

EPP WELCOMES EURO & SHENGEN EXPANSION

1/1/2007



The President of the European People's Party (EPP) **Wilfried Martens** welcomed the EU member-states that joined today the zone of the single European currency, the Euro, as well as the member-states that joined the European area for freedom of movement of persons, the Schengen area, a few days earlier. Specifically, as of today, the Mediterranean island-states of Malta and Cyprus join the eurozone, bringing-up the number of participating countries to 15. Also, ten days earlier, 9 EU member-states - the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia – joined the border-free Schengen area, which now includes 24 European countries.

“This is a new turning point for Europe and the European project – 2008 has started with the expansion of the Euro and Schengen areas and has reinforced confidence for millions of European citizens on the importance of the European Union in their daily lives,” stated the EPP President.

“The global strength of the Euro and the freedom of movement for the citizens of the new EU member-states will have a very strong and positive impact – both immediate and long-term - on the European project,” Martens concluded.