

HANS-GERT PÖTTERING WELCOMES POLITICAL PARTY STATUTE

Brussels, January 24, 2001

The Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament, Hans-Gert PÖTTERING, today welcomed the proposal from the European Commission to create a statute for European political parties which follows the EPP-ED Group's initiative to draw up a statute and make financing more transparent.

"The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament will now examine the details of the proposal and, if necessary, propose amendments. However, as far as the Commission is concerned it has fully honoured its commitment to draft a regulation on the statute for European political parties and on their funding.

"Following a Report of the Court of Auditors last year on the activities of the political groups in the European Parliament, I asked the Chairmen of the main political Groups in the European Parliament to join with me and make a request to the Commission to draft a statute for political parties. This request was made and now the Commission has tabled its proposal.

"The Court of Auditors sought, rightly, to modernise the financial management of the political groups and create a clear division of responsibilities between the political Groups in the European Parliament on the one hand and the political parties at European level on the other. The political groups have begun to implement almost all the recommendations of the Court of Auditors. However, there remains a grey area where the separate responsibilities of the Parliamentary Groups and the parties are not clearly defined. This draft statute will allow such a clear division of responsibilities to be made.

"We will work to ensure that the financial and other responsibilities of political Groups in the European parliament and political parties at European level will be open and transparent ".

"A statute for political parties at the European level will also, as indicated by President Prodi, help forge a closer link between the European Parliament and the citizens of the Union," Pöttering concluded.