

## EPP HEAD URGES GREATER EU ROLE IN CYPRUS

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The EU must become more active in efforts to reach a Cyprus on the basis of UN resolutions and European principles, the President of the European People's Party (EPP) Wilfried Martens said yesterday.

Martens is visiting Cyprus at the invitation of opposition DISY (*a member of the EPP* ~~ed.~~). He said the UN should undertake a new initiative for Cyprus, but referring to the Annan plan, said it needed *"the influence of EU values"*. This was a very important element, he added.

*"It is urgent to find a solution. Not to accept the period of stagnation, that worsens the situation and the gap. We are committed as EPP to engage in negotiations and initiatives for a solution,"* Martens said. *"The EU cannot be*

*neutral. For me it is an essential concern of the EU to promote and be positive in trying to find a solution."*

DISY leader Nicos Anastasiades said his party had received assurances from the EPP that in the event of a new round of talks it would help contribute to the success of the dialogue. *"We want to share with Mr Martens the worries and expectations of the Greek Cypriots, to exchange views on how to make use of the European course of Turkey, to end the anachronistic division line and the occupation army,"* Anastasiades said.

Commenting on Turkey's failure so far to ratify the customs union protocol that obliges it to normalise relations with Cyprus in the commercial field, Martens said: *"Turkey signed the Protocol, which has an international value and significance and thus it has to ratify and implement it. When you sign you have to engage yourself, to ask for the ratification of your parliament and implement it. I will always defend this. I have very good relations with Turkish Premier Erdogan but I have no difficulty to tell him the same position."*

Martens also praised the role of DISY in EPP activities, saying the party played an important role in the EPP. *"It has a real influence in the decision making and actions of the EPP, its leadership is engaged and committed,"* he said.

Martens, who is on a two-day visit to the island, met later in the day with the President of Cyprus Tassos Papadopoulos.

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