



EPP GROUP
ACHIEVEMENTS
2014
2019





State of the Union

The EPP Group can be proud of its achievements over the last five years.

When looking at our track record since the last elections in 2014 until today, it is fair to say that a lot of work has been done.

We have kept our promise to deliver to the people in policies that matter for them.

We have been determined and taken major steps in securing our borders, fighting terrorism, boosting investment, job creation and in many other important areas.

Still, a lot of work remains to be done. We should not lose sight of the huge opportunity we have to continue delivering on our top priorities and should seize the moment to make sure the changes we have made make a real difference in people's lives.

We believe that an effective Europe is a Europe that delivers, and for that, **the EPP Group is making a difference.**

Manfred Weber

Chairman of the EPP Group
in the European Parliament



We have made our borders more secure

Passport-free travel within the EU can only be guaranteed if we know who is crossing our external borders at all times.

The EPP Group has led EU efforts in securing our external borders so that Europeans continue to enjoy the freedoms to which they are accustomed. We have created a **European Border and Coast Guard** from Frontex, with an operational staff of up to 10,000 and capacities that are ready to be deployed when a country is faced with disproportionate migratory pressure.

EPP Group Members championed an electronic **Entry-Exit System** registering all non-EU citizens arriving in the Schengen area so that criminals with false identities trying to enter our territories can be easily identified. For visa-free travellers, a pre-registration system - ETIAS - has been put in place to further assess security risks.



We fought for your security

After a series of terrorist attacks which rocked Europe in recent years, the EPP Group was the first political force to understand the urgency of beefing up Europe's security infrastructure. In order to help law enforcement authorities deal with the immediate threat, we have updated the continent-wide legal framework on **terrorism, clearly classifying as crime the planning and financing of terrorist attacks as well as travelling abroad for terrorist purposes**. We have put in place **systematic checks** for all persons crossing the EU's external borders in order to identify foreign fighters returning to EU territory.

We are also putting an end to elaborate terrorist financing. Additionally, we have come up with a series of recommendations on how to **prevent radicalisation**, particularly of home-grown terrorists and in prisons. We have improved the traceability of firearms to avoid them ending up in the wrong hands. The EPP Group led the tremendous push for **EUROPOL**, our law enforcement agency, to become the EU hub for the exchange of intelligence and information that is key to preventing terrorist attacks. We were the only political Group in the European Parliament to support from the outset the setting-up of a referral unit within EUROPOL to detect and take down online terrorism propaganda. Despite huge opposition from the European Left, our MEPs have also made terrorists' moves traceable by making sure airlines disclose records of passengers flying into Europe (**Passenger Name Record**).



We have not forgotten the victims

Many people fall victim to crime in the EU every year - around 30 million crimes alone, excluding minor offences, are reported to police.

The EPP Group has continuously fought for specific focus to be given to the needs of victims of crime, to protect their dignity and security. In this parliamentary term, we ensured that victims of crime are recognised and receive proper protection, support and access to justice across the EU.

We have also put our efforts behind combating all forms of violence against women and girls to ensure that victims are protected and perpetrators are punished.



We created the conditions for the EU to take responsibility for its own defence

With the emergence of hybrid warfare, cyberattacks, new forms of terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Europe is facing its biggest threat since the Cold War.

Europe needs to grow up and stop looking to the US for its security. In this mandate, the EPP Group pushed hard for the creation of a **European Defence Union** as no country alone can guarantee its own security. We pioneered the idea of the **European Defence Fund** to improve cooperation and investments in defence. Established with €13 billion, it will lead Europe a big step closer to a fully-fledged **EU Defence Research programme**.

In order to prevent third countries like Russia using gas supply as a political tool, EPP Group Members have pushed through a law ensuring that **no country is left alone should a gas crisis** arise. In the case of a serious gas shortage in any EU country, its EU neighbours will step in.



We mobilised more investment for more jobs

EU countries are steadily on the path of growth and the unemployment rate has gone down from 10,2% to 6,5% during the electoral period.

The so-called Juncker Plan (EFSI) to mobilise private investment in Europe started in 2015 and until the end of 2017 it generated more than **750,000 jobs** by reaching a target of €350 billion in investments in 2018. **EFSI 2.0** is set to raise investments to over €500 billion, thus increasing EU GDP by 1,3% by 2020. These plans are already **benefitting more than 700,000 SMEs** all over Europe.

InvestEU is the Union's new instrument to continue the work of the EFSI for the period 2021-2027, with the aim of triggering **€650 billion in additional investment**.

Reforms in the banking sector have secured your savings without using taxpayers' money to bail out failing banks and to prevent a severe financial crisis from happening again. The EPP Group has consistently supported SMEs in any related legislation, particularly in budgetary allocations.



We shaped a new generation of fair trade deals that create jobs

With a landmark **Trade Agreement with Canada (CETA)**, which the EPP Group wholeheartedly supported, despite hesitancy from the European Left, Europe signalled that it was committed to an open, multilateral system of free and fair trade. By its first birthday, CETA had already given a boost to European exports by saving €590 million in duties and increased exports in multiple sectors.

After Canada, the EU has concluded Trade Agreements with Japan (JEEPA) and Singapore. JEEPA is the most significant bilateral Trade Agreement that the EU has ever concluded. The economic area covered accounts for almost 40% of world trade. Moreover, it will create **an open trading zone covering 635 million people** and almost one third of the world's total GDP. Trade with countries outside the EU provides jobs for 31 million Europeans. That means one in seven jobs in the EU depends on exports. The EPP Group has protected these jobs from unfair trading practices flooding our markets with products made in third countries.

We adopted a screening mechanism on foreign direct investments in the area of security and public order that will help us **tackle questionable investments** that may cause a security threat. We have also led in granting our industries new trade defence instruments to face the unfair practices of China and others.



We defended our values outside the EU

Through trade, the EPP Group has helped countries like Ukraine stay anchored to Europe. We strongly believe that every country has the right to make free choices about their political association and economic integration, and should not be punished for that.

On the EPP Group's initiative, the **Democratic Opposition in Venezuela was awarded the EP's Sakharov prize** for Freedom of Thought for their tireless work in favour of freedom and human rights in the face of an oppressive regime.

Thanks to an EPP Group demand, the EP strongly supported the establishment of a new sanctions regime punishing state and non-state actors responsible for gross violations of human rights. This **European Magnitsky Act** should carry the name of the tax accountant killed in a Russian jail who has become the global symbol of all those individuals bravely fighting their government's malpractices.



We scored big wins for consumers

Thanks to the EPP Group, from now on you can watch your favourite TV show even when you travel. **Removing unjustified geo-blocking** in 2018 allowed consumers to shop and access their domestic subscriptions for online music, film or sport broadcast services when travelling to another Member State on a temporary basis and without being discriminated on the basis of their place of residence.

Thanks to the **end of roaming charges** in July 2017, Europeans travelling within the EU only pay domestic prices for roaming calls, SMS and data.

The **WiFi4EU** initiative will bring high-quality wireless Internet access to thousands of local communities free of charge (at least 6,000-8,000 local communities by 2020). The new **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR), supported by the EPP Group, puts Europeans back in control of their personal data. We also supported the first ever Regulation on **Drones**.

A new set of **copyright rules will guarantee fair pay for journalists, artists** and other creators of intellectual property on the Internet when their work is shared by commercial platforms.



We committed to improve health

The EPP Group is committed to doing everything in its power to ensure that nobody dies from cancer in the EU 20 years from now.

53% of work-related deaths are due to cancer. To prevent these premature deaths, a series of legislative initiatives will **limit the exposure of workers to a number of hazardous substances**. The EPP Group stands for safer, up to date and binding exposure limits to be applicable at the workplace and in all Member States. Thanks to the EPP Group, **cancer research has been prioritised in the upcoming EU Research programme** for 2021-2027 – Horizon Europe.

We have also imposed more rigorous **rules on medical devices** to ensure that devices such as breast or hip implants are traceable and comply with EU patient safety requirements.

Under the lead of the EPP Group, the EU set **strict rules for medicinal products used for animals**, namely antibiotics in order to halt the spread of drug resistance from animals to humans.



We have protected our farmers and fishermen

The EPP Group led a successful and swift drive to **update the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) rules** so as to reduce red tape, access EU financing more easily, boost support for young farmers and make relationships within the food supply chain fairer.

The legislation to **ban several unfair trading practices** in the food supply chain was a major achievement in favour of all farmers, SMEs and others who deal with bigger players - like large retailers. It will prohibit numerous malpractices, including delaying payments and changing agreements unilaterally.

Our MEPs supported 600,000 EU beekeepers by calling for measures to stop honey adulteration and to establish a science-based approach to manage permits for chemicals which may affect bees' health.

The EPP Group has protected **North Sea fishermen** by backing a framework of rules enabling **sustainable fishing** in the North Sea.



We built a stronger EU to fight against financial crises

We have introduced reforms to ensure that financial markets across the EU are well regulated and strong and stable so as to reduce the likelihood of future financial crises. Banks and financial institutions are now better capitalised and the EU and Member States better equipped to face future financial crises.

The package of banking reforms together with several other financial sector regulations adopted in March and April 2019 will further **strengthen the resilience of EU banks** and reduce the risks related to financial markets. The regulations will also create more flexible conditions for lending to SMEs and funding of infrastructure projects.

Integrated EU financial markets improve the funding conditions of our economy, promoting jobs and growth on a sustainable basis.

In this regard, the EPP Group is committed to the reform process launched by **the Capital Market Union (CMU)** that improves the financing conditions of the EU's real economy.



We created new opportunities for young Europeans

In this mandate, the EPP Group has fought to substantially increase European funding to all youth-related policies, be it fighting youth unemployment or the most popular youth programme to date: **Erasmus+**. The Europass portal has been upgraded so that young Europeans can showcase their skills and qualifications anywhere in the EU.

Finally, with the **DiscoverEU** initiative that was launched in 2018, the EPP Group has made a substantial investment in young people and in Europe's future by reinforcing the main aim of the EU: to bring people together. Under the DiscoverEU umbrella, almost 30,000 young people turning 18 received a free ticket to discover our continent by train in 2018. For 2019, there will be 40.000 free tickets.



We fought for zero tolerance against fraud

The EPP Group strongly supported the creation of the **European Public Prosecutor's Office** (EPPO), which will be able to cross national borders to investigate the fraudulent use of EU money.

The creation of EPPO was complimented by a law harmonising the way crimes against EU finances are prosecuted and penalised in all 28 EU Member States. Currently, the EU loses around €600 million each year to fraud in EU funds.

The Anti-Money Laundering Directive helps to tackle many sorts of crimes - from terrorism to financial and organised crimes - as it helps to reveal the real owners of companies.



We made progress on family, work-life balance and women's empowerment

The average gender pay and pension gap stood at 38,3% in the 65 and over age group across the EU's 28 Member States in the year 2015. In half of the Member States, it has even widened over the past five years.

The EPP Group has put forward recommendations on how to address this issue and we are pushing hard for Member States to take those recommendations on board.

The rules set for the **minimum level for parental, paternity and carers' leave** as well as the right to request flexible working arrangements were adopted in April 2019. It is a major step forward for parents and carers and will help caring parents in balancing their professional and family life.

It was an EPP Group success to ensure for working parents 10 days paternity leave, remunerated at sick pay level of the Member State and 4 months parental leave. It also introduces possibilities for flexible working arrangements as well as 5 days of guaranteed carer's leave, for the first time at European level.



We fulfilled our commitments on climate change

With the Paris Climate Agreement, Europe has committed itself to helping keep global warming at 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. In order to honour the agreement, it needed to limit its CO² emissions. It did so with a package of laws championed by the EPP Group that **capped emissions from the industry, aviation and non-industrial sectors**, like agriculture, and set down rules on land and forest management.

New CO² emission standards for passenger cars and vans were set to effective, yet realistic levels, thanks to the EPP Group. The same goes for lorries that for the first time received CO² emission standards. The new targets will give the automotive sector the right incentive to introduce more fuel-efficient cars and put low or even zero-emission cars on the market.



We helped to clean the seas and shores for our children

Modern life without plastics would be unthinkable but the downside is that plastic ends up littering the sea and the shores, thus severely harming the marine ecosystem. The EPP Group supported the **ban of single-use plastic products** for which sustainable alternatives exist, thus allowing Europe to go ahead with innovative standards for both producing and recycling industries.

Preventing and recycling waste will not only clean our planet and save natural resources but it will also provide new business opportunities. New rules approved as part of the **Circular Economy Package** do not only cut the amount of waste and increase recycling but they also have the potential to create 80,000 new jobs.



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Editor: Pedro López de Pablo

Responsible: Pete Pakarinen

Coordinator: Pascale Raffegeau

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