

ENDA KENNY: FINE GAEL LEADER AND EPP VICE PRESIDENT WILL CHAIR NEW EPP MINISTERS OF EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR, AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS GROUP

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Fine Gael leader and EPP Vice President **Enda Kenny** will chair the new EPP Ministers of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs group, following a decision today by the EPP Presidency. Kenny will chair EPP preparatory meetings prior to the scheduled meetings of the Council of Ministers. For the past three years, the EPP has been organising with success important Ministerial meetings such as Foreign Affairs, Economy and Finance, and Energy.

"I am delighted to be given the responsibility of chairing the EPP Ministers of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs. The protection and creation of jobs is a huge challenge and I firmly believe that the European Union must have this at the heart of its economic policy. In creating this ministerial group, the EPP is recognising the importance of this issue," Kenny stated.

"From an Irish point of view, at a time when the unemployment crisis is worsening, my appointment to chair this ministerial group gives Fine Gael a direct input into the formulation of the European response. It will also allow us to learn from the economic and employment policies that are being pursued in other EU member states," Kenny added.

EPP President **Wilfried Martens** warmly welcomed the new role of Enda Kenny:

"I am very pleased that Enda Kenny has agreed to chair this Ministerial group. He has great experience on these matters and offers the necessary political impetus to make these meetings a great success. I am convinced that work of Kenny and the Ministers will be of great added value for tackling Europe-wide unemployment," Martens underlined.

Note to editors:

Enda Kenny and Fine Gael belong to the largest and most influential European-level political party - the European People's Party - which currently includes 72 member-parties from 39 countries, 13 EU and 6 non-EU heads of state and government, the Presidents of the Council, Commission and Parliament, as well as the largest Group in the European Parliament.

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