

EPP PRESIDENT ADDRESSES 7TH ND CONGRESS IN ATHENS

06-07-2007



EPP President **Wilfried Martens** addressed today the 7th statutory Congress of [Nea Demokratia](#) (ND) in Athens, Greece, at the opening ceremony. The event was attended 5000 delegates from all over Greece, in addition to 2000 observers. The opening ceremony was also addressed by **Lefteris Zagoritis**, ND Secretary General, former Prime Minister **Constantine Mitsotakis**, and ND President and Prime Minister **Kostas Karamanlis**.

The EPP President expressed his conviction that ND will win another term in the upcoming elections and repeated his full confidence to Prime Minister Karamanlis and his government. Here is the full text of his speech:

*Dear Prime Minister of Greece and President of Nea Demokratia,
Dear delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is with great pleasure that I address the 7th Congress of your party following your kind invitation. Nea Demokratia is among the oldest member-parties of the European Union to be actively present in the European People's Party. Last week Prime Minister Karamanlis launched the EPP's European debate on the environment in the beautiful city of Ioannina. Nea Demokratia takes the lead on issues of great political importance and cooperates with its European partners.

On the 7th of March 2004, Greece went through a major socio-political change. It has entered a path towards economic stability, a safe course of reforms and sound results. The outcomes of Nea Demokratia Government policies have proved that Greece is moving rapidly away from its unfruitful past to a certain future. Its efforts have been successful and have led to the modernisation of the financial environment, public management and procurement. Modern Greece evolved into a major player in the energy sector. At the same time, people's support remains strong with Nea Demokratia to remain the dominant political power in the country.

Nea Demokratia is also a dominant political player in the greater region of the Balkans, as a force for peace and stability. Our aspiration for all the countries of the region is to become part of the greater European family, as far as they satisfy all criteria and values. This idea of Union was also in the thought of Rigas Feraios, a prominent representative of the Greek Enlightenment movement, whose work I had the opportunity to be introduced to last week during my visit to Zagorochoria. The creation of a Pan-Balkan union as a democratic Federation was in the very center of Rigas' vision that went far beyond those customary in his times. He inspired a union in which all nations live harmoniously together and their citizens enjoy fundamental rights, such as rights of religion and free use of language. The same rights and principles are today in the core of the European Union and represent our common values.

Prime Minister Karamanlis is a 21st Century leader who combines modern pragmatism with visionary politics. He is modest and fair. He believes in synthesis, pragmatic solutions and above all he is a true European. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the European Union in Berlin, Prime Minister Karamanlis was among the leaders who defended and supported a vision of a more powerful Europe. In 2004 he put forward the idea of the creation of a European Coastguard and the establishment of joint patrolling units from member states at the external maritime borders of the Union addressing the serious challenge of illegal immigration, for the benefit of countries with extensive maritime borders like Greece. He is among the European leaders, whose constructive approach and initiatives contribute to the promotion of the European idea.

Dear friends,

I am convinced that the government of Prime Minister Karamanlis will continue to implement its strategy of reforms at a steady and unhampered pace, in order to benefit all Greek citizens. I am certain that the citizens of your country will give their confidence to the government of Prime Minister Karamanlis for a second time. I am confident that a strong Nea Demokratia is in the benefit of Greece and in the benefit of the European People's Party.

*Nea Demokratia moves forward.
It moves forward together with all citizens.
It moves forward for the benefit of all citizens.*

Thank you very much."

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