

# NEWS

## MARTENS DECLARES SOLIDARITY WITH AUNG SAN SUU KYI

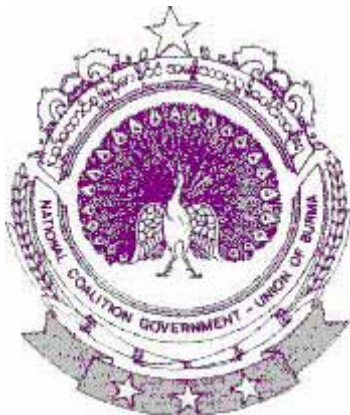
**Brussels, November 12, 2001**

Ahead of the 10th anniversary of Burmese democracy leader AUNG SAN SUU KYI's award of the Nobel Peace Prize - being celebrated by her fellow-laureates and many others in Oslo on [December 8](#) - EPP President Wilfried MARTENS said there was immense and world-wide support for her cause:

"Despite that, this remarkable and courageous woman is even now still in detention. All of the parties which make up the European People's Party, and the Christian Democrat International, are determined that she should be released as quickly as possible, and her country begin the long and difficult road back to democracy, and a normal life for its peoples.



On behalf of all the parties I represent, I would like to express our wholehearted solidarity.



We have repeatedly called for genuine dialogue to begin immediately between the regime and the democratically elected leaders of the country, with a view to new, free, elections, as soon as possible. We say it again: there is no time to be lost.

Burma has slipped from being the fabled rice-bowl of Asia to becoming one of the poorest countries in the world - not least because of the enormous army deployed to keep down its own population. Its potential and its riches, human as well as economic and environmental, are wasting away under a military dictatorship which is as shortsighted as it is brutal.

Civilised countries do not have the right to call themselves that if they accept such vicious oppression. Even less justifiable is to seek to profit from dealing with those responsible for inflicting such suffering.

I am proud that Belgium, my own country, has been among the most determined in imposing economic sanctions and in understanding the need for consensus among the ethnic minorities. They are among the worst-afflicted by a regime which seems determined to 'Burmanise' them, or worse. Agreement between all Burma's peoples on the future shape of the country is essential if there is to be a peaceful and durable transition."