

EPP PRESIDENT HAILS CDU LANDSLIDE VICTORY - EARLY FEDERAL ELECTIONS EXPECTED

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EPP President Wilfried Martens expressed his great delight with the landslide victory of Germany's CDU in the regional election of North Rhine-Westphalia, with nearly 45% of the vote. *This is historic victory for the CDU and a prelude to victory at the national level* Martens stated.

After 39 years of social democratic government in North Rhine Westphalia, the CDU managed to achieve a result that amounted to a disaster for the SPD in its former core stronghold. The fact that Chancellor Schröder now wants to have early federal elections shows that the end of his government is very close, Martens said.

The EPP President sent letters of congratulations to the newly elected leader of the region Jürgen Rüttgers as well as to CDU leader Angela Merkel.

The decision to hold early elections this fall is probably one of the few wise decisions taken by the current administration. I think everybody realizes that Angela Merkel is Germany's Chancellor-in-waiting, Martens proclaimed.

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