

# TERRORISM 'AN AFFRONT TO CIVILISATION'

**Bilbao, February 25, 2001**

Speaking to a meeting of the Youth of the EPP following more atrocities committed by Basque terrorists, President Wilfried MARTENS said:

Dear friends, it is a great privilege and pleasure to be with you today - which is also the birthday of José-Maria AZNAR. I am only sad that such a happy day is marred by more senseless killing of innocent people. On behalf of the EPP I extend our condolences to the many who have lost their family, friends, and loved ones in this terror campaign, and pray that it will soon end. Terrorism is an affront not just to Spain but to all civilised societies.

I hope, José-Maria, that your next birthday will be a happier one.

The former President of the United States, the other George Bush, once remarked that 90 per cent of politics was just turning up.

Being there.

In a rather long political life I have found this: that patience, reliability, this being there, sticking with it, even in the bad times, that these are not minor virtues.

Really not. They are central.

Politics needs great patience, and - when it counts - great courage. Sometimes physical courage as well, as you know here in the Basque country.

José Maria Aznar turned up for Spain.

He became a leader of a country in transition. Those were the difficult times in a country, full of fateful decisions.

Let us be clear: Socialists in Spain did not - surely could not - deliver the kind of free society which Spanish people soon wanted and needed. And deserved.

Socialism in its many different guises is the state exaggerating.

Today, in a time of globalization, such pretensions make little sense. The state cannot deliver in the way it once could, and which was expected of it.

There perhaps is the real political division in Europe today.

- Between Etatisme, the statism of the Socialists, which is based on a misunderstanding, at best, and at worst a lie.
- And us, the centrists and reformists. We are far from being neo-liberals. But we dare to face the challenges of our time truthfully - as they really are.

The state today, if it is an honest one - and I think the Spanish state is one of the most honest, and the most inclusive of the people and peoples within it - can be an enabler.

The proof is not just in the figures, but in the feeling you have in a society.

I think, I feel, and I know that this marvellous place, Bilbao, will be a free city once again. Free of the threat of innocent lives amputated - for what ?

There is so much to celebrate and to build on, after all. Bilbao brims with life and with culture, as does Madrid and all of Spain's great regions and cities. They are free, and full of possibilities.

The precondition is clear. There must be agreement that the way forward is the ballot box and not the gun. And the state must be modest and realistic. And it must enable people.

I believe, as I know you all do, in a social market economy, in society. But I believe passionately in a truly free society.

Now, at least in Europe, we saw the triumph of liberty, democracy and the rule of law.

This new century poses new challenges. Globalization, the new economy, the information society and technologies demand new answers.

Pragmatism or some undefined "third way" of the socialists do not address people's real concerns.

The European model is based on values, culture and history. That is where the answers to the questions come from.

That is the starting point for us. And that is the European People's Party's new vision of a European Union of Values.

The immediate challenges are to enlarge the Union, to include the new democracies in a Europe that is whole, free and prosperous.

Full employment remains our main goal because it is the best guarantee of social cohesion.

A social market economy and sustainable welfare systems must be built to ensure that a just and equitable society is also the birthright of future generations.

The explosive success of information technology creates another opportunity - a Society of Knowledge, in which education and a new spirit of enterprise are central.

The challenge is to safeguard what is truly, uniquely valuable in our civilisation as we embrace a radically different world, one in which people's lives are changing.

(Following text was delivered in Spanish:)

Coming from many different cultures and traditions, secular and confessional, the EPP's member parties have remained united by certain core values: freedom and responsibility, dignity of the human person, solidarity, subsidiarity, justice, the rule of law and democracy as they were defined in our Basic Programme.

The European People's Party, rich in its universal spirit, represents the strongest hope of finding new ways which are in keeping with the tradition and Christian roots.

The founding fathers of the Union - Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer - were also the founders of the party.

The EPP is the great European party, the only one capable of tackling the huge tasks ahead.

Now a new generation of political architects is needed, your generation, to realise our vision of Europe, and our conception of what it means to be a European.

(in Spanish .....)

Provenientes de muchas culturas y tradiciones diferentes, tanto seculares como confesionales, los partidos miembros del PPE han permanecido unidos por una serie de valores fundamentales: libertad y responsabilidad, dignidad de la persona, solidaridad, subsidiariedad, justicia, el estado de derecho y la democracia como fueron definidos en nuestro Programa de Base.

El Centro europeo, rico en su espíritu universal, representa la gran esperanza para encontrar nuevas vías que respeten la tradición de la Europa clásica, humanista y las raíces cristianas.

Los padres fundadores de la Unión - Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi y Konrad Adenauer - fueron también los fundadores del partido.

Centrista y reformista, el PPE es el gran partido europeo, el único capaz de hacer frente a las grandes tareas que nos esperan.

Se necesita ahora una nueva generación, vuestra generación, para llevar a la práctica nuestra visión de Europa y nuestra concepción de lo que significa ser europeo.