



18th Summit of Chairmen of EPP Parliamentary Groups in the National Parliaments of the EU and the EP

3 June 2013

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PROGRAMME

Monday 3 June 2013

OPENING OF THE SUMMIT:

- **Joseph DAUL** MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group

Co-chairmen

- **Paulo RANGEL** MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for relations with Parliamentary Groups of the National Parliaments
- **Charles FLANAGAN** MP, Chairman of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party, Ireland

Session 1

THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK AND OWN RESOURCES

Interventions :

- **Jean-Claude JUNCKER**, Prime Minister, Luxembourg
- **Christian JACOB** MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Group UMP at the National Assembly, France
- **Rafał GRUPÍNSKI** MP, Chairman of the Platforma Obywatelska Parliamentary Group, Poland
- **Athanasios BOURAS** MP, Chairman Nea Demokratia, Greece
- **Peter ÖSTMAN** MP, Chairman of KD Parliamentary Group, Finland
- **Giovanni LA VIA** MEP, Rapporteur of EU general budget for 2013
- **Jean-Paul GAUZÈS** MEP, Rapporteur on the European Semester

Debate

Session 2

THE CHALLENGES OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014 AND THE NEW LEGISLATURE

- **Wilfried MARTENS**, President of the European People's Party
- **Corien WORTMANN-KOOL** MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group, Vice-President of the EPP
- **Francis DELPÉRÉE** MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Group CDH in the Senate, Belgium

Session 3

PRESENTATION OF THE NEXT PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- **Audronius AŽUBALIS** MP, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

CONCLUSIONS AND ADOPTION OF THE FINAL DECLARATION

- **Paulo RANGEL** MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for relations with the Parliamentary Groups of the National Parliaments

Working meeting

- **Guest speaker: Janusz LEWANDOWSKI**, Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget

OPENING OF THE SUMMIT

JOSEPH DAUL MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group



Joseph Daul MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group

The Chairman of the EPP Group, Joseph Daul MEP (EPP, FR), delivered a short overview on the state of play of the Multiannual Financial Framework negotiations. Joseph Daul underlined that the Member States have to acknowledge their responsibility and focus more on improving the expenditure of the EU budget: “Member States have to establish order in their public finances. They have budget deficits; the EU doesn’t have a budget deficit, the EU Treaty does not allow it. The European Parliament will fight for a zero deficit in the EU’s long-term budget. We should not forget that 94% of the European budget goes back to the Member States, only 4 % goes to the administration and 2% to interpreters. Member States should take responsibility for best practice in spending”.

Joseph Daul went on to underline the importance of a revision clause within the next seven years: “This is an austerity budget for seven years. Which State or government has a seven year budget and would accept an austerity budget? Which national assembly would accept the fact that they would not have the right to change or revise the budget during its term of office? What does it mean? It means that the next Parliament won’t be able to make any changes to the budget during its 5 year term. The Parliament will be elected and won’t have the right to have any say on the budget. I’m speaking about the principle, about the European Parliament’s responsibility. Which elected government would agree to be blocked from revising or making changes to the budget during its term of office? It is not logical, our Parliament should have the right to discuss the budget.”

Joseph Daul concluded: “We understand the economic realities, we are not questioning the right of Member States to set the financial limits of the European budget. What we are saying is that the money should be better spent. Hence, this is why we expect a review clause so that we can see how the money has been allocated in two or three years’ time. This is why we have argued for flexibility between budget lines and years, and finally, this is why we believe that it is time for Europe to have its own resources so that we avoid these zero sum negotiations every seven years.”

PAULO RANGEL MEP, Vice-President of the EPP Group responsible for relations with national Parliaments



Paulo Rangel MEP, Vice-President of the EPP Group responsible for relations with national Parliaments

I am delighted to welcome you to the 18th Summit of the Chairs of the EPP Parliamentary Groups in the EU, chaired by Joseph Daul.

Parliaments are in the vanguard of European political life today. We are living in unusual, troubling times, times in which people are wondering what the future holds for them and therefore they are turning to their political representatives for guidance and leadership.

At times like these it is up to parliaments to take centre stage, to engage in dialogue with the people and then, on their behalf, to develop programmes and policies which transform crises into challenges and problems into opportunities.

I want to believe that the times in which we are living offer us an opportunity.

We are negotiating the next multiannual financial framework down to the last cent. A multiannual financial framework (MFF) which, I would emphasise, is a springboard for growth. Without growth we will not be able to eradicate poverty and unemployment, particularly youth unemployment.

We need a safer Europe for our people, for our families.

Now that a huge effort has been made to consolidate fiscal discipline we need to look to the future. We need an ambitious MFF, not a restricted or a reticent one.

We appeal to all actors to secure an agreement as soon as possible; the continuity of the European Union programmes is essential and cannot be questioned.

The MFF is vital for Europe. Investments in cohesion, infrastructure, research, agriculture and employment initiatives, are now at the core of European citizens aspirations.

We need a budget which will boost growth across the European Union: a budget that enables Europe to compete in the dynamic world, a budget for integration looking towards (seeking) innovation and modernisation, one that will open-up opportunities for the European dynamic sectors in all fields of economic activity and in all categories of the labour force. This is why we regret the deadlock in negotiations and ask the Council to have a realistic attitude and make the necessary efforts to reach agreement on the MFF.

In the road to a new momentum in European policies we hope for and expect the parliaments to be very proactive.

We will have the opportunity to discuss the European elections which will be held in May 2014.

These elections will be the first major opportunity for a coordinated effort by the national parties and the EPP.

We must spread this message if we are to find a way out of the crisis we need more Europe – a more united Europe.

The election campaign will also be a time to demonstrate just how closely national Parliaments and the European Parliament have been working together throughout this parliamentary term.

Parliamentary debate and democratic scrutiny of government action are the essential ingredients of democratic life. They are also a showcase for democracy, as they are the most visible part of political life.

A high turnout in the elections is essential to lend legitimacy to political representatives.

Our challenge is to make the European message more attractive. In the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, of which I am a member, we recently worked on this subject.

We proposed the following measures:

- ballot papers for the 2014 European elections should include references to both European and national political parties;
- European political parties should nominate their candidates for the Commission Presidency sufficiently in advance of the election to enable them to conduct an EU-wide electoral campaign on EU issues;
- National political parties should specify the names of their respective candidates for the Commission Presidency and the European political group to which they belong.

FIRST SESSION:

THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK AND OWN RESOURCES

JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER, Prime Minister, Luxembourg

We are now approaching the June 2013 European Council and the development of a medium-term funding programme will be on the agenda.

Although the solution agreed at the February 2013 European Council was relatively unambitious, it was undoubtedly a step in the right direction.

Given the far-reaching implications of these inter-institutional discussions, the most recent of which took place last week, I would very much like us to recapture the Community spirit.

I have been observing budgetary behaviour since 1984 – the year I became the Budget Minister for Luxembourg. It was also the year of the Fontainebleau European Council, where the notion of ‘net contributor’ emerged in the context of European public finance. The European budget now resembles a bank account, in which each Member State deposits the minimum and tries to withdraw the maximum. Little attention is given to finding a European response to the problems afflicting the continent today. It is deeply saddening that the European spirit has now been side-lined by domestic political considerations.

Any political action taken in response to the current situation needs to be mindful of the Member States’ differing sensibilities, which inevitably shape EU decision-making.

In the midst of the current financial and economic crisis, when Member States approve their national budgets, they are asked to comply with the requirements of the European adjustment programme, which they must comply with under Economic and Monetary Union. Persuading governments to be generous at European level while being restrictive at national level is a real challenge.

Nevertheless, the bulk of the work has already been done. The decisions made by the European Council have generally been approved by Parliament; two tasks remain, however. The first task is to deal properly with the remainder of the 2013 budget. The Council of Finance Ministers made an initial attempt to unlock funding, but the proposal failed to get full backing from



Jean-Claude JUNCKER, Prime Minister, Luxembourg

Parliament. As I see it, agreement on the MFF will be reached only when there is full agreement on the 2013 budget; by that I mean not only making a promise about what decisions will be taken, but making a firm, strong, inter-institutional commitment. Otherwise, we will have no hope of breaking the current deadlock.

Having attended many budgetary discussions throughout Europe, I would advise that we should begin to prepare the next multiannual financial framework. We cannot wait until 2018, 2019 or 2020 to agree on a new expenditure structure, a new concept of own resources. If we are to make real progress, governments and parliamentarians need to begin these discussions now. But before that, we should draw on the conclusions of the February 2013 European Council, which provided for a review clause, one we must use to its full potential.

We stressed the need to make the EU’s budgetary action more flexible, and now we must agree on what form this should take. We must also agree on how unused payment appropriations may be carried over from one year to the next. The arrangements for annual internal flexibility and multiannual flexibility should not undermine existing decisions.

Likewise, the review clause should not undermine cohesion policies and should only be invoked with the unanimous approval of the Member States.

CHRISTIAN JACOB MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Group UMP in the French National Assembly



Christian Jacob MP (UMP, FR), Chairman of the Parliamentary Group UMP at the National Assembly, France

Christian Jacob MP (UMP, FR), Chairman of the Parliamentary Group UMP at the National Assembly, France, underlined his support for the European Parliament as a full co-legislator in the MFF negotiations. “I very much believe in close links between Members of the national Parliaments and Members of the European Parliament. These close links are all the more important in this special time of crisis, when our countries are facing many challenges“, said the French MP.

Mr Jacob expressed his understanding of Parliaments demands on the EU long term budget negotiations: “I know these negotiations are difficult. Five political Groups, including the EPP put down a motion for a resolution in the EP to criticise the European Council conclusions in February, regarding the MFF-. I understand where you are coming from; I understand your demands for more flexibility between budget lines and from one year to the next. I also understand what you say concerning the possibility of reviewing the budget pathway through the year.”

In his view, failure to agree on the EU long-term budget will have adverse consequences on EU as whole, and particularly on European citizens: “The EU itself must show responsibility, the European Parliament and the European Council must do their best, specifically on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).” The French MP mentioned that the CAP shouldn’t be taken hostage in the on-going budget negotiations, especially as the outcome remains uncertain. The EU must avoid, at any price, the renationalization of the CAP.

RAFAŁ GRUPIŃSKI MP, Chairman of the Platforma Obywatelska Parliamentary Group in the Polish Parliament

Rafał Grupiński MP (PO, PL), Chairman of the Platforma Obywatelska Parliamentary Group in the Polish Parliament, said that Poland welcomes the European Parliament position on MFF negotiations and hopes that an agreement will be reached by the end of June, at the latest. Any delay in adopting the EU long term budget would have a local effect, creating delays in all the areas that involves EU projects. “When Europe needs these programs, most, when Europe needs investment to quick start growth, these programs would be delayed. In the specific area of common policies, which are, after all, the very base of the philosophy of the EU, any delay is going to slow down EU investment,” said the Polish MP.

He went to say that Poland doesn't have a problem with the European Parliament's demands on the MFF, especially regarding the review clause and flexibility. Mr Grupinski stressed that the multiannual programs policies, such as the agricultural policy, must have secure funding. “We recognise that the European Parliament has many demands, but we urge all sides to reach an agreement as quickly as possible” he concluded.

The Chairman of the Platforma Obywatelska Parliamentary Group in the Polish Parliament drew attention to Croatia's accession to EU. He underlined



Rafał Grupiński MP (PO, PL), Chairman of the Platforma Obywatelska Parliamentary Group in the Polish Parliament

that EU has enough money for Croatia in the 2013 budget. want Croatia to play its full part in our programs, in our EU policies. As far as I'm concerned, that is not a financial question, it is our homework, our job. If we don't make that budgetary adjustment, then Croatia will be a net payer, they will pay in, and will not get anything back. I do hope that on the June 30, when Croatia has the accession ceremony, there will be no discussion about a lack of money”, warned the Polish MP.

ATHANASIOS BOURAS MP, Secretary General Nea Demokratia Parliamentary Group in the Greek Parliament



Athanasios Bouras MP (ND, GR), Secretary General Nea Demokratia Parliamentary Group in the Greek Parliament

Athanasios Bouras MP (ND, GR), Secretary General Nea Demokratia Parliamentary Group in the Greek Parliament, sees the new MFF 2014-2020, as an opportunity to give the EU the necessary means to get out this crisis and to strengthen its position. He hopes that the new MFF will be a modern, flexible, transparent system for the European budget. We have the base to implement the current European projects. “We need to ensure that there is the necessary provision in the budget to finance jobs and growth in the EU” he said.

The Secretary General of the Nea Demokratia Parliamentary Group in the Greek Parliament also described the strategy of the new MFF : “First of all, we have the possibility of reforming the MFF for the 2014-2020 period, we will have a new EP and a new European Commission, so, we would be able to restate the budgetary priorities. Secondly, we have the idea of flexibility in the 2014-2020 MFF. The idea is that it should be able to keep it to the limit of responsibility that would be stated in the budget. Thirdly, there are the “own resources”, we need to be clear about this, we need to insure the European budget, funding by real own resources. The current system for our mutual Member States contributions is not an completed idea, as we support that the EP put in its last resolutions.”

The Greek MP urged the European Parliament to reach an agreement as soon as possible and urged that solidarity is put in the heart of this common budget philosophy. “I think it is important that we should achieve a good agreement on the MFF. We need to insure that we put solidarity at the centre of the scene. Solidarity is not an abstract term. It needs to be allied to the MFF, so we can be sure that solidarity is a practice. The resources should be used in the right way. What we expect is that the Council will revise this opinion, will think again, and will agree on a compromise on the MFF. We should not forget that the money goes straight back into the Member States,” he concluded.

PETER ÖSTMAN MP, Chairman of Christian Democratic Parliamentary Group, Finland

Peter Östman MP (KD, FI), Chairman of Christian Democratic Parliamentary Group, Finland, stated that the decisions on the MFF were linked to the direction of the European Union and the Member States in Europe, and emphasised that the negotiations should proceed quickly. He spoke about the importance of predictability in the process, “so that we can continue working together towards an agreement on the basis of common understanding. The EU is only as strong as its MS. We have to develop the initiatives already taken, such as the Digital Single Market, which offers opportunities to MS and Europe as a whole”.

In terms of “flexibility”, he said that Finland does not see a need for automatic mechanisms and that the principle of budgetary balance should be maintained according to the current Treaty. As for “review”, he continued, Finland does not support a binding obligation. Regarding Finland’s position on “own resources”, he indicated that it supported the need for reform within the framework of the current Treaty, and also supports reform when it comes to the division of powers of the Institutions involved in the process. He went on to say that “a healthy European economy needs healthy economies in the Member States”.



Peter Östman MP (KD, FI), Chairman of Christian Democratic Parliamentary Group, Finland

Finally, he said that along with the crisis, citizens have lost their trust in the EU, and we need to win back their trust: “As politicians, we have a major responsibility to deliver correct information to our citizens,” he concluded.

GIOVANNI LA VIA MEP, Rapporteur of EU general budget for 2013



Giovanni La Via MEP (EPP, IT), Rapporteur of EU general budget for 2013

Giovanni La Via MEP (EPP, IT), Rapporteur of EU general budget for 2013, said that the problems regarding the differences between payments and commitments will have to be resolved with new mechanisms and procedures which will require everyone to participate and accept responsibilities. The Parliament's rapporteur underlined that "there is a need for flexibility in the long term budget in order to make the most of national contributions and to compensate the reduction due to the crisis". In his view, the EU budget has real added value and is able to generate growth in Europe. The problem is the implementation of the budget, as "only an efficient use of the available resources will enable us to meet our goals". "It's a matter of credibility, and the Council should honour its past declarations. We have to pay for the commitments we have made", the Italian MEP stated.

JEAN-PAUL GAUZÈS MEP, Former Rapporteur on the European Semester



Jean-Paul Gauzès MEP (EPP, FR), Former Rapporteur on the European Semester

Jean-Paul Gauzès MEP (EPP, FR), Former Rapporteur on the European Semester, spoke about the coordination of economics policies, the so-called Eu-

ropean Semester: "The EP does not intend to replace the power of national Parliaments, in terms of dealing with the budget of Member States, however, what is included in the coordination measures for economic policies is that we identify a gap in the monetary policy, meaning, the issue of democratic accountability". "We need to ensure that there is economic coordination within the Eurozone and that the European Parliament intervenes (by giving an opinion) only after the European Commission has provided its Annual Growth Survey. The Commission makes a proposal, the European Parliament gives its opinion and the European Council examines these proposals and takes decisions, collective decisions which are taken by those who have the political legitimacy to do so." "In his view the European Parliament and national Parliaments need to work along the same lines, with a community spirit that allows us to make necessary corrections when there is a lack of proper economic policy." He underlined that the "Six and Two Pack" should ensure that national Parliaments' rights are protected and taken into account.

DEBATE : a solid EU long term budget must be adopted as soon as possible



Michael Schneider (EPP/CoR, DE), Chairman of the EPP Group in the Committee of Regions, stated that with regard to the MFF, “the European Structural Funds play an important role”. He went on to say that people were concerned that the negotiations might be “dragged-out” over

a long period and thus, we will not be able to do the necessary preparatory work for the next period. “We want to have knowledge of the MFF in good time, to ensure the necessary solutions for the Structural Funds Regulation, as the current Regulation is due to expire”. Regarding the deficit between the commitments and payments, he emphasised that “18 million euros is committed, but has not been paid out!”



Concluding the debate, **Jean-Claude Juncker**, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, stated that after listening to all participants from the European Parliament and National Parliaments, he noticed the desire to achieve an agreement on the MFF by the end of June. Furthermore, he stated that

we should think about everything that should follow in the period 2014-2020. He believed that the Parliament by tradition, “wants to do things that it does not allow governments to do”.



l-r: Jean-Paul Gauzès MEP (EPP, FR), Former Rapporteur on the European Semester; Christian Jacob MP (UMP, FR), Chairman of the Parliamentary Group UMP in the National Assembly, France; and Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg

SECOND SESSION:

THE CHALLENGES OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014 AND THE NEW LEGISLATURE

WILFRIED MARTENS, President of the European People's Party

I am pleased to be here with all of you today in the European Parliament and thank you for your attendance at this Summit.

Europe is facing a difficult situation.

The last years have revealed major weaknesses in the European economy, many of which were caused directly, or made worse, by the policies of socialist governments in some EU Member States.

In response, we in the EPP family - both at European level here in Brussels and in capital cities across Europe - have taken important steps to address structural weaknesses.

We need to make our economies healthy again if we want to achieve sustainable economic growth and more jobs.

The reforms that have been implemented have often required real leadership and political courage. The policies have not been easy to implement, and they will take time to bear fruit.

Sustainable economic growth is still elusive, and unemployment, especially among key groups such as the youth, remains too high.

Nonetheless, we are beginning to see that the efforts of EPP leadership within the EU institutions and in national governments are beginning to pay off, and important safeguards have been put in place to ensure that the mistakes which led to this crisis will not be repeated in the future.

Despite some encouraging signs, next year's European elections will probably take place in a difficult economic situation. These elections will be crucial in defining whether Europe continues down the road towards full recovery, or will return the failed policies of the past.

The simple fact is that regardless of the past policy successes, which we at the EPP can rightly claim, it



Wilfried Martens, President of the European People's Party

will still be up to us to convince the citizens of our Member States that the path proposed by the EPP is the right path for Europe to follow.

It will not necessarily be easy, as this path, which will be guided by EPP values such as responsibility and sustainability, will be less attractive to some voters than the short-sighted ideas proposed by populist voices within the ranks of the EPP's competitors.

We also face the problem of voter disenfranchisement. Unfortunately, voter participation has declined steadily with every European election, and we can expect that widespread discontent will diminish voter turnout even more in 2014.

For these reasons, it is all the more important that we wage a campaign that lays out in simple terms what is really at stake, and why we are the party best suited to move Europe forward.

At the EPP headquarters here in Brussels, we are already preparing for this election. We are drafting our

election manifesto, which will set out the vision and fundamental policy ideas which will shape the EPP's campaign.

We have established a Campaign Steering Committee, which gathers the key strategists and coordinates all the stakeholders in the campaign: the EPP member parties, the EPP Group in the European Parliament, the Centre for European Studies, and our member associations.

As early as last year, The EPP committed to nominating a candidate for President of the European Commission through a process that is open, transparent and competitive. Let me address, for a moment, why this particular aspect is so important.

As many of you know, the elections in 2014 will mark the first time the major European political parties will each put forward a candidate for the post of President of the European Commission. The European Parliament elections will therefore effectively determine the winning candidate for Commission President.

Although this will be a historic first for Europe, it is a process we have long advocated at the EPP, in order to boost transparency and improve the democratic legitimacy of the European Union.

In fact, well ahead of the 2009 European elections, the EPP put forward Jose Manuel Barroso for a second term as Commission President.

Unfortunately, at that time the other major parties at EU-level refused to follow suit.

Thankfully, at next year's elections, all major European political parties will nominate a candidate. This is a good thing for Europe, especially given the legitimate frustrations of many Europeans and the declining rate of voter participation. We must do all we can to create an electoral process that is as transparent and open as possible.

Although it is still too early to speculate about names, I am convinced that the EPP is well on its way towards establishing a process that will ultimately produce the best candidate for the position.

The EPP is a leader among European parties in this respect, and as a result I am convinced that despite the difficult electoral climate, we as a party, will be ready for 2014.

Dear friends,

Allow me to conclude with a call to action to everyone present today.

The elections next year will be the "most European" of all the European elections.

Decisions must be taken and efforts must be made as close to the citizens as possible. This means our member parties at national level must step forward and lead.

Therefore, I call on all of our friends from national Parliaments present today to return to your capitals with an eye towards the 2014 European elections.

Please do what you can to build enthusiasm within your party and among your fellow citizens.

I ask that you explain to them why more Europe and not less Europe will provide the best chance for continued recovery today and prosperity tomorrow, and why the EPP in particular, is the political family that can best fulfil that promise.

Thank you for your attention.

I wish you a productive meeting and look forward to working with you as we approach next year's European elections.

CORIEN WORTMANN-KOOL MEP, Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group and Vice-President of the European People's Party

Corien Wortmann-Kool MEP (EPP, NL), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group and Vice-President of the European People's Party delivered an address on the main activities that the EPP Group in the European Parliament and the European People's Party will be engaged in for the preparation of the 2014 European elections. Vice-President Wortmann-Kool referred to one of the most visible changes for the forthcoming elections, namely that each European political party is being asked to present a candidate for the position of the President of the Commission. "Despite the fact that the campaign will be fought mainly on national issues, the political families' candidates are likely to give a more European dimension to the debate. The EPP family will have to promote an offensive message, fighting against populist accents and countering both left-wing and right-wing euro-scepticism.

What is the EPP group doing to prepare the election?

The EPP Group, in coordination with the European People's Party, can provide critical added-value to the national preparations by putting its knowledge and communication experience at the disposal of its members of Parliament and candidates, and also its EPP member parties. Although the EPP Group in the European Parliament will not be campaigning in the elections, it will be involved in communicating with the citizens via social media and internet.

Activities of the EPP Party and the European Parliament

The discussion on the possible candidates will begin in the autumn and the nomination of the candidate will take place in the EPP Congress, in an open, transparent and competitive nomination procedure. The European Parliament will organise an institutional communications campaign leading up to the 2014 elections. The campaign, adopted by the Parliament's bureau on 20



Corien Wortmann-Kool MEP (EPP, NL), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group and Vice-President of the European People's Party

May 2013, will emphasise the new powers conferred on the EP by the Lisbon Treaty, and will prepare the ground by communicating the policies and the impact of the Parliament. The focus will be on 5 main themes, which will raise awareness of the upcoming election and will, finally, communicate the outcome of elections and the new composition of the Parliament. The aim of the EPP Group is to finalise the preparatory work in the early autumn and will put its material and services at the disposal of MEPs and EPP member parties.

The Dutch MEP remarked that with regard to the European Elections, "efforts should be put into achieving unity". She stated that populism was a tool being used against MEPs: That is why, she said, "it is very important to provide adequate information to voters from constructive European forces such as our Party, and impose measures which will show that we behave responsibly in relation to how we use public money".

FRANCIS DELPÉRÉE MP, Chairman of the CDH Parliamentary Group in the Senate, Belgium



Francis Delpérée MP (CDH,BE), Chairman of the CDH Parliamentary Group in the Senate, Belgium

The European elections will take place in less than a year's time. I should like to focus on the immediate future and some specific issues – three specific moments in time: before the elections; the elections; and after the elections.

I. BEFORE THE ELECTIONS

In this context I think there are three issues that need to be addressed before May 2014: what's at stake, the rules of the game and the players.

A. What's at stake

What is at stake in elections is the number of seats to be filled in a constituency. The Treaty (Article 14(2)) sets this out clearly. The number of MEPs elected will be 'seven hundred and fifty, plus the President'.

How many Members per state? The Treaty provides an arithmetic rule. States are represented in a 'degres-

sively proportional' manner. However, two correction factors are applied in the form of a threshold and a ceiling. The threshold is six Members. The ceiling is 96 Members.

Further arrangements for distribution of seats are of course possible. By law, Member States can establish electoral colleges. In Belgium, for example, 22 MEPs were elected, 13 chosen by the Flemish college, 8 by the French-speaking college and 1 by the German-speaking college. In 2014, there will be only 21 Members. In addition, demographic changes require a review of the internal breakdown.

The Treaty simply says that this too should be based on the principle of proportional representation. This would mean the election of 12 Members by the Flemish college, eight Members by the French speaking college, and one German-speaking Member, unless it is decided in the meantime to review the college sizes.

B. The rules of the game

There is another issue. Each Member State has existing legislation for the conduct of the European elections. Can this be amended in the year before the elections, given that we have less than a year before May 2014? Constitutional jurisprudence, notably that of the Constitutional Council of France, suggests there is an important distinction to be made.

In the first instance, we can envisage a bill relating to institutional, technical or practical provisions. In principle, these have no impact on the ballot. They have no effect on the equal standing of the candidates. Legislation may be passed in the forthcoming year, provided that it does not come as a surprise, for example in the closing days of the campaign.

In the second instance, we can envisage a bill containing provisions that may have a direct impact on the allocation of seats – for example on campaign funding rules or the allocation of radio and television broadcasting time. The Constitutional Council considers that such modifications a few months or weeks before the election may compromise the fairness of the election, thus they are open to criticism.

C. The players

Among the players are the voters, including the question ‘who is eligible to vote?’.

I have to say in passing that it is not as easy as it might appear to establish who has voter status. I speak about the jurisdiction of President Rangel, but, if I am not mistaken, in Portugal the right to vote in European elections is not reserved to Portuguese nationals; it is also given to all Portuguese-speaking people living in Portugal, whether they are from Angola, Brazil or Cape Verde. Clearly the rules may be more restrictive in other countries.

There are also the candidates. If my information is correct, Portuguese-speakers are also authorised to stand as candidates in the European elections in Portugal. The definition of nationality remains within the competence of each state.

II. THE ELECTIONS

Here again, I will confine myself to three comments, relating to the meaning of the election, the number of elections and election procedures.

A. The meaning of the election

The fact that the European Parliament is elected may be the least significant point. It is elected in particular circumstances as, once it is elected, it cannot be dissolved. MEPs do not have to worry. They are elected for five years. For some this is deeply reassuring.

The European Parliament might on occasion wonder whether the absolute stability of its system explains

why not so many powers have been assigned to it. In the game of powers in the European institutional system, stability is a strength but it may also prove a weakness.

B. The number of elections

It has been commented many times: the European elections are European only in name. In fact they are national elections where a group of men and woman, generally nationals of the country in question, are appointed to a representative role in the European Parliament

The European elections’ national slant can have organisational consequences. In some states, for example, elections are held only on Sundays; in others voting takes place on several days of the week preceding the deadline.

The national slant may also have legal consequences. Voting has been compulsory in Belgium since the end of the 19th century. This requirement still applies to everyone, which means it also applies to voters in the European elections, including people who are not Belgians who have registered to vote. The threat of a penalty, however light, may discourage some voters from registering.

The national slant may also have political consequences. In some states, such as Belgium, the European elections are combined with the regional elections, which are also held every five years. This is the rule. The present political situation means that next year, the parliamentary elections and the regional elections will be held on the same day: 25 May 2014. The press are already calling it the mega-election.

How will voters react when faced with three ballot papers? Will they decide to put all their eggs in one basket or will they vote à la carte? Will one vote influence the others? What impact will the European campaign have on the national campaign and vice versa?

Can we lay down a rule whereby European Parliament elections have to be held more than x months from other elections, to avoid all contamination?

This is not likely to succeed. European elections are held, throughout Europe, at the same time. There will always be occasions where a crisis will arise in one or other state and it can only be resolved by means of local, regional or national elections.

C. Election procedures

I will confine myself to a specific issue. A number of European voters vote online. If there are several ballots, which voting paper will appear first, second, and third? Once again, will there be a carrying-along effect? Or will the voter make a careful distinction between the level of power, the political issues, the voting lists and the candidates? I have the feeling that there will be quite a lot of confusion between names and acronyms.

III. AFTER THE ELECTIONS. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COMMISSION

So, it is the day after 25 May. The elections have taken place and it is the end of the first stage. But as is sometimes said, not very accurately, this is the start of the second round. As an elected representative, I hardly dare say that this is sometimes more important than the first round.

A. First of all there is the verification of credentials, which in fact has two facets. One is the procedure in each Member State, which reflects the conditions in which the elections took place. The second is at European level and establishes that each person elected meets the conditions of eligibility.

B. Election of the President of the Commission

The first thing to be noted here is that, in accordance with Article 14(1) and Article 17(7) of the Treaty on European Union as amended by the Lisbon Treaty, the President will, in future, be elected.

People have not yet got used to the idea of an election. The Commission's Europa website comments on Article 17 under the heading 'Appointment Proce-

dures' and goes on to say that the European Council appoints the President of the Commission. This is at the very least a translation error; it is wrong. In future, the President of the Commission will not be appointed, but will be elected. That is not at all the same thing.

The President will indeed be the elected choice of the elected representatives. He will be chosen by the Members of the European Parliament. He will thus have genuine political legitimacy through being elected by ballot in the Parliament (of which he may be a Member).

However, it is important to note that the President must receive a majority, not of the votes cast, but of the Members of the European Parliament (which means he must receive 376 votes out of 750).

It is also true that the election will be on the basis of a proposal by the European Council. The European Council does not appoint the President; it proposes by qualified majority a candidate for President of the Commission. In doing this, it takes account of the elections to the European Parliament and also carries out appropriate consultations.

Everyone knows what happens next. If the candidate proposed by the Council does not receive a majority, the Council has a month to put forward a new candidate, again by qualified majority. The European Parliament elects or rejects him in accordance with the same procedure.

C. The appointment of the Members of the Commission

The Commissioners are not elected. They are nominated by the European Council. They are selected, on the basis of the suggestions made by Member States, in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraph 3, second subparagraph, and paragraph 5, second subparagraph.

The selection is made in agreement with the elected President. This is normal as they must form a team that is as closely knit as possible, in order to fulfil the tasks assigned to them collectively.

This has to be approved by the European Parliament, which approves or rejects the nominations. At the same time, Parliament approves the programme of the incoming team of Commissioners.

These are a few comments, some legal, others more political, and some are purely practical. But I come back to my starting point: May 2014 is tomorrow. It is with this timeframe in mind that it becomes urgent to list and consider certain questions. The proverb ‘forewarned is forearmed’ applies to MEPs and even more so to the EPP. This is the purpose of my little contribution to our work.



l-r: Jean-Paul Gauzès MEP (EPP, FR), Former Rapporteur on the European Semester; Christian Jacob MP (UMP, FR), Chairman of the Parliamentary Group UMP in the National Assembly, France; Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg; Beatrice Scarascia Mugnozza, Head of EPP Service in charge with Relations with National Parliaments; Paulo Rangel MEP (EPP, PT), Vice-President of the EPP Group responsible for relations with national Parliaments; Joseph Daul MEP (EPP, FR), Chairman of the EPP Group; Charles Flanagan MP (FG, IE), Chairman of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Group; and Wilfried Martens, President of the European People’s Party

DEBATE : 2014 a choice for Europe



During the debate **Peter Östman MP (KD, FI), Chairman of Christian Democratic Parliamentary Group, Finland**, mentioned the delicate situation in Finland, where there is one MEP from the Christian Democratic Party and three MEPs from the National Coalition Party. In his

view, the best election result would be if the National coalition Party and the Christian Democratic Party could make-up a coalition, as this could secure the list.



Beatriz Rodríguez-Salmones MP (PP, ES), Member of the Joint Committee for the European Union in the Spanish Congress of Deputies, intervened, stating that things had changed radically since the last European Elections in terms of populism, especially in countries

like Spain. She stated that the issue of MEPs privileges will arise and that Members of the European Parliament will be asked how much money they earn and will be questioned about their privileges. "In some countries, politicians have seen their wages decline and all civil servants have seen their salaries decreased; there are many people suffering! We need to give true and clear answers to these questions."



Francis Delpérée MP (CDH, BE), Chairman of the CDH Parliamentary Group in the Senate, Belgium, repeated that the only card to play in the forthcoming elections "is the card of truth". In addition, he said that there should be a comparison made with the

privileges of leaders in the business and the public sector.



Arto Satonen MP (KOK, FI), Vice-Chair of the National Coalition Party Parliamentary Group in the Finnish Parliament, spoke on two main points to be taken into account in the European Elections: Youth Unemployment and whether a positive or a negative political

approach to Europe will prevail in the upcoming elections. "It is important to deploy resources at European level to combat youth unemployment. The youth labour market has to work in such a way that even when there is weak economic performance, young people are still being encouraged into the market".



Tsvetan Tsvetanov MP (GERB, BG), Deputy Chairperson of Parliamentary Group, stressed that the rise of populism is huge and therefore insisted that the EPP needed to have a skilful election strategy. Over the past two years, socialists have gained more power

in Greece, Bulgaria, France and Romania because they have used "populists" tools. We need to discuss the populists' messages! "In Bulgaria, they have the power, even if they can never achieve what they promised. It is very important that the EPP finds the right balance, even if we need to work with socialists to find that balance!"



Paulo Mota Pinto MP (PSD, PT), Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs in the Portuguese Assembly, stated that the present situation had shown that some countries have to solve their own problems, but stressed that “we also need European answers”. He said that one of

the positive outcomes of the elections was that the debate on the European elections had increased significantly in some countries, like Portugal. Furthermore, he stated that he would prefer the European elections to take place on one day only, instead of four.



Richárd Hörcsik MP (FIDESZ, HU), Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs in the Hungarian National Assembly, highlighted the importance of the national elections in countries such as Germany and Hungary as they will determine the results of the European elec-

tions. He underlined, that in the Council of Europe’s Assembly, the socialist liberals have used Hungary as a target and wanted to initiate a monitoring process in Hungary.



Jean Bizet MP (UMP, FR), Vice-President of the Committee on European Affairs in the French Senate, spoke about the situation in France with regard to populism, and the political extreme right parties such as the National Front, or extreme left parties such as Mr. Mélachon’s party.

“We are particularly concerned because the extreme parties and the parties speaking-out against Europe

may gain votes”. He underlined that Europe has to be more united, more responsive and more competitive.



Paulo Rangel MEP (EPP, PT), Vice-President of the EPP Group responsible for relations with national Parliaments, underlined the fact that the voters are very smart; they know how to differentiate between good and bad politicians, and good and bad policies. Regarding the status

of politicians, he added: “I fully defend reasonable conditions (which are not privileges) established in a transparent way, and we have the obligation to defend the institutions and the political system as a whole!



Concluding the debate, **Corien Wortmann-Kool MEP (EPP, NL), Vice-President of the European People’s Party and Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP Group**, confirmed that “these elections will not be easy!” It will be a battle against the left and the populist’s parties, who have a

different appearance in the MS, and only know how to avoid the problems! Moreover, she believes that the European elections will be a challenge because “there is potential where the voters are neutral and can be motivated to vote”.

THIRD SESSION:

PRESENTATION OF THE NEXT PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUDRONIUS AŽUBALIS MP, Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

Audronius Ažubalis MP (TS-LKD, LT), Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, stated that the aim of the Lithuanian Presidency is to be an efficient and result-oriented Presidency, based on continuity and built on values and long-term vision rather than narrow national interests.

Over the next six months the Presidency will strive for a credible, growing and open Europe. In terms of a “credible Europe” - the Lithuanian Presidency intends to implement the economic governance framework, therefore deepening the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) with special focus on the Banking Union framework, thereby protecting the financial interests of the Member States.

“Growing Europe” means the timely adoption of the next MFF-related legislative proposals, the annual budget, deepening the internal single market for growth, boosting employment, completing the EU internal energy market, and moving the EU macro-regional strategies, such as the Baltic Sea strategy, forward.

“Open Europe” means strengthening the Eastern Partnership, further enlargement with the accession of Croatia, promoting free trade with strategic partners: negotiations on free trade agreements (FTAs), with United States and Japan, as well as with some ASEAN countries, and also securing effective control of the EU external borders. The first priority is energy security. For Lithuania, energy dependence is a problem, as it is for the whole of the EU. A functioning EU internal energy market is a necessary prerequisite for a solid external dimension of EU energy policy. The Lithuanian Presidency is pleased to note that one of the new hubs for energy initiatives is the Baltic Sea region. Particular projects, such as the Baltic Energy Interconnection Plan, is a good example of cooperation between EU Member States and it is also a good example of how to move EU macro-regional strategies forward to ensure growth. Regional strategy is the second priority of the Lithuanian Presidency. To achieve this, improved networking among the different actors and improved co-ordination of the financing possibilities is required. The



Audronius AŽUBALIS MP (TS-LKD, LT), Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

alignment of the Baltic Sea strategy with the 2014-2020 financial frameworks is still to be achieved.

The third priority is the “Eastern Partnership (EaP)”. Today, Europe is facing a critical moment, as the EU is not the only centre of gravity in the region. Looking at the broader geopolitical processes in Eastern Europe, one can speak of two competing alternatives of regional integration, one of which is the EaP, and another the Eurasian Union – initiated by Russia. Lithuania assumes that the future of Europe depends on how we treat Europeans in the East. The Lithuanian Presidency therefore places special expectations on the 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius this autumn, namely the signing of the Association Agreements, with Ukraine, including the DCFTA parts, and the finalising of these agreements with Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia with the initialling of these respective agreements.

Lastly, the Lithuanian Presidency will make efforts to strengthen EU external borders. The current Schengen system lacks strong governance and supervision, therefore the Presidency will examine the ‘Smart borders’ package, among others. Mr Ažubalis concluded by underlining that a vision of prosperous Europe with safe and democratic neighbourhood, will guide the efforts of the Lithuanian Presidency in this period.

WORKING MEETING:

**Guest speaker : Janusz Lewandowski,
Commissioner for Financial
Programming and Budget**

JANUSZ LEWANDOWSKI, Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget

Janusz Lewandowski, European Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget, stated that there are no magic solutions to the current economic situation. He believed that the MFF will provide answers on how to finance jobs, growth and innovation in time of consolidation of public finances. He said that the European Commission was not happy with the agreement achieved by the Heads of State on 8th February, and added: “we cannot charge the future with the problems existing in today’s budget!” To conclude, he spoke about the importance of flexibility given the current low level of payments.



Janusz LEWANDOWSKI, Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget



l-r: Véronique Mathieu Houillon MEP (EPP, FR), Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; Jean-Pierre Audy MEP (EPP, FR), Head of the French Delegation to EPP Group; Christian Jacob MP (UMP, FR), Chairman of the Parliamentary Group UMP in the National Assembly, France; Jean-Paul Gauzès MEP (EPP, FR), Former Rapporteur on the European Semester; and Jean Bizet MP (UMP, FR), Vice-President of the Committee on European Affairs in the French Senate

FINAL DECLARATION OF THE 18th SUMMIT

BRUSSELS, 3 JUNE 2013

We, the Chairmen of the EPP Parliamentary Groups, emphasise the importance of providing the next generation with jobs, without increasing debt. Therefore, we strongly believe that creating the right conditions for new growth and jobs in Europe are the main political objectives for the future of Europe.

We believe that in order to achieve these objectives and stimulate growth and jobs in solidarity, Europe should:

- Strengthen and open up the Internal market
- Have a future orientated MFF
- Ensure an effective implementation of EU funding in the Member States

We need a fully operational internal market, establishing the essential measures to foster competitiveness, attract private investment and strengthen our economy.

We are determined to ensure that the Union will have a transparent Budget, which will include all expenditure and revenue, without additional expenses outside the budget (unity of the budget), and which will provide the EU with the necessary means to recover from the crisis and become stronger. Moreover, in order to take account of the latest economic conditions and guarantee the full democratic legitimacy of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014- 2020, a mid-term revision is necessary to cover all aspects of revenue and expenditure. We call particularly, for the flexibility of the MFF and we insist on reaching a roadmap for the future on the reform of the own resources system.

We believe in a coherent European budgetary policy between the various EU policies and between the EU budget and the national budgets. EU investments must be clearly targeted, and concentrate on projects that deliver competitiveness and also which support major goals for the Europe of the future. We need to be able to take all the necessary concrete steps to honour our commitments, especially with regard to the Youth Employment Initiative.

We are convinced that, in order to restore confidence in our economy resulting from these sustainable measures for growth and job creation, we have to insure the proper implementation of rules, put public finances in order, continue to modernise our economies, develop incentives to improve industry participation and at the same time, invest in R&D and innovation.

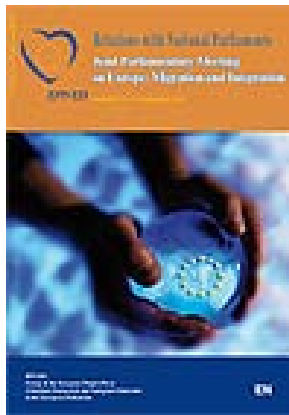
We, the Chairmen of the EPP Parliamentary Groups, thank the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union for its on-going efforts to move forward with the discussions on key issues of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014- 2020, and to advance on the current fora in order to reach a political agreement.

Furthermore, we underline the importance of strengthening relations with our international partners, to meet the challenges of globalization as a decisive factor in enabling European companies to become global leaders. When creating a secure climate for investment and new trading opportunities for European companies worldwide, special attention should be given to the internationalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are enlarging their export capacity.

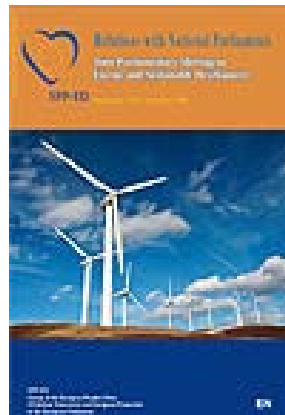
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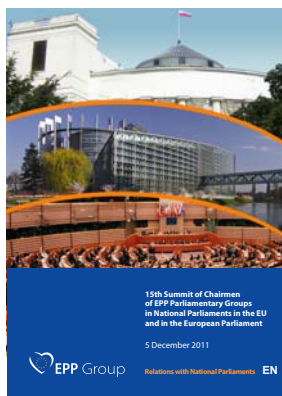
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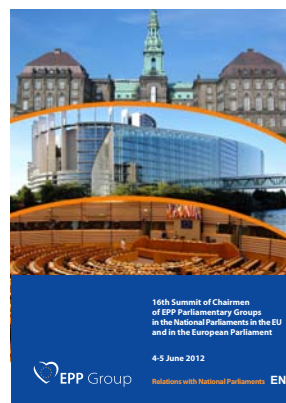
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