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## EPP President concludes visit to Georgia and Azerbaijan

Brussels, 21 December 2011



The President of the European People's Party (EPP), **Wilfried Martens**, concluded a 4-day visit to the south Caucasus republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan. In Georgia, he visited Tbilisi and Batumi where he had meetings with President **Mikheil Saakashvili**, Prime Minister **Nika Gilauri**, President of Parliament **David Bakradze**, and other senior figures from the government, the parliament, and the UNM party (an observer member of the EPP). President Martens also hosted in Batumi the first trilateral Eastern Partnership meeting of EPP and like-minded Ministers from Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia (for details, see [press release](#)).

In Baku, Azerbaijan, President Martens presented the Azeri edition of his political autobiography '[Europe: Struggle, I Overcome](#)' in the presence of leading government officials, parliamentarians, political parties, academics, diplomats and civil society representatives. He also gave a lecture on European integration to Azeri students and young leaders of YAP. Furthermore, President Martens also had a very fruitful meeting with the leadership of the muslim, Christian orthodox, and jewish faiths. Finally, the EPP President met with the President of Azerbaijan **Ilham Aliyev**.

"My visit to Georgia and Azerbaijan was particularly fruitful since I had the opportunity to explain the importance of implementing the Eastern Partnership and, though this implementation, the adoption of European values and norms. Georgia, of course, is leading way for the entire south Caucasus region, thanks to the brave reforms of President Saakashvili," President Martens stated.

"In Azerbaijan, I had a very fruitful meeting with President Aliyev where we discussed the development of common EU-Azerbaijan projects in the field of energy supply which, in the near future, will contribute significantly to Europe's energy security. We also exchanged views on the implementation of a number of necessary reforms in the economic, social and political fields. In this respect, I stressed that these reforms must be elaborated and implemented in a close cooperation with the European Union and with international organisations, mainly the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe," the EPP President underlined.

"I was also impressed by the tolerance and the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of the different religions and their communities; in this respect, Azerbaijan is an example," the EPP President added.

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, European Council, and European Parliament, 16 EU and 6 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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