



## **20th Summit of Chairmen of EPP Parliamentary Groups in the National Parliaments of the EU and the EP**

**7 April 2014**



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# PROGRAMME

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Paulo RANGEL MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group, responsible for relations with Parliamentary Groups of the national Parliaments, lead candidate PSD, Portugal

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# OPENING OF THE SUMMIT

## PAULO RANGEL MEP,

**Vice-Chair of the EPP Group, responsible for relations with Parliamentary Groups of the national Parliaments, lead candidate PSD, Portugal**



Paulo **RANGEL** MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group, responsible for relations with Parliamentary Groups of the national Parliaments, lead candidate PSD, Portugal

**D**ear colleagues, dear friends,

Election campaigns are a privileged opportunity to meet citizens.

This opportunity should be taken with joy, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude.

We anticipate two or three weeks of intense activity - meeting, listening, explaining, and propagating the common message which must animate us: we are elected politicians and we represent the European citizens.

The circumstances are difficult, some challenges are dangerous, however there is not the slightest reason to be fearful of the elections or their outcome.

We are striving for ideas and programs developed in the name of our citizens, we are all on the same side, coude à coude, to perform the best for everyone, for our countries and for the European Union .

We are living in very delicate financial and economic situations, and very difficult political times.

But above all, our political family, the European People's Party, has been the most positive, consistent, decisive and effective party.

We have been proposing a strict policy, advocating European unity by requiring national and European solidarity.

We begin this campaign with the pride of those who have taken decisive and correct actions in the past and we have a program of proposals for the future.

The program that we take from our congress in Dublin is a set of coherent ideas and ambitious proposals for reforms for a European Union according to its founder and well tailored to the times in which we now live.

These are the first European elections since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and also the first to take place in the economic crisis that we are currently experiencing.

A crisis which began as a financial one, has now also become an economic, political and social one.

A crisis which is starting to show the first signs of

recovery, but we all know it is only the beginning of a new chapter!

Only Europe can guarantee democracy against extremism.

We must sound the alarm: those who peddle anti-European views are mainly opposed to democracy!

A surge in support for the extreme right and left is a danger of which we must all be aware.

It is not only dangerous because it could inhibit the functioning of the institutions, but also because, by granting democratic legitimacy to extremists, we are giving them carte-blanche to gradually destroy the European project in the long term.

However, we must also take great care when determining the response that we will give to the Socialists, for all too often they choose to go down the route of populism, or, when not the route of populism, then that of irresponsibility.

This choice has, in many countries including mine, resulted in the current situation: the need for intervention by the Troika.

Fortunately we are taking the situation back into our own hands and there are positive signs that we are beginning to gain the trust of the people, of businesses and investors.

Friends and colleagues,

I would like to take advantage of this meeting with our colleagues from national Parliaments, to deliver an entirely realistic message at the beginning of this election campaign: the EPP has every chance of winning!

I am convinced that the crisis has given the people the tools to understand the functioning of the economy and the policy choices that we are offering them.

For the first time the parties will also nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Commission.

In Dublin we fired the starting pistol for this race for Europe!

Our candidate, Jean-Claude Juncker, is well known by his credentials, for his expertise and political skill.

I would say that the election of the President of the European Commission by the European Parliament makes the European elections more attractive.

I hope that this will result in increased participation by European citizens.

As I stated in my own-initiative report on the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon with respect to the European Parliament, I believe that the new procedure under which the Commission's 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 in the elections to the European Parliament and more directly to the election of the President of the European Commission.

We are prepared for the electoral campaign next May and we are ready to win it!

# FIRST SESSION:

## **“THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION: EVALUATION AND CHALLENGES FOR 2014”**



## JOSÉ MANUEL BARROSO, President of the European Commission

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, welcomed the initiative of the 20th Summit of EPP Parliamentary leaders, which was held on 7th April, just weeks before the European elections. He underlined that during the economic and financial crisis and up to the present moment, EPP leadership at national and European level has been absolutely crucial, praising the efforts of the responsible governments and the European institutions, he said: “Our trademark in the EPP is one of leadership, responsibility and solidarity, we should not give up on this trademark and the principles we have, we need to defend, explain and promote them. People will not only vote for the present situation but they will also vote for the future. That is why we need to offer something positive, something we can achieve, and not enter into these elections with a negative narrative. There is indeed a lot that needs to be done in the years ahead.”

President Barroso went on to deliver a comprehensive overview of solutions for growth and jobs, stressing that the EU needs fiscal consolidation, more reforms and investment. In addition, he underlined the necessity for a stronger economic and monetary union.

“We have to have the confidence to explain the results of our work - showing that the most important thing now is growth and jobs, and to achieve these we need to make the Single Market fit for the 21st century. We need pan-European infrastructure in science, transport, energy and the digital market. We have to open global markets for trade for instance, with agreements with the United States. We have to continue our efforts for Smart Regulation and keep bureaucracy to a minimum and avoid red tape at national and European level, because bureaucracy is not just a problem in Europe,” said President Barroso. Moreover, he added: “We need to lead the way



José Manuel **BARROSO**, President of the European Commission

for a comparatively secure and sustainable energy and climate policy; we need to manage appropriately legal and illegal migration, combating illegal migration in a determined way and finding an intelligent way of managing legal migration. Last but not least, we must work for a Europe which is stronger and more integrated, at least for those countries that want to continue being more integrated and of course we must keep Europe open for those who want to join.”

In the context of the Ukrainian crisis, the Commission President, outlined that it is crucially important for Europe to be stronger with a solid political union, so that it can act with a Common Foreign and Security Policy and also to have some principles of European identity in the area of defence.

“In the age of Globalisation the margin for decisions is much smaller than before, but politics matters. It matters who will be the next President of the European Commission, it matters which will be the major party in the European Parliament, it matters what overall direction our institutions will take. I believe Europe needs a strong EPP and I believe Europe will only ask the EPP to remain in charge, if the EPP shows its commitment to Europe and European values,” concluded President Barroso.



José Manuel **BARROSO**, President of the European Commission and Paulo **RANGEL** MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group responsible for relations with Parliamentary Groups of the national Parliaments

## DEBATE : LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE



Gustav **Blix** MP (Moderaterna, SE), Member of Committee on European Union Affairs in the Swedish Riksdag, stated that the key to prosperity in the future is the need to continue introducing reforms and also to make our economy more competitive, lower in taxes and more open, “the

differences on how economies look and the different degrees of economic freedom in the Member States is substantial” he said. We have to look at the success of the countries in Europe which have carried out substantial reforms and have healthy economies, such as Denmark. In addition, he mentioned the importance of having one political voice regarding foreign policy in respect to the Ukraine, Turkey and Russia.



Jean **Bizet** MP (UMP, FR), Vice-president of the European Affairs Committee in the French Senate asked what would be the position of the President of the European Commission if France requested a new timeline to gain control of its finances? He also welcomed the work based on the co-decision between

the Council and the Parliament on the CAP Reform. In addition, he questioned whether there would be a review-clause or an alternative in 2016.



David **McAllister** MP (CDU, DE), CDU lead candidate in the European elections intervened and asked the President of the European Commission about the positive advantages of a possible trade agreement with the USA.



José **López Garrido** MP (PP, ES), Member of the Joint Committee for the European Union in the Spanish Congress, spoke about the risks of anti-Europeanism, and stated for instance, that “it will be good for our societies to find that the EPP has a unique and reasonable ‘Eu-

ropean’ way to face immigration in order to avoid misunderstandings”.

# **SECOND SESSION:**

## **AFTER THE CONGRESS IN DUBLIN: A CANDIDATE FOR EUROPE**

## JOSEPH DAUL MEP,

### Chairman of the EPP Group, President of the European People's Party

Mr President of the Commission José Manuel Barroso,  
Mr EPP Vice-Chair Paulo Rangel,  
Colleagues,

I am pleased to meet all of you one last time before the elections in May. These elections are important for us all, both in your own countries and at a European level.

The latest polls are encouraging for the EPP. After a period of uncertainty, our political family's popularity is rising again.

It is up to us to build on and accentuate this trend. That is why we are here today.

It is an important mission, as it is about the direction the EU will take over the next five years. In the EPP, we have a clear line to follow. We must continue the work we have begun, so that on the one hand we can come out of the crisis stronger, and on the other hand we can further European integration.

That said, you will surely tell me that we cannot have one without the other. This is true, and it is what separates us from the Socialists.

We want to continue with structural reform; that is essential. We want businesses to be able to invest. We want genuine growth to return, creating jobs.

Unlike the Socialists, as indeed we have seen in France, we do not want to waver in our efforts and allow ourselves to fall back into the cycle of deficit, debt and bankruptcy.

Something else about these elections is very important to me, something which seems to be merely a 'back-room' matter and yet is crucial for the future.

Each of us, that is every European political party, is putting forward a candidate for President of the European Commission.



Joseph DAUL MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group, President of the European People's Party

This is a massive step forward. For years and years, like you, I have heard over and over again the same criticism of the EU from our fellow citizens: the EU is undemocratic; no-one knows who is doing what.

Now, they will be able to choose between different candidates, and more importantly, different political projects.

Members of the European Council are rather worried about this development. Until now, the choice of Commission President has been their prerogative.

They are thoroughly convinced that they are the most capable of choosing who is best qualified for the job.

I think differently: I believe that the most suitable candidate is always the one who is elected. Why? Because



in addition to ability, the Commission President must have legitimacy.

We cannot ignore the fact that these elections are taking place at a time when Europeans are turning their backs not just on EU politics, but on politics in general. In most, if not all, countries, voting turnout is falling, including for elections which traditionally have a high turnout, such as local elections.

In some areas, turnout is less than 50%!

That does not benefit us; rather, it plays right into the hands of anti-establishment parties.

We should not treat this lightly. Eventually, it could lead to rallies and other mass demonstrations taking power at the expense of universal suffrage.

You know the consequences as well as I do, and they are not at all good for democracy.

People vote against the EU out of fear for their future, their jobs and their security. They no longer think that Europe is about them. They feel that the EU is an exclusive group for insiders, who operate behind closed doors

And unfortunately, they are partly right.

We have a responsibility to let Europeans have a say over what type of Europe they want.

The Commission and its President are responsible for around a third of all legislation adopted in the Member States. These laws have an increasingly direct impact upon the lives of the people of Europe.

The EU plays a part in their every waking moment.

That is why in the future, I would like our Commissioners to also appear on the European electoral lists, as they do for six of us here. It is not enshrined in the Treaties, but it would undeniably be a step towards further transparency.

We must be honest with ourselves and admit that we have not always been up to scratch.

As the EPP, we belong to a special European family, one that, since the 1960s, has been a driving force behind the EU. If we want Europe to continue moving

forward, Europeans must feel a more emotional attachment to it.

To paraphrase my friend Jean-Claude Juncker, this is our mission: to make the people of Europe fall in love with Europe again.

Too often we have taken the EU for granted, and we must acknowledge that we have not always got it right. When it comes to the Single Market, for example, we have to get our act together.

The Single Market must, finally, be completed, and we must add to it a single energy market which, like the CAP, will help us regulate prices and bring about stability.

We must also push forward with the source of growth and jobs which is the digital economy.

Do you know how much 'Non-Europe' costs?

A Parliament study, which I will ask our Secretariat to send to you if you do not already have it, estimates that in just the 24 areas investigated, 'Non-Europe' costs us 6% of our GDP! Imagine: if we legislated a little better, we could increase GDP by 6% without investing a single penny...

The next five years must bring change - progress. We have to use our majority in the Council, and also the majority which I believe we will have in the Commission and Parliament, to drive our Union forward.

To get there, we need to convince the people of Europe to support us, and that begins with a Commission President chosen by them.



## MARIANNE THYSSEN MEP, Lead candidate CD&V, Belgium

Colleagues, good friends, and Paulo too, thank you for organising this meeting at this late stage. I think, colleagues, that it is a good thing for us to hold regular meetings with parliamentary party leaders, with people who hold positions of responsibility in specialised committees in the national parliaments. Exchanging ideas between member parties and with representatives from other Member States is a fruitful approach, I believe. We all have our own concerns, our own agendas, our own priorities, but ultimately we face the same social challenges, which we aim to tackle on the basis of the same shared values and from the same political angle. Now that the European elections are approaching, it seems desirable that we should have the opportunity to listen to one another and to consider how we can reinforce one another, because that after all should be the aim of this meeting.

Colleagues, in those distant days when I first entered the European Parliament – towards the end of 1991 – Europe was still a romantic idea. Public opinion still saw it as something to be taken for granted. The Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall had just been consigned to history; our Eastern European friends were eagerly looking forward to joining the European Union; the Maastricht Treaty had just been negotiated but was not yet signed. We were all dreaming of developing a common home affairs policy, working towards a common foreign policy; we were looking forward to the introduction of the euro, the single currency which at that time did not even have a name yet.

In a word, we were very pro-European and had little or no difficulty in convincing public opinion of the desirability and added value of European integration.

But gradually this situation changed, and the attitude to Europe became more realistic. I consider it a good thing that people started to take a more critical view



Marianne **THYSSEN** MEP, lead candidate CD&V, Belgium

and ultimately to regard the European Union as a level of policy-making like any other, one tier in a multi-tier system of governance in which each tier has its tasks, its responsibilities, which, according to our philosophy, we assign as dictated by the subsidiarity principle.

There was nothing wrong with this development, but I think we have to say that the pendulum has swung too far and we are now realising, basically because of the financial and economic crisis and the sovereign debt crisis, that we have really ended up in a situation where we are hearing Europe decried too much, we are hearing too many Eurosceptic voices, which are also increasingly strident and do not always opt to tell the truth in order to make their case, which resort to populist rhetoric and in the end blame Europe for everything which goes wrong.

What they forget in the process is that the major European objectives and the major European achievements too, which Mr Barroso has also enumerated – peace and political stability, freedom, democracy, a standard of living which the whole world envies us for – are something that, in the eyes of some people, no longer counts for much: some are pontificating about the abandonment of the euro, or have actually called for it, and would not mind if the European Union itself were to collapse, but we – it is important to remember the fact, and I think we should be proud of it – we have not wavered from our course, we have continued to defend European integration, unification, the euro, we have taken emergency measures when the storm was blowing strongest, and we have taken structural measures to ensure that ultimately order was restored.

We owe a debt of gratitude and respect to such people as Mr Barroso, Jean-Claude Juncker and Herman Van Rompuy in this context. I think it is a debt that we really ought to pay, and that we have the right to do so. We have emerged from one of the most serious crisis that we have ever experienced since the foundation of the European Union, and in the end we have emerged from it in one piece and stronger than before. Happily, we can all observe that, as regards economic growth and employment too, we are gradually beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel and that progress is being made.

In this respect I fully endorse Mr Barroso's statement that we should not apologise for the way we handled the crisis. Not everything was perfect, some things could perhaps have been done faster or sooner, but when it comes down to it, it was a very serious crisis, and ultimately we dealt with it, thanks to our firm position and our leadership.

I saw all this at close quarters from here in our political group as a member of the Committee on Economic Affairs together with other colleagues – I see Danuta Hübner here, for example, but other colleagues are present too – and I am glad that we in our political group were also able to work hard on reforming the economic and monetary Union.

And of course we have seen, colleagues, that at the beginning of the crisis, many intergovernmental solutions were devised. We in Parliament do not always like to see this kind of thing. We prioritise the Community approach; we also advocate that some decisions should be incorporated into the Community system.

But in the end we have to accept that 'necessity knows no law'.

I do not mind telling you that, in the report which we were permitted to produce here in the European Parliament, for which I had the honour to be the rapporteur – a report on the future of economic and monetary union – we defended the intergovernmental approach, the emergency measures which had been devised jointly by government leaders when the storm was truly raging, on the basis that 'necessity knows no law'.

I think that our government leaders carried out their task, so let us give credit where it is due. We in the PPE Group ultimately managed to pilot the package through Parliament, gaining acceptance for it on the part of a majority of Members.

We began by focusing on structural aspects. The President of the Commission has already mentioned this. Rules were made stricter; more stringent checks were imposed, both in the private sector and with regard to public finances. The line we finally adopted and stuck to, over which we supported one another in the various institutions and in the committee, in the various governments, but also here in our political group, was that we considered that we could not take a problem which had been caused by over-indebtedness and solve it by incurring yet more debt. In an ageing society and after the crisis which we have been through, we do not believe that, the solution can lie in incurring yet more debt or pursuing a lax policy.

The Union, economic and monetary union, has now been greatly reinforced, and we need to continue in the same direction, and continue to defend this approach, which we should be proud of; above all, we should have no truck with those who consider that we should, rather, be apologising.

We have devised a budgetary union, we have established the banking union, and that is a very important step which will benefit us in the distant future.

But we know that our work is not yet complete. A good deal still remains to be done. So we shall not be twiddling our thumbs during the next parliamentary term and we must above all now, as I am sure we all agree, work for economic growth and find ways of creating jobs again so that we once again give prospects to young people, to young families who are starting to build their lives.

Each of us must do this at our own level. Each at our own level using the instruments that we have at our disposal, both in the Member States and at the European institutions. We must ensure competitiveness, we must pay attention to the factors labour and capital, while certainly not forgetting energy either. We must invest in communication and in transport infrastructure. We must make sure that investment in research and development takes place. And finally also in the education and training of people.

We must focus on the SMEs which provide the most employment, and ensure that, whatever potential for growth there is, they can fully exploit it, including in the internal market. We must also further perfect the internal market, because barriers still exist there, and we really must eliminate them. We must work to establish a dynamic foreign trade policy. We already mentioned this during the previous session and, at colleagues' request, Mr Barroso provided some information about the negotiations on TTIP.

We need to progress towards a different type of growth: we know that things need to be done in a smarter, more innovative and more sustainable manner, and this is something about which we shall have to reach sound agreements; it is also an area in which we can and must reinforce one another. We should not try to score points against one another. We must not cause tensions between the various policy-making levels in Europe. Rather, each of us, at his own level of policy-making – national Parliaments, the European Parliament and other European institutions – must do his own work and ensure that we reinforce one another.

Colleagues, we are all members of the EPP Group. The EPP Group has always been the pioneer of European integration. Europe's founding fathers came from our political parties: Monet, Schuman, Adenauer, De Gasperi, Helmut Kohl. It seems to me that we should also mention Wilfried Martens, the late lamented President of the EPP, and also those people who are in charge now, because we do not always sufficiently give them their due.

And I think that we should also draw attention to the valuable work done by the leaders who guided Europe through the difficult crisis, namely Commission President Barroso, as well as Herman Van Rompuy and Jean-Claude Juncker, who also chaired the Euro Group during this difficult period.

I think we should also congratulate them. In our campaign we should draw attention to the important contributions they have made, to their work and their responsibilities. They should not have to blow their own trumpets: it is up to us to make it known what they have done, to explain to people that their work is also producing genuine results. People do not always appreciate the results, but they are interested in seeing them. And if we can point to results, that will also impart credibility to our action in future.

I think that we should ensure that we remain frontrunners. I hope that you are all able to ensure that we have at least as many representatives in the next European Parliament as before, that we can remain the largest political group there.

That will not be equally easy to achieve everywhere. I shall try to bring it about in my country. I hope that you will also fight for it in yours. But I believe that we really must use this campaign to regain people's hearts, we must genuinely explain the basics of Europe to them again, show what Europe has achieved in recent years, all the things that Europe means to them as citizens. Then they will see that they do not want to return to the situation which existed before far-reaching European integration was attained, then they will see that Europe also makes their region and their country stronger, and ultimately also their own

future, and that, I believe, is the way in which we can regain people's support.

I hope, therefore, colleagues, that we can work together well in that campaign. That, by espousing a common cause and defending the same positions, the same programme, we can also reinforce one another. I am very curious to hear your views on the matter.

But, without further ado, allow me to wish all the leading candidates, and also the other candidates on their lists, for the European elections every success. I have now been a Member of the European Parlia-

ment for some 22 years. Those of you who seek election to it, I can assure you that it is a very interesting place to work. We can influence policies here, we do not have to wait to become members of another institution or have the opportunity to become ministers in our national governments, because we know that we are members of a strong political group, which means that we can influence policy, and that, after all, is what people expect of us.

I wish you all every success in your campaigns, in your own countries.



l-r: Valdis **DOMBROVSKIS**, former Prime Minister of Latvia; Iñigo **MÉNDEZ de VIGO**, Spanish Secretary of State for European Union Affairs; Beatrice **SCARASCIA-MUGNOZZA**, Head of EPP Service in charge of relations with national Parliaments; Joseph **DAUL** MEP (FR), President of the European People's Party and Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament; Paulo **RANGEL** MEP (PT), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for relations with national Parliaments; Konstantinos **MOUSSOUROULIS** MP (ND, HE), Vice-president of the European Affairs Committee, Greece; Marianne **THYSSEN** MEP (BE), lead candidate of CD&V, Belgium; and Danuta **HÜBNER** MEP (PL), lead candidate of Platforma Obywatelska, Warsaw, Poland.



## DAVID McALLISTER, CDU lead candidate (Spitzenkandidat) to the European elections, Germany

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
I would like to tell you about the situation in Germany, in the German CDU and in our sister party the CSU from Bavaria. The German CDU had its annual party conference on Saturday. We had a lot of guests from the EPP parties in Berlin and with this party conference we have begun the first stage of our election campaign for the European elections. We discussed and passed our manifesto. We have an election manifesto which is approximately 80 pages long and it's quite similar to the EPP manifesto which was passed in Dublin.

We have focus in our campaign on foreign affairs defence and security with regards to the new situation in the Ukraine. The second major argument is of course that we want a competitive Europe which will focus on growth and jobs, fostering the single market and free trade with other parts of the world which Mr Barroso was talking about this morning. Investing in education, infrastructure and research is important. Of course we want Europe to be bigger on big things but also smaller on small things. We want Europe to concentrate on the big challenges where we need more Europe but also a more effective Europe.

The polls are quite good in Germany, at the moment the CDU and CSU are somewhere between 36% and 39%. Angela Merkel is very popular and I will be campaigning with her in all 16 German Bundesländer. Horst Seehofer as Chairman of the CSU, the prime minister of Bavaria will be campaigning in Bavaria. We want to send as many MEPS as possible from Germany to Strasbourg so the EPP can remain the strongest parliamentary group.

We are campaigning for our candidates, we are campaigning for Angela Merkel's successful politics in Germany, we are campaigning for our manifesto, but



David **McALLISTER**, CDU lead candidate (Spitzenkandidat) to the European elections, Germany

of course we are also campaigning for Jean-Claude Juncker who was in Berlin on Saturday. He spoke to about 1,000 delegates in Berlin and received a very warm welcome. The European top candidate has a special importance for us since Germany is the home country of the top candidate of the Greens and the top candidate of the Socialists.

There will be two TV debates on Germany television, one on 8th May on the second German channel and one on 20th May on the first programme together with the Austrian broadcasting cooperation. We are very happy that we have a European top candidate who knows Germany very well. He is also well known among Germans. Jean-Claude Juncker is one of the most popular non-German politicians and he speaks our difficult language fluently.

We will campaign very effectively. The 25th May is not about where and from which country the candidate for the President of the Commission comes from, but the question is for which policy he stands. Mr. Schulz's policies are wrong, especially with regards to his position on Eurobonds.

We are on a good track and I think I can say also that for the CSU colleagues Hans-Peter Friedrich and Manfred Weber: CDU and CSU are optimistic that we can win this election and to make the EPP once again the strongest Parliamentary group in Strasbourg and that the next President of the Commission will be once again one of us.



Jean-Claude **JUNCKER**, EPP candidate for the President of the European Commission and Paulo **RANGEL** MEP (PT), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for relations with national Parliaments and head of the PSD-CDS coalition 'Aliança Portugal'



## JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER, EPP Candidate for President of the European Commission



Jean-Claude **JUNCKER**, EPP Candidate for President of the European Commission

Jean-Claude Juncker, former Prime Minister of Luxembourg, rallied European and national Parliamentarians in his bid to become the next President of the European Commission. The meeting was a key step in showing broad party support for Jean-Claude Juncker across the EU28, after he was chosen as the European People's Party candidate for President of the European Commission at their congress in Dublin at the beginning of March 2014. Mr Juncker, the former president of the Eurogroup of finance ministers played a key role in navigating the Eurozone through the financial crisis. With the campaign motto Experience, Solidarity, Future Mr. Juncker is seen by his supporters as having the steady and skilful hand needed to steer the EU out of the crisis.

Addressing the European and national Parliamentarians and heads of the lists for the European elections, Jean-Claude Juncker highlighted his priorities: "I'm a candidate for President of the European Commission because I think that I have the experience required for this position and I also have a good understanding and knowledge about the EU countries, I am amongst those who can bridge the gap between north and south. We have to ensure that everyone in Europe understands that the EPP is the party which is taking action on public finances, that it is a growth-oriented party that wants to increase the competitiveness of the European economy as a whole and bring people together. It's about wealth, growth and sound public finances. I am campaigning for a strong Europe. 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."

In an exchange, the heads of the lists for the European elections presented their political programmes and outlined the challenges that they are facing in their respective Member States.

## DEBATE : TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER



Manfred **Weber** MEP (DE), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group commented on the strategy for the elections. He indicated that in most Member States the EPP was grappling with growing populism from right and left. “If we dwell on whether it is ‘yes or no’ to Europe, then we will

strengthen the hands of the radicals. We have to focus on fighting against the Socialists in the elections”. In the German newspaper, the “Bild”, “Schultz has said that he would like to see more legal immigration from Africa. In Spain the unemployment rate is 50%. How are we going to accept legal migration with such rates? We need to attack the Socialists because that is the real key to the elections”, he added.



Viviane **Reding**, Vice-President of the European Commission and lead candidate of Luxembourg’s Christian-Democratic Party (CSV) reacted to the comment of Mr Weber. She stated that we should not debate the issue “for or against Europe”, because “every time we start such

a debate, we give recognition to the populists, to the extreme right or left, because for us it is clear that we are ‘for’ Europe, since we created it after WW II”. The question is how will we ensure that Europe develops, she said. “It depends on Member States: I am leading the list for Luxembourg, and the questions the Luxembourgers ask are different to those asked by Spaniards. That is why the campaign has to

be national, even though we all have our values, and these values have been established for a long time”. Moreover, “we have to speak about the Charter of Fundamental Rights” she said. We provide the solutions; we do not create the problems! We should provide support in border areas, in order to work closer together. In addition, she highlighted that “we should remember that the ‘glue’ between us is Jean-Claude Juncker”.



Deborah **Bergamini** MP (PDL, IT) stated that according to polls, 60% of Italians were sceptical about Europe. She expressed her concern that participation in the elections will be very low, and said that “this will have to be taken into account by the candidates and the people

running for election”. She highlighted that “electors have become very pragmatic: they are no longer married to a particular ideology!” She went on to explain that in her country a “left” government was being supported by the “centre right”, the so called “new centre right” a new political formation. Because of the pragmatism of voters and political forces, “we will not necessarily find the right future for our countries or for Europe. From the EPP side, we have to explain what the fundamental thinking is, and we should not become too pragmatic”, she repeated; in other words, the EPP should not put forward only an economic standpoint, “we have to clearly explain our values on immigration, justice, family...without these values, our logic will be less important. Our task will be to offer EU people a braver and broader framework than the Socialists’,” she said.



Antonio **Rodrigues** MP (PSD, PT), Member of the European Affairs Committee in the Assembly of the Republic, stated that there are two points of discussion and he agreed with Ms Reding and Ms Bergamini on the fact that we should not make the mistake of using the Europe-

ans elections as a re-run of national elections, therefore, he insisted that “we should champion European values”. The EPP and all the candidates must stand firmly behind those values and the political direction we wish to take. We have national candidates and lists and we need to address the European issues, and make clear our beliefs. He commented that “we have been invited to participate in the Spanish elections, to show that it is a cross-border election!” We need to work even harder than we have worked over the past 5 years, and stick to the plan and rules when it comes to austerity. Moreover, he insisted, “we need to show that it is thanks to our efforts that we are starting to see results, and we need to make it clear that we believe in what we are seeking to achieve. We can return growth, jobs and prosperity!”

to deal with this problem in the medium and long term. We need to strengthen the foundations of the European Union, European borders, single currency, the impact of European legislation etc., and we need to explain this to our people. We believe that Populism is a threat to the Europe”, she concluded.



Teresa **Caeiro** MP (CDS-PP, PT), Vice-president of the Assembly of the Republic, reminded us that countries like Portugal, which have received assistance, “their Governments have been criticized by public opinion because of the reforms that have been implemented”. These elec-

tions will become national elections, and the national opposition will take advantage of this. “We must not forget about the rise of anti-European parties, we need

# THIRD SESSION:

## THE EPP ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

## IÑIGO MENDEZ DE VIGO, Secretary of State for European Affairs, Spain

Firstly I would like to make the point that our political group was the first to propose that the citizens of the Member States of the European Union should be given the chance to directly elect the President of the Commission. I was very pleased to hear Jean-Claude Juncker publicly declare today that he is the only candidate for the Commission Presidency. It is extremely important to bear in mind an agreement signed by Joseph Daul with the other European political groups under which the Socialists and Liberals undertake that the first party to be given the opportunity to form a parliamentary majority on 25 May will be the one that wins the most votes. You sometimes hear people saying ‘the European political parties have all put forward candidates, but another one might come forward’. This will not be the case: the presidency will be awarded to one of the candidates put forward by the European political parties. We need to reiterate that that is a democratic requirement and dispel any doubts that people may have.

Secondly, this places us in a very strong position because Jean-Claude Juncker is a phenomenal candidate. As far as I am concerned, there are few jobs as challenging as that of Commission President. You have to be able to combine vision and ambition, and you need to have had real experience in government to do so. It is impossible to become Commission President without that experience and an in-depth technical understanding of a broad range of very complex issues. Jean Claude Juncker ticks both boxes! For that reason, I have no doubt whatsoever that the other candidates’ comparative weakness will be exposed as the campaign progresses.

Thirdly, we need to remember that our opponents are the Socialist Party – no one else. It will either be ourselves (the EPP) or the Socialists who will win the most votes. There is no need to concern ourselves with the



Iñigo MENDEZ de VIGO, Secretary of State for European Affairs, Spain

other parties. I have heard some people here saying, ‘we’ll end up jumping into bed with the Socialists, it’s no good!’, and that we are giving ammunition to those who say that the Socialists and the People’s Party always end up reaching an agreement. We might well reach an agreement – and if they are seeking to ensure good governance and stability in the EU, we will – but our aim is to win the elections using our own ideas, our own agenda and our own principles; we do not want to have to reach any agreements or form a grand coalition with anyone!

Lastly, the Socialists will obviously try to portray us as the party of austerity that has forced ordinary Europeans to make sacrifices, and themselves as the party of generosity. We need to come up with a device which is entirely in tune with people’s



plight in the current climate. Since my old friend Alain Lamassoure is here, I will mention a device I first heard about from him, which I have used many times since: ‘responsibility and solidarity’. We have found a way to combine these two principles. We have acted responsibly, because you cannot spend what you do not have, you cannot run up exorbitant debts and you cannot avoid making reforms; at the same time, however, if this has happened and you are facing difficulties, those who are best able

to help have to show solidarity, like in any family, and support those that are trying their best to improve their situation – hence ‘responsibility and solidarity’. That narrative gives us legitimacy: we steered Europe out of the deepest, most complicated crisis of its history, and our policies are now starting to bear fruit. We should walk proudly, with our heads held high, confident of winning the backing of our fellow Europeans on 25 May. ‘Amen’, as we Christian Democrats say, and may this be so.



l-r: Iñigo **MENDEZ DE VIGO**, Secretary of State for European Affairs, Spain; Jean-Pierre **AUDY** MEP (FR), Head of the French delegation to the EPP Group; and Manfred **WEBER** MEP (DE), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group



## VALDIS DOMBROVSKIS MP,

Former Prime Minister of Latvia, lead candidate Vienotiba, Latvia

First of all I would like to thank Paulo and the EPP group for organising this Summit 1 ½ months before the European elections, to share ideas. As regards the general campaign line and campaign topics, I believe quite a few things have already been said. The European Union seems to be currently at the stage where economic adjustment is largely completed and now we need to concentrate on how to ensure sustainable economic growth.

The good news for us is that we do not need to promote so much austerity anymore. It is always difficult to promote, although from my own experience I must say it is not impossible. However now we can actually say that our actions are producing results, adjustment is now over and we are moving to the next stage of ensuring sustainable economic growth and job creation. Some people say that the Socialists are also talking about jobs and growth, but that is fine.

The second question is how to ensure jobs and growth. The Socialists key answer seems to be more deficit spending; our key answer seems to be more competitiveness. We need to concentrate on how to strengthen the EU's competitiveness. Inevitably especially in Eastern Europe, security issues have become more of a concern due to Russia's aggression in Crimea. Europe should be united and strong in its message to Russia, that this is not acceptable, and it will not be tolerated - Europe needs to respond and we also need to strengthen our transatlantic link. Although we are now talking about the European elections, we also need to talk about strengthening NATO, to really ensure that situations like this are not repeated.

Coming back to economic issues - of course the next question could be about competitiveness. Talking about competitiveness is fine, but what are the exact proposals? There are quite a few things which are



Valdis **DOMBROVSKIS** MP, former Prime Minister of Latvia, lead candidate Vienotiba, Latvia

known and which could be done to strengthen the EU's competitiveness. It includes strengthening the EU internal market, especially in areas such as energy, services and digital single market. It also relates to investments in research and innovation. There is a welcome development in EU multi-annual budget that this is actually the fastest growing heading in the EU multi-annual budget. We really see that Europe is concentrating on research and innovation because this is one of the very few policy areas where other advanced economies are basically outpacing us. Further proposals include reducing the administrative burden especially for SME's, promotion of international trade, signing free trade agreements with the US and Japan. There are quite a few things that Europe can do. They are not miracle solutions but if these proposals are worked on, this will make the difference between the

scenario of stagnation or near stagnation and the scenario of sustainable growth.

I believe the European People's party is best equipped and has the credibility to deal with these issues. Because of our track record in the past, we can really claim the economic competence to ensure economic growth. We also have a competent and experienced front-runner – Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, who has been working on these issues for many years in different positions, therefore I believe the EPP can maintain its position as Europe's driving force.

Regarding the situation in Latvia, we realistically expect that our party can win three seats out of the eight seats which are assigned to Latvia. I will finish here and once again, I would like to thank you very much for organising this event.

## ALAIN LAMASSOURE MEP, Lead candidate UMP, Ile de France - France

Sadly, France does not have as good a prime minister as Latvia's Valdis Dombrovskis: the country has been in limbo for two years, since the Socialists came to power. The economy is going nowhere, unemployment has never been so high and no one knows what President Hollande's policies are.

Against this background, our party won a historic victory in the local and municipal elections 10 days ago. But in France, the European election campaign is a very different affair.

By 15 April 2014, the French government will, like all the other 27 EU Member State governments, have to present to the European Commission the economic measures it intends to introduce to reduce debt and the deficit and become competitive once more. All it will do is ask for two more years to achieve the aims which it set itself. It is clear that the whole Socialist campaign will be based on the topic already mentioned: 'today's Europe is a Europe of the Right: a Europe of conservatives and austerity. The Socialists must win to ensure that a Europe of growth replaces the Europe of austerity.'

We in France do not fear the Socialists in this election. They will be crushed.

However, we do fear the populist extreme right Front National party (FN), which will campaign on the same issue: 'Europe means austerity.' Their campaign will be anti-European, anti-Euro, anti-Schengen, etc. and will be based on the theme of austerity.

Which means that we, on the other hand, must mount a positive campaign – as was so excellently expressed by our colleagues – by saying: 'Here's how we will lead Europe, with our candidate to the fore, as set out in our programme.' But it will be a tough fight and, for us in France, the challenge is not so much to defeat the Socialists – we will crush them in this election – as to



Alain LAMASSOURE MEP, lead candidate UMP, Ile de France - France

finish ahead of the FN, surveys suggest (depending on the day) that they are not far behind us.

And if, by some misfortune, the FN were to finish ahead of our party (the UMP), it would mean two things: at national level: that the French did not consider our party capable of providing a credible alternative to the current government or in the absence of the current government, and at European level: that one of the great founding states of Europe now had an anti-European party at its helm.

We are clearly in a very strange situation, and we will of course do everything we can to win this election and come out on top.

Our biggest trump card in achieving this is Jean-Claude Juncker.

I am pleased to be able to say this, because initially, in Dublin, the French and my political party supported another candidate in the primary election. However, as Michel Barnier himself said after the results appeared, we are all behind Jean-Claude Juncker, with no reservations and in many cases with real enthusiasm.

And, given the state of mind of our fellow citizens in France (i.e. a kind of collective nervous depression and uneasiness towards Europe) – or as a result of Euro scepticism or a feeling of deception with regard to Europe – the best strategy, which will have the audience in raptures, is to say: ‘From now on there is a Mr Europe; one day there will be a Mrs Europe, but for the moment it is Mr Europe, and you will elect him.

Thanks to the new Treaty you will, by means of the European Parliament, elect not only the majority in Parliament who will vote on all the laws of the EU but also Mr or Mrs Europe just as you elect the Prime Minister in your countries or, as is the case in France, the President of the Republic and the mayors of our municipalities.’ The argument is clear to all and brings reassurance to everyone.

And now some news which is not good for our political party in France but good for Europe: the fact that the Socialists chose Martin Schultz, who is German, this does not count against him in France. I do not know Joseph’s views on this, nor those of Jean Bizet, but in the six months that I have been campaigning or involved in the pre-campaign, I have not heard anyone say ‘I would never vote for a German.’ Which itself is quite a success for Europe!

We are, however, campaigning against Mr Schulz: not because of his nationality but because of his political ideas, in particular the way he presents the Europe of austerity. This is a very important point.

Finally, I will talk about the priorities: the issues on which we are campaigning on the basis that ‘thanks to Europe we can move forward.’

We have listened to excellent speeches by Iñigo and Valdis, particularly on the issues of industry, competitiveness, new technologies and energy. With regard to this last area, if there is no real European coordination and we all carry on just doing as we want in isolation,

then we are heading for disaster. Foreign policy, security and defence are also important, for the reasons excellently outlined by Valdis.

I would also add immigration to the list of vitally important policies. In many countries, one of the main reasons for the existence of populist parties on the extreme right or the extreme left is the problem of national identity and especially the problems created by immigration from outside Europe. If our national immigration control policies are not working, it is not because they are inherently bad but because they have always been essentially national. Now, however, the Lisbon Treaty provides the EU with all the powers it needs to have common policies on both asylum and immigration. It is only at European level, with the same rules on the entry conditions, movement, work and residence of people arriving from outside Europe that we will be in control of immigration. This is an area where our message differs from that of the populists, as we say: ‘yes, immigration is an important point, and we will deal with it with the help of Europe and not in spite of Europe.’

Finally, I would like to mention the speech made by Jean-Claude in Germany yesterday. The question of Turkey’s candidacy for EU membership is a highly sensitive one in France (and I believe it is the same in some other countries, though not all). When I say ‘highly sensitive’, I mean that 80 % of our voters are firmly against Turkey joining the EU.

In France this is a topic which requires Jean-Claude to be completely clear and very specific.

I mention this because I know that not all countries share the same point of view. But it is a subject which, as you know, requires unanimity if an enlargement treaty is to be achieved: unanimity among governments and unanimity of ratification.

In France we changed the Constitution, so that now, since Croatia’s accession, there must be a referendum to ratify the accession treaty for each country seeking membership. This reform came about as a result of the problem with Turkey, and this is a point on which a lack of clarity might well result in us losing a great deal – and a great number of votes among the French electorate.



## DANUTA HÜBNER MEP, Lead candidate Platforma Obywatelska, Warsaw, Poland

After hearing what Valdis and Alain said about the Prime Ministers, I have no other option but to begin by saying that we have a very good Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk.

I would also like to join you in thanking Paulo, Joseph and all the colleagues who have prepared this meeting, for bringing us together.

I would like to start with a few words on Poland; I think you should know that in Poland we do not have a good tradition of a high turn-out in European elections. In the 2009 election, the turn-out was very low, amongst the lowest in Europe.

We are trying to do what Joseph has said. It is absolutely fundamental for our campaign to focus very strongly on convincing the people that indeed their participation in the European elections is extremely important and matters strongly. The opinion polls in Poland now, reflect more or less the expected situation in the European Parliament. In the polls we are very close to the major opposition party, sometimes slightly above, and sometimes slightly below. Therefore, the challenge is really enormous and the fight will be extremely tough.

A few words with regard to the focus of the elections. When I listened to all the colleagues who spoke about the individual campaigns and I listened to Jean-Claude, when he said that we need 28 narratives for the elections, I realized that we in fact raise the same issues, even though strongly tailored to individual situations in Member States.

For example in Poland, immigration will not be an issue yet. But clearly our major focus in the elections must be linked to security and safety. And this is due mostly, of course, to the Ukraine/Russian episode, but also to the



Danuta **HÜBNER** MEP, lead candidate Platforma Obywatelska, Warsaw, Poland

issue of security and safety in a very broad understanding. So not only from the military or from the defence point of view but also the energy issue, food safety and even the safety of foreign trade, as we are also now suffering from the Russians' reaction to our position on Ukraine via trade with Russia. Therefore I think safety and security will be a major issue for us.

But we still face as a country, as a society, and as an economy, the huge challenge of further modernisation, of having growth high enough to accelerate the "catching-up" process, to invest in new growth factors to improve our competitiveness. So all these issues which are important for the EPP, which are related to the competitiveness of the Polish economy, I think they will also come.

One issue which was not mentioned explicitly by other colleagues, but which I think matters strongly in Poland and in many of the new Member States, if I can use this rhetoric, is the quality of life of the citizens. I think this will also be an important issue in these elections.

I would like to raise some issues related to the campaign as such, and to say that we count very much on Jean-Claude Juncker coming to Poznan at the end of April. But we also count very much on José Manuel coming to Krakow. I would like to invite all of you, and I am also sure that Joseph will visit again.

We look forward to the presence of the EPP leaders in Poland, because for reasons which I don't wish to explain now, Poles are very open to foreigners coming and explaining things, sometimes they have more trust in them. I hope that Jean-Claude will also be the most trusted European politician in Poland, as he is in Germany. We Poles like to listen to others, especially if they can say something good about Poland.

I also understand that the challenge ahead is to win the elections. But this is not enough, and I really believe that we have to look beyond the elections and to use this campaign to present our vision for Europe. Current and future Members of the European Parliament of the EPP also have to be prepared for this campaign, to put the right questions to all those who will be coming from different political groups and campaigning for various positions in the European institutions.

From the discussions during the campaign, we should also take good note of what really matters for us, for our public and for our voters. It is important because we will need a very firm institutional foundation for Europe to progress further. We have to build this foundation through a democratic consensus among main political groups. We have to do everything to really play the leading role in reaching out to and building democratic consensus for the future institutions - this is the major challenge. And, of course, we have Jean-Claude Juncker. We have made our choice in an extremely democratic manner. Both Jean-Claude and Michel Barnier made history in participating in this

process which was extremely important and we have to thank them for this.

But now there is no doubt that all our eggs are in one basket - his name is Jean-Claude Juncker. I was extremely pleased when you expressed your enthusiasm for this function during the dinner. I think this is very good news for all of us and I would like to thank you for this indeed very much.

My next issue, as Alain and other colleagues have mentioned, is that we will be presented as a party of austerity, as a party of immigrants or anti-immigrants, if you listen to what Mr Schulz was saying and the reaction of Manfred Weber to this. I think the only option for us is to avoid the situation when all those difficult questions which are important for our citizens and which are also legitimate from the point of view of the future of Europe, are put to the public by the wrong political groups. If they have the monopoly for all those difficult questions then we will be on the defensive. I think this would be extremely bad. That is why we should protect our legitimacy to talk also about the weaknesses of Europe, to confront the challenges that we are facing and we should probably also have the courage to face those questions and to answer them not only when we are attacked by other political groups. I think that the answers we should have to all those challenges, should be those that people can identify themselves with.

David Mc Allister said that Europe should avoid being "too big on small issues" and I hope also that he would agree with me that Europe cannot be "too small on the big issues" which will soon come. In spite of the impressive amount of reforms behind which, or ahead of which, the EPP stands there is still a lot to be done, and that's why we must calibrate Europe correctly, not too big, not too small; this will be also an electoral challenge and also the challenge for the future leaders of the European institutions.

I wonder how we will cope with the differentiated Europe, because it will stay with us for a while. I don't want to talk about divisions in Europe, I hope we will never embark on this rhetoric, but we will remain dif-



ferentiated on many accounts in the years to come, and I think we clearly should see how we want to cope with this. Are we in favour of just different speeds, or are we also in favour of a multi-tiered Europe?

We would also like to receive assurances, and I hope that we achieve this during these elections where the governments will be involved, that the European Parliament is not ignored by the governments in the future. That makes our work much more difficult and that is why we need to gain the support of our governments, in the Council, to build the position of the European Parliament in the context of the major challenge which we have which is the democratic legitimacy. On this we need to be very strong.

I think that the elections should not be seen exclusively as an important gesture of our voters in support of us or our lists. We should clearly focus on attracting people to what we will be saying, to our vision, to the reforms. In this context, the debate between “Spitzen-Kandidaten” is very important. I was very happy to see the report from the first German debate and I know there will be one more in Berlin and in Maastricht and on 15th of May we will have also the one by the European Broadcasting Union. And what I heard - I hope these are just rumours; is that very few of the media from certain countries want to broadcast these debates. It would be a nightmare if we don't have debates between the two major candidates for the President of the Commission, available for all citizens in all languages. I don't know what the EPP can do about this, but we should try to reach out to the national media, and ensure that they get involved in broadcasting the campaign.

We should be very tough, I agree with you, on nationalism. We will have it in Poland; I think the opposition parties will bring the nationalistic approach issues very clearly to the fore, it is popping up all the time. We also know that nationalism has never served Europe, we remember this from the past, and that's why we also have to be prepared to respond to it strongly. Europe's challenge is that when people are unhappy with their national leaders, they vote against them. When people are unhappy with a directive or when people

are unhappy on whatever small issue associated with Europe, they are immediately against European integration. Let me finish by saying that this is the moment where we must return to the values. We must get people behind this current strategic moment and that's why I think that our values are very important.

Finally, we should help people to rediscover the value of Europe and we should ask people to ask themselves the question of what Europe means for them. These elections today after all the reforms, after all the problems of the last years, are not only about Europe but also about democracy in Europe and we must be fully aware of this.

## TOMISLAV DONCHEV MP, Lead candidate GERB, Bulgaria



Tomislav **DONCHEV** MP, lead candidate GERB, Bulgaria

The lead candidate of the Bulgarian GERB party, Tomislav Donchev, began his speech by stressing the need for more homogeneity in EU debates. In the current context, he said a debate “FOR EUROPE” and all the EU’s determinations, goals and disappointments takes precedence over the ideological debates dividing the continent today. Therefore: “this axis of the debate is crucial for most of the old Member States, because of the necessity to give a strong answer to euro-scepticism and populism.” However, this type of discourse should be highly considered by politicians in other Member States too, as “in the geographical periphery of Europe, especially in the Black Sea region, the debate for Europe is even more dramatic.”

Focusing on Bulgaria, Tomislav Donchev underlined the need for redefined European values in a local con-

text and to reinforce them in order to contribute more to the country’s social circumstances: “(...) it is the moment for Bulgaria to redefine European values in the local context and to strengthen their presence in our social life. Bulgaria needs now more than ever to confirm its’ ability to maintain an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, protection of human rights, solidarity between generations and sustainable development, based on economic growth, competitive social market economy and environment protection.” Given the country’s economic situation, Bulgaria will have to make the most of the EU’s efforts to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity.

Regarding the spirit of the campaign for the forthcoming European elections, Mr Donchev said that GERB will organise a positive campaign, promoting the values and goals promoted by the EPP: “Despite the severe nature of the political discourse in Bulgaria, we will follow our principles and will run a positive campaign, engaging our supporters and convincing more and more people that the values and goals of EPP are the best possible way for the future of Europe.” The struggles of GERB members will be directed towards winning people’s confidence, knowing that “the political choice is related to the principles, but it also demonstrates a personal trust in the party representatives.”

In closing, Mr Donchev expressed his confidence in GERB’s potential to win the 2014 European Elections in Bulgaria and to send a higher number of MEPs to the European Parliament: “(...) GERB will win the elections in Bulgaria again - just as we have each time in the past seven years, sustaining the confidence of Bulgarian people in the EPP family and its values.”

## **THEODOR STOLOJAN MEP, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and lead candidate of Romania's Democrat-Liberal Party (PDL)**

Theodor Stolojan outlined the 2014 electoral scene in Romania and proposed a number of key topics for subsequent discussion.

With a view to the European Parliamentary elections and the autumn presidential elections, the political parties would have a fresh opportunity to outline their vision for the future of Romania and the objectives to be pursued by it at EU level.

Notwithstanding the differences between them, there will be a temptation during the May and November elections to focus on internal political issues and ignore the national advantages of EU membership. Despite the interest displayed by political parties in the European elections and their initial preparations for the commencement of the electoral campaign, there was, according to Theodor Stolojan, a risk that lack of debate on European issues could alienate electors, resulting in a low turnout.

The European electoral campaign should, on the contrary, be regarded as an ideal opportunity to discuss matters of interest to Romania and its citizens, including the following:

### **1. Accession to Schengen area**

Although the European Parliament resolution adopted in 2011 indicates that Bulgaria and Romania fulfil the necessary conditions for accession to the Schengen area, no specific date for this has yet been set by the European Council. The opposition of certain Member States and the introduction of new political criteria in place of the technical criteria already met, have led to a certain degree of disappointment among Bulgarian and Romanian citizens. However, insofar as accession to the Schengen area is a requirement under the acces-



Theodor **STOLOJAN** MEP, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and lead candidate of Romania's Democrat-Liberal Party (PDL)

sion treaties and is being sought by Bulgaria and Romania, Member States must acknowledge fulfilment of the basic Schengen conditions and find a solution as soon as possible with a view to securing a unanimous vote in Council.

### **2. Energy and climate policy vs. industrial competitiveness**

In Romania, unlike major competitors, the price of energy is influenced by European policies seeking to prevent and combat dangerous climate changes. As a result, both household and industrial energy costs are constantly increasing, this being further influenced by considerations such as revenue or production costs.

Given that containment of climate change is still an EU strategic priority it is, in the light of the financial and economic situation, necessary to strike a correct balance between environmental and industrial policy. Greater competitiveness and industrial sustainability in the European Union is one of the principal means of achieving economic growth and creating jobs, while achievement of these objectives largely depends on standards of governance and measures to consolidate political initiatives impacting on production costs and costs to final users.

### **3. Strategy for the Danube**

The EU strategy for the Danube, which was adopted in 2011, seeks to ensure sustainable development in the region involving the riparian states, including 14 EU Member States. With no funding specifically earmarked for this cooperation instrument, the project is financed from existing EU funds, together with contributions from the national, regional or local budgets, international financial institutions etc. Experience over the last few years has shown that such joint funding arrangements have not produced the hoped-for results. In order to avoid wasting opportunities of achieving priority objectives in areas such as transport, energy, environmental protection etc., it is necessary to find new ways of implementing the initial Danube strategy objectives.

### **4. Strategy for the Black Sea**

As early as January 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the Commission and the European External Action Service to draw up a strategy for the Black Sea region. This will involve the EU and all riparian states in a joint effort to identify the principal challenges and opportunities so as to help consolidate stability, security, regional cooperation and sustainable prosperity in this area. In the light of recent developments, all parties should try to use existing mechanisms as effectively as possible with a view to realising their strategic potential, along with all the other advantages of the accompanying EU strategy for the Danube and the Eastern Partnership.

### **5. Integration of Roma communities**

Efforts at national level and better EU coordination are necessary to achieve more effectively the integration of Roma communities, which has long been of concern to the EU. Implementation of strategies and plans drawn up at national level on the basis of specific measures and objectives could help improve their economic and social integration throughout the Union. At the same time, this will doubtless be substantially enhanced by a European integration strategy providing a more comprehensive framework for coordination, monitoring and assessment.

### **6. Quality and effectiveness of EU funding**

For a considerable period, the main issue regarding European funding was the question of take-up. The new Multiannual Financing Framework, however, is now focusing more on performance criteria in terms of quality and effectiveness. Following the economic recession in most of the Member States, resulting in reduced EU budget contributions, EU funding must focus on these objectives with a view to increasing added value sustainably.



## DEBATE : EUROPE IS THE SOLUTION



Charles **Flanagan** MP (FG, IE), Chairman of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party in Dáil Éireann, Ireland, underlined that the main issues of this election campaign are the expected turnout and the motivation of people to vote. In his view, the problem is that throughout the years we have failed to address the issue of turnout in

a meaningful way, comparing the 1979 elections when the turnout was 63-64%, to the last elections in 2009 when the turnout was just 40%. The Irish parliamentarian stressed that blaming the EU is common across Europe, in national politics people will vote to punish those who take unpopular measures. He believes that national politicians should change their attitude towards the EU: "National Parliaments tend to associate themselves with the good news, and to associate Brussels with the bad news. This needs a cultural change, which has to be addressed in the national Parliaments. Unlike national Parliaments, the European Parliament is non-adversarial in nature. In Ireland, Socialists are not the real enemy for Fine Gael; the real adversaries are the anti-austerity people, the euro-sceptics."



Emanuelis **Zingeris** MP (TS-LKD, LT), Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Affairs in the Lithuanian Seimas, referred to the need for more Europe in the context of the Ukrainian crisis: "In Lithuania now we are facing the same situation as in the 1990's, however more than 80% of the Lithuanians are in favour of Europe. We should

tell these people that policies will be strong, energy policy will be strong, and the answer to Russia will be strong." The Lithuanian MP also stressed the need for an adequate response to the anti-Christian movements in the Middle East, supporting at the same time the democratic changes in the Muslim world, notably the Maghreb region.



Rafał **Grupiński** MP (PO, PL), Chairman of the Civic Platform Parliamentary Group continued talking about the situation in the Ukraine in relation to the election campaign in Poland. He quoted Jerzy Giedroyc, writer and political activist, who was right when he said that being a member of NATO does not guarantee security for Poland, instead

a stable situation and economic growth in the Ukraine is what really guarantees security for Poland. This is true also for the whole EU, if Ukraine is stable with a strong market economy, it might be a buffer between EU and Russia, not only between Poland and Russia.



Jean **Bizet** MEP (UMP, FR), Vice-president of the European Affairs Committee in the French Senate, stated that French people have traditionally seen globalisation as a negative thing however they thought that Europe would shelter them from globalisation, whereas in the Anglo-Saxon world globalisation has been seen as an opportunity.

Disappointingly, the extremist Front National in France is building on this perception of the French people.



Alain **Lamassoure** MEP (FR), Chair of the Committee on Budgets highlighted the importance of the upcoming televised debate on France24 between Mr Juncker and Mr Schulz. There is a need for an action plan for European expatriates – there are 13 million expatriates around the world - experiencing administrative problems regarding reimbursement of health care costs, retirement, and having their degrees recognised.



# FOURTH SESSION

## SUMMARY OF THE GREEK PRESIDENCY

## KONSTANTINOS MOUSSOUROULIS MP, Vice-president of the European Affairs Committee, Greece

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In a recent address to the European Finance Ministers in Athens, the Prime Minister, Antonis Samaras, spoke of his vision for a Europe offering opportunities to all, showing solidarity to all and asking all to accept their responsibilities.

The unification process has shown that this vision could become reality. How important this really is for European citizens will become clear at the forthcoming elections. It is necessary to keep a close eye on the political climate, since a significant increase in abstention rates, particularly among young voters, and substantial advances by the Eurosceptic parties or extremist blocs will create a domino effect reversing all that has been achieved.

At the same time, it must be remembered that politics provides the ideal interface between vision on the one hand and results and practical solutions on the other. Our political party, the EPP, has both the vision and the practical solutions for Europe.

However, practical solutions are not always convincing in the eyes of the public, particularly in view of the uncertainty, insecurity, unemployment and poverty adversely affecting the daily lives of most Europeans. That is the greatest danger facing Europe. The secret to the future lies in the present, as has been said before. We therefore need immediate and convincing solutions for the present.

It is extremely dangerous to forget the past. As the Spanish philosopher, Santayana expressed it, 'those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it'.

Nobody should therefore forget that that the miracle of peace, stability and prosperity was preceded by the



Konstantinos **MOUSSOUROULIS** MP, Vice-president of the European Affairs Committee, Greece

tragedy of war, instability and poverty.

The EPP is set to distinguish itself as the principal and most powerful political force in Europe. If we all work together to bring about change, our meeting today will greatly contribute to this.

Increased growth, employment and social cohesion, a stronger Union, in particular EMU, responses to external challenges and the promotion of policies across the board such as integrated maritime policy have been the general priorities for a Greek Presidency which has been above all brief (because of the elections) but well filled.

In the time available to me I shall attempt to give a brief assessment of the principal achievements of the

Greek Presidency to date regarding each of the priority objectives.

### **Enhancing growth, employment and social cohesion**

Adoption of the own-resources legislative package will ensure prompt and sustained European policy funding. New European solidarity fund rules were also agreed on (facilitating a swifter response by the fund to natural disasters and the provision of aid to stricken areas within the EU).

Regarding the fisheries policy, approval by the Council of the final compromise proposal regarding the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, ensuring the efficient funding of the new EU common fisheries policy, was of great importance.

### **Progress towards completion of the first and second (single market) act**

Similar successes have also been achieved with regard to competition through single market legislation such as:

1. the directive on electronic invoicing in public procurement, which will help dismantle market barriers, particularly for small and medium-sized undertakings, and help achieve harmonisation and compatibility of electronic invoicing systems in the Member States;
2. the regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market, ensuring safe, trustworthy and consumer-friendly electronic transactions between businesses, individuals and public services (e-commerce);
3. the directive on the disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain European companies and groups of companies. This will improve transparency, thereby enhancing single market competitiveness and efficiency and helping to combat tax evasion.

### **Long-term financing of the economy (infrastructures and SMEs)**

- Adoption of innovation investment package for

new forms of cooperation between the public and private sectors with a view to re-stimulating growth and employment in the EU;

- regarding telecommunications, adoption of the directive on measures to reduce the cost of deploying high speed electronic communications networks was a significant step towards promoting investment in next generation networks with a view to boosting high speed broadband penetration, thereby achieving substantial cost reductions;
- a regulation on guidelines for the deployment and interoperability of trans-European telecommunications networks was adopted.

Concerning employment, the chief objective of the European Union and of Greece in particular is to reduce unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. To this end, it is important to reach agreement with the Parliament regarding the compromise proposal on enhanced cooperation between the public employment services, which is expected to enable existing structures to combat unemployment more effectively, while ensuring a return to a smoothly functioning employment market.

### **Consolidation of EU and EMU**

- a. The Council approved the Parliament proposal for a regulation amending certain provisions relating to financial management for certain Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties in respect of their financial stability.
- b. The political agreement on the SRM, the single resolution mechanism, a major step towards completing the banking union, was of key importance in efforts to consolidate the European Union.

The following directives concerning harmonisation of Member State financial sector policies were also adopted:

- Directive on deposit guarantee schemes simplifying and harmonising national schemes within the EU, providing better protection for depositors and guaranteeing deposits up to EUR 100 000.

- Directive on Central Securities Depositories seeking to ensure safer securities settlement procedures and open up the market in central securities depository services.

Finally political agreement was reached with the Parliament on:

- the financial markets directive and regulation (improving safety and transparency of the financial sector and ensuring financial market stability and protection of investors);
- the directive on undertakings for collective investments in transferable securities concerning custody requirements, compensation and sanctions, ensuring more effective risk management and improving investor protection and confidence.

### **Migration, border controls and mobility of EU citizens in the context of measures to achieve greater security in Europe**

Issues relating to migration and the management of migrant flows are a key priority for the Greek Presidency with regard to both legal and clandestine migration and movement. Its principal achievement in this connection is the review of the list of third countries whose nationals are subject to visa requirements on crossing EU external borders and those exempt from these requirements. Of particular importance is the directive on conditions of entry and residence of migrant workers entering the EU for seasonal work and the support of COREPER II for the compromise proposal emerging from dialogues between the Presidency and the Parliament regarding the directive on conditions of entry and residence of third country nationals in the framework of an inter-corporate transfer.

It is worth noting that adoption of the regulation on the surveillance of EU external sea borders was achieved by the Greek Presidency through joint multi-agency efforts coordinated by FRONTEX.

In the field of justice, substantial progress was achieved regarding the adoption of laws protecting the financial interests of the Union, and of European citizens and

businesses thanks to the harmonisation of legislation and cooperation by the Member States in civil and commercial matters.

The following were adopted:

- a directive on protection of the euro and other currencies against counterfeiting by criminal law and replacing the framework decision;
- a directive on the freezing and confiscation of the proceeds of crime in the EU, making it easier to combat cross-border and organised crime by harmonising national legislation regarding third countries and introducing better safeguards,
- a regulation on the creation of a European account preservation order to facilitate cross-border debt recovery in civil and commercial matters and promote cross-border commercial activity.

### **Across-the-board policies in the European maritime sector**

The approval by the Council of the proposals for directives for maritime spatial planning and the equipping of vessels were major successes for the Greek Presidency, relating directly to shipping safety and conservation of the marine environment. This is expected to have a substantial impact on tourism and the environment.

Significant progress has already been made regarding environmental protection and quality of life.

This is illustrated by the agreements brokered by the Greek Presidency and approved by the Council:

- the introduction of rules and procedures for the introduction of aircraft noise limits in the Union;
- amendment of the regulation on the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions from light commercial vehicles by 2020, application to aircraft emissions of the greenhouse gas emission allowance trading scheme and amendment of the waste transport regulation.

The above agreements illustrate the priority being given to European citizens by the Greek Presidency.

In the cultural sector, one of its main achievements was to broker agreement with Parliament on the adoption of a decision concerning the cultural capitals of Europe for the years 2020-2033, ensuring the continuation of this extremely important European institution.

It also succeeded in obtaining unanimous approval by the Member States of the informal agreement with the Parliament concerning the directive on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of an EU country. This is expected to increase the effectiveness of mechanisms to ensure the return of national treasures to Member States.

In addition, two agreements were reached on institutional issues:

- a regulation on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations; this new regulation is the crowning achievement of the Greek Presidency with regard to institutional matters, since it is expected to improve representative democracy at European level, designating genuinely European political groups able to play an active role in bridging the existing chasm between national and European politics;
- commencement, on instructions from COREPER, of the first informal triologue with Parliament regarding a review of the Statute of the Court of Justice of the EU and in particular the number of judges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The priorities of the Greek Presidency are the priorities of Europe. Economic and social recovery is a rough and rocky path requiring major sacrifices, courage and endurance.

Europe has shown that it is able to rise to every challenge. However, this requires constant and coordinated effort which can and must produce results. Only through joint and concerted action can we rise to such challenges and make our shared dream a reality, resulting in a united Europe acting jointly and effectively on behalf of its citizens, a Europe for the people.





Claude **WISLER** MP, Vice-president of the Christian Social parliamentary group in Luxembourgish Chamber of Deputies



Matej **TONIN** MP, Chairman of the New Slovenia parliamentary group in the Slovenian National Assembly



Heikki **AUTTO** MP, Member of the Administration Committee in the Finnish Parliament



Manfred **WEBER** MEP (DE), Vice-Chair of the EPP Group and Jean-Claude **JUNKER**, EPP candidate for the President of the European Commission



Joseph **DAUL** MEP (FR), President of the European People's Party and Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament and Nicos **TORNARITIS** MP, Spokesman of the Democratic Rally Party parliamentary group in the Cypriot House of Representatives

# 20TH SUMMIT FINAL DECLARATION

**BRUSSELS, 7 APRIL 2014**

**W**e stand for a united Europe.  
We want a healthy society with a new emphasis on solidarity between all Europeans.

We believe that Europe is a vast community of values and principles among which freedom, responsibility, justice, security, respect for the dignity of human life and equality between men and women. We want Europe to be bigger on big things and smaller on small things.

The Chairmen of the EPP parliamentary groups are concerned with guaranteeing peace and security in Europe and its neighbouring countries. In this sense they believe that the solution to the crisis in the Ukraine must be based on the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the Ukraine, within the framework of the Ukrainian Constitution as well as the strict adherence to international standards, the United Nations Charter and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act.

At this important period before the European Elections, the Chairmen of the EPP Parliamentary Groups at national and European level are aware of the significance of the European citizens' vote which will be expressed in the European elections in May. We consider that their primary responsibility is to call for European citizens' participation in the next elections in May. We focus our efforts to encourage citizens to vote because they are voting for the Future of Europe.

The renewal of the European institutions, especially the European Parliament and the election of the President of the European Commission under the new provisions of the Treaty on the European Union will respect the citizens' expectations, making the European Union more democratic and closer to them.

The President of the European Commission must be chosen according to the letter and the spirit of the Treaty taking full account of the results of the European elections. The candidate to become the next President of the European Commission shall proceed from the political family able to form the necessary qualified majority in the European Parliament.

We firmly support Jean Claude Juncker as a candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission, due to his government experience, the fact that he is a democrat open to dialogue and a man with a spirit of solidarity, due to his strong European convictions, his ambitious program oriented towards social harmony, financial stability, modernisation and economic progress.

We believe that the European Union can solve the economic crisis that has affected all levels of society. We are certain that finding solutions to the crisis means making clear choices and we, the EPP, have proved to be the party of responsible government which has acted while others talked, and has worked and works to lead Europe out of the crisis.

We do not want to incur debt, which our children will be forced to pay back. We want the European economy to be competitive and innovative and to create the right conditions for new and sustainable growth and jobs. For this reason, we know that to create jobs and ensure continued wealth, targeted investment is the key, and reforms are necessary.

We are determined to ensure that all European citizens are able to look to their future with confidence again.

We, the Chairmen of the EPP Parliamentary Groups, work hard to shape an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and where entrepreneurship is rewarded, not held back. Our key political objective is to creating the right conditions for our companies to prosper. Less red tape and a truly business-friendly environment is what the European Union needs.

We are committed to achieving a victory in the European elections. The European Union needs to strengthen the representativeness of its institutions and to reinforce the EPP as the leading dynamic political force.

The European Union is an example of security, social harmony and democracy. We are determined to safeguard all the acquis. The candidates of the EPP have our confidence.

# Latest internal publications

## “National Parliaments” Series

### EPP Group in the European Parliament



Joint Parliamentary Meeting on  
A New Deal for European Economic Recovery?  
(16-17 February 2009)  
June 2009/ EN, FR



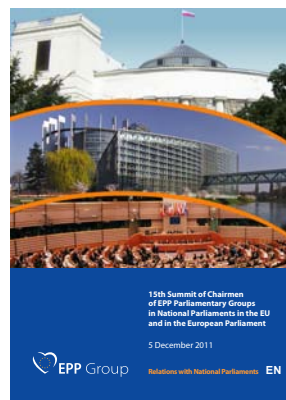
12th Summit of Chairmen of EPP  
Parliamentary Groups in the National  
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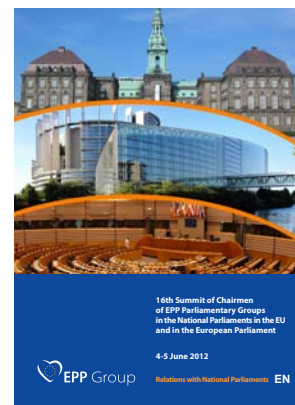
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(6-7 December 2010)  
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Parliamentary Groups in the National  
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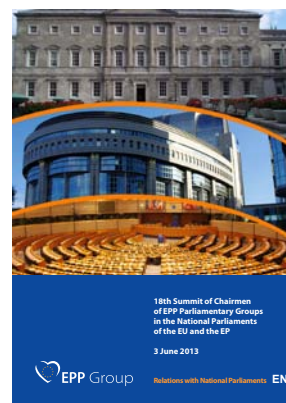
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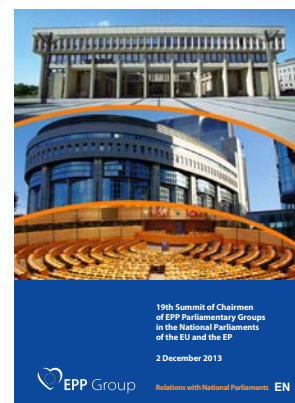
16th Summit of Chairmen of EPP  
Parliamentary Groups in the National  
Parliaments in the EU and in the EP  
(4-5 June 2012)  
December 2012/ EN, FR



17th Summit of Chairmen of EPP  
Parliamentary Groups in the National  
Parliaments in the EU  
(3-4 December 2012)  
May 2013/ EN, FR



18th Summit of Chairmen of EPP  
Parliamentary Groups in the National  
Parliaments in the EU  
(3 June 2013)  
May 2013/ EN, FR



19th Summit of Chairmen of EPP  
Parliamentary Groups in the National  
Parliaments in the EU  
(2 December 2013)  
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in the European Parliament

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