

EPP CONGRATULATES HERMAN VAN ROMPUY (EPP) AND CATHERINE ASHTON (PES) FOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN POLICY HIGH REP NOMINATIONS

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The President of the European People's Party (EPP), **Wilfried Martens**, has congratulated the Belgian Prime Minister **Herman Van Rompuy** (EPP) and Commissioner **Catherine Ashton** (PES) for being nominated by the 27 EU heads of state and government for the positions of President of the Council and High Representative for Foreign Affairs. EPP Secretary General **Antonio Lopez-Isturiz** also congratulated the nominees.

"I am delighted with tonight's decision of the 27 EU leaders because they have chosen two highly competent and experienced politicians to take-over the two new leadership posts of the Lisbon Treaty: my good friend and EPP colleague Herman Van Rompuy and Catherine Ashton," stated President Martens.

"I always knew that Herman Van Rompuy is a gifted politician with strong leadership qualities and that's the reason why I proposed him less than a year ago to the Belgian King to become Prime Minister. I am thrilled now that all 27 EU heads of state and government have also recognized the qualities and talent of Herman Van Rompuy and nominated him as the first President of the European Council – Europe will not be disappointed," the EPP President added.

EPP Secretary General Antonio Lopez-Isturiz underlined the political importance of today's nominations:

*"The decision to nominate Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy is welcome news for the EPP and for Europe. Van Rompuy will give much-needed political impetus to the EU and will reinforce the leadership efforts of Commission President **Jose Manuel Barroso**. Moreover, I'm convinced that Catherine Ashton will be a strong addition to the new Barroso Commission – I wish her and the new Commission all the best in upcoming hearings in the European Parliament,"* Lopez-Isturiz underlined.

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