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EPP President holds high-level meetings in Lebanon

Brussels, 28 January 2012



The President of the European People's Party (EPP), **Wilfried Martens**, concluded a successful two-day visit to Lebanon. During his visit, he met with the main political and religious leaders of the country and also represented the EPP at the event of the Centrist Democrat International (CDI):

"My meetings in Beirut gave me the opportunity to get first-hand information on the political situation of the country, in light also of the current developments in the region. Lebanon is a key country in the Eastern Mediterranean so I believe that the European Union needs to exercise greater political engagement," underlined the EPP President.

In Lebanon, President Martens met with the President of the Republic, **Michel Sleiman**, and the Prime Minister **Najib Mikati** and discussed the political situation in Lebanon, Belgium, and international issues.

The EPP President attended a working dinner hosted by MP **Nadim Gemayel** and representatives from the 14 March Movement, including former Prime Minister **Fouad Siniora**, and discussed the Arab Spring, the Middle East peace process, and the political situation in Lebanon.

President Martens also participated in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the CDI and attended the CDI conference on the Arab Spring, co-hosted by Kataeb party and President **Amine Gemayel**. The EPP President took the floor during the panel 'The Changes in the Arab World'.

Wilfried Martens met with the Patriarch of the Maronites, **Bechara Boutros Raï**, and discussed the situation of the Christians in Lebanon and in the Arab world and also about the specific and the historical role that the Maronite Church played as a bridge between the different religions, civilisations and cultures. Also, the importance of the interfaith dialogue and the recent papers published by the university of Al Azhar and its leader Al Tayyeb, were discussed.

Finally, the EPP President met with the President of the Party 'Lebanese Forces' **Samir Geagea**, and discussed the situation in Syria. They agreed that inaction from the international community on Syria is not acceptable and that the situation is dramatic. President Martens and President Geagea will remain in contact in order to formulate and promote an emergency solution on Syria.

Note to editors:

The EPP is the largest and most influential European-level political party of the centre-right, which currently includes 74 member-parties from 39 countries, the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council, 17 EU and 5 non-EU heads of state and government, 13 members of the European Commission and the largest Group in the European Parliament.

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