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Finland: historic victory for Kokoomus; Jyrki Katainen expected to become EPP's 16th EU PM

Brussels, 18 April 2011



The President of the European People's Party (EPP), **Wilfried Martens**, has warmly congratulated EPP member party Kokoomus and its leader **Jyrki Katainen**, for achieving a historic victory in yesterday's elections. Kokoomus received 20.4% and 44 seats and secured 1st place for the first time in Finland's parliamentary history. Jyrki Katainen, a two-term EPP Vice President and chairman of the EPP EcoFin Ministers group, will begin the difficult process of coalition talks with other parties in order to form the new government. Following the successful completion of coalition negotiations, Jyrki Katainen is expected to become EPP's 16th Prime Minister in the European Union (EU):

"Last night, I had the opportunity to warmly congratulate my good friend Jyrki Katainen for the historic victory of Kokoomus. Jyrki Katainen's strong leadership qualities, his repeated successes as Finance Minister, his commitment to accountability, and his forward-looking approach have been firmly recognized by the Finnish voters," underlined the EPP President.

"I am aware that difficult coalition talks lie ahead, but I am certain that Jyrki Katainen will meet the challenge. Jyrki Katainen, who is highly regarded in the EPP and the EU, will soon lead his country with firmness and conviction. I look forward to welcoming him as EPP's 16th EU Prime Minister at the June EPP Summit," the EPP President added.

EPP President Wilfried Martens also commented on the rise of the populist True Finns party:

"It's disheartening to see a populist party rise to 3rd place in Finland. Europe needs to reflect on this development and to examine the causes. But I am deeply convinced that Finland is, and will continue to be, a country of European and Nordic values," Martens stated.

Finally, the EPP President also welcomed the result of the Christian Democrats (KD), an EPP observer member party, which scored 4% and 6 seats.

Note to editors:

The EPP is the largest and most influential European-level political party of the centre-right, which currently includes 75 member-parties from 39 countries, the Presidents of the Commission, Council, and Parliament, 15 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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