

# 'EPP IS THE PARTY OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZEN' - MARTENS

***Brussels ,December 06, 2002***

At the EPP Political Bureau held today in the European Parliament, EPP President Wilfried MARTENS welcomed the latest electoral results in Austria and congratulated EPP member party ÖVP for winning a 'historical election'.

He pointed out that this was not only a historical victory, but also a victory with crucial political consequences, since 'it shows that the EPP is the only moderate alternative in Europe'.

ÖVP was the strongest party among working women, voters under 30 and skilled workers. 95% of Austrian farmers also voted for ÖVP.

Martens said that these results show that the EPP is the party of the European citizen.

EPP President also expressed his solidarity after the maritime catastrophe in Spain. 'We are sure that the Spanish authorities are doing the best to control the effects of this catastrophe and to help the people sadly affected by this ecological disaster'.

He also pointed out that the two main coming challenges are enlargement and institutional reforms.

Martens said that the basic consensus of Estoril should be respected as the 'main political line'.

The paper 'A Constitution for a strong Europe' outlines the EPP's vision of a European Constitution laying down a much clearer distribution of competences, more transparency and democratic institutions, and integrating the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

He added that 'it is time to show common sense as Europeans, implementing the necessary reforms of Lisbon Summit in the present context'.

EPP President also said that he was confident that the EPP will reach a consensus opinion on the accession of Turkey in next Enlarged Summit in Copenhagen, but he disapproved any 'particular' opinion on the matter.

The same meeting voted to accept in first reading application for observer status by DSS party from Serbia and from DP party from Albania.

The Democratic Party of Serbia was founded in 1992. In the September 24 federal and local elections, The DSS President, Vojislav KOSTUNICA, a candidate put forward by the Democratic Opposition of Serbia coalition, became the president of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Having won 45 seats in the last Serbian legislative election on December 23, 2000, the DSS formed the largest party caucus in the 250-seat Serbian Parliament.

The Democratic Party of Albania came to power after the election of March 22, 1992. The party, while implementing its centre-right program, replaced all the old laws of the previous dictatorial system with new laws of Western standards.

Also at the meeting, Guy KORTHOUDT and Christian KREMER were re-elected as Deputy Secretary Generals, and Sauli NIINISTÖ was named Honorary President.