

WESTERN BALKAN DEMOCRACY FORUM Thessaloniki, 11-13 April 2002

EPP Press Release on the Situation in Venezuela

The European People's Party meeting today (12 April 2002) at its Western Balkan Forum in Thessalonika, Greece, expresses its concern at the direction of overnight events in Venezuela and its support for the people of Venezuela and the democratic forces of this friendly nation.

Democracy and the respect for Human Rights leave no room for tyranny and are the only bridge towards future peace and development. The European People's Party calls for the designation of a representative civil authority which should have as its top priority the preparation and execution of democratic elections.

The European People's Party also expresses its complete confidence and solidarity with our Venezuelan sister party, COPEI. We are convinced that COPEI will face and overcome this crisis as it has done throughout its history in the defence of liberty and democracy.

The European People's Party has counts on the institutional and democratic credentials of the Venezuelan National Armed Forces to assume their responsibility as guarantors of the rule of law and to facilitate a calm and peaceful democratic process.

Our sister parties throughout Central and South Eastern Europe have also known the experience of dealing with difficult times and have faced them with the determination and political courage and without diverging from democratic principles. Meeting together today in this Forum, we are reaping the fruit of their commitment.

The European People's Party recommits itself to our ongoing object of striving for our common future hope.