

EPP DELEGATION VISITS MOSCOW FOR THE ENTHRONEMENT OF PATRIARCH KYRILL I

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At the invitation of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate, a delegation of the European People's Party (EPP) led by President **Wilfried Martens** participated on Sunday, 1 February 2009, at the enthronement of its new **Patriarch Kyrill I**. The 4-member delegation included EPP Vice President and Member of the European Parliament **Alojz Peterle** as well as EPP Secretary of External Relations **Kostas Sasmatzoglou** and EPP Political Adviser **Galina Fomenchenko**.

The EPP delegation had the opportunity to meet with the new Patriarch and offer its wishes: *"We expressed to Patriarch Kyrill our best wishes for his new tasks and the hope that our dialogue will continue to strengthen in the near future,"* EPP President Wilfried Martens stated.

On the sidelines of the 3-day visit, the EPP delegation met on Monday, at his invitation, with Russian Prime Minister **Vladimir Putin**. During the meeting, the EPP delegation had the opportunity to discuss the current state of Russia-EU relations and how these relations can improve: *"We had a very open and frank discussion with Prime Minister Putin on how EU-Russia relations can improve and we both agreed on the necessity for dialogue on a political level,"* Martens underlined.

Moreover, the delegation met with opposition leader **Leonid Gozman**, Co-Chairman of Pravoje Delo party, with **Sergei Zhavoronkov**, political analyst of the Institute of Economy in Transition, and with Ambassador **Marc Franco**, Head of the EC Delegation to Russia.

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