

ONE EUROPE (OR MOST OF IT) IN 2004

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The EPP's Enlarged Summit at Göteborg on June 14 took a robust position on the timetable for enlargement: it was precisely reflected in the European Council's decision to make the enlargement process "irreversible" and conclude negotiations with the best-prepared applicants by the end of 2002. But on 21/06 Commission President Romano PRODI confused the unsettled picture following the Irish 'No' to the Nice Treaty by suggesting the vote could not legally block EU enlargement. NATO agreed to send in troops to keep the peace in Macedonia if a durable ceasefire can be agreed, but today that looked improbable. The EPP's member party the Union of Democratic Forces in Bulgaria suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the exiled King SIMEON II. Simeon had promised an "improvement in everyday life" within 800 days and his victory leaves him just one seat short of an absolute majority. The UDF is holding an emergency mini-congress on 26/06. IN BRIEF: The leader of the French Gaullists, Michèle ALLIOT-MARIE, announced that the party would apply to join the EPP. The British Conservatives, and are fighting a leadership battle to replace William HAGUE, who resigned after the party's second defeat by the BLAIR government.

EPP WINS THE DAY AT GÖTEBORG

The EPP Summit at Göteborg, held ahead of the EU Summit, was united on the central issues now facing Europe. There was solid political will, both behind enlargement, and behind the economic reforms which will deliver a prosperous and forward-looking Union.

"We proved that we do share the same principles and the same direction," said EPP Secretary-General Alejandro AGAG. "And we saw that reflected in the conclusions of the EU Summit. It is now realistic to believe that we really will have One Europe - or most of it - in time for the next European elections."



While hardly welcome, the Irish referendum against the Nice Treaty had delivered a salutary shock, said Agag. "That point was made very eloquently by the new Fine Gael leader Michael NOONAN. We may not like it, but the Irish objections have to be understood and met, for both legal and political reasons. It is not good enough to point out that Ireland is a small country, and therefore shouldn't be allowed to block anything. Either we believe in mutual respect, and in subsidiarity, or we don't."

Agag said the well-organised and usually serious-minded 'No' campaign made clear that people could not be taken for granted, and that explaining clearly what was being decided in their name "is a necessity - it cannot be an afterthought."

The Summit was marred by anti-globalisation protests - see photo - which developed into full-scale riots which forced prime ministers Jose Maria AZNAR and Silvio BERLUSCONI to leave their badly-damaged hotel by the back door. Twelve police were hurt, and three protesters were shot . More organised violence has been threatened against meetings organised under Belgium's EU presidency, beginning in July.

The [Summit Conclusion](#) also echoed views widely voiced in the EPP, and in its EPP-ED parliamentary group, that the Nice debacle meant that new, more democratic, ways had to be explored for reaching decisions about changing the basic Treaty.

The Convention model successfully used to prepare the Charter of Fundamental Rights was "always something which the EPP took as its own - it's a model we would favour," he said. (This proposal is included in the EPP's [Union of Values](#) agreed at Berlin in January).

The EPP Summit also backed the strategic goals agreed at Lisbon, of Europe becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Sweden's Moderaterna leader Bo LUNDGREN stressed that a fresh round of World Trade Organisation negotiations was now vital. Although there were disagreements with the US, notably on agriculture and services, the common agenda was "very close", he said, as had been proved in the talks between EU leaders and President George W BUSH - in Göteborg on his European tour. Liberalising the European economies, especially in the area of utilities and telecoms "must not be postponed any longer," Lundgren said.

...BUT OUTLOOK STILL OMINOUS IN SKOPJE

Kostas KARAMANLIS (*right*), leader of Nea Dimokratia in Greece, presented a detailed report to the EPP summit on the deepening crisis in the Balkans. He told the press conference afterwards that the solution must remain firm rejection of talks with terrorists, and an equally firm commitment throughout the region to human rights and to partnership with the European Union.



But the prospects for peace in Macedonia still look grim. EU High Representative Javier SOLANA arrived on a flying visit to Skopje yesterday to encourage leaders on both sides of the ethnic divide to keep talking - without apparent success. Macedonian President Boris TRAJKOVSKI said the peace process was "totally deadlocked." NATO is planning to send a force of up to 3,000 troops to Macedonia to disarm ethnic Albanian rebels, but only if a cross-party political settlement can be reached to end the uprising by the National Liberation Army, and there is a durable ceasefire.

Reflecting the BUSH administration's reluctance to commit troops to peacekeeping, the US has indicated it would provide transport, intelligence and other forms of support, but not troops. NATO ambassadors approved the basic concept of the force at a meeting in Brussels, but still need to work out precise contributions by different NATO member countries, and to reach a separate decision on deployment: NATO Secretary-General George ROBERTSON said in a letter to Trajkovski that "the mandate of a possible NATO operation would be confined to the collection of weapons and the forces would deploy for a limited duration."

This may be Macedonia's last chance to avoid all-out civil war. The truce agreed 10 days ago expires on Monday (25/06). It is regularly interrupted by gunfire.

BULGARIA - UDF WOODED TO JOIN KING

After the devastating defeat of Ivan KOSTOV's Union of Democratic Forces-led government at the hands of the exiled King SIMEON II's newly-created National Movement, the UDF is holding an emergency mini-congress on Tuesday (26/06). It is likely to see the resignation of Kostov as party leader. One of the main

candidates to succeed him is the current foreign minister and EPP vice-president Nadezhda MIHAILOVA (right).

The congress will face a series of other fundamental decisions, of which the most central is whether or not to accept Simeon's invitation to the UDF to join him in a coalition. There is powerful international pressure on all involved, from the EU, NATO, and Washington, to maintain continuity. But Kostov denounced Simeon's campaign as "wild populism," and has indicated he personally would not work with the king, who promised to improve everyday life within 800 days.

The Simeon II National Movement (NDSV), was formed by the 64-year-old exiled king barely two months ago. His victory - the first comeback by any of the central European monarchs - has been an international sensation. The NDSV won heavily in all the main cities - Sofia, Plovdiv, and Varna - which were traditional UDF strongholds. Many observers share the UDF's doubts about how far Simeon can meet inflated public expectations without unpicking the painful but necessary reforms of the Kostov government. (Monthly salaries in Bulgaria averaging 100 US\$, and 18% unemployment, help explain the NDSV's victory). It is also unclear who will lead the new government, which must be formed by July 5. The latest rumours suggest it will be Simeon himself.

IN BRIEF...



Michèle ALLIOT-MARIE (right), leader of the French Gaullist RPR announced on the margins of the Summit at Göteborg that she was going to begin the procedure to join the EPP. "Today, all the great parties which share our values are in the EPP", she said, adding that changes to the party's statutes - notably relating to a future 'United States of Europe' - had removed any obstacles to the RPR's membership.

The British Conservative Party chairman, the aristocrat Michael ANCRAM, became a surprise fourth contender in the race to succeed William HAGUE, who is stepping down as leader after the overwhelming Tory defeat in the general election (see EPP News 13). Ancram said he would unify the divided party. Already announced are two right-wingers, Iain DUNCAN SMITH and David DAVIS, and the former THATCHER acolyte Michael PORTILLO, now presenting himself as a moderate. A decision was expected today by former Chancellor Kenneth CLARKE - the only unambiguous pro-European candidate - on whether he will also stand.

Despite signs that the overwhelming victory of Tony BLAIR in the British elections might result in an early decision to join the Single Currency, this now looks unlikely following a speech by Chancellor (finance minister) Gordon BROWN.



The pound sterling rose by a cent against the dollar and strengthened against the euro. Blair's spokesman insisted the speech "does not shift government policy one iota", but was widely seen as a move by Brown - sceptical about the euro - to assert his authority.