



YEARS



70 YEARS OF HISTORY  
1953-2023

## 11 September 1952

Following the first official meeting of the Common Assembly of the Europe Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (forerunner of the European Parliament), Christian Democratic delegates from Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands form an unofficial alliance.

### First Official Meeting



## 11 May 1954

Alcide De Gasperi, Founding Father of the European Union, is the first Christian Democrat to be elected President of the Common Assembly: **“The future will not be built through force, nor the desire to conquer, but by the patient application of the democratic method, the constructive spirit of agreement, and by respect for freedom.”** (Alcide De Gasperi, accepting the Charlemagne Prize for his Pro-European Commitment, 12 January 1952).

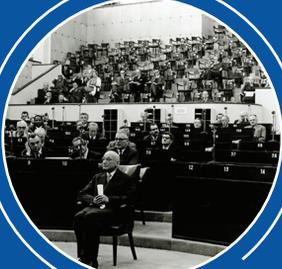
### First Elected President



## First Christian Democratic Group Founded

### 23 June 1953

The Christian Democrat Members of Parliament of the six original Member States founded the first Christian Democratic Group within the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).



**11 September 1952**  
**6 Member States:** Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

**1952**  
Christian Democratic Group  
**38 seats from 78**

## Chair of the Christian Democratic Group

Emmanuel M.J.A. Sassen  
Member of the Common Assembly of the ECSC (The Netherlands)



## 1979 | First Direct Elections to the European Parliament

**1 January 1973**

**9 Member States:** First Enlargement as Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom join the European Economic Community.

**First Enlargement**



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**Enlargement** is one of the EU's biggest success stories, promoting stability and prosperity on the continent while consolidating the common principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and a market economy.



**19 December 1979**

Defending citizens' interests, the EPP Group voted with the European Parliament to reject the 1980 European Budget: **"A vote for the budget would constitute a vote for the stagnation of the Community that cannot be in the interest of this House."** (Egon A. Klepsch, Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Addressing the European Parliament, 12 October 1979).

**Rejection of the 1980 European Budget**



**First Direct Elections**

**7-10 June 1979**

The first direct elections for Members of the European Parliament took place in the Member States. Direct elections allowed European citizens to effect policy and the direction of the European Union.



The Christian Democratic Group changed its name to the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group), abbreviated to the EPP Group.

**EPP Group**  
107 seats from 410

**Chair of the EPP Group**  
Egon A. Klepsch MEP  
(Germany)



## 9 November 1989

The EPP Group spearheaded European integration after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the imminent demise of totalitarianism across Central and Eastern Europe.

### At the Forefront of European Integration



## 26 December 1991

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the EPP Group supported the emergence of pluralist democracies in the former Communist countries.

### Supporting New Democracies



## Reunification following the fall of the Berlin Wall

### 3 October 1990

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EPP Group advocated for the reunification of Germany within the European Economic Community: **“For the first time since the end of the Second World War there is thus legitimate hope that the East-West conflict will be overcome, that there will be lasting stability and freedom for all throughout Europe.”** (Helmut Kohl (EPP), German Chancellor: EP Plenary discussion, 23 November 1989)



### 1 January 1981

**10 Member States: Second Enlargement** as Greece joins the European Economic Community.

### 1 January 1986

**12 Member States: Third Enlargement** as Spain and Portugal join the European Economic Community.

**EPP Group**  
121 MEPs from  
518

**Chair of the EPP Group**  
Egon A. Klepsch  
MEP (Germany)

### 7 February 1992

The EPP Group has always been active in strengthening the process of European integration. The signing of the **Maastricht Treaty** was fundamental to this process.

It created the European Union, ushering **“a new and better chapter of European history.”** (Leo Tindemans, Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, European Parliament Debates, 14 October 1992).

### Signing of the Maastricht Treaty

The Maastricht Treaty laid the foundations for a single currency, the euro, and expanded cooperation between European countries. It also increased the power of the European Parliament, placing it on an equal footing with the Council of the EU in adopting legislation.

### 1 November 1993

The Maastricht Treaty officially came into force and the European Union was officially established.

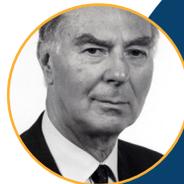
### Official Establishment of the European Union



### Establishment of Europe's Fundamental Principles

#### 1 January 1993

The Single Market, the cornerstone of Europe's integration, and its four freedoms are established: the free movement of goods, services, people and money is now a reality.



**EPP Group**  
162 MEPs from 518

**Chair of the EPP Group**  
Leo Tindemans MEP  
(Belgium)

**President (EPP Group) of the European Parliament**  
Egon A. Klepsch MEP  
(Germany) 1992-1994

### 4 January 1999

The euro is born. For the EPP Group the single currency created a strong symbol of European identity and the expression of European Union values.

“It represents the most tangible historical endorsement of the extraordinary adventure that is European integration, pursued for almost half a century on the basis of pooling national sovereignties.” (Nicole Fontaine, President (EPP-ED Group) of the European Parliament, Statement Marking the Introduction of the euro, 31 December 2001)



### Single Currency as a Symbol



### The Largest Group in the European Parliament

#### 10-13 June 1999

European elections saw the EPP Group triumph. EU citizens supported the EPP Group vision of a reunited continent. Since 1999, the Group has remained the largest in the European Parliament.

The Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group), changed its name to the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group) and European Democrats, abbreviated to the EPP-ED Group.



**EPP-ED Group**  
233 MEPs from 626

**Chair of the EPP-ED Group**  
Hans-Gert Pöttering MEP (Germany)

**President (EPP-ED Group)  
of the European Parliament**

Nicole Fontaine MEP (France)  
1999-2002



**1 January 1995**  
**15 Member States: Fourth  
Enlargement** as Austria, Finland  
and Sweden join the  
European Union.



### 1 May 2004

The EPP-ED Group supported the EU's biggest ever enlargement, accepting 10 new countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

The enlargement marked the end of the division between the two Europes, which had been separated since the end of the Second World War by the Cold War and the Berlin Wall.

### Supporting the Biggest EU Enlargement

**"On 13 June 2004, Europeans took a decisive step towards the realisation of the grand design of the Founding Fathers of the European Union: after 50 years of oppression and Communist dictatorship, people in Central and Eastern European countries won the right for the first time to join other citizens of Europe."**  
(Budapest Declaration, 2004)

For the EPP-ED Group reunification represented an opportunity to build the entire continent on the same set of values: democracy, the rule of law, and the respect of fundamental freedoms and rights.



**EPP-ED Group**  
268 MEPs from 732

#### Chair of the EPP-ED Group

Hans-Gert Pöttering MEP  
(Germany)

#### President of the European Commission

José Manuel Durão Barroso  
(Portugal)  
2004-2014



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**1 May 2004**

**25 Member States:**

**Fifth Enlargement** as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia join the European Union.

### 14 July 2009

Confirming the EPP Group's influence, Polish MEP Jerzy Buzek was elected President of the European Parliament.

A symbol of Europe's reunification, his election expressed Europe's desire for freedom and turned a new page in the history of European integration.

President Buzek considered his election **"a tribute to all those millions of people who fought for democracy"** and to those

under Communism who refused to **"bow to the system."** (Jerzy Buzek addressing the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 14 July 2009).

Going back to its roots, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group) and European Democrats, changed its name to Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group), abbreviated to the EPP Group.

### Election of the European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek



### EPP Group wins the European Elections

#### 7 June 2009

The EPP Group emerged victorious from the European elections with 264 MEPs elected to represent 500 million Europeans.



**EPP Group**  
264 MEPs from 736

**Chair of the EPP Group**  
Joseph Daul MEP (France)

**President (EPP Group) of the European Parliament**  
Jerzy Buzek MEP (Poland)  
2009-2011



**1 January 2007**  
27 Member States:  
Sixth Enlargement as  
Bulgaria and Romania  
join the European  
Union.

### 12 October 2012

The EPP Group has always been actively engaged in the field of human rights and has constantly encouraged a policy aimed at guaranteeing respect for fundamental freedoms and strengthening democracy throughout the world.

In 2012, the EU received the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.

When awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU, the Nobel Committee said its decision was based on the

stabilising role the EU has played in transforming most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace. The EU's most important achievement has been **"the successful struggle for peace and reconciliation and for democracy and human rights."**

**"The European Union is the biggest peace-making institution ever created in world history and the strongest possible recognition of the deep political motives behind our union."** (Herman Van Rompuy, President (EPP) of the European Council, 12 October 2012).

### Nobel Prize



**EPP Group**  
270 MEPs from 736

**Chair of the EPP Group**  
Joseph Daul MEP (France)



## 2014 | European Parliament Elects President of the European Commission

### EPP Group Again the Largest

#### 22-25 May 2014

The EPP Group retained its position as the largest political Group in the European Parliament following the European elections.

### Election of Jean-Claude Juncker as President

#### 15 July 2014

For the first time in the history of the EU, the European Parliament elected - through the vote of EU citizens - the President of the European Commission via the *Spitzenkandidat* (lead candidate) process.

As the largest Parliamentary Group following the elections, the

EPP Group was best positioned to influence the decision of the EU Member States on the next Commission President. Thus, the EPP Group lead candidate Jean-Claude Juncker was elected President, pledging **"A new start for Europe"** and an **"agenda for jobs, growth, fairness and democratic change."** (Jean-Claude Juncker, Strasbourg, 15 July 2014)

# 2018 | EPP Group Achievements in the 8th Parliamentary Legislature | 09

## 2014-2018

The EPP Group delivered on its 2014 election promises and continued its work in the European Parliament to provide a better future for Europe's citizens from 2014 to 2018. In the 8th legislature, the EPP Group achieved the following successes:

- Implemented security measures to ensure the safety of European citizens
- Stabilised the migration crisis
- Created growth and jobs across Europe
- Abolished roaming charges and set in motion the Digital Single Market
- Secured extra funding for the Erasmus+ Programme

- Adopted policies to fight climate change

With the European Elections set to take place the following year, the EPP Group embarked to build upon these remarkable achievements, outline its robust political priorities, and forge a Europe that is truly fitting for the challenges of the 21st century. Throughout the election campaign, the Group ardently emphasised their unwavering commitment to placing citizens at the very core of Europe's future.



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**1 July 2013**  
**28 Member States:**  
**Seventh Enlargement**  
as Croatia joins  
the European Union.



**EPP Group**  
219 MEPs from 751

**Chair of the EPP Group**  
Manfred Weber MEP  
(Germany)

**President (EPP Group) of  
the European Parliament**  
Antonio Tajani MEP (Italy)



# 2019 | EPP Group again the largest Group in the European Parliament

## Female Leadership for Europe

1 December 2019

**Ursula von der Leyen is the first woman to become President of the European Commission.** Two years later, the Parliament elected Roberta Metsola as the youngest President ever of an EU Institution. Their success opened a new chapter for female leadership in the European Union. The EPP Group strongly supports gender equality and empowering women across Europe.



## Leading Europe's Climate Policy

June 2021

**The Parliament approves the Climate Law, setting the goal of cutting CO2 emissions by 55% by 2030.**

The EPP Group succeeded in bringing this legislation to the finish line, aiming for a high level of ambition in the fight against climate change. The EPP Group is committed to leading Europe's climate policy, seeking to bring all citizens on board and leave a better planet for future generations.

2019:  
EPP Group  
182 Members from 751

Chair of the EPP Group  
Manfred Weber MEP  
(Germany)

President (EPP Group) of  
the European Parliament  
Roberta Metsola MEP (Malta)

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## Unprecedented health emergency in Europe



11 March 2020

**WHO declares Covid 19 a pandemic.** When Covid-19 struck Europe, the EPP Group strongly supported joint European action to defeat it. Europe rose to the challenge: purchasing, supplying and distributing vaccines. The EPP Group is committed to helping researchers save lives and patients seek the best treatments. As a result of the EPP Group's efforts, the European Parliament established the Special Committee to Combat Cancer (BECA).

## Supporting Ukraine

24 February 2022

War returned to the European Continent following Russia's unprovoked attack against the sovereign state of Ukraine and this war has now continued for more than a year. The EPP Group has stood by the Ukrainians since the beginning of this war, supporting all sanctions against Russia and aid to Ukraine. The EPP stands by Ukraine whatever it takes.

*"Our Ukrainian friends show us every day what it means to be European. They show us that if people have a choice, they choose democracy over autocracy, the rule of law over rule of few, and freedom over tyranny. That is called the European way of life." (Manfred Weber, Strasbourg, 15 February 2023)*

## EPP Group in the European Parliament

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