

EPP SECRETARY GENERAL, ANTONIO LOPEZ-ISTURIZ: ♦GERB APPLICATION FOR EPP MEMBERSHIP IN PROGRESS♦

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**EPP SECRETARY GENERAL, ANTONIO LOPEZ-ISTURIZ: "GERB APPLICATION FOR EPP MEMBERSHIP IN PROGRESS"**

The EPP would like to deny the article, published in Mediapool newsagency, on 30 August, stating that "the GERB application for EPP membership is temporarily frozen". This information is false.

On 30/08/07, the application of the GERB has been a topic of discussion of the EPP Working Group 3 "Membership" (WG3). The purpose of this group is to review and debate on the documents related to the application of the party – statutes, program, etc. According to the statute of the EPP the procedure envisages this as a first step to consider any application. It is a very lengthy and thorough procedure.

EPP Secretary General and MEP, **Antonio Lopez-Isturiz**, said: *"The EPP President Wilfred Martens, the Chairwoman of the WG3 Corien Wortmann-Kool and myself, the Secretary General of the party, are the only people authorized to comment on the application procedures of parties. We have not made any press statements until now to the Bulgarian media. So therefore, the false statement in Mediapool is not based on EPP sources. Nothing has been frozen, delayed or rejected. The application is following the normal process and will be judged on its own merit."*

The members of WG3 decided to visit Sofia and to receive first-hand information from the GERB, which is the usual process with all applications. This study visit will lead to a report and a recommendation to the WG3. Finally, the report and the recommendation will be forwarded to the decision-making body of the EPP – the Political Bureau – that will discuss the application in two separate meetings (the Political Bureau meets every 2-3 months) and take the final decision.

Lopez-Isturiz concluded: *"Therefore, the GERB application for EPP membership is in progress. The EPP is representing the most influential political family in Europe with more than 30 years of political tradition and fundamental values. Our wish is to see again in Bulgaria a stable center right government that will ensure for the Bulgarian people prosperity and security. We do not intervene in internal political affairs and we appeal to our sister parties in Bulgaria to behave with dignity and respect towards our political family."*

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