

POETTERING RESPONDS TO CAMERON'S STATEMENT

14-07-2006



The Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, **Hans-Gert Poettering**, has seen detailed media reports on a statement from David Cameron, leader of the British Conservatives together with Mirek Topolánek, leader of the Czech ODS Party on the possible formation of a new political group in the European Parliament following the European elections in June 2009.

"It is regrettable that this statement does not recognise the substantial and positive contribution by a large majority of Conservative and ODS MEPs within the EPP-ED Group", Poettering said. Conservative MEPs will now remain in the Group essentially based on the fact that the leadership of the Conservative Party in London has not succeeded in finding other parties to co-operate with in the European Parliament. This means the agreement between the Conservative

Party and the EPP-ED Group, dating back to before European elections in 2004 on Group membership for the parliamentary term to 2009, will be kept in the letter if not in the spirit.

Poettering criticized the statement as being an unnecessary and not very helpful. Nobody can forecast today what the political situation will look like three years from now.

The EPP-ED Chairman confirmed his conviction that a long term cooperation between the EPP and the ED (British Conservatives plus Czech ODS) parts of the Group is not only in the interest of the centre right parties but also in the interest of Britain and the Czech Republic.

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Background:

British Conservative MEPs were first admitted to the EPP Group in 1992. Because the MEPs in question are not elected from an EPP member party list, the Group decides, on request by the MEPs after each European election, on their membership of the Group.

In 1999 the Group changed its name to the EPP-ED (European Democrats) Group to accommodate the Conservative MEPs in the Group. Before the European elections in 2004 the EPP-ED Group changed its statutes to take into account the special situation of allied MEPs (European Democrats). They were specifically granted the right to have "their independent view on constitutional and institutional matters regarding the future of Europe ". In addition the ED part of the Group is entitled to one of the positions of Vice-Chairmen of the Group.

The EPP-ED Group, currently with 263 MEPs, would remain the biggest group in the Parliament independently of the British Conservatives (27 MEPs) and the Czech ODS (9 MEPs), ahead of the Socialist group (200 MEPs).

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