

JOHN BRUTON, CHOSEN TO BE HEAD OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON

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The European Commission has chosen former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, John Bruton, to be the next Head of the Commission's Delegation in Washington DC.

Vice President of the EPP since 1999, John Bruton was until recently member of the Presidium of the European Convention. He is one of the number of experts invited by the last Greek Presidency of the European Union to prepare a Paper for discussion in May 2003 by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union on how best to improve relations between the United States and the European Union.

◆ This decision reflects the joint wish of the Commission and Member States to raise the profile of the European Union in the United States. As is the custom with such appointments, Member States will be consulted on the choice of Mr Bruton and his confirmation subject to standard diplomatic procedures of accreditation with the United States ◆, a European Commission statement says.

Chairman Martens congratulated John Bruton personally today and wished him well deserved success with the new mandate.

"John ◆'s strong and clear-sighted leadership, experienced professionalism and motivating skills will be a great asset for the Union ◆'s representation in the USA. There is no doubt that he will be successful in the difficult tasks ahead of him", he said.

"As an EPP Vice President and active chairman of several Working Groups in the Party he will be so dearly missed", he added. In the name of all the members of the party and the Secretariat ◆'s staff he thanked John for his dedicated and loyal work so far in the party and hoped it could somehow be continued in the future despite the distance his office will be from the EPP Brussels headquarters.

Mr Bruton is expected to join the Commission in November and he will take up his full responsibilities as soon as his accreditation is approved.

The Commission's Delegation in the US is one of the Commission's largest representations to third countries, with a total staff of 80 people.