

## **POLISH PACT ON EUROPE "MODEL FOR ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES"**

**Brussels, August 30, 2001**

EPP President Wilfried MARTENS today congratulated Polish Prime Minister Jerzy BUZEK on brokering a cross-party pre-election "pact for Europe". Signed between the main political parties just weeks before parliamentary elections, the agreement excludes inter-party bickering during the crucial last stages of Poland's negotiations to join the European Union.

In a letter to Buzek, Martens said: "This seems to me very enlightened and sensible, and in the best traditions of Polish democracy. It could also prove crucial to the success of the negotiations. I for one would find it really shameful, for the whole of the Union, as well as for your country, if Poland is not in the first group of new EU Member States. That prospect is now a great deal more certain." He said the statesmanlike character of the agreement "could serve as an excellent model for other candidate countries."

The pact, enthusiastically backed President KWASNIEWSKI, was signed by Jerzy BUZEK for the EPP member party [Solidarity Electoral Action Social Movement](#) (Ruch Społeczny Akcja Wyborcza Solidarnosc -RS AWS), by Prof Bronislaw GEREMEK for the Freedom Union (Unia Wolności - UW), also an EPP party, as well as by Socialist SLD leader Leszek MILLER and Maciej PLAZYNSKI for the Citizens' Platform (Platforma Obywatelska -PO).

In all, these parties represent 74% of the vote, according to current poll figures. The only two parties which have not so far agreed are the farmers' PSL party (12%), which is still debating the issue, and the right-wing AWS splinter group Law and Justice - PiS (6%). The anti-European right (1%) denounced the pact as "a betrayal of the nation".

The pact reads, in part: "Poland's membership of the European Union marks a historic opportunity for our country. We can finally close a period marred by defeats and reverses, and open a new and secure chapter in our history. Membership of the European Union will permit Poland to occupy its rightful place in the family of European nations.

"Before this can happen, however, we have to close the accession negotiations. These are now entering their decisive and most difficult phase....Time is short...The situation requires that our country's political parties establish an extraordinary agreement among themselves...."Just as in international football matches, the national team is made up of players from clubs which play against each other in local matches, so now Poland must reach for a team of the best people and the best ideas, if the negotiations are to benefit our society.

"This does not mean that our parties will not compete in other fields or abandon the right to criticise the government should such a need arise. However we do declare that notwithstanding the result of the coming elections the party or parties in government will conscientiously and thoroughly inform parties finding themselves in opposition about the negotiations and consult with them the country's negotiating strategy. These consultations should take on an institutional form.

"At the same time the parties which shall find themselves in opposition declare that they are ready to take part in the consultations. They will also in a spirit of solidarity support such of the government's negotiating moves which were earlier agreed with them. This cooperation will be underpinned by an information policy which will enable the population to learn about the negotiations and avoid the

danger that people will feel they have fallen victim to a 'conspiracy of the elites'. Our aim in establishing this agreement is to obtain the best possible result for Poland in the negotiations and the best possible place for our country in a United Europe."