

WILFRIED MARTENS OPEN LETTER TO PES PRESIDENT POUL NYRUP RASMUSSEN

25-10-2006



Dear Mr Rasmussen,

In your letter of 24 October 2006 you raise a number of important issues. First of all let me tell you that I was happy to receive an invitation to Budapest to the official commemoration of the heroes of the 1956 uprising. I was also proud to share a platform with my EPP Vice Chairman, Viktor Orban.

Contrary to your statement I did take part in the official event invited by the Hungarian President. I was present in the Ecumenical Mass and the official ceremony in the Opera and I was more than happy to also honour the Hungarian revolution in the presence of my friend Viktor Orban and 100.000 or so other proud Hungarians.

You characterise the Fidesz event as an anti-government rally. It was in fact nothing of the sort. It was a real celebration of the triumph of democracy over evil. You suggest that it is Mr. Orban that is causing all the problems in Hungary.

Might it not be that the man who openly admits to telling lies and nothing but lies for 18 months or so before the recent elections has something to do with the unrest in Hungary? Do you honestly believe that a Prime Minister can hold on to power after such a damning admission? Is defending him, as you have done, really defending democracy and the European values that we share?

I have not seen any rush from Socialist leaders, other than yourself, to defend him.

You suggest that the PES decision to suspend the Slovak SMER party was sending a clear message against cooperation with extreme nationalists. Are you sure about the clarity of the message? Is it not true that the 3 SMER MEPs still sit in the Socialist Group?

I doubt that a decision void any practical effect sends any message at all. Suspending membership of the party whilst keeping the members of the party, at least one of whom is a strong and vocal advocate of cooperation with the extremists, within the Group is not a credible political action.

You accuse me of playing a disgraceful game in Hungary. I defend and encourage Fidesz and Viktor Orban. A party and a man who gave strong leadership to Hungary and anchored that country in our Union. You are attempting to defend a self-proclaimed liar. I think you should look more carefully at the values you pretend to defend before attempting to shift the blame and to lecture me.

If I as Prime Minister of Belgium announced that I had been telling lies and nothing but lies for 18 months before the elections, how long do you think I would survive? A day, an hour or perhaps 2 hours, at most.

Mr Rasmussen, in your letter you use emotive words such as "populist" and "Neo-Nazis". If I spend Saturday afternoon supporting the Red Devils and a few, or several hooligans turn up and try to disrupt the event am I to be chastised for encouraging them. No, myself and the other 99,9% of the crowd are not and can not be guilty by association.

Mr Rasmussen, there is something wrong in the state of Hungary and we both know that the very centre of government is responsible for it.

*Yours sincerely,
Wilfried Martens*

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