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Albania: EPP statement by Wilfried Martens, EPP President, Franco Frattini, Italian Foreign Minister, and Elmar Brok, MEP

Brussels, 25 June 2010



As a follow-up to the recent meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the European People's Party (EPP) in Assisi Italy, the President of the EPP, **Wilfried MARTENS**, and the coordinators of the EPP Foreign Ministers' group, **Franco FRATTINI**, Foreign Minister of Italy, and **Elmar BROK**, Member of the European Parliament, made the following statement on Albania:

"We state our concern over the current political situation which originated after the democratic elections held last June 2009 with the refusal of Mr RAMA and the socialist party to fulfil their role as parliamentary opposition, choosing instead to take their grievances to the street and thereby preventing a normally functioning national

assembly;

"We remind that, despite this and regardless of the accusations made by the opposition, the government of Prime Minister **Sali BERISHA** is legitimate and the parliament is now fully operational;

"We demand that the opposition socialist party remains in the national assembly to fulfil its role of parliamentary opposition and that it formally accepts the results of the elections confirmed by the Central Elections Commission, the Electoral College of the Court of Appeal and all the international observer organisations;

"We stress that the visa liberalisation process with Albania should not be put into question by the current political situation; believe that any such attempt would be to the detriment of the Albanian people;

"We welcome the progress achieved by the Albanian government, and believes that the council and parliament should approve the visa waiver for Albania by the end of 2010;

"We ask the opposition to fully respect the national Constitution and to act within the Rule of Law; remind that this is one of the Copenhagen criteria that must be satisfied to join the European Union;

"We believe that the European Union should support and encourage the Albanian government in its steps towards strengthening democracy and the accession to the European Union, where it belongs;

"We recall that although the Albanian government has made a number of concessions in order to accomodate demands from the opposition, notably offering the opposition the majority and chairmanship of a Parliamentary inquiry committee, Mr. Rama and the opposition have constantly made new demands which run counter to the Constitution, the electoral law and previous court rulings; assume therefore that Mr. Rama is not interested in a political settlement that adheres to the rule of law and the Constitution.

Note to editors:

The EPP is the largest and most influential European-level political party of the centre-right, which currently includes 73 member-parties from 39 countries, the Presidents of the Commission, Council, and Parliament, 14 EU and 5 non-EU heads of state and government, 13 members of the European Commission and the largest Group in the European Parliament.

For more information:

Kostas Sasmatzoglou, Spokesman, Tel: +32-2-2854147

Javier Jimenez, Press Officer, Tel: +32-475480446