

## MARTENS ADDRESSES THE EUROPEAN IDEAS NETWORK

22-09-2005



The **fourth annual meeting of the European Ideas Network** was opened today (22/09/2005) by **Luis Marques Mendes MP**, Chairman of the Portuguese PSD Party, **Wilfried Martens**, President of the European People's Party, and **Hans-Gert Poettering MEP**, Chairman of the EPP-ED-Group in the European Parliament, at the Belem Cultural Centre in **Lisbon**. They all **thanked James Elles MEP, founder of the EIN**, for the initiative he took three years ago to **bring together politicians, academics, journalists, advisors together with representatives of Think-tanks and Foundations of the Centre and Centre-Right**, to exchange their views and develop policy thinking. In his introduction, **James Elles MEP** said: **"Everybody wants economic growth, but nobody wants change !"**. He appealed to the 350 participants to **provide European leaders with ideas and initiatives**, and to ask for **more determination and innovation in facing the challenge of globalisation, the major topic of this EIN Summer University**.

In his welcome speech, the Chairman of the Portuguese Party PSD, **Luis Marques Mendes MP**, described the **difficult situation facing the European Union**, regarding the adoption of the Constitution and, above all meeting economic and political challenges. **But, even in this context, there is room for a new policy, based on realism and ambition**. "Europe must be the most competitive area in the world: the objectives of the Lisbon strategy must be, more than ever, at the heart of our agenda. **There is no alternative to globalization: the Centre-Right must make it work in the best interest of Europeans. We must be at the same time open-minded and make sure that the rules of fair trade are respected everywhere"**.

EPP President **Wilfried Martens** stressed the dynamic development of the European Ideas Network. **"The EPP is strongly committed to make a success of the EIN, because its success will help our political family to overcome mental barriers and to propose new ideas** to face successfully the challenges of globalization, such as environmental protection". Too often, emphasised Wilfried Martens, we have in our countries the feeling that we live in "islands", and we try, separately, to solve problems that in reality are common to all Europeans and beyond: that must change. **"Let's open the doors and the windows, let's create the conditions for an open debate on all issues. This is the historic task of our political family. Up to now, we have always been at the source of the ideals and of the prosperity of Europe: we shall continue"**.

**Hans-Gert Poettering**, Chairman of the EPP-ED-Group, the strongest political force in the European Parliament, also **invited EIN participants to take the political lead** and to stay at the forefront of the political development of the European Union. Poettering named terrorism, globalization, economic reforms, climate change, but also the European Constitution, as the main political topics needing a co-ordinated and innovative approach. **"We must be modest in our speeches, but ambitious in our actions. We must find new solutions to overcome new, legitimate worries"**, declared the Chairman, outlining the importance of the European Ideas Network initiative for the EPP-ED Group and the major role played by the Foundations and Think Tanks in the reflections of the Centre-Right. **"Idealists are the real realists"**, said **Helmut Kohl: a good motto for the EIN Summer University**, which will also .../... welcome personalities such as **Jos Manuel Durao Barroso**, **Jos-Maria Aznar**, **Christopher Patten**, **Ernest-Antoine Seilliere**, **Anibal Cavaco Silva**, **Carl Bildt** and **Bernard Henri Levy**.

*The EIN will continue tomorrow (23/09/2005) and end on Saturday with the European Ideas Fair.*

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