. It consists of a set of legislative texts which to all financial institutions (including approximately 8.300 banks) in the EU must comply with. These rules lay down capital

requirements for banks, ensure better protection for depositors, and regulate the prevention and management of bank failures. One of the most important pieces of legislation of the Single Rule Book is the Banking Recovery and Resolution Directive, adopted in 2014.

Much attention was given to the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion. The EPP Group insisted to go beyond past levels of cooperation among Member States. An increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of tax collection is needed and the automatic exchange of information constitutes an important tool to that goal. The amended Directive on Mandatory Automatic Exchange of Information in the Field of Taxation was adopted. OECD partnership is appreciated by EPP Group.

The EPP Group supports the introduction of the proposed financial transaction tax (FTT) which has entered the enhanced cooperation procedure among 11 Member States; preferring, however, the introduction in all Euro area Member States, at EU level, or, in the best case, at global level.

## Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)

The IMCO Committee invested efforts in concluding key initiatives for the completion of the Single Market and towards delivery of growth and jobs. This included the formal adoption of new rules on public procurement and in the area of utilities and concessions. Negotiations on the Concessions Directive led by Philippe Juvin MEP (FR) constituted a cornerstone of this package. In view of a still fragmented Single Market for goods, our Committee under the leadership of Zuzana Roithová MEP (CZ) streamlined the marketing of an array of products in a common legal framework to facilitate the screening of markets and to better protect consumers and professionals from unsafe products. Simultaneously, we worked towards harmonised rules on Consumer Product Safety and Market Surveillance with a formal conclusion still pending. In support of President Juncker's agenda for creating a connected Digital Single Market and generating 250 billion EUR of additional growth, Birgit Collin-Langen MEP (DE) secured the adoption of rules for e-invoicing in public procurement, and Marielle Gallo MEP (FR) for the future mutual recognition of electronic IDs and harmonised rules on electronic trust services.

## Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)

The adoption of a roadmap for the steel industry – the basis for Europe's key industrial value chains, such as automotive, construction, mechanical and electrical engineering – was significant. Under András Gyürk MEP (HU) several provisions were adopted to help this sector and enhance competitiveness by fostering innovation, creating growth and jobs.

Gunnar Hökmark MEP (SE) shadowed the Telecom Infrastructure Report endorsing all EPP Group priorities: targeted investments for broadband networks development and connectivity, and access to an infrastructure of public digital services. The Del Castillo report on the "Connected Continent" will be further discussed in 2015.

Together with the ENVI Committee, ITRE adopted under Herbert Reul MEP (DE), Chairman of the National Delegation (CDU) of the EPP Group in the EP, a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies. This report focuses on five issues: targets, coherence of policy instruments, energy security, fostering the competitiveness, acknowledging the differing capacity of Member States and the choice of policy instruments. The issue of nuclear energy was singled out in the safety of nuclear installations report, steered by Romana Jordan MEP (SL). It establishes a mechanism for EU-wide nuclear safety guidelines and strengthens the role and independence of national regulators. It also aims to increase transparency and on-site emergency preparedness and response.

Finally, the subsequent provisions for the implementation of the Horizon 2020 Programme were adopted. Thanks to the commitment of several EPP Group Members a set of 11 reports were issued focusing on co-financing research (so called "Joint Technology Initiatives") in the fields of SMEs, clean sky, innovative medicines, clinical trials, metrology, bio-based industries, fuel cells and hydrogen, and electronics.

## Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)

The Posting of Workers Directive, negotiated by Danuta Jazłowiecka MEP (PL) was significant. This Directive aims to reconcile the exercise of the freedom to provide cross-border services under Article 56 TFEU with appropriate protection of the rights of workers temporarily posted abroad. It contains mandatory rules to be applied in the case of posted workers in the host country and sets out employment and working conditions which must be complied to ensure the minimum protection of workers. The Directive aims at improving and reinforcing the implementation, application and enforcement of the Posting of Workers Directive (96/71/EC) including measures to prevent and sanction any abuse and circumvention of the applicable rules.

In concrete terms, the Directive:

- > sets out minimum measures for the implementation, transposition into national law and monitoring of the Directive;
- > improves access to information;
- > regulates mutual assistance between official bodies;
- > establishes rules for monitoring and checking;
- > regulates joint and several liability for subcontracting, and ensures that in subcontracting chains the direct subcontractor can be held liable by the posted worker with respect to any outstanding net remuneration in which Member States may provide for more-stringent liability rules under national law in regard to the scope and range of subcontracting liability;
- > establishes the right of employees to bring proceedings concerning compliance with the requirements of the Directive and remuneration, retrospective payments and accommodation and only impose administrative requirements and control measures necessary in order to ensure effective monitoring of compliance.

## Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN)

Our Group strives to achieve a sustainable infrastructure funding, better predictability, access conditions and improvement of competitiveness in all modes of transport. A key role was played in reinforcing a sustainable and environmental European transport legislation, reflected in the Fourth Railway Package managed by MEPs Mathieu Grosch (BE), Antonio Cancian (IT), Luis de Grandes Pascual (ES), Dominique Riquet (FR), Georges Bach (LU) and Markus Ferber (DE). We advocated for the competitiveness improvement of rail operators and keeping a balanced approach between economic and social issues for EU citizens, stakeholders of the EU rail industry, workers and passengers. Several crucial areas of the EU's aviation policies (Airports Package, Air Passenger Rights and the Single European Sky 2+, EASA/EAA, SESAR, and the Galileo/GNSS), eCall and Naiades II were also among TRAN's key projects. Under the EPP Group leadership, (Slots – Carlo Fidanza (IT), Noise – Michael Gahler (DE), Passenger rights – Georges Bach (LU), Single European Sky II+, EASA and Galileo – Marian Jean Marinescu (RO)), we were at the forefront of negotiations.

The accomplishment of the Single European Sky is a priority, including: fully observing the interconnections that exist between the SES 2+ package and the Airport Package and the legislative files and the deployment of their R&D technological tools (SESAR), and reinforcing passengers' welfare and rights and encouraging competitiveness and growth for the industry and service providers. The EPP Group insisted also that an EU External Aviation Policy should fully respect reciprocity and fair competition.

We also drove the ECall (Dieter-Lebrecht Koch (DE)) and NAIADES II (Corien Wortmann-Kool (NL)) initiatives. Thanks to e-Call, emergency services should be able to quickly find the exact location of an accident. NAIADES II comprises a Directive for technical requirements for inland waterway vessels and a Regulation on a Community-fleet capacity policy to enable more accessible and better funding for SMS.

#### Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

The EP achieved first reading agreements on the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, reductions of CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions from cars (negotiated by MEP Thomas Ulmer MEP (DE)) and the future sound level of motor vehicles, the access to genetic resources, the next set of European environmental economic accounts (coordinated by Elena Oana Antonescu MEP (RO) and the prolongation of the “Stop the clock Plus” agreement, giving the air industry a clearly limited transition period to establish a scheme for greenhouse gas emission trading (Rapporteur Peter Liese MEP (DE)). Further first reading EP positions were secured on animal as well as plant health, monitoring of carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport, shipments of waste, Medical Devices IVD (Rapporteur Peter Liese MEP (DE)), a future reduction of lightweight plastic bags as well as the technical implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to the UN framework Convention on Climate Change (negotiated by Vladimir Urutchev (BG)). The EP also managed to establish a first joint position on the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies in an initiative report based on joint ENVI and ITRE preparations. A further first reading agreement was reached on the Regulation on clinical trials which harmonises the rules in the EU, making specific provision for low-intervention trials, clarifying the role of ethics committees in the authorisation process, and detailing how to obtain informed consent from patients.

To end the increasing number of fraud related food scandals, the EP adopted its position on the report on “the food crisis, fraud in the food chain and the control thereof” (managed by Esther de Lange MEP (NL)), and in the “electronic identification of bovine animals” (negotiated by Sophie Auconie MEP (FR)).



*l-r: **Herbert Reul** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the National Delegation (CDU) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and **Aldo Patriciello** MEP (EPP Group, Italy), voting in the ITRE Committee, September 2014*



*Esteban González Pons MEP (EPP Group, Spain), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and Chairman of the Working Group 'Legal and Home Affairs'*

## Standing Working Group 'Legal and Home Affairs'

Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI)

### **Ensuring an efficient justice system and eliminating barriers for cross border litigations**

Upon an EPP Group initiative, a Report by Tadeusz Zwiefka MEP (PL) addressed the 'Justice Scoreboard' to contribute to the development, quality, efficiency and independence of national judicial systems. A further Report by MEP Zwiefka on Jurisdiction and Recognition of Documents in Civil and Commercial Matters (Brussels I) paved the way to the Unified Patent. How so? The UPC (Unified Patent Court Agreement) Agreement can only enter into force on condition that the relationship between Brussels I and the new court has been regulated.

The European Account Preservation Order represents another success for the EPP Group (Rapporteur: Raffaele Baldassarre MEP (IT)). It provides a European instrument for the freezing of accounts across borders based on the same conditions, irrespective of the country where the competent court is located, hence reducing costs and delays for creditors seeking to obtain and enforce an account preservation order in cross-border situations.

The EPP Group has taken a proactive stance in the midterm review of the Stockholm Programme and thus played an important role in shaping the future of the JHA area.

### **Moving forward the Contract law project: The Common European Sales Law (CESL)**

The European Contract Law project is a key priority for the EPP Group. The CESL (Co-Rapporteur Klaus-Heiner Lehne MEP (DE)), an instrument with immense cross-border commercial potential that strengthens the Internal Market for consumers and businesses by offering more choice, was adopted

by the European Parliament (EP) in February 2014. It serves as a basis for any future negotiations and for the work the EP will undertake.

### **Better law-making and delegation of legislative powers**

The EPP Group is at the forefront in reducing unnecessary and disproportionate administrative burdens to improve the democratic legitimacy of the EU and the legal environment for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Our Group pushed for the 2003 Inter-institutional Agreement on Better Law-making to be renegotiated and revised to fit the new legal environment created by the Lisbon Treaty. The Report by Jozsef Szájer MEP (HU), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the EP, on the demarcation between delegated and implementing acts provides the EP and the Rapporteurs with clear criteria for Council negotiations.

### **Improving Intellectual Property Rights**

Marielle Gallo MEP (FR) successfully concluded negotiations on the new Directive on Collective Management of Copyright and Licensing of Musical Works to facilitate licensing of musical works for online use throughout Europe. Creators and artists will receive fair compensation and clear information on their revenues ensuring a positive impact in the Digital Market by facilitating the development of new cross border services.

### **Reforming Company law: Reducing administrative burdens and improving transparency**

The proposals on a Directive and Regulation on Audit, the Disclosure of Non-financial and Diversity Information by certain large companies and groups, and the Insolvency Regulation, have been adopted this year. They aim to create a harmonised and clear legal environment for businesses and they were predominantly negotiated by EPP Group Rapporteurs and Shadows: Klaus-Heiner Lehne MEP (DE), Tadeusz Zwiefka (PL), Sebastian Bodu MEP (RO) and Raffaella Baldassarre MEP (IT).

### **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)**

A Report on the mid-term review of the Stockholm Programme (Shadow Rapporteur: Véronique Mathieu MEP (FR), and EPP Group Coordinator in the LIBE Committee) was covered jointly by the LIBE, JURI and AFCO Committees. Cooperation ensured the best possible result, allowing for the agenda to be set for the new legislature.

### **Promoting citizens' privacy**

2014 was a fruitful year for fostering the protection and promotion of our citizens' privacy and data protection. The NSA revelations and the EU delay in updating its privacy rules regarding rapid technological development gave the EPP Group the opportunity to convince political forces to join efforts in achieving binding standards for personal data protection. This was achieved by the EPP Group Spokesman, Axel Voss MEP (DE) who strongly advocated for stronger safeguards for EU citizens privacy, more effective legal protection of EU citizens data while ensuring new rules do not constitute unnecessary burden to companies, in particular SMEs.

### **Providing security for EU citizens**

In 2014 the EPP Group continued its struggle for the fight against terrorism and organised crime. Police cooperation is crucial and through Augustin Díaz de Mera MEP (ES) the EPP Group called for rigorous European-level action by reinforcing the role of the responsible EU agency, Europol. Legislation has been initiated to give the agency the necessary tools to ensure the security of our citizens.

A Report on the Rules for the Surveillance of the External Sea Borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by FRONTEX was made possible by a European Court of Justice decision requiring the EP to be involved and the rules to become binding. Agreement balancing fundamental rights while saving lives and addressing border security concerns was reached due to the efforts of EPP Group Rapporteur Carlos Coelho MEP (PT).

### **Visa liberalisation and oversight**

EPP Group Rapporteur Mariya Gabriel MEP (BG), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the EP, worked on her Report establishing clear criteria for third country evaluation before Visa Liberalisation, and also successfully concluded her Report on the Azerbaijan Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements. EPP Group Rapporteur Renate Sommer MEP (DE) dealt with the Readmission Agreement with Turkey. Shadow Rapporteur Marian Jean Marinescu MEP (RO), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the EP, was involved in the swift adoption on Visa Liberalisation with the Republic of Moldova.

In the area of legal migration EPP Group Rapporteur Salvatore Iacolino MEP (IT) managed to conclude negotiations on conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer ensuring greater mobility of workers for international companies in the EU. Georgios Papanikolaou MEP (GR) worked as Shadow Rapporteur on the Directive on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Seasonal Workers and Anna Maria Corazza Bildt MEP (SE) was the Shadow Rapporteur on the

admission of third country nationals for the purposes of scientific research, studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service.

The EPP Group has been successful in drugs policy, developing European solutions for better safeguarding European citizens from new psychoactive substances. Two related Reports by EPP Rapporteurs Jacek Protasiewicz MEP (PL) and Teresa Jimenez-Becerril Barria MEP (ES) were adopted in plenary.

### **Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)**

#### **New legal and financial status of European political parties and foundations**

Following almost two years of intense debate and negotiations, the EP and Council adopted two regulations regarding the new legal and financial status of European political parties and their foundations. These regulations shall apply from 1 January 2017.

The first regulation, assessed by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (Report Marietta Giannakou MEP (GR)) provides legal status and capacity to and recognises European political parties and their foundations. Those wishing to benefit from European legal form must fulfil certain conditions of democratic representation and respect the values on which the Union is founded. European legal status will be recognised by an independent authority established in the EP tasked to verify that the conditions for obtaining European legal status be respected. The authority may also impose financial sanctions on European political parties and their foundations for infringements of the Regulation.

The second Regulation ensures the adaptation of funding rules to the Financial Regulation and was welcomed by the Budgetary Control Committee (Report Ingeborg Gräßle MEP (DE)).

### **Committee on Petitions (PETI)**

#### **Substantial revision of the administration of petitions**

An EP resolution adopted in March 2014 under EPP Group Rapporteur Jarosław Walesa MEP (PL) paved the way for a substantial revision of the administration of petitions. Due to the ever growing number of petitions (almost 3.000 in 2013), EPP Group Members have worked towards responding in a timely and responsible manner to citizens' concerns, related to their right of free movement within the Single Market, those regarding environmental law and combatting discrimination. They called for efficient and transparent investigations of petitions by generating a debate between the national authorities and European institutions.

MEP Walesa's resolution sought to raise the profile of PETI as a Committee of scrutiny, which can supervise the correct transposition and implementation of the European aquis and provide citizens with non-judicial remedies when their claims are justified. Members decided to build on the partnership between the PETI Committee and National Parliaments' petitions committees to allow for the best exchange of experience and practices and more systematic referral of petitions to the correct authority.

## Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)

### **Advancements on the path to gender equality**

In December 2013 the adoption of a resolution on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) by the plenary majority (EPP Group Shadow Rapporteur Mariya Gabriel MEP (BG)) was a ground breaking success for the EPP Group. The EP stated that the formulation and implementation of policies on SRHR and on sexual education in schools is a competence of the Member States, but the EU can contribute to the promotion of best practices. Our Group thus defended the principle of subsidiarity.

On the grounds of sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality, the EPP Group Shadow Rapporteur Anna Záborská MEP (SK), with the help of Angelika Niebler MEP (DE) compromised with S&D Rapporteur Mary Honeyball concerning the Nordic model and the criminalisation of the client, so a majority could adopt in plenary.

The Progress Report on Equality between Women and Men 2012 (Shadow Rapporteur Anne Delvaux MEP (BE)) marked a further success for the EPP Group.

Further Reports dealt with: Specific actions in the Common Fisheries Policy for Developing the Role of Women (Shadow Rapporteur Barbara Matera MEP (IT)), Undocumented women migrants in the EU (Shadow Rapporteur Barbara Matera MEP (IT)), and Combating violence against women (Shadow Rapporteur Teresa Jimenez-Becerril MEP (ES)).

## Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)

### **European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033**

(Rapporteur Marco Scurria MEP (IT))

The first initiative on European Capitals of Culture was developed in 1985 and has been awarded to more than 50 cities. The current framework will end in 2019. This initiative has been successful in regenerating cities, their image and boosting tourism, and should be continued. In his Report, Marco Scurria MEP (IT) asked to keep the European dimension as a unique and essential element of this Union action and argued in favour of the involvement of local civil society, and citizens' active participation. The governance should be based on a broad cross-party support. Furthermore, the title will be reserved to cities with a possibility to involve their surrounding regions.

### **Preparing for a Fully Converged Audiovisual World**

(Rapporteur Sabine Verheyen MEP (DE))

The progressive merger of traditional broadcast services and the internet offers consumers enhanced viewing possibilities: In her Report Sabine Verheyen MEP (DE) pointed out that convergence raises questions about consumer, youth and data protection, but also about safeguarding diversity, access and findability, regulatory framework and the dual nature of the media as a cultural and economic asset. The existing legal framework must be examined and, if necessary, adapted to the current reality of converged markets.



*Tadeusz Zwiefka MEP (EPP Group, Poland), EPP Group Coordinator in the Legal Affairs Committee of the European Parliament*



***Marian-Jean Marinescu MEP** (Romania), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and Chairman of the Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies'*

## Standing Working Group 'Budget and Structural Policies'

### Committee on Budgets (BUDG)

Following the adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 in December 2013, the BUDG Committee concentrated its efforts on the implementation of the new framework. An own-initiative report on the experiences drawn by the MFF negotiations and the outlook for the European Parliament (EP) on budgetary matters was adopted by a large majority in plenary, representing the closing legacy of the late MFF Rapporteur, Jean-Luc Dehaene MEP (FR).

The High Level Group on Own Resources, presided by Mario Monti MEP (IT), was established as part of the political agreement on the MFF 2014-2020. With a mandate to examine all aspects of the reform of the own resources system, it is set to deliver its first assessment at the end of 2014. The EPP Group attaches a great deal of importance to this process and participates actively through its representative Alain Lamassoure MEP (FR).

Regarding the yearly budget, the EPP Group is committed to finding a permanent solution to the recurrent problem of shortage of payments in the EU budget. In the EP's reading of the EU budget for 2015, the EPP Group and its BUDG Coordinator José Manuel Fernandes MEP (PT), was instrumental in promoting the view that all flexible means available in the new MFF Regulation, including the Contingency Margin, should be mobilised for this purpose.

### Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT)

Each year, the discharge procedure by the European Parliament ensures ex-post democratic oversight at political level regarding how the EU's annual budget has been used. The EPP Group was responsible for scrutinising the Commission's implementation of the budget for the financial year 2012. Markus Pieper MEP (DE) was the Parliament's discharge Rapporteur, steering the work through the Budget Control Committee and the plenary. In his report he called on the Commission to take direct responsibility for

agricultural and structural spending. He also called for a 'commitment by the Commission' to conduct its own random on-the-spot checks of the recipients of EU funds and national government departments. This requirement should be taken up by the new European Commissioners, the report demanded. Corresponding binding commitments would form part of the next discharge procedure, also led by an EPP Group Rapporteur, Inge Gräßle MEP (DE), who became the Chair of the Budgetary Control Committee after the EP elections.

In 2014 the EPP Group was responsible for other expenditure areas. The Agencies discharge reports were drafted by Petri Sarvamaa MEP (FI), whereas Paul Rübiger MEP (AT) acted as Rapporteur for the Joint Undertakings and Tamás Deutsch MEP (HU) was responsible for the discharge of the "other institutions" such as the Council and the European External Action Service.

In March 2014 Members of the Budget Control Committee undertook a fact-finding mission to the Czech Republic to study in depth the functioning of the management and control systems of the structural funds. Ingeborg Gräßle MEP (DE), Member of the Delegation, urged the Czech authorities to improve their public procurement act and adopt a civil service act in order to avoid future deficiencies and systemic errors.

### Committee on Regional Development (REGI)

The five regulations on cohesion policy (European Structural and Investment Funds - ESIF) for 2014-2020 entered into force on 1 January 2014. They comprise the European Union investment expenditure towards the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, providing for the important aspect of economic growth and job creation that will come through the regions of the EU. Their contents are now being translated into "Partnership Agreements" between the



EU and each of the Member States. The Regional Development Committee EPP Group Members, led by Coordinator Lambert van Nistelrooij MEP (NL), remained vigilant that the regulations guarantee a clear legal strategic framework and partnership of all levels of government, and ensure flexibility within the thematic concentration, e.g. towards research and innovation and the low carbon economy. They also provide for clear, measurable targets for accountability and results, and modify the concept of 'sustainable urban development'. Stronger innovation-driving cooperation via Smart Specialisation is additionally facilitated.

Another important legislative dossier dealt with the reform of the EU Solidarity Fund, an instrument created to respond to natural disaster situations and to express European solidarity towards affected regions. The agreement reached represents a success for the EPP Group as advance payments to the affected regions, technical assistance linked directly to project actions became eligible, the deadlines for the submission and implementation of projects by the Member States were extended, and a clear threshold for the eligibility of regional disasters was established.

The own-initiative report on local and regional consequences of the development of smart grids contains targets for 2030 for energy efficiency, renewable energies and greenhouse gas emissions. The report now refers to previous EPP Group led activities, in particular the report on the role of EU cohesion policy in implementing the new European energy policy.

## Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

After reaching political agreement on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 2013, the EP, acting for the first time as co-legislator, concluded a historic reform process with the final adoption of the corresponding 'delegated acts' in early 2014. To safeguard the interests of European farmers the EPP Group led by its Coordinator Albert Deß MEP (DE), rigorously analysed the impact of the delegation of powers to the European Commission. The Group accepted the proposed delegated acts because the Commission committed itself, through a binding Declaration, to a mandatory review of the implementation of the CAP "greening" requirements after the first year of application. Mairead McGuinness MEP (IE), EPP Group Shadow Rapporteur for direct payments, stressed it is essential that farmers are not overburdened with cumbersome rules and are not prevented from producing sufficient, safe and high quality food.

EU farmers received an important boost before the end of the previous Parliamentary term thanks to the work of Esther Herranz García MEP (ES) on EU agri-food promotion policy. Supported by the EPP Group, the Rapporteur reached agreement with the Council of Ministers on measures to increase sales of EU farm produce within the EU and abroad and to restore consumer confidence in the event of market disruptions. The EP also ensured that the new measures would extend to wines with a protected designation of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indication (PGI).

In the second half of 2014, EU farmers were hit by the severe consequences of the Russian import embargo on agricultural products. Czeslaw Siekierski MEP (PL), Chairman of the AGRI Committee, brought the matter to full Plenary pointing out that one-third of exports had disappeared overnight and that the fruit and vegetables, dairy and meat sectors had been particularly hard-hit. The EU is the most affected trading partner as 73% of the banned imports come from the EU. The EP urged the European Commission for aid for the affected farmers.

## Committee on Fisheries (PECH)

The primary legislative activity of the Fisheries Committee focused on the EMFF and on the bilateral agreement between the EU and Morocco. The EPP Group has played a central role in achieving both of these goals.

Firstly, in January 2014, agreement was reached on the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) setting out rules on the Structural Funds not yet adopted under the EU's multiannual financial framework (2014-2020). Alain Cadec MEP (FR), Rapporteur, played a key role in bringing this agreement to fruition. The EMFF encourages sustainable fishing and helps diversify coastal economies and finances projects that will stimulate coastal employment.

Secondly, Morocco and the EU concluded the four-year Fisheries Protocol. Gabriel Mato MEP (ES), Chair of the PECH Committee, was instrumental in achieving the final agreement and the vote in the EP was a resounding success for the EPP Group. Gabriel Mato MEP (ES) stated that the protocol represented an example of responsible international fisheries governance, optimistic that the EU's financial support would help build a sustainable future for Moroccan fisheries through targeted sectoral support. European vessels will be able to return to fishing in Moroccan waters after more than two years. The protocol is the second most important of its kind and belongs to a new generation of fisheries agreements, after the reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy.



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## External Policies, Committees and Delegations Service

## 4 External Policies, Committees and Delegations Service

The EPP Group Service for External Policies, Committees and Delegations aims to assist the design of the EU's external policies by promoting external action based on democracy and the rule of law, strengthening political relations with third countries, ensuring the effectiveness of the enlargement process, encouraging the spread of fundamental principles and human rights, promoting free trade and contributing to the eradication of poverty throughout the world.

## Standing Working Group 'Foreign Affairs'<sup>1</sup>

Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

### The Eastern Neighbourhood

The crises in Eastern Ukraine and relations with Russia were prioritised in 2014. Following the illegal annexation of Crimea and the invasion of eastern parts of Ukraine by Russian backed separatists and Russian military, the EPP Group supported several plenary resolutions to express our condemnation. The EPP Group supports the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. We call on Russia to respect and enforce the Minsk protocol and implement the Poroshenko Peace Plan. If Russia does not contribute to de-escalation the EPP Group supports the continuation and strengthening of targeted sanctions.

The EPP Group supports the AA/DCFTA between the EU and Ukraine and the parallel ratification in the Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament (EP) on 16 September 2014. The continuation of the autonomous trade preferences is an opportunity for Ukraine to take advantage of market access and allows the implementation of necessary reforms prior to Ukraine taking full benefit of the provisional application of the DCFTA, when it comes into force on 1 January 2016. The EPP Group outlines that no changes to the AA/DCFTA can and will be applied to the agreement.

The EPP Group welcomes the signing of the AA/DCFTAs with Moldova and Georgia and deplores the pressure exerted by Russia on both countries. The EP has also marked its consent for both AA/DCFTAs.

### Middle East

In 2014, the EPP Group demanded the EP to address the plight of religious and ethnic communities in Syria and Iraq. On 27 February the EP adopted a resolution on 'The Situation in Iraq', expressing concern regarding violence perpetrated against the civilian population, vulnerable groups and religious

communities. In a resolution adopted on 17 April on 'Syria: Situation of Certain Vulnerable Communities', the EP acknowledged the work of Father Frans Van der Lug who had lived in Syria for decades and refused to leave the besieged city of Homs; additionally attacks against Christians, Armenians and Kurds were condemned, and a call on parties involved to halt actions aimed at inciting inter-ethnic and inter-confessional conflict. In a resolution adopted on 18 September on 'The Situation in Iraq and Syria, and the Islamic State Offensive, Including the Persecution of Minorities', the EP condemned all forms of persecution, discrimination and intolerance based on religion and belief, and acts of violence against all religious communities, stressing the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right.

### Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought 2014

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought has been awarded each year since 1988 to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The 2014 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was awarded to Dr Denis Mukwege from Democratic Republic of Congo for his fight for protection especially of women. He founded and works at the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, where he treats victims of sexual violence who have sustained serious injuries. The war in the DRC is officially over, but the armed conflict continues in the eastern part of the country as do attacks against civilians, including gang rapes.

The EuroMaidan movement – one of the three finalists for 2014 Sakharov Prize represented by Mustafa Nayem, Ruslana Lyzhychko, Yelyzaveta Schepetylnykova and Tetiana Chornovol – was distinguished with a special mention by the EP during the award ceremony. The EPP Group recognises this movement as a voice for European values, freedom and human rights.

<sup>1</sup> As of 1 September 2014 the Standing Working Group Foreign Affairs was formally reconstituted from the Parliamentary Work Service to the External Policies: Committees Service



*Jacek Saryusz-Wolski MEP (EPP Group, Poland), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and Chairman of the Working Group 'Foreign Affairs'*

## Committee on International Trade (INTA)

Regarding international trade affairs, the EPP Group continued to support its traditional goal of enhancing a fair trade policy aimed at creating new opportunities for EU industry and citizens at a multilateral and bilateral level throughout 2014.

On 16 April 2014 the European Parliament voted on a crucial report – the **ISDS: Financial Responsibility linked to Investor-state Dispute Settlement Tribunals established by International Agreements to which the EU is Party**. The EPP Group (Rapporteur Paweł Zalewski MEP (PL)) has set up a framework to allow the EU to manage its financial responsibilities resulting from investor state dispute settlements (ISDS) – a legal mechanism whereby investors can take cases against states under certain conditions. After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty the EU has exclusive competence over foreign direct investment, taking responsibility for financial commitments resulting from lost civil cases. The core issue involved the right apportionment of the obligation to pay awards to an investor, i.e. when and under what conditions the EU pays the awarded sum, and when it is the obligation of the Member State concerned to do so.

The EPP Group found an acceptable solution, defending the unity of external representation to protect EU interests. It has tackled the issue of provisions related to the free transfer of capital and their compatibility with EU law and the level of investment protection granted to foreign investors in future EU agreements.

The EPP Group welcomes the adoption of the Regulation concerning the exercise of the Union's rights for the application and enforcement of international trade rules, without a specific request by the Commission case by case, as happens now. The procedure gives the Commission an effective and efficient tool for the enforcement of the union's rights under international

trade agreements in the field of goods and services. The Regulation is a major success for our Group which insisted on specifically referencing the services sector. It is not only an important leverage in international trade for the Commission, but also a positive example of defending EU interests in the world.

The reinforcement of economic and trade relations with the United States is a key objective of the EPP Group and is at the heart in negotiation the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). An ambitious, balanced and comprehensive agreement could bring significant gains in bilateral trade exchanges, through creating global trade rules (especially regarding the persisting stalemate of the Doha Round in the WTO agreement) and the adoption of joint commercial standards. A strong political commitment and willingness, supported by the EPP Group, can create the conditions for successful negotiations.

Due to the situation in Ukraine one of the most important dossiers in 2014 was the Autonomous Trade Preferences (ATP) – Rapporteur Paweł Zalewski MEP (PL) – in support of the Ukrainian economy. Due to urgency it was decided not to wait for the entry into force of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), part of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (AA), but to start the reduction or elimination of Union customs duties on goods originating in Ukraine immediately.

The EU granted immediate and unlimited preferences to 82.2% of Ukraine's exports. The remaining percentage was partially liberalised through tariff rate quotas (TRQs). To benefit from the unilateral preferences, Ukraine had to comply with EU rules of origin (RoO), establishing that the exported products originate from Ukraine, and to cooperate with the EU in order to prevent any risk of fraud. With these unilateral trade preferences in place, Ukrainian exporters were able to save EUR 250 million. Thanks to the initiative taken by the EPP Group the preferences were prolonged in October 2014 until the end of 2015.

## Committee on Development (DEVE)

2014 marked the adoption of two crucial Reports in the area of development cooperation policy, top priorities for the EPP Group:

1. **Report on the Role of Property Rights, Property Ownership and Wealth Creation in Eradicating Poverty and Fostering Sustainable Development in Developing Countries**, adopted by the EP on 12 March 2014, Shadow Rapporteur Gay Mitchell MEP (IE).

The total extra-legal and unregistered wealth is estimated at over 9.3 trillion USD, 93 times larger than the total foreign aid to developing countries in the past 30 years. Establishing legal property law systems and empowering people to govern over their own resources could thus be the greatest development story of the 21st century, but also the greatest challenge of all.

Recognised and registered property rights are a catalyst for economic growth, enhancing investment opportunities through access to capital and low-cost credit, using land as collateral. Secure tenure generates higher productivity and stimulates entrepreneurship through access at functional rental and sales markets, boosting commercial values through adequate registration of land holdings and SMEs.

While non-transparent, corrupt and inefficient land administration systems constitute a major bottleneck for entrepreneurship and SMEs, easily transferable land titles reduce the cost of accessing credit and increases the opportunities for gainful employment, contributing to innovation and technological advancement.

2. **Report on the EU 2013 Report on Policy Coherence for Development**, adopted by EP on 13 March 2014, Shadow Rapporteur Gay Mitchell MEP (IE).

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) has become a comprehensive policy-making tool preventing inconsistencies arising from policies pursued by the EU thus avoiding adverse repercussions for developing countries. The EP report focuses on: migration flow management, agricultural, trade and energy policies, including EU biofuel policy, which are likely to have adverse effects on developing countries, climate change policies and fisheries agreements.

The key proposals in this Report are as follows:

- > an arbitration system, to be operated by the President of the European Commission, who should have the task of deciding among conflicting policies on the basis of the commitments accepted by the Union with regard to PCD;
- > the important role which the European Parliament could play in the process of promoting PCD;
- > the need to establish an independent system within the Union to receive and formally process complaints by members of the public or communities affected by the Union's policies.

The draft Report on '**The EU and the Global Development Framework after 2015**' by Davor Ivo Stier MEP (HR) was adopted during the November II plenary session.

Following the UN special event on MDGs (September 2013) and the Reports on the post-2015 drafted by the UN High Level Panel and the UN Secretary-General, new framework negotiations have intensified, through the discussions of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Intergovernmental Expert Committee on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDEF). The Rapporteur would like to contribute to the definition of a coherent and consistent EU position, to be adopted by the Council in December 2014. Council conclusions should set out the EU principles and main lines of its negotiation strategy.

The Rapporteur is elaborating the INI report without knowing the content of the UN Secretary-General synthesis report, which will be the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations leading to the post-2015 Summit in September 2015. The post-2015 framework should be global in aspiration, coverage and universally applicable, considering different national contexts, and respecting national policies and priorities. Mutual accountability covering public, private, domestic and international financing should be at the core of the new international framework. The Rapporteur focuses on: poverty eradication and sustainable development, human rights, conflict prevention, post-conflict, peace-building and promotion of durable peace, climate change and disaster risk reduction, food security, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, land degradation, water and sanitation, health and education, the central role of women in the new development framework, inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work, private sector, civil society and local authorities.

## Interparliamentary Delegations

Due to the Parliamentary elections in 2014 the external missions of Interparliamentary Delegations and Assemblies concluded in March 2014. Moreover, given budgetary constraints, the Conference of Presidents took the decision to suspend external missions of Interparliamentary Delegations and Assemblies until the end of the year. 2014 also marked a period of turmoil and growing instability throughout the world, especially in the Southern and Eastern European Neighbourhoods.

Following the Eastern Neighbourhood Summit in Vilnius in November 2013, Ukraine has become the centre of international attention given the rapidly disintegrating and volatile situation. We witnessed the peaceful protests in Maïdan and elsewhere in the country; the illegal annexation of Crimea; the downing of the Malaysian Airlines flight over the Donbass region occupied by pro-Russians separatists; and finally the so-called ‘hybrid war’, causing thousands of civilian fatalities and destabilisation of the region. We faced an aggressive Russian policy and a deteriorating humanitarian situation. The prospect of a rapid solution to the conflict evaporated. Meanwhile Ukraine chooses to pursue its European aspirations: President Poroshenko was elected on 25 May in the first round with 54.7% of the votes; on 16 September the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) and the European Parliament simultaneously ratified the Association Agreement with an overwhelming majority. On 26 October parliamentary elections revealed the victory by a clear majority of pro-European forces.

Our Group reacted in a prompt and determined way in order to support pro-European and democratic forces in Ukraine. The EPP Group continuously alerted the international community to the danger of aggressive Russian policies. The 21st EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee meeting took place in Kiev in March and an Election Observation mission in May; our Members additionally organised several ad hoc missions:

- An EPP Delegation visited Ukraine in February when, after months of protests, the Ukrainian Parliament voted to strip President Yanukovitch of his mandate and install an interim government. The Delegation addressed Ukrainians with a message of hope and support. The Delegation also met with leaders of EPP sister parties, Vitali Klitschko and Arseniy Yatsenyuk, as well as with Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of imprisoned former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Especially moving was the visit to a Kiev hospital where MEPs spoke to the protestors who had been beaten and injured by the Ukrainian special police forces. Following the escalation, Joseph Daul MEP (FR), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament and EPP President, expressed condolences to the families of the victims of the violence in Ukraine and called for the murderous snipers, the Berkut, and the armed forces of the Ministry of the Interior to be removed from the streets.



*l-r: **Jerzy Buzek** MEP (EPP Group, Poland), Former President of the European Parliament, **Elmar Brok** MEP (Germany), EPP Group Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, **José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra** MEP (Spain), EPP Group Coordinator in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, **Jacek Saryusz-Wolski** MEP (EPP Group, Poland), addressing the Ukrainian public at the Maidan, Kiev, February 2014*



*l-r: **Cristian Dan Preda** MEP (EPP Group, Romania), **Elmar Brok** MEP (Germany), EPP Group Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, **Manfred Weber** MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, **Arseniy Yatsenyuk** (Prime Minister, Ukraine), **Sandra Kalniete** MEP (EPP Group, Latvia), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, **Joseph Daul** (France), President of the EPP Party, **Andrej Plenković** MEP (EPP Group, Croatia), **Jacek Saryusz-Wolski** MEP (Poland), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Ukraine, July 2014*

- An EPP mission led by Manfred Weber MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and Joseph Daul, EPP President, visited Ukraine in July 2014. The main topics of discussion centred on the conflict in the East, Russian involvement, the Association Agreement and early elections. Most interlocutors, including Prime Minister Yatsenuk, stressed the implication of Russia in the conflict and, directly or indirectly, in the crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17; he appealed to the EU to increase the pressure on Russia. The serious humanitarian crisis was also mentioned. The EPP Delegation underlined its support to Ukraine and stressed the need to end violence and to stop the flow of arms, military equipment and personnel entering from Russia. In consideration, Russia must respect border controls.
- In October 2014, the EPP Group deployed a Fact Finding Mission to Ukraine prior to the parliamentary elections. The objectives of the mission included: An analysis of the situation prior to the elections, in particular to assess the potential for a post-election pro-EU reformist coalition; the EPP Group's partnership prospects with the political parties; the humanitarian situation of the Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs); challenges for energy security (gas, coal); and to support the EPP affiliated and EPP like-minded parties on the eve of the elections.

The Delegation communicated several key messages:

- The importance of forming a stable, inclusive, united pro-EU reformist coalition after the elections, setting aside personal conflicts;
- The need to use the narrow 'window of opportunity' for reforms due to the elections, and to act decisively in accordance with the road map for reforms provided by the AA/DCFTA and its thorough implementation;
- The need to improve governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption as a precondition for popular support of the reforms and sustained involvement of European partners;
- The urgency and imperative that the possibly critical humanitarian situation of the 400.000 IDPs from the Crimea and Donbas regions be addressed;
- The readiness of the EU institutions to assist Ukraine in reaching a solution for immediate energy supply needs;
- The illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea must remain on the international agenda;
- The European Parliament will vote on the prolongation of the Autonomous Trade Preferences until 31 December 2015 (during the October Strasbourg Session);
- Euromaidan is a source for inspiration for many Europeans.

Regarding the other Eastern Partnership countries, our Members followed closely the political situation in Georgia and Moldova. So far, these two countries, together with Ukraine, concluded an Association Agreement with the European Union.

In March 2014 the 16th EU-Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee meeting was held in Tbilisi and the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee meeting was held in Chisinau. The main purpose of these meetings was to prepare for the Association Agreements with Georgia and the Republic of Moldova on 27 June. Each AA also provided for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

An EPP Group Fact Finding Mission to Moldova took place in November 2014 ahead of the legislative elections of 30 November. These elections were crucial in deciding the geopolitical orientation of the country. The pro-democratic camp secured a majority of seats in the parliament; the country thus will continue on its path towards Europe. The Members of the Delegation engaged in the campaign and met with approximately 800 Moldovans to whom they extolled the benefits of the Association Agreement. Delegation Members met with Vlad Filat, Chairman of PLDM (EPP Observer), Iurie Leanca, Prime Minister of RM, the most popular politician in the country, Dorin Recean, Minister of Internal Affairs, and Sabina Cerbu, Deputy Minister of Justice and Diplomats.

Regarding Enlargement, two important meetings took place in March in the Western Balkans: the 8th EU-Montenegro SAPC meeting in Podgorica and the 16th EP-Bosnia and Herzegovina Interparliamentary meeting.

Our Members observed that there have been important regional developments that keep the integration process on track. Serbia has opened negotiations and began the Chapter screening process. Albania received candidate country status in June 2014 in recognition of its integration efforts. Montenegro should be encouraged in the accession negotiations and to continue the reform process.

Nevertheless, there are also some worrying trends, such as the increasing problems regarding the functioning of institutions in several countries. Recent boycotts of the parliaments in Albania and Macedonia together with a problematic situation following the elections in Kosovo raised serious concerns. Our Members used the opportunity of meeting with their counterparts to make clear that the integration process requires a general consensus involving all elements of the political spectrum, together with functioning instructions.

Regarding Turkey, the 74th EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting took place in April 2014 and the 75th JPC took place in November 2014, both in Brussels. At the 74th JPC, Ria Oomen-Ruijten MEP (NL), the EP Rapporteur on Turkey, expressed her disenchantment with the latest developments in Turkey and noted that in the last meetings of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and in the Plenary, where the EP resolution was debated, the general atmosphere was very negative; many MEPs who had always been friends of Turkey were taken by surprise by the latest moves of the Turkish Government. Ria Oomen-Ruijten underlined that Turkey did not necessarily need the opening of Chapters 23 and 24 in order to advance reforms in these areas as the Copenhagen criteria remain the main point of reference. In response several Members of the Turkish JPC Delegation regretted that

double standards existed regarding democracy in Turkey and other countries. Participants additionally denounced a crisis in the Turkish Government's value system.

In August 2014 Recep Tayyip Erdogan was elected President with nearly 52% of the votes amid a low turnout.

Regarding the Southern Neighbourhood, our Members continued to follow closely developments in the region. Most worrying was the emergence of the "Islamic State" across Syria and Iraq. A number of important Delegation meetings occurred throughout 2014. The 14th Tunisia-EP Interparliamentary meeting took place in Brussels in February. EPP Members congratulated both Tunisian MPs and the Tunisian Government on the adoption of the new constitution, describing it as a 'historic moment' and a 'major step' towards establishing the rule of law in Tunisia. EPP Members also participated in an Election Observation Mission to Egypt in May.

Regarding the Arab Peninsula, the 3rd EP-Qatar Interparliamentary meeting took place in Doha and the 7th EP-Kuwait Interparliamentary meeting took place in Kuwait City in March. EPP Members underlined that both visits confirmed good cooperation with their counterpart bodies (the Qatar Advisory Council and Kuwait National Assembly), as well as engagement in dialogue with civil society and human rights organisations. During its visit to Kuwait City, the Delegation strongly reinforced its cooperation with the National Assembly (Majlis al-Umma), with Kuwaiti Government officials and representatives from various sectors of Kuwaiti society.

Regarding North America, the 75th EU-US Interparliamentary Meeting and Transatlantic Legislator's Dialogue (TLD) meeting took place in March in Washington DC.

The Delegation focused on the TTIP negotiations, energy security & trade, cyber security & data protection, and on foreign & security policy. Alongside

the official sessions, a number of events were hosted during the two-day visit: Elmar Brok MEP (DE), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the European Parliament, provided first-hand insights into Russia's strategy and policy towards Ukraine and Crimea. He also addressed the ways in which the US and EU can cooperate to contain and de-escalate the most dangerous situation on the European continent since the end of the Cold War.

Regarding Latin and Central America, the 7th Ordinary Plenary Session of the EUROLAT American Parliamentary Assembly took place in Athens in March. EPP Members highlighted the fruitful cooperation and the remarkable work of the Assembly over the past years. The Plenary adopted an urgency Resolution on Femicide and the four Standing Parliamentary Committees debated draft motions for resolutions and working documents covering topics of the political bilateral agenda.

The 17th meeting of the EU-Mexico JPC took place in Strasbourg in April. EPP Members focused on the 'Pacto por Mexico', a cross-party alliance, focusing on Mexico's general interests. Members also took stock of the state of play and prospects for the modernisation of the Global Agreement and the legal framework between Mexico and the EU. At the Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting the two parties adopted a Joint Declaration whereby the European component congratulated its counterpart on their efforts to combat organised crime, corruption and insecurity.

The 19th meeting of the EU-Chile Joint Parliamentary Committee took place in January 2014. Both parties stressed the need to modernise the EU-Chile Association Agreement in the fields of trade, SMEs, corporate social responsibility, energy and climate change. They also welcomed the successful bilateral dialogue on human rights and democracy and the signs of economic recovery in the EU.



*l-r: Michael Gabler MEP (EPP Group, Germany), Andrzej Grzyb MEP, Vice-Chairman of the Polish Delegation (Polish People's Party) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Iurie Leanca, Prime Minister Republic of Moldova, Sandra Kalniete MEP (EPP Group, Latvia), Vice-Chairwoman of EPP Group in the European Parliament Jaromír Štětina MEP (EPP Group, Czech Republic), Moldova, November 2014*



In relation to Asia, 2014 was an important electoral year for India, Indonesia and Afghanistan. As well as presidential elections in Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is to withdraw from the country after more than 10 years of presence.

Numerous Delegation meetings were held, notably with the ASEAN countries. Of the ten ASEAN Members, seven partnership and cooperation agreements were negotiated with Europe, two of which have recently been signed; four free-trade areas have been established - with Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand, although these have been momentarily put on hold. It was further noted during the ASEAN Delegation meeting that 2015 would be a significant year for the ASEAN region for a number of reasons: the ASEAN single market would be established, comprising of some 600 million consumers and a fast-growing middle class, and the first, hopefully democratic, elections will be held in Myanmar.

As for China, while tensions with Europe concerning the solar panel issue were successfully settled, on the internal scene mass protests erupted in Hong Kong in September. Activists protested against the proposed electoral reform announced by the China's Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC), claiming that this reform would hamper the development of democracy in Hong Kong.

Concerning Africa and the ACP countries, the 27th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly took place in Strasbourg in March 2014. The EPP Group continued to play a leading role by securing a number and successes in the adoption of reports and resolutions on such topics as terrorism and the customs union. The Members also raised the question of controversial laws punishing homosexuality adopted by Nigeria and Uganda. Gay Mitchell MEP (IE), EPP Group Coordinator in the Development Committee of the European Parliament, made it clear that "the EPP Group will strongly oppose the death penalty, the ultimate breach in human rights".... no EU state may

have the death penalty nor accept severe prison sentences for sexual activities among consenting adults. The EU does sometimes try to export its culture from Europe to the developing world and ACP MPs have a point when they claim this. However, in the area of the death penalty, the EU treats all countries similarly. If, New Zealand or Norway introduced a law like this we would do exactly the same... it is not only alarming that Uganda or Nigeria are passing such laws, what is alarming is that other ACP countries support such measures. This is unacceptable and we will not be "silent", he stated.

In December 2013, we witnessed the outbreak of the most widespread epidemic of the Ebola virus disease in history, originating in Guinea before spreading to Liberia and Sierra Leone. By November 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) and respective governments had reported a total of 15,145 suspected cases and 5,741 deaths. However, other sources warned that the true figures might be three times as high, as many cases have not been reported.



*l-r: Gay Mitchell MEP (Ireland) EPP Group Coordinator in the Development Committee of the European Parliament, Hans Peter Mayer MEP (EPP Group, Germany), Mariya Gabriel MEP (EPP Group, Bulgaria), Michael Gahler MEP (EPP Group, Germany), Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Pan-African Parliament, 27th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Strasbourg, March 2014*



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## National Parliaments Service

# 5 National Parliaments Service

In 2014, the EPP Group's activities regarding Relations with National Parliaments focused on two major aspects: in the framework of the European elections meetings were organised to exchange views with the EPP candidate to lead the Presidency of the European Commission; and after the elections to re-launch the activities for the period 2014-2019.

### The Group organised the following activities in 2014

#### 20th Summit of Chairmen of EPP Parliamentary Groups in the National Parliaments of the EU and the European Parliament, Brussels, 7 April 2014

The 20th Summit in the European Parliament, Brussels, brought together the Chairmen of EPP parliamentary groups in the National Parliaments of the EU; they underlined their firm support for Jean-Claude Juncker to become President of the European Commission. The national and European parliamentarians and lead candidates on the EPP lists for the European elections also adopted a declaration which outlined the importance of a strong Europe in which all citizens will be able to look to the future with confidence. The meeting focused on the European elections and the EPP's priorities for a better EU; the event was attended by the current President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, who gave an overview of his term in office. The lead candidates on the lists for the European elections had a discussion with Jean-Claude Juncker, *Spitzenkandidat* for the EPP. David McAllister, CDU lead candidate (*Spitzenkandidat*), Germany; Marianne Thyssen, lead candidate CD&V, Belgium; Valdis Dombrovskis, former Prime Minister of Latvia, lead candidate Vienotība, Latvia; Alain Lamassoure, lead candidate UMP, Ile de France - France; Danuta Hübner, lead candidate Platforma Obywatelska, Warsaw, Poland; Tomislav Dontchev, lead candidate GERB, Bulgaria; Theodor Stolojan, lead candidate PDL, Romania - presented their political programmes and outlined the challenges they are facing in their

respective Member States. The European and national parliamentarians also discussed the challenges facing the Greek EU Presidency.

The President of the European People's Party (EPP) and Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Joseph Daul MEP (FR), underlined the EPP political family's priorities: "The EPP's policy is clear: to continue the work we have already started; firstly to lead Europe out of the 'heightened' crisis, and then to further deepen European integration. We need to return to real growth, the type of growth which will create jobs."

The parliamentarians stressed that "Jean-Claude Juncker is the best person to achieve this; he has immense European experience, a spirit of solidarity and an ambitious programme oriented towards the social market economy, financial stability, modernisation and economic progress."

Jean-Claude Juncker highlighted his priorities: "I am campaigning for a strong Europe. We are the party that has and will continue to lead Europe out of the crisis and put Europe firmly back on the path to growth, jobs and stability. I am your candidate and I count on your support in the coming months to win these elections so that together we can do what we do best: make Europe a better and more prosperous place for everyone."

Paulo Rangel MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the EP, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (PSD) of the EPP Group in the EP, emphasised that solidarity should go hand in hand with responsibility: "Our political family, has been the most positive, consistent, decisive and effective Party. We have endorsed a strict policy, advocating European unity by requiring national and European solidarity without fail."



**20th Summit of Chairmen of EPP Parliamentary Groups in the National Parliaments of the EU and the European Parliament  
Brussels, 7 April 2014**

*l-r: **Martin Kamp**, Secretary-General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, **Jean-Claude Juncker** (LU) Spitzenkandidat for the EPP, **Paulo Rangel** MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (PSD) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, **Konstantinos Moussouroulis** MP (EL), Vice-President of the European Affairs Committee, **Marianne Thyssen** MEP (BE), lead candidate CD&V, and **Danuta Maria Hübner** MEP (PL), Chairwoman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament*

## 21st Summit of the Chairmen of the EPP Parliamentary Groups in the EU, Brussels, 17 November 2014

The 21st Summit in the European Parliament, Brussels, brought together the Chairmen of EPP parliamentary groups of the National Parliaments in the EU and many other important guests. It was the first Summit to take place in the new legislature, under the Vice-Presidency of Esther de Lange MEP (NL), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments. There was a high attendance with more than 26 MPs from 16 Member States. The Summit was opened by Manfred Weber MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the EP and co-chaired by Elena Centemero MP, FI, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Italy, and Paolo Alli MP, NCD, Member of the European Affairs Committee, Camera dei Deputati, Italy. The guest speakers included, Danuta Maria Hübner MEP (PL), Chair in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, EP Co-Chair at the COSAC, and Corien Wortmann-Kool (NL), Vice-President of the European People's Party.

For first time in the history of the Summits, a member of another political party was invited to express and share his views on the relations with the National Parliaments: Frans Timmermans (S&D) spoke in his role as First Vice-President of the European Commission for Better Regulation, inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. "It is healthy to "think outside the box" of our own political family. We, the EPP and the S&D, share a sense of urgency when it comes to restoring confidence in European cooperation," noted Esther de Lange MEP (NL). A working lunch was organised with the participation of the Vice-Presidents and Commissioners from the EPP political family: Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner responsible for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner responsible for Jobs, Growth,

Investment and Competitiveness, Miguel Arias Cañete, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports and Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. The second part of the meeting focused on "Growth, Competitiveness, Employment", and was introduced by Jyrki Katainen, European Commission Vice-President; interventions were made by Hans-Peter Friedrich MP, Deputy Chairman of the CDU/CSU-Group, Bundestag, Germany, Christian Jacob MP, Chairman of the UMP parliamentary group, National Assembly, France, Daniel Neville TD, Chairman of the Fine Gael parliamentary party, Ireland, Marek Rocki MP, Chairman of the Civic Platform Group in the Polish Senate and Luis Montenegro MP, Chairman of the PSD parliamentary group, Portugal.

Esther de Lange MEP (NL), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, emphasised that "growth and jobs are "big challenges" that require our immediate attention. The working program of the EPP Group adopted in Albufeira lays the foundation for our work. But we cannot do this on our own. The European Parliament and National Parliaments will need to work hand-in-hand to deliver growth and jobs for our citizens".

A Final Declaration was adopted. It focused on five points: Employment, legislative framework, competitiveness, innovation, and investment.



**21st Summit of the Chairmen of the EPP Parliamentary Groups in the EU  
Brussels, 17 November 2014**

*l-r: Manfred Weber MEP (DE), Chairmen of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Esther de Lange MEP (NL), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness*



**21st Summit of the Chairmen of the EPP Parliamentary Groups in the EU  
Brussels, 17 November 2014**

*EPP Group MEPs Esther de Lange (NL), Othmar Karas (AT), and Sofia Ribeiro (PT) with Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, and National Parliamentarians*

## EPP EU Affairs Networks

The 11th Network Meeting of EPP National Parliamentarians responsible for European Affairs and EPP Group Members of the European Parliament, Brussels, 4, February 2014

Paulo Rangel MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, chaired the meeting of the Network of National Parliamentarians charged with European Affairs and Members of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, in the presence of the former Prime Minister of Latvia, Valdis Dombrovskis (an EPP candidate for the post of European Commission President).

“I believe that the new procedure by which the Commission President is elected by the EP will strengthen the Commission’s legitimacy and political role and will make the European elections more important by linking the voters’ choice to the European Parliament and more directly to the election of the Commission President,” stated Vice-Chairman Paulo Rangel. Valdis Dombrovskis added: “The new role of the European Parliament in the election of the European Commission President is meant to reinforce the ties between the citizens’ democratic vote and Europe’s leadership.” The Chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee in the European Parliament, Carlo Casini MEP (IT), concluded: “The Treaty provides two clear pillars: the European Parliament is the representative of European citizens and the Council is the representative of the Member State governments, themselves democratically accountable to their National Parliaments and citizens. Keeping this in mind, we must strive to make the Union work with the tools available, particularly through the European political parties.”

The 12th Network Meeting of EPP National Parliamentarians responsible for European Affairs and EPP Group Members of the European Parliament, Brussels, 13 October 2014

On Monday 13 October, 2014, the EPP EU Affairs Network brought together members of National Parliaments and the European Parliament. This first meeting after the European elections was co-chaired by Manfred Weber MEP (DE), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and our new Vice-Chair responsible for the Relations with National Parliament, Esther de Lange. At the working lunch the guest speaker, Francis Delpérée, Member of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, put forward several proposals for closer cooperation between National Parliaments and the European Parliament. Mr Delpérée suggested that perhaps a combined membership of the national Parliament and European Parliament could be considered on a part-time basis. He also proposed to organise meetings between specialists from different parliaments.

Manfred Weber MEP (DE), Chairman of the EPP Group in the EP, highlighted the importance and the need to work together with the National Parliaments. He stated that the years ahead will be very challenging for the EP, and a firm partnership with the S&D will be necessary in order to form a stable majority in the EP. Esther de Lange MEP (NL) underlined the need to politicise our speeches at both European and national level - “Just explaining how Europe works is not enough,” she said.

The meeting welcomed calls for closer cooperation at various levels from MPs Hans-Peter Friedrich (CDU/CSU, DE), Borbely Laszlo (UDMR, HU) and Raymond Knops (CDA, NL), Paolo Tancredi (NCD, IT), Jean Bizet (UMP, FR), Nicos Tornaritis (DR, CY), Elena Centemero (FI, IT), Anthony Lawlor (FG, EI), Nuno Magalhaes (PS, PT).



**The 11th Network Meeting of EPP National Parliamentarians responsible for European Affairs and EPP Group Members of the European Parliament, Brussels, 4, February 2014**

*l-r: António Rodrigues MP (PT), Vice-President of the PSD Parliamentary Group, Carlo Casini MEP (IT), Chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, Paulo Rangel MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (PSD) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Miguel Seabra, EPP Group Secretariat, Konstantinos Moussouroulis MP (EL), Vice-President of the European Affairs Committee, Susanna Haby MP (SE), Member of the Committee on Europeans Affairs*



**The 12th Network Meeting of EPP National Parliamentarians responsible for European Affairs and EPP Group Members of the European Parliament, Brussels, 13 October 2014**

*r-l: Manfred Weber MEP (DE), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Esther de Lange MEP (NL), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, Beatrice Scarascia Mugnozza, Head of the Service in charge of Relations with National Parliaments*

## EPP Young Members Network

The ‘Young Members Network’, is made up of young Members of the European Parliament and held its first meeting of the new legislature on 7 October. This meeting focused on the presenting of upcoming activities to all new young MEPs. Pablo Zalba Bidegáin MEP (ES) (Coordinator) and Lara Comi MEP (IT), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the EP (Vice-Coordinator), discussed the importance of the Network and opened a discussion on Youth Policies. The next meeting of the Young Members Network and the Annual Meeting will prospectively take place at the beginning 2015.

## EPP and Inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU

In 2014, various EP Committees organised joint committee meetings on specific issues. Due to the Europeans elections the activities of the European Parliament ended in April. Three meetings were organised: A Parliamentary Forum “EU Parliaments in Global Governance”; “Preventing Violence against Women – A Challenge for All” and the “Future Priorities in the field of Civil Liberties”. Since the new legislature, an ICM was organised on the “The EU External Agenda and the Western Balkans”.

## European Parliamentary Week on the European Semester

- ‘European Semester’ and the Conference on Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG) (20-22 January 2014)

Members of the EPP Group and National Parliamentarians from the EPP family met to discuss the economic governance of the European Union within the European Parliamentary Week, which included the ‘European Semester’ cycle for 2013 and 2014. This European Semester also included the Conference on Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and

Governance (TSCG), which was co-organised by the EP and the Hellenic Parliament in Brussels. The Conference combined a number of plenary sessions with parallel committee meetings with the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee of the EP, the Budget Committee of the EP and the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the EP.

The EPP Group organised a preparatory meeting during this event where Paulo Rangel MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the EP, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (PSD) of the EPP Group in the EP, called for strengthening the role of parliamentary scrutiny, both at European and national level. Elmar Brok MEP (DE), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the EP and EP Sherpa for the negotiations on a deeper EMU, called for negotiations on a deeper economic and monetary union, and underlined that good cooperation is needed to ensure that each Member State is responsible and capable of carrying out its tasks. Othmar Karas MEP (AT), Vice-President of the European Parliament, expressed the wish to lay the foundations for further enhanced cooperation.



**‘European Semester’ and the Conference on Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG)  
20-22 January 2014**

*l-r: Vangelis Meimarakis MP (EL), Speaker of the Greek Parliament, Beatrice Scarascia Mugnozza, Head of the Service in charge of Relations with National Parliaments, Paulo Rangel MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Relations with National Parliaments, Head of the Portuguese Delegation (PSD) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; Kai Wynands, Head of the Working Group ‘Economy and Environment’, Elmar Brok MEP (DE), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, and European Parliament Sherpa for the negotiations on a deeper EMU*

- Conference of Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG) (Rome, Italy, 29-30 September 2014)

The third Conference of Article 13 of the “Fiscal Compact” was organised by the Italian Parliament and took place from 29-30 September in Rome. MEPs and National Parliamentarians from across the EU tackled a wide range of economic issues, from the reduction of inequalities to the coordination of tax policies. A Delegation of six EPP Group MEPs attended the conference: Danuta Hübner (PL), Chair of the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament Burkhard Balz (DE), Danuta Jazłowiecka (PL), Othmar Karas (AT), Alain Lamassoure (FR) and Esther de Lange (NL).

**Interparliamentary Conference on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Defence and Security Policy (CSDP)**

- Athens, Greece (3-4 April 2014)

MEPs and National Parliamentarians met in Athens and expressed their deep concern about the Ukrainian crisis and the conflict in Syria. Furthermore, they welcomed the adoption of the Egyptian Constitution but expressed concern at the credibility of Egypt’s democratic transition.

- Rome, Italy From (5-7 November 2014)

MEPs and National Parliamentarians met in Rome for the first interparliamentary conference on foreign and security policy after the European elections in May. The debates focused on the crises at EU borders, the priorities of EU foreign and defence policies and the prospects of European defence. Keynote speakers included Federica Mogherini,

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, and Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni. The 16-strong European Parliament Delegation was chaired by Elmar Brok MEP (DE), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the EP.

**Publications**

The EPP Group provides information on EPP Group activities regarding relations with National Parliaments. In addition to the dedicated website, press releases and newsletters are published on a regular basis as well as two brochures on the Summit of the Chairmen of EPP Parliamentary Groups. At the beginning of this new legislature, the EPP Group published a pamphlet on the activities of the Service providing the Members with information on the meetings organised within the Group and the Parliament.



## Mediterranean Policy and Intercultural Activities Service

# 6 Mediterranean Policy and Intercultural Activities Service

## Mediterranean Policy

In 2014 EPP Group confirmed the Mediterranean region as a political priority and continued its actions for strengthening relations with the political partners of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

### EPP Group Working Group on the Mediterranean

The Working Group met monthly under the Chairmanship of Vito Bonsignore MEP (IT), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED, and Mariya Gabriel MEP (BG), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED, following the European elections.

During the second semester the Working Group concluded the work assigned by the Seventh Legislature and elaborated on an innovative 2014-2019 EPP Group Mediterranean Policy strategy. Key objectives included: the institutional reform of the UfM and the Parliamentary Assembly; migrations and humanitarian emergencies; economic and social development; security, peace processes; and a more progressive EPP political network.

### Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

The Plenary Session of the PA-UfM took place in Jordan on 8 and 9 February 2014. The EPP Group played a key and decisive role in the final drafting of the adopted recommendations that were ratified by the Bureau and adopted by PA-UfM. Themes included: the Arab transition countries; the fight against corruption; the financing of SMEs; micro-finance, artistic production and inclusive culture; the role of cultural institute; twining between universities; the sustainability of water supplies; energy production; waste management; the role of women in society and job creation.

### Exchange Program with Algeria 27-30 January 2014

The EPP Group, together with the EPP Party and the CES Foundation, organised an event with the RND Party and Members of Algerian civil society to facilitate mutual knowledge and a progressive approach to future initiatives. Fifteen Algerians met with Members of the EPP political family. Joseph Daul MEP (FR), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, President of the EPP Party, and Tokia Saïfi MEP (FR), Chair of the Political Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, were active participants in discussions which focused on energy, agriculture, fisheries and the fight against terrorism.





#### 4th EPP Group Dead Sea Conference 9 February 2014

The EPP Group together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation organised the 4th Dead Sea Conference on 9 February 2014. The conference took place in Jordan after the Plenary Session of the PA-UfM and was chaired by Joseph Daul MEP (FR), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament and President of the EPP Party, and by Atef Tarawneh MP, Chairman of the Jordan House of Representatives. Discussions centred on the future of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and policy, reform following the “Spring Revolution”, and political stability and security. The Group Chairman was accompanied by Group Members Tokia Saïfi MEP (FR), Maria Da Graça Carvalho MEP (PT), Santiago Fisas Aixela MEP (ES), Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines MEP (ES) and Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou MEP (GR). Participants expressed a commitment to continue to prioritise the Mediterranean region and foster cooperation.

#### EPP Group Seminar on Economic Cooperation 25 March 2014

The EPP Group, chaired by Jean Roatta MEP (FR), Member of the AP-UfM, hosted a meeting with Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Mario Aymerich, Director of the Environment and Regional Development, Projects Directorate, European Investment Bank, Irène Mingasson, European Commission (DG DEVCO), and Madeleine Majorenko, Head of the European Neighbourhood Policy Division in the EEAS, and with Mediterranean Ambassadors. Discussions were focused on projects promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean and on a European Investment Bank commitment to promote economic cooperation in the Mediterranean. Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines MEP (ES) stressed the need to improve the quantity and the quality of the EU investments in the region as Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is necessary for peace, stability and economic growth.

#### EUROMED Working Group, September 2014

*l-r: Antonio López-Istúriz White MEP (EPP Group, Spain), Mariya Gabriel MEP, Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Union and EUROMED, Paolo Licandro, EPP Group Deputy Secretary-General, Jorge Soutullo, EPP Group Secretariat*



#### EUROMED Working Group, March 2014

*l-r: Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines MEP (EPP Group, Spain), Mario Aymerich, Director of the Environment and Regional Development, Projects Directorate, European Investment Bank, and Jean Roatta MEP (EPP Group, France), Member of the AP-UfM*

#### Meeting with the Ambassadors to the EU from the 16 Member Countries of the Union for the Mediterranean 18 November 2014

Manfred Weber MEP (DE), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament and Mariya Gabriel MEP (BG), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED, hosted the EPP Group's bi-annual working lunch with the Ambassadors from the Mediterranean Countries. The Chairman confirmed his commitment to a revised and strong EU political investment in the region. If multilateralism is a necessary problem-solving approach, the EU should act on a bilateral basis in order to take into account the different problems affecting the Mediterranean Partners. Mariya Gabriel MEP, outlined the virtues of transforming practices to formulate a rejuvenated partnership. Mediterranean partners must stimulate a new EU Neighbourhood Policy by presenting credible national plans for reforms and future investments so that they can incite a renewed and solid EU commitment.

## Intercultural Dialogue

The Group's Intercultural Dialogue activities focused primarily on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. Designated meetings included the Annual Conference in Cracow and the 17th Annual Intercultural Dialogue, hosted in Brussels.

### Persecution of religious groups in the Middle East

Events in the wider Middle East impacted heavily on the 2014 Interreligious Dialogue activities. The EPP Group was at the forefront in placing the plight of Christians on the political agenda. Participants from Iraq, Syria and Egypt detailed events relating from verbal harassment to hanging, to the persecution of Christians and religious groups due to ethnic violence and geo-political conflict. Representatives sought support from MEPs to defend freedom of religion and basic human values.

Discussions additionally centred on religious pluralism as part of the EU's external policy and dedicated EU aid for refugees and displaced Christian populations. EPP Group politicians stressed that religious freedom is a universal right contributing to the flourishing of multi-religious societies. Therefore the international community should make every effort to ensure freedoms are respected.

### Photo Exhibition: Portrait of Indonesia 11 February 2014

The EPP Group organised in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Brussels a photo exhibition in the European Parliament. The "Portrait of Indonesia: Unity in Diversity" event presented images of Indonesia's rich and diverse cultural heritage taken by two European photographers, who were selected by the EPP Group and the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Brussels. The photographers visited cities across Indonesia (in Central Java, North Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, and Bali) for two weeks to capture the essence of the religiously rich and diverse country.



### Meeting with representatives from the Iraqi Chaldean Church

*l-r: György Hölvényi MEP (EPP Group, Hungary), Manfred Weber MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako (Iraq) and other Iraqi guests*



**Photo Exhibition: Portrait of Indonesia**

*l-r: Representatives, **Werner Langen** MEP (EPP Group, Germany), Photographer **Thierry Monasse** (France), Ambassador **Arif Havas Oegroseno** (Indonesia), **Jan Olbrycht** MEP (Poland), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*

**14th International Conference in Cracow  
26-27 September 2014**

The EPP Group co-organised the 14th Conference in cooperation with the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow. Religious leaders, academics and European politicians focused on the question “What Unites and Divides us in Europe?” In his opening remarks H.E. Cardinal Dr Stanislaw Dziwisz, Archbishop of Cracow, pointed out that European society risks forgetting its Christian heritage roots, thus challenging essential values. The life-giving soul of Europe rests in its Christian heritage; however the continent is more and more severed from its Christian soul. He emphasised the importance of European integration which has resulted in peace among Member States over the past 50 years. However there is still much to do to bridge the gap that divides European society.

Jan Olbrycht MEP, Chairman of the Polish Delegation (Civic Platform) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, underlined that European integration eases tension and promotes understanding, solidarity and peace amongst citizens. He emphasised that countries under democratic rule combine their efforts to cooperate in a peaceful manner; countries that share the same values are not in a state of war.

**The Conference was organised into three different Working Groups**

The first Working Group, conference entitled ‘Migration and its Consequences for Europe’, was hosted by Father Ziad Hilal SI, Director of the Social Centre in Homs (borders of Syria and Lebanon). He offered first-hand information on the conflict in the Middle East. Illustrated by photographs, he highlighted the importance of Christian NGOs in the provision of food, medicine, and education for thousands of people from all religious denominations each day. He warned that if Christianity in Syria and Iraq are lost very soon ancient Christian culture will disappear from the greater Middle East. In his closing remarks, Father Ziad

Hilal alluded to the sensitive issue of migration management in Europe. Jan Olbrycht MEP (PL) expressed his gratitude to Father Ziad Hilal SI. He underlined the various challenges in helping displaced people and the necessity to develop cooperation. Promoting integration, developing human rights and quelling persecution are issues that need immediate attention.

The second Working Group, conference entitled ‘Social Market Economy – An Answer to a Crisis?’- discussed cooperation between free partners with a limited degree of state regulation; the right place for private ownership; a stable and effective financial system; the rule of law; and the protection of workers’ rights.

The third Working Group, conference entitled “Youth – Between Uncertain Future and Stability”- discussed education, leisure activities and free time; unemployment, youth political engagement and governments’ commitments on youth. There was a general feeling that, despite prevailing difficulties, the energy and optimism of youth stands tall in the face of economic uncertainty.

Following the conference discussions participants attended Holy Mass, celebrated by H.E. Cardinal Dr Stanislaw Dziwisz in the Saint John II Sanctuary.

## Conference on the Economic Crisis, Mediterranean Migration and the Role of the Church - 18 November 2014

Manfred Weber MEP (DE), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, opened the Conference chaired by Mariya Gabriel MEP, Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED, on the Church's commitment to the economic crisis affecting European citizens, which is made worse by an extraordinary migratory flux from Southern Europe. Millions of displaced people from conflict regions join millions of European citizens living in poverty. In this context, the EPP Group aimed to recognise the strong and invaluable daily commitment of the Vatican and its Caritas, as well as the Jesuits and charity organisations all around Europe. Caritas, which is installed in large part of the world, serves millions of Europeans every day.

Manfred Weber MEP, EPP Group Chairman, warmly welcomed H.E. Mgr. Alain Paul Lebeauin, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union, as well as Jorge Nuño Mayer, Secretary-General of Caritas Europa, Jan De Volder, Representative of Sant'Egidio Community, Fr. Jean-Marie Carriere, from Jesuit Refuge Service in Europe and Myria Vassiliadou, EU Anti Trafficking Coordinator. Christos Stylianides, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, explained the increasing role of the EU in minimising the pain caused by the economic crisis and in the provision of humanitarian aid to third countries affected by severe crises. Mariya Gabriel MEP exposed the impact of the new migration flux on Europe and invoked a global and common approach to this phenomenon.

## 17th EPP Group Interreligious Dialogue 10-11 December 2014

On 10-11 December 2014, the EPP Group hosted its 17th Annual Interreligious Dialogue, the Conference entitled "Persecution of Religious Minorities in Conflict Regions". With the presence of representatives from crisis areas and from countries hosting displaced peoples, the EPP Group centred discussions on the humanitarian emergency and the continuous attack against religious minorities. Chaired by Jan Olbrycht MEP, Chairman of the Polish Delegation (Civic Platform) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Mariya Gabriel MEP (BG), Chairwoman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED, and by György Hölvényi MEP (HU), the meeting hosted representatives from Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Kurdistan, countries affected by persecutions and hosting displaced peoples.

Discussions focused on the deterioration in global religious freedom over the past two years. It was further noted, due to the threat posed by Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria, that the Christian minority in the region faced extermination. The importance of education and development as a way to prevent fear and manipulation among the population was underlined. The rise of the Caliphate (IS) and its quest for power and influence was highlighted; IS is attempting to eradicate remaining Christians in the Middle East. In responding to the growing persecution of Christians, Europe has a responsibility to support those at risk. Increased dialogue with Muslims as well as strengthening NGOs are key to securing the future of Christians in the Middle East.



### 17th EPP Group Interreligious Dialogue

*l-r: Peter Sefton-Williams, Editor-in-Chief of the Worldwide Religious Freedom Report 2014, UK, Jan Olbrycht MEP, Chairman of the Polish Delegation (Civic Platform) of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Mgr. Steven Mamza, Bishop of Yola, Nigeria, Manfred Weber MEP (Germany), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament and Paolo Licandro, EPP Group Deputy Secretary-General*

## Eastern Neighbourhood Policy and EU Enlargement

During the first 2014 semester, EPP Group Members convened monthly Working Group meetings on the Eastern Partnership, EURONEST and Enlargement led by Gunnar Hökmark MEP (SE), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament. Commissioner Stefan Füle, responsible for Enlargement and EU Neighbourhood Policy, was a frequent participant in these meetings.

Due to the Ukrainian crisis 2014 was significant as regards EU-Russia relations. After the overthrow of President Yanukovich Ukraine experienced several months of internal tensions. The situation was exacerbated by the Crimean annexation and the fomenting of unrest by rebel force in the Eastern part of the country.

### EPP Group fact finding mission to Georgia 26 April 2014

An EPP Group Delegation headed by Krzysztof Lisek MEP (PL) met both representatives of the Georgian government and leaders of the opposition. Discussions focused on the “selective justice” issue following the election loss of pro-Western modernisers.

### 4th EPP Group Conference on the Western Balkans: From Stabilisation to Accession 8 April 2014

The future of the countries of the Western Balkans regarding EU accession was the main focus of the 4th EPP Group Conference on the Western Balkans. The conference emphasised the progress and challenges regarding the accession procedure. The possibility of EU membership, it was noted, adds strong impetus to reform processes aimed to further democratisation and the improvement of life quality.

Opening the Conference, Joseph Daul MEP (FR), Chairman of the EPP Group in the EP, President of the EPP Party, underlined that the key to success in the Balkans is political and economic stability and good relations with neighbouring countries. A Candidate State or a state who wishes to be Candidate must take this into account. The Conference, chaired by Gunnar Hökmark MEP (SE), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, opened with Eduard Kukan MEP (SK), Chairman of the Delegation for Relations with the Balkans and Riccardo Migliori, former OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Chairman, and considered the political, social and economic, and opportunistic aspect of relations with the EU.

Participants Nebojša Stefanović, President of the National Assembly of Serbia, Vice-President of the Serbian Progressive Party, explained how Serbia is preparing for EU accession. Mladen Ivanić MP, Member of the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, President of the Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) and former Prime Minister of Republika Srpska and Senad Šepić MP, Vice-President of SDA and Director of Political Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina noted contemporary regional political progress and the will of Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the EU.

Mr Lulzim Basha, President of the Democratic Party of Albania, Mayor of Tirana, explained the evolution of politics in Albania and perspectives regarding EU accession. He underlined the necessity of a commitment from the European Commission to push the Albanian Government, led by the socialists, to fulfil all the EU required criteria with transparency.

EPP Group Members Marietta Giannakou MEP (GR), Doris Pack MEP (DE), Dubravka Šuica MEP (HR), Salvatore Tatarella MEP (IT), Alojz Peterle MEP (SL), Andrej Plenković MEP (HR) and Cristian Preda MEP (RO) were involved in the discussions. György Schöpflin MEP (HU) closed the meeting by requesting a common commitment on Balkan accession to secure the entire region and to present a new opportunity for growth with Europe.



### 4th EPP Group Conference on the Western Balkans: From Stabilisation to Accession

*Joseph Daul MEP (France), Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, centre, Gunnar Hökmark MEP (Sweden), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Chairman of the Working Group on EU Enlargement, Neighbourhood Policy and EURONEST, right, and Eduard Kukan MEP (EPP Group, Slovakia), Chairman of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo*

## EPP Group Regional Conference on the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region 30-31 January 2014

The EPP Group held its International Conference on the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region in order to offer support to a political project which fosters EU-Balkan integration. The EPP Group addressed the topic for the first time, grounding the initiative on a solid institutional base. This project concerns the Danube and the Baltic Sea Macro-Regions. The Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region covers four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and four non-EU Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) which are potential candidates for EU membership. Opening the Conference, Vito Bonsignore MEP (IT), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED, welcomed Senator Mario Mauro, Italian Minister for Defence and underlined the importance of the Macro-Regional strategy, stating that “the chance offered by this project is one of the steps for further developments of the EU-Balkans relations”.

Minister Mario Mauro remarked how the Macro-Region would bring greater prosperity and social development as well as providing a concrete opportunity for competitiveness and attractiveness for financial markets. Salvatore Tatarella MEP (IT), Member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety in the European Parliament alluded to the territorial cohesion aspect: “the Macro-Regional strategy should be an occasion to foster a sustainable and harmonic growth, reducing the gap between different geographic areas of the Union and enhancing the development of the area through cross-border co-operation”.

Despite 20 years of democratic reforms in the Western Balkans communist remnants remain, underlined Alojz Peterle MEP (SL), Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. Riccardo Migliori, former President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, argued that if Macro-Regions can be defined as ‘functional areas’ identified on the basis of specific projects “the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region shall be seen as an area full of historical and political meaning for the EU as a whole”. Given the fact that the European Union, besides being an economic union, is and shall be especially a political Union, the same perspective has to be applied to the Adriatic Sea area.



### EPP Group Regional Conference on the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region

*l-r: Raffaele Baldassarre MEP (EPP Group, Italy), Dr. Michele Emiliano, Mayor of Bari, Vito Bonsignore MEP, (EPP Group, Italy), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, responsible for Mediterranean Policy and EUROMED, Paolo Licandro, EPP Group Deputy Secretary-General*



## Press and Communications Service

# 7 Press and Communications Service

Informing media and communicating with stakeholders and citizens on EPP Group policies and actions in the European Parliament

The Press and Communications Service works on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the legislative initiatives undertaken and political objectives pursued by the EPP Group in the European Parliament are communicated effectively to citizens, the media, interested stakeholders and opinion leaders. To that end we provide written, oral, audiovisual, and social media information using an innovative combination of traditional communications methods and new media platforms. A team of Press Officers from across the Member States assist journalists and deliver news updates on European policies, procedures, laws and measures. Accurate, relevant and timely information is disseminated to both Brussels and Member State based journalists in all 24 official languages of the European Union so as to facilitate maximum media coverage of the EPP Group's activities in the European Parliament.

The EPP Group's Press and Communications Service works in close cooperation with the Brussels press corps to provide input on votes and debates at Parliament's Plenary Sessions, and the key legislative issues of importance to the EPP Group. At present there are over 900 journalists accredited to the EU institutions in Brussels; of these over 80 are accredited to the European Parliament with on average 100 using the Parliament Press Room during each plenary session in Strasbourg.

As the largest and most influential Group in the European Parliament we aim to ensure that citizens are at the heart of Europe. The EPP Group thus strives consistently to target and engage citizens in the understanding of EU policy and activity. To achieve this goal the Press and Communications Service comprises a number of specialised teams, including the Internet and Social Media Team; the EPP-TV and Meet Your MEP Teams; and the Publications Team who produce and distribute an array of material that helps citizens find out about the legislative process and how EU policy impacts on their daily lives.

Read below for a more detailed insight into how these concerted efforts served to guarantee the EPP Group's media presence in 2014.

### 2014 European elections: Communication and interaction

The 2014 European elections were different. Due to the enhanced role and power of the European Parliament under the Lisbon Treaty, citizens, for the first time, played a determining factor in the election of the European Commission President. The Press and Communications Service therefore intensified its efforts throughout 2014 in highlighting the role, political nature, achievements and priorities of the EPP Group in the European Parliament. We endeavoured to ensure that citizens were informed that the European Parliament is the only directly elected European institution, that EPP Group Members are the advocates of citizens' interests, and that the votes of individual citizens directly determine European governance. To this end, the Press and Communications Service engaged with contemporary channels of communication to develop a coherent information campaign centred on the core message: **'Believe in People'**. The campaign





Staff: EPP Group Press and Communications Service

focused on connecting EPP Group MEPs with European citizens, opening up a two-way dialogue to foster and maintain closer relationships through engagement on social media and a number of targeted online and printed publications. This interaction provided a forum whereby the significance and impact of the European Parliament was directly highlighted, as was the corresponding increased power of citizens. The campaign raised awareness and expanded the audience of the EPP Group as demonstrated by the higher number of visits on our website as well as an increase in traffic and engagement on social media.

The success of our communications campaign was evident as the EPP Group emerged victorious from the European elections, thus retaining its position as the most powerful political force in the European Parliament. Our efforts to close the gap between the EU and its citizens were further underlined by the election of Jean Claude Juncker – the EPP candidate – as President of the European Commission. The democratic vote of European citizens was thus respected.

To bring the EU closer to its citizens, the Press and Communications Service disseminated daily information regarding the activities and policy work of the EPP Group in the European Parliament. We ensured that our audience could follow proceedings in their newspapers and access information via TV, radio or online. Day-to-day news reactions on the most topical EPP Group issues were found in our press releases, while each Friday our ‘Highlights’ offered useful insights on what is hot and what is not in the European Parliament. Breaking news coverage was simultaneously provided via real-time social media feeds, EPP TV, the Group website, and our Instagram and Flickr photo channels.

The following presents an overview of the work carried out by the Press and Communications Service’s different units.

## Internet and Social Media

### Internet and Social Media Team In Campaign Mode

2014 was the year of the European elections, thus presenting an opportunity to connect with voters across the spectrum to hear their stories. As the leading European political Group in the European Parliament, our aim was not to run an election campaign but an information one. And we thought the best way of explaining how voters can influence policy was by asking voters to explain it themselves. So we asked for their stories and were delighted with the response.

### Putting people back at the heart of the European Union

The ‘**Believe in People**’ exercise was based around 52 articles written by European entrepreneurs, youth, teachers, doctors, pilots, MEPs and others, setting out how they benefitted from European legislation and their calls for improvement. These were both published and sourced online, reaching out through social media networks. This increased our engagement with both supporters and non-supporters, giving us valuable feedback.

Our online activities also generated offline engagement. Thirty bloggers participated in a dedicated meeting with key MEPs and EPP Heads of State and Government adopting the ‘**Believe in People**’ mantra at the EPP Party Congress in Dublin in March.

## The statistics

Visits to the Group website increased by 84% over the duration of the campaign, page views by 78%. The percentage of this traffic coming from Facebook increased by 372% and from Twitter by 243%. Our number of both followers and interactions on these platforms also swelled. The number of our MEPs interacting with followers on Twitter increased by over 30%.

By October 2014:

\*92.500 likes on Facebook

\*39.500 followers on Twitter

## Facebook: going global

2014 saw the launch of 10 global EPP Group Facebook pages. Attached to the main Facebook page, these local pages have allowed us to engage with our fans in their respective languages, share content more relevant to them in their respective countries, and facilitate direct contact with the MEPs they elected at home. Managed by teams from each of the Member States they represent, they have helped to make our Group more accessible to the public.

## Live coverage of key events

On 25 May 2014, the last day of the European elections, the Group used its network of staff in 27 Member States to gather and share information on the results of the elections in realtime. Using our Twitter account, we shared early information to those with less easy access to it.

In addition, reactions and supporting material (videos, photos) were compiled with key Tweets in a 'live-blog' on 'Storify' (Storify is a social network service that lets the user create stories or timelines using social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram), which was also published on our website.

## Hearings

Following the elections, European Parliament Hearings of the new Commissioners-Designate were also covered live on Twitter and published, with key reactions and analysis, on a 'Storify' published on our website. Photos were uploaded to Flickr within 20 minutes of the start of each Hearing. Statistics confirmed that the EPP Group was the most active on social media of all political groups on both occasions.

## Content

In 2014, we invested additional time and resources to providing news and information in a more easily-digestible format, with a greater emphasis on the visual and audiovisual.

This included producing infographics, short videos and making high-quality photos available on our website, Flickr and Instagram.

We also updated our website following the elections, gathering and publishing information on all our new MEPs and responding to queries.

## Platforms

In addition to our core channels, we launched our Flickr account in 2014 in an effort to share some of the great visual material we stock internally. We also started using Storify, not only for live coverage of key events, but also as a record of Q&A sessions with MEPs on Twitter, for example – such as the very successful #MyErasmus #AskEPP session during which Erasmus Rapporteur Doris Pack MEP (DE) answered 60 questions on the topic.

Core channels 2014:

**Website, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube**

Supporting channels:

**Flickr, Storify, Pinterest, Vine, Google+, LinkedIn**

## EPP TV

The EPP Group Press and Communications Service was the first to establish, in June 2007, its own European Parliament Web TV platform. The Group has a WebTV team with its own studio and a full-time camera woman and technician. EPP-TV communicates the latest news from inside the European Parliament and reports on EPP Group success stories, events and activities. Almost all of our videos are originally produced in English and then translated and dubbed or subtitled in German, French, Italian and Spanish. EPP-TV allows European citizens to better appreciate the work of their MEPs through live coverage, short reports, documentaries, interviews and on-the-spot reactions that are uploaded on the EPP Group website, and on our Youtube channel which has more than 700 subscribers.

EPP-TV also produces coverage on relevant news and topics that are being discussed in the Parliament, quickly uploading the videos onto 'The Newsmarket', an online video distribution platform that is accessible to media professionals. To date we have published more than 266 stories, and more than 1.500 assets have been downloaded by 360 media outlets spread across 60 countries.

On European Election Night (25 May 2014), EPP-TV broadcast live exit polls, graphic estimates, results, comments and statements from the European Parliament for six hours in five languages, with great success.

Follow the link to view a selection of our most topical videos from 2014:

**<http://www.eppgroup.eu/videos>**

## Information and Promotional Material

Responding to the ever increasing numbers coming to meet our MEPs in Brussels and Strasbourg involves ensuring that all visitors receive leaflets, brochures and supplementary material to inform and help them understand the day-to-day activities of the EPP Group. The quality and origin of the material we distribute is of utmost importance: the EPP Group therefore uses renewable material and European production for its promotional material. At present, over 85% of the items the Group distributes are sourced in Europe. Detailed certification that all material complies with employment and environmental directives is required from suppliers.

## Meet your MEP Programme

In 2010, the EPP Group Press and Communications Service launched the “Meet your MEP” Programme, the new version of the previous Special Visitors Programme.

Its purpose is to present EPP Group MEPs’ daily work and activities by inviting regional journalists, young people and, since 2013 in view of the upcoming European elections, also staffers of EPP Group sister parties and people with disabilities, to Brussels and to Strasbourg.

The “Meet your MEP” Programme has been an excellent way to give visitors in-depth knowledge on the policies of the EPP Group and on the events and happenings within the European Parliament.

Since its conception, nearly 14.000 visitors have met more than 75% of MEPs belonging to the EPP Group.

The success in the latest European Elections, confirming the EPP Group as the biggest political force in the European Parliament, is also based on the communication strategy of the EPP Group, of which the “Meet your MEP” Programme is of essential significance.

## European Parliament Open Days

The European Parliament opened its doors to the public on Sunday 4 May in Strasbourg, and Saturday 17 May in Brussels. The Open Days celebrates Europe Day (9 May), a symbol of peace and unity in Europe and the anniversary of the historical ‘Schuman Declaration’, the first official step in the foundation of the current European Union. The large numbers that flocked to the Parliament buildings – 14,000 and 18,000 visitors to each city respectively – testifies to the ongoing popularity of the event.

The EPP Group invests considerable time and energy into the Open Days as the occasions provide a unique opportunity to meet and personally engage with citizens, and for the public to discover our role and activity in the European Parliament in more detail. This year we placed a special emphasis on the importance of the European elections as the future direction of Europe lies more than ever before in the hands of the citizens. To present its achievements during the 2009-2014 Parliamentary Term and outline its priorities for 2014-2019, the EPP Group treated visitors to exhibitions, information and interactive stands. Additionally, a number of informal debates with a selection of MEPs were held.

## EPP Group Publications

The Publications Team coordinates, produces and manages an extensive publishing programme to bring EPP Group policies and activities closer to European citizens and targeted professional circles.

In support of our ‘**Believe in People**’ campaign for the European Elections in May we produced two brochures, made available in 23 languages, highlighting our achievements during the 7th Parliamentary Term (2009-2014) and identifying our priorities for the 8th Parliamentary Term (2014-2019).

Further publications in 2014 included a “*Handbook for Members*”, designed to provide a clear and coherent reference guide for the work of our MEPs a “*Vademecum of the Members of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*”, cataloguing all of our 219 Members’ contact details in Brussels and Strasbourg, social media profiles, nationality and Member State party affiliation; a revised “*Leaflet with Map of Europe*”, outlining the structure, priorities and political orientation of the EPP Group and an “*Annual Activity Report*”, summarising the activities and highlighting the political goals of the EPP Group in the European Parliament. The Publications Team additionally produced a number of publications covering the Group’s external meetings outside of Brussels and Strasbourg. Publications providing for an in-depth look into EPP Group positions on a range of broader issues that affect Europe were furthermore delivered throughout 2014. A single access point to ensure the accessibility, downloading and sharing of current and past publications is available on our website: [www.eppgroup.eu/publications](http://www.eppgroup.eu/publications)

To facilitate further access to EPP Group publications, a selection of EPP Group eBook publications to download for viewing were made available on the publications page of the Group website: [www.eppgroup.eu/publications](http://www.eppgroup.eu/publications) or directly, and more interactively, via our eBook display from the *Issuu* digital publishing platform: [issuu.com/eppgroup](http://issuu.com/eppgroup).

EPP Group publications are catalogued, indexed and archived to service and record our activities, thus making our publications available to scholars, students, visitors, researchers and the media.



## The European People's Party (EPP)

# 8 The European People's Party (EPP)

### About us

The European People's Party (EPP) is the political family of the centre-right, whose roots run deep in the history and civilisation of the European continent, and which has pioneered the European project from its inception. Tracing back its roots to Europe's Founding Fathers – **Robert Schuman**, **Alcide De Gasperi**, and **Konrad Adenauer** – the EPP is committed to a strong Europe based on a federal model that relies on the principle of subsidiarity.

Founded in 1976, the EPP is a party of values, based on the Christian view of mankind and the Christian Democratic concept of society. The EPP strives for a democratic, transparent and efficient Europe that is close to its citizens. Through the promotion of the social market economy, the EPP aspires to achieve a prosperous Europe. The EPP is the largest political party in Europe, currently with 78 member parties from 39 countries, 16 Heads of State and Government (11 EU and 5 non-EU), 14 European Commissioners, and the largest group in the European Parliament with 219 members.

The EPP is governed under the 2003 "EU Regulation on political parties at European level and the rules regarding their funding." In late 2007, this Regulation was revised to allow all European-level political parties to campaign for the European Parliament elections. During the **2014 European elections**, the EPP conducted, in close cooperation with its national member parties, its first Europe-wide campaign, which was successfully spearheaded by Jean-Claude Juncker as the EPP's candidate for President of the European Commission. Following the victory of the EPP in the May elections, the new Juncker Commission was approved by the European Parliament in October and officially took office on 1 November.

### Structure

The European People's Party is horizontally engaged with all the main EU institutions including the European Council, Council of the EU, European Commission, and European Parliament. In addition to Parliament, the EPP has Groups in the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe, OSCE and NATO. Internally, the EPP has three levels of decision making: the Presidency, Political Assembly and Congress.

### Presidency

The EPP is led by the Presidency, an executive body. It decides on the general political guidelines of the Party and presides over the Political Assembly. The Presidency is composed of:

- i. the President of the EPP
- ii. the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council, the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, the President of the European Parliament (if these persons are affiliated with the EPP)
- iii. the Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament
- iv. the Honorary President(s)
- v. ten Vice-Presidents
- vi. the Treasurer
- vii. the Secretary-General

The composition of the EPP Presidency as of 1 November 2014 is as follows:

President

**Joseph Daul**  
France (UMP)

Secretary-General

**Antonio López-Istúriz White**  
Spain (PP)

Ex Officio Vice-President

**Jean-Claude Juncker**  
Luxembourg (CSV)

Ex Officio Vice-President

**Donald Tusk**  
Poland (PO)

**Manfred Weber**  
Germany (CSU)

Vice-President

**Michel Barnier**  
France (UMP)

Vice-President

**Peter Hintze**  
Germany (CDU)

Vice-President

**Antonio Tajani**  
Italy (FI)

Vice-President

**Johannes Hahn**  
Austria (ÖVP)

Vice-President

**Corien Wortmann-Kool**  
Netherlands (CDA)

Vice-President

**Mário David**  
Portugal (PSD)

Vice-President

**Jacek Saryusz-Wolski**  
Poland (PO)

Vice-President

**Tobias Billström**  
Sweden (Moderaterna)

Vice-President

**Anca Boagiu**  
Romania (PDL)

Treasurer

**Ingo Friedrich**  
Germany (CSU)

Honorary President

**Leo Tindemans**  
Belgium (CD&V)

Honorary President

**Sauli Niinistö**  
Finland (Kokoomus)

Political Assembly

The Political Assembly defines the political positions of the party between each Congress, deciding on membership applications and final political guidelines. The Political Assembly also decides on the budget and safeguards the political presence of the EPP between Congress meetings. The Political Assembly is composed of designated delegates from EPP member and associated member parties, member associations and groups. The Political Assembly meets three to five times a year and defines the mandate of the Working Groups which prepare the Party's policy documents and recommendations.

Congress

The Congress is the highest decision-making body of the Party. It is composed of delegates from EPP member and associate member parties, member associations and groups. The EPP Congress meets at least once every three years. It elects the EPP Presidency and decides on the main policy documents and electoral programmes, and provides a platform for the EPP heads of government and party leaders.

The EPP has organised a total of 22 Congress meetings:

- > 2014 Congress XXII in Dublin
- > 2012 Congress XXI in Bucharest
- > 2011 Congress XX in Marseille
- > 2009 Congress XIX in Bonn
- > 2009 Congress XVIII in Warsaw
- > 2006 Congress XVII in Rome
- > 2004 Congress XVI in Brussels
- > 2002 Congress XV in Estoril
- > 2001 Congress XIV in Berlin
- > 1999 Congress XIII in Brussels
- > 1997 Congress XII in Toulouse
- > 1995 Congress XI in Madrid
- > 1993 Congress X in Brussels
- > 1992 Congress IX in Athens
- > 1990 Congress VIII in Dublin
- > 1988 Congress VII in Luxembourg
- > 1986 Congress VI in The Hague
- > 1984 Congress V in Rome
- > 1982 Congress IV in Paris
- > 1980 Congress III in Cologne
- > 1979 Congress II in Brussels
- > 1978 Congress I in Brussels

EU Heads of State and Government of the EPP  
(As of 1 November 2014)

President	Prime Minister	Prime Minister	Prime Minister
<b>Traian Băsescu</b> Romania (EPP)	<b>Alexander Stubb</b> Finland (Kokoomus)	<b>Viktor Orbán</b> Hungary (FIDESZ)	<b>Antonis Samaras</b> Greece (Nea Demokratia)
President	Taoiseach	Prime Minister	Prime Minister
<b>Nicos Anastasiades</b> Cyprus (DISY)	<b>Enda Kenny</b> Ireland (Fine Gael)	<b>Pedro Passos Coelho</b> Portugal (PSD)	<b>Ewa Kopacz</b> Poland (PO)
Prime Minister	Chancellor	Prime Minister	
<b>Laimdota Straujuma</b> Latvia (Vienotība)	<b>Angela Merkel</b> Germany (CDU)	<b>Mariano Rajoy</b> Spain (PP)	

Non-EU Heads of State and Government of the EPP

Prime Minister	Prime Minister	President	Prime Minister
<b>Nikola Gruevski</b> FYROM (VMRO-DPMNE)	<b>Iurie Leancă</b> Moldova (PLDM)	<b>Serzh Sargsyan</b> Armenia (HHK)	<b>Erna Solberg</b> Norway (Høyre)

Members of the Bosnian Presidency

<b>Bakir Izetbegović</b> Bosnia and Herzegovina (SDA)	<b>Dragan Čović</b> Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH)	<b>Mladen Ivanić</b> Bosnia and Herzegovina (PDP)
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EPP Members of the European Commission

President	<b>Johannes Hahn</b> European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations Austria (ÖVP)	<b>Phil Hogan</b> Agriculture & Rural Development Ireland (FG)
<b>Jean-Claude Juncker</b> President of the European Commission Luxembourg (CSV)	<b>Dimitris Avramopoulos</b> Migration, Home Affairs & Citizenship Greece (ND)	<b>Christos Stylianides</b> Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management Cyprus (DISY)
Vice-Presidents	<b>Kristalina Georgieva</b> Budget & Human Resources Bulgaria (GERB)	<b>Elżbieta Bieńkowska</b> Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs Poland (PO)
<b>Jyrki Katainen</b> Jobs, Growth, Investment & Competitiveness Finland (Kokoomus)	<b>Miguel Arias Cañete</b> Climate Action & Energy Spain (PP)	<b>Tibor Navracsics</b> Education, Culture, Youth & Sport Hungary (Fidesz)
<b>Valdis Dombrovskis</b> Euro & Social Dialogue Latvia (Unity)	<b>Carlos Moedas</b> Research, Science & Innovation Portugal (PSD)	
Members	<b>Günther Oettinger</b> Digital Economy & Society Germany (CDU)	
<b>Marianne Thyssen</b> Employment, Social Affairs, Skills & Labour Mobility Belgium (CD&V)		

## Activities

### Summits

EPP Heads of State and Government, party leaders in coalition governments and/or in opposition, the EPP Presidency and the Presidents of the European Council and European Commission meet for EPP Summits prior to the European Council Summits. These important sessions offer EPP leaders an informal and confidential setting to seek consensus within the EPP family in an effort to develop common positions at the European Council.

### Ministerial Meetings

In 2007, the EPP inaugurated a new political process with the first EPP Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting in order to discuss the foreign policy priorities on the EU Ministers' agenda. Following this successful model, the EPP then launched informal meetings with the EPP EcoFin Ministers in 2008, and again expanded the concept in 2010. The current list of meetings includes: Foreign Affairs, Economic and Financial Affairs, Employment & Social Affairs, Competitiveness, Defence, Agriculture, Environment, Energy, Justice, Home Affairs, and General Affairs.

## Working Groups

Working Groups are the backbone of the EPP's political work, where high-profile representatives from the EPP member parties develop common positions and strategies on major policy areas and submit specific recommendations to the Political Assembly for final approval.

### Working Group 1: European Policy

The European Policy Working Group has the task of preparing the EPP's most vital policy papers and Congress documents on European issues.

### Working Group 2: Economic and Social Policy

This Working Group is focused on responding to the current economic and financial crisis, demographic issues, and research and development.

### Working Group 3: EPP Membership

This Working Group promotes and facilitates the accession of new EPP members, associate and observer members. When a party from an EU country is accepted in the EPP, its elected representatives automatically join the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and all other EPP Groups and organisations.

### Ad-Hoc Working Group 4: Climate Change and Energy

This Working Group was re-established in 2013 to update the previous EPP political paper on climate change adopted in 2008.

### Campaign Managers Meeting

This committee coordinates with member parties to plan campaigns. The exchange of experiences in past election campaigns, as well as the long-term preparation of European issues and the campaigns for the European Parliament elections, brings added value to the member parties and to the EPP.

## Associations

### Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP)

YEPP, led by President Konstantinos Kyranakis, is the EPP's official youth organisation. YEPP's members are national party-political youth organisations. The purpose of all 57 member organisations, as well as for YEPP, is to provide young people with a channel to influence the shaping of their societies with democratic means and centre-right, Christian Democratic and conservative ideas. YEPP brings together between 1 and 2 million young people in 38 countries of Europe, making it the largest party-political youth organisation in Europe.

### European Democrat Students (EDS)

EDS is the official students' organisation of the EPP. Founded in 1961, EDS brings together students and young political leaders from all over Europe to promote a political pro-European exchange. Led by Chairwoman Eva Majewski, EDS has 42 member organisations from 35 countries, representing over 1.600,000 students and youngsters.

### European Seniors' Union (ESU)

Founded in Madrid in 1995 and led by its President An Hermans, ESU is the largest political senior citizens' organisation in Europe. The ESU is represented in 27 states with 41 organisations and about 1.269,000 members. The ESU is dedicated to the advancement of rights of European senior citizens and their engagement in society.

### European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW)

The EUCDW is the workers' organisation of the EPP with 24 member organisations from 18 different countries. Led by Elmar Brok, MEP, the EUCDW presses for the political unification of a democratic Europe; promotes the development of the EPP on the basis of Christian social teaching; represents and defends worker interests in European policy; and works for the achievement of Christian social principles and policies in the European workers' movements.

### Small and Medium Entrepreneurs of Europe (SME Europe)

SME Europe, led by Nadezhda Neynsky is the EPP organisation for small and medium entrepreneurs, shaping EU policies in a SME-friendly way. As a proactive organisation within the political networks of Christian Democrats and conservatives, SME Europe brings a new spirit and a fresh entrepreneurial wind into the political debate.

### Women of the European People's Party (EPP Women)

EPP Women, led by Doris Pack, is recognised by the EPP as the official association of women from all like-minded political parties of Europe. EPP Women has over 40 member organisations from countries of the European Union and beyond.

## Think Tanks, Foundations

### Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

Founded in 2007 as the Centre for European Studies and renamed in 2014 in honour of the late EPP President, the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Martens Centre) is the official think tank of the EPP. Led by President Mikuláš Dzurinda, the Martens Centre serves as a common European framework for national foundations and think tanks recognised by EPP member parties. It is governed under the revised 2007 “EU Regulation on political parties at European level and rules regarding their funding.”

The core activities of the Martens Centre are its research and study projects, which are complemented and supported by conferences, seminars, workshops and publications, many of which are executed in conjunction with its member organisations. The aim of the foundation is to contribute both to the public awareness of European citizens on the development of European integration and to help decision-makers, such as EPP Heads of State and Government and EPP party leaders, to formulate new and effective policy options.

### Robert Schuman Institute

The “Union of the Robert Schuman Institute for Developing Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe” (RSI) has been operating under the auspices of the EPP with an extended scope of activities since 1995. The RSI organises international courses for potential young leaders, party members and officials of the EPP sister and co-operating parties of the developing democracies in the region, which receive both theoretical and practical training. Since the 2004 EU enlargement, the Institute has focused mostly on eastern and south-eastern European countries.

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**EPP Group**  
in the European Parliament

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