

ON THE WAY TO THE 21ST CENTURY

EPP Action Programme 1999 - 2004

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0. PREFACE

European Elections 1999

Europe, on the threshold of the third millennium, has every chance of a successful future - if we take this opportunity. With the Union's expansion east and southward, the continent is visibly growing, in addition to its political, economic, and cultural opportunities. At the same time, globalisation is changing the framework conditions for strengthening competitiveness, creating new jobs, and preserving the environment. The European Parliament - strengthened by the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam - will decisively influence the shape of tomorrow's Europe. The June 1999 elections to the European Parliament are therefore of overwhelming importance for every European.

The European Parliament leads the way

The European Parliament has become a co-legislator in numerous areas. It thus influences the lives of the 375 million citizens of the European Union. The 626 directly-elected deputies will, *inter alia*, decide on the appointment of the President and co-decide the composition of the next Commission as well as on the admission of states from Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean Basin. It is therefore of decisive importance which is the strongest group in the European Parliament.

EPP as the strongest force

Europe must not be one-sidedly dominated by a Socialist majority. Power needs to be controlled. That is why the EPP is going into the 1999 European Elections determined to become the strongest force in the European Parliament and once again to ensure the political balance in the European institutions. Europe was built on the foundation of common Christian and humanist values. European co-operation is characterised by the values always espoused by the EPP. An open society, based on freedom and the rule of law, and with its respect for the individual, both as a unique person imbued with fundamental rights, and as a member of a wider social context of family and civil society, is combined with a stable macro-economic framework and belief in private enterprise. This has proven to be our best guarantee against all kinds of totalitarian ideas and the best protection for human and civil rights.

A Politics of Balance - the Politics of the Future

The EPP stands for a kind of politics which combines European integration and national and regional interests, economic progress with social progress, liberty and responsibility, tradition and modernity, readiness to defend ourselves and striving for peace. We are of the tradition of European integration based on the ideas of Adenauer, de Gasperi, and Schuman. We are decisively against extremists - both right and left. Irrespective of people's varying gifts, talents, and abilities, we are open to all our fellow-citizens, and support everyone's right to achieve their full potential in freedom and dignity regardless of origin, sex, age, race, nationality, language, personal conviction,

social position or state of health.

Our Programme

The EPP faces the challenges of the 21st century.

We want a communitarian Europe which is democratic, transparent, and capable of taking action. We do not want a super-state, but rather - following the principles of subsidiarity and federalism - a division of responsibilities and duties between the Union, Member States, and regional and municipal institutions, based on solidarity.

We stand for regional structural policies which provide opportunities for weaker regions to develop and to take responsibility for themselves. We support reform of the Common Agricultural Policy which will give our farmers long-term prospects; a reform which is ecologically sustainable, consumer-friendly and mindful of our health.

We want to advance the economy and society to make our social systems more durable for the future, and strengthen individual and inter-personal responsibility.

This is how we seek to lay the foundations for better competitiveness, the creation of new jobs and safeguarding the environment.

In the European Union we strongly support a just sharing of the burden of accepting refugees fleeing civil war and asylum-seekers. We must show solidarity in how we deal with the issue of refugees and victims of political persecution.

Together we want to face up to the challenge of internationally-organized crime.

The core of the European integration process remains ensuring peace and prosperity on a permanent basis. European construction has ended the interminable series of European wars, and created an area of peace, freedom, and democracy. But Europe is part of a wider world. We hope that a united Europe will serve as an important contribution to peace and social progress for the citizens of other continents; particularly the poorest people. We must now take democracy, security, solidarity, stability, and peace beyond the borders of the European Union, and set an example of cooperation for other regions.

We accept the challenges and the opportunities presented by globalisation while remaining fully aware of our responsibility to Europe's citizens, but also to people outside of the Union. We face these challenges in the knowledge of the universally valid core values of freedom, equality, justice and solidarity.

We accept this responsibility for the new European agenda on the basis of values which have inspired European society and history. The EPP decided in Athens in 1992 to base its ideas and its political actions on precisely these basic values. The Athens *Basic Programme* is our guideline, and it thus permeates our response to the challenges of our time. This Action Programme should be read in conjunction with the

document adopted by the XII EPP Congress held in Toulouse (9 - 11 November 1997) with particular reference to the chapters on healthcare, social insurance and the family.

In recent national elections Europe has been veering left. Collective decision-making, political interventionism and bureaucratization will increase at the expense of freedom for individuals and enterprises. The past accomplishments of European co-operation are at risk by negative forces from the new plurality of Socialist-dominated governments in some Member States. The delicate balance between the EU institutions and national parliaments may be disrupted by excessive politicization and a disregard for the balance of power.

The historic mission of uniting Europe and creating a European Union where the present and future members can engage in a dynamic and fruitful co-operation, is seriously hampered by socialists clinging to old ideas, seeing increased public spending as the only solution to all challenges.

The EPP is determined to vehemently fight attempts to introduce a socialist agenda in Europe. We will continue the struggle for freedom, prosperity and security within the European Union and in Europe at large. We call for a strong stand against socialism.

The EPP is proud of its role in shaping the EU and furthering its development. We will carry this work forward. We will fight against socialists whose policies will undo this fundamental achievement, which has resulted in the longest period of freedom, peace and prosperity in the history of Europe.

1. AGENDA 2000

EU enlargement is to the advantage for everybody

1. The preamble of the Treaty on European Union recalls the historic importance of the ending of the division of the European continent and confirms the Member States' attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.
2. The accession of the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) to the European Union constitutes an historic task, now that these countries have regained their freedom and introduced democracy. In the same way, the enlargement taking in Cyprus and Malta is a major objective. The process of enlarging the European Union has brought great advantages both to European Union Member States and to applicant states.
3. In their efforts to meet the conditions for EU membership, applicant states will continue to improve the stability and economic and political prospects of our continent. They have to reform their fragile political systems and create stable democracies based unambiguously on the rule of law; adopt the principles of a market economy; settle regional conflicts; and establish stable relations of mutual trust with neighbouring countries and with Europe as a whole. Additionally, they must ensure respect of human rights in accordance with the Council of Europe European Convention on Human Rights; improve the situation of ethnic minorities and reject those who try to stir up ethnic conflict. It is up to the applicant states themselves to qualify for accession. The EPP considers that all applicant states must be judged on their individual progress. On this basis, the EPP believes that the accession and negotiation process should advance without delay. Applicant states must be given assurances that they are welcome in the European Union and that accession will follow as quickly as possible. The EPP does not deny the difficulties of taking this road, but points out that, in this way, both the stability of the European continent and the European Union itself, will be strengthened.
4. Enlargement will benefit not only the candidate states, but also - in many different ways - current EU Member States. Economically, the big Central and Eastern European market will be open to domestic economies. The new competition which will be created at the same time will increase, over the medium to long-term, and improve domestic industry's competitiveness. The material and non-material costs of not enlarging would be considerably greater than the costs of so doing. The costs of non-integration outweigh the costs for enlargement, though in the short run, some sensitive sectors may be greatly and adversely affected at regional level. Security and stability are improved by widening the sphere of democratic tolerance and the rule of law.
5. The European Union must do its utmost to support Central and Eastern European states which opt for democracy, the rule of law, and a social market economy, and create the conditions for a responsible society. European cooperation should therefore assist in creating networks of like-minded organizations and movements, within a

country, within the Central and Eastern European region itself and with Western counterparts. In this way, experiences can be exchanged, know-how can be shared and personal contacts can be established.

6. We have to prepare the European Union in the coming years to successfully meet these challenges. Reform of the EU institutions, its financing, the Common Agricultural Policy, and the Structural Funds is absolutely inevitable before enlargement can take place. Transition mechanisms are needed in order to make the reforms bearable.

Institutional Reform

7. Irrespective of how many states join the Union in the next round of enlargement, the European People's Party wishes to see a far-reaching institutional reform which will ensure the Union operates well, taking full account of the principles of freedom, democracy, responsibility, equality, justice, solidarity, and subsidiarity which underpin our political actions.

Respect for the Principle of Subsidiarity

8. Strict application and monitoring of the subsidiarity principle is both necessary and indispensable. We need a citizen-friendly Europe which respects our regional, political and social differences, and which protects and promotes European regional identities, cultures and ways of life in all their diversity. The objective is a clear picture of how responsibilities are divided between European, national, regional, and local levels.

Implementing EU citizenship

9. EU citizenship should be further developed as an expression of a sense of belonging to, and identification with, the Union.

European Constitution

10. As proposed by the Draft Constitution of the European Parliament, the European Union needs a constitution in order to define the specific decision-making processes of the different institutions of the Union, and the competences of the Union, individual Member States, and regions, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity. Furthermore, this Constitution must include a Bill of Rights which accords with the European Convention on Human Rights. While awaiting this outcome, the EPP proposes to reinforce the constitutional character of the Union by, for example, coordinating the texts of the various treaties into one single text which would include within it a catalogue of fundamental rights.
11. The EPP believes that the European Union must be as close as possible to its citizens. Consequently, the EPP feels it is necessary to improve the accessibility of the citizens to Community legislation. We advocate a simplification of the law and the introduction of a hierarchy of legislation to help promote the transparency and consistency of the Community legal system.

Reform of the Council

12. The Council's legislative decisions must in principle be taken by majority for a transitional period, decisions on changes to the treaties, enlargement of the Union or increases in own resources should continue to be adopted unanimously, and ratified by the Member States and by the European Parliament. Furthermore, it is necessary to introduce a re-weighting of votes within the Council. Alternatively double majority voting should be introduced which takes Member States' relative population-size into account. The co-decision procedure must apply to all fields of European legislation, including agricultural policy.

Reform of the Commission

13. The EPP seeks a strong and independent European Commission which continues to be the driving force behind the Union and one which will grow into the genuine executive power of the Union. The Commission is the guardian of the treaties and therefore represents the Union's interests. It must be independent and retain the monopoly of legislative initiative. The Commission ought, in the future, to further develop its efficiency, effectiveness, and control of the financial interests of the Union. Individual Commissioners must, as a matter of course, act only in the interest of the Union as a whole. Once a re-weighting of votes in the Council has been agreed, we wish to see all Member States represented by a maximum of one Commissioner per state, as set out in the Institutional Protocol of the Treaty of Amsterdam.
14. In order to assure better control by the European Parliament over the Commission, the removal of individual Commissioners, in cases where this is justified, must be made possible by a qualified majority vote in the European Parliament, without this requiring the dismissal of the entire Commission. The President of the European Commission should be given the possibility of asking for a motion of confidence. The Commission must take measures against any inefficient use of EU resources and take vigorous action against any signs of corruption. The principle of subsidiarity must not be used to dilute or reduce the powers of the Commission.

Reform of the European Parliament

15. In order to create equality between MEPs and to avoid the existing distortions, a uniform and transparent statute for MEPs should be approved by the Council, as developed by the European Parliament, in accordance with the Treaty of Amsterdam.

Reform of the law on European Elections

16. The European People's Party strongly believes in the necessity of agreeing on common principles for an electoral law in time for the 2004 European Elections. Governments and parliaments of Member States are urged to adopt the European Parliament's proposals to this effect with the basic principles of proportionality and proximity. These proposals, which have been advanced and widely supported by the EPP Parliamentary Group, would lead to a more democratic and more representative European

Parliament which would be closer to the citizens of Europe.

The use of new instruments of Foreign Policy

17. The EPP demands a determined application of the new instruments which have been developed in the framework of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), among which are recourse to majority voting for the adoption of common actions, the creation of a Planning and Early-Warning Unit (drawing together experts from the Commission, the Council of Ministers, the WEU, Member States and NATO), and organisation of the activities of the Secretary General of the Council, which would be responsible for foreign policy and active participation by the European Parliament. The new CFSP provisions offer the Member States a range of instruments with which they can develop an effective foreign, security and defence and prevention policy. The EPP wants to create a Union structure capable of deciding democratically on, and implementing, a CFSP in which majority decision-making is the rule. It is therefore essential that the Union should in future have an international legal personality.

Integration of the WEU

18. The EPP favours the integration into the EU of the Western European Union (WEU). The WEU should become the defence element of the Union and the European pillar of NATO. The European Union will thus take a greater responsibility in resolving conflicts and assume a leading role in humanitarian, support, peacekeeping, and other crisis management tasks (known as the Petersberg Tasks). Whether or not to participate in such operations should be a decision for each Member State, but the financial burden should be shared by all Member States, and, at the end of this process, be included in the budgetary procedure. In the integration process of the WEU, special attention needs to be paid to the enlargement process of the EU. The integration of the WEU must not be allowed to obstruct the integration of any new Member State.

External Economic Relations of the European Union

19. In the field of external economic relations, the Union should be responsible for all issues being dealt with within framework of the WTO and, as a general rule, the Commission should be endowed by the Council and the European Parliament with general negotiating powers.

European Political Parties

20. The EPP strongly urges the implementation of Article 138A of the Treaty of Maastricht (Article 191 of the Treaty of Amsterdam) resulting in a broader development of European-wide political parties, such as European support for better contacts with voters, policy development, training and educational activities. In such an approach, European political parties must follow the *Recommendation of the European Council (96/694/CE)* inviting Member States to adopt an integrated strategy aimed at equal participation of women and men in the decision-making process and at developing or establishing - by legislative means and/or encouragement if needs be - in order to

ensure the appropriate measures.

21. The EPP is strongly committed to active development, promotion, and support for equal opportunities in all policy areas of the European Union, and of the EPP itself.

Uniform European Electoral Law

22. In the framework of the execution of Article 138A, the Treaty of Amsterdam envisages a uniform procedure to be followed in all Member States when electing deputies to the European Parliament. The EPP undertakes to defend within the European Parliament the principle of parity of representation of Europe's elected representatives.

Parity of democracy

23. The EPP shall, in all its recommendations and endeavours, redress the current imbalance between men and women in representation at all levels and in every area.

Cultural Identity

24. The process of European integration does not and must not constitute any threat to the religious, regional, linguistic or cultural identity of its citizens; the European Union must on the contrary take culture into account in all its actions, in particular in order to respect and promote the diversity of its cultures. The official languages of the Member States shall continue to be treated as official languages of the European Union; this does not exclude a reduction in the number of working languages for practical and logistical reasons. Computerized methods of translation, and measures to make more flexible and modular both interpretation and translation according to need will be used at the level of the institutions to guarantee this principle when membership of the Union will be extended to other states. In any event, as far as contact between the citizen and the institutions is concerned, it is not possible to envisage any flexible way of reducing the number of languages.
25. The Union needs a public dialogue on values and norms as a new approach to the roots of European culture and societal and cultural activity in the Union in response to the challenges of our time (enlargement, globalisation, growth of the information society, employment and social cohesion). On the subsidiarity principle, the Union should respect, guarantee and, if necessary, facilitate the role of officially recognized religious and comparable world view organisations.
26. To bring to life the cultural area common to Europe's people, it is essential to encourage creative activity, promote cultural heritage with a European dimension, encourage mutual awareness of cultures, languages and history of Europe's peoples and support cultural exchanges with a view to improving the dissemination of knowledge and promoting cooperation and creative activities.
27. However, the EPP considers as a priority objective to any cultural cooperation policy :

- citizen's participation in and access to cultural activities;
- explicit recognition of culture as a source of jobs and a factor in social integration and citizenship;
- the integration of cultural aspects into Community policies within the European Union.

Reform Method

28. The EPP supports recourse to the Community method in preparing the next revision of the Treaties, and for the European Parliament to be fully involved; it asks the European Council to request the Commission to submit a *Proposal for Amendment to the Treaties* on the basis of the Parliament's resolution of 19 November 1997. The European Parliament will debate this proposal with the national parliaments with the aim of submitting a joint draft to the governments of the Member States who will consider and, where appropriate, adopt it. The final decision of the European Council must be submitted for Parliament's assent prior to ratification of the Treaty.

Free Movement

29. Freedom of movement is one of the four basic freedoms of the EU and an important symbol of European integration. It must not in the long-term be limited. Without prejudice to this, it is in everybody's interest that in the field of free movement of people, as in the past, the well-tried instrument of transitional periods be used. The prime objective is to provide our fellow-citizens with new and better perspectives in their own countries.

Financing the European Union

30. Union financing - both income and expenditure - must combine and do justice to the principles of solidarity, autonomy, annuality, and unity. Agreements on the future inter-institutional agreement, the financial perspective, and future own-resources system belong together.
31. The system for financing the Union budget must ensure that the burdens are shared fairly amongst the Member States. The principle of own resources should be maintained, based on objective criteria, the contributive capacity of the Member States; the principle of "juste retour" being contradictory to the principle of solidarity.
32. The EPP accepts that the 1.27% limit should be maintained as an objective for the next financial period; notes that this objective can only be achieved after enlargement if decisions are taken regarding reform of existing policies; agrees that, in view of the uncertainty of the costs of enlargement, it would be logical to assess requirements through revision of the financial perspective once one or more applicant state accedes to the Union and before any suitable reforms are made to agricultural and structural policies.
33. Administrations in accession states must be placed in the position to administer the

funds with which they are provided. The EPP endorses individual evaluation of each accession state and diminishing support as each state progresses towards the community level.

34. The means earmarked for financing new accessions must be kept in mind, and adjusted, to candidates' capacity for management and additional digesting. In addition, aid the new Member States must be made conditional on their progress.
35. The EPP stresses the need for financial solidarity in supporting the Common Agricultural Policy; insists that any element of reform of the CAP introduced should not lead to additional overall costs for the taxpayer. Without entering into the merits of the agricultural proposals, the EPP believes that the agricultural guidelines should be maintained and notes that the reforms proposed will lead to an increase of agricultural expenditure in 2000-2003 before leveling off.
36. The intensity of Community measures in the 15 Member States, especially those concerned with economic and social solidarity, must accord with the reforms needed to ensure further rationalization of spending, and greater effectiveness and efficiency.
37. The EPP demands - in line with the intentions of the Treaty of Amsterdam - a closer cooperation between Member States implementing the structural funds and requests that stress be placed on the close link between the structural measures and the development of human resources.
38. The EPP insists that more inter-institutional cooperation should be developed in order to maximise scarce resources. The EPP, concerned by the exploding costs of interpretation and translation in an enlarged EU, requests that the EU authorities must take appropriate action to ensure the effective day-to-day functioning of the Institutions. The EPP also believes that there must be a thorough review conducted on the functioning of agencies given the tremendous increase in their number, size and scope of operation.

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

39. The CAP should provide progressive support for a European model for agriculture, based on a plurality of production including family farms, respecting the environment, and sensitivity to consumers and agriculture's specific character as a producer of foodstuffs and non-food raw materials (closely linked to caring for and managing the land) and also the great diversity of production systems and income levels. Appropriate answers have to be found. The key elements here are small business, family farms, and economic management which is durable and environmentally-friendly.
40. The aim is effective landholding based on good farming practices which, regardless of size and legal structure, can exploit the available land and make an income from the market with a minimum level of centralized bureaucracy.
41. Competitive differences resulting from location and availability of productive resources

will require - in addition to uniform market, price, and income support in a fully operational internal market with partly-liberalized external protection - region-specific, environmental, and social measures; these measures are necessary if all available land is to be exploited for agriculture, less-favoured areas to be helped, and specific agricultural activities supported.

42. Special attention must be paid to :

- a better balance between pricing and marketing policy on the one hand, and direct income support, socio-structural, environmental, and rural development policies on the other;
- regionally-differentiated common measures so as to ensure economic and social cohesion and facilitate organized management of the whole of the countryside by enabling farmers to cultivate the available land.

43. Such measures should be independent of current production, function-specific, and effective in income terms, so that the farmer can have a long-term perspective in his/her business decisions. Care should be taken when introducing these measures to ensure that they conform to the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or are a meaningful adjunct to them. However, the specific nature of the European model, which presupposes the physical presence of farmers in all rural areas, does mean that income support invariably depends on effective exploitation of the available land.

44. Regardless of the measures to compensate for falls in prices or in compensation for permanent disadvantages, or actions to maintain a healthy environment, measures to improve competitiveness are needed, regardless of the location of the holding. Measures aimed at reducing production levels (milk quotas, set-aside) remain essential and must be pursued with determination.

Interrelationship of agriculture and rural areas

45. Agricultural market regulations, and the measures for developing rural areas which directly affect agriculture, must be closely coordinated.

46. Over and above the different types of support for rural development, rural development within the CAP framework should be strengthened and be aimed at farmers, whose only hope of survival is to diversify their activities (multi-functionality) or to become part-time farmers. The CAP's rural development components must be clearly reinforced and should include the existing socio-structural measures and the current back-up measures, and indeed actions currently included in the LEADER programme.

47. Over and above specific regional socio-structural, environmental and rural development measures already referred to, it is also necessary to devise adequate criteria for the allocation of direct income supplements to farmers in the most peripheral, least favoured and mountainous regions.

Structural Policy Reform

48. EU enlargement emphasizes the need for of reinforcement and adaptation of structural policy.
49. In many areas the current regulations cannot be applied to the new Member States because of administrative, legal and co-financing problems, or would give rise to immense difficulties in those states. Our objective is that Union legislation, including Structural Funds, should be applicable to the states that commit themselves to necessary and comprehensive reforms. Transitional arrangements and derogations will in some circumstances be necessary.

Principles of Reform

50. The strengthening of social and economic cohesion should continue to be a main principle of European integration in an enlarged European Union. Structural policy should be based on the following guidelines: financial solidarity, transparency, helping people to help themselves, temporary support to avoid long term dependency, continuous evaluation of effectiveness and success, no crowding out of private initiative and investment, regions receiving aid should carry the responsibility of distributing it, avoiding distortions of competition especially in border regions and in regions bordering areas of EU Member States receiving disproportionate levels of grant aid, and strong cooperation with regional authorities. In addition to these guidelines, the principle of subsidiarity must at all times be respected. It is a key principle for structural policy and also in the promotion of a Citizens' Europe.

Measures

51. We favour establishing at European level, a simple system for the submission, processing, and approval of applications and subsequent monitoring or adjustment to remove the obstacles, notably for SMEs for access to structural funding. The procedures and mechanisms of the different structural funds to be continued (ERDF, ESF, EAGGF, FIG) should be harmonized. In order to simplify administrative procedures there should be only one programme to be notified within the Commission for each Member State or responsible region.
52. Structural funds which no longer include community initiatives aimed at the promotion of equality between men and women must nonetheless integrate the dimension of equal opportunity in all of their initiatives : the EPP will from time to time evaluate the impact depending on the type of initiative.
53. Adequate co-financing by Member States must be ensured and represents a significant contribution to the fight against fraud. Financial resources should not simply be doled out on the basis of a fixed scale. Member States must cooperate with the EU authorities to monitor and control the proper use of funds and, if necessary, prosecute any abuses.
54. Adequate financial resources must be made available in the framework of the Union

budget to the Structural Funds, both by means of modern financing mechanisms and other means (loans, mortgages, low interest rates, and capital sums etc.), in order to enable them to fulfil their task and to increase involvement and initiative in the private sector. Structural funds should not be allowed to crowd out private investment and initiatives.

55. Agreement on the proposed geographic concentration and a reduction of objectives should be considered. Objective 1 Areas remain the top priority of the Structural Funds. The criteria of 75% of per capita GDP adjusted according to purchasing power parities, which gives the most accurate picture of the wealth of the region, should be strictly applied and gradual phasing-out systems established.
56. The number of Union initiatives must be reduced. The cross-border initiative INTEREG should be the main priority since it represents the clearest example of 'European added value'. National governments continue to enact legislation conflicting with rules on the other side of the border. Member States and regions must take substantially more responsibility for structural funding. This must be prevented in future by a new European Directive, which tests relevant legislation of Member States to ensure unified application of EU regulations.
57. In order to prepare applicant states for accession, a temporary financial instrument in the framework of the EU budget and in addition to the Structural Funds, seems sensible since there is no legal basis for financing necessary pre-accession measures with existing instruments. States wishing to join the EU are asked to put in place efficient local, regional, and national administrative structures in accordance with their constitutional systems, to encourage actors in the non-state sector at these levels, and to improve their financial control systems, so that as future members they can make effective use of the Structural Funds, and thus reduce the enormous regional disparities and development problems.
58. Transitional arrangements need to be put in place for the phased reduction of assistance payments up to the end of the planning period (i.e. up to 2005), for those regions which have achieved a significant, enduring recovery and thus no longer qualify for Structural Fund assistance. The length and intensity of these transitional arrangements should depend on how much a region exceeds the limit fixed for the respective objective.
59. We must ensure that resources which are made available can also be spent after the end of the planning period. That means programming must be optimized, and early information from potential participants improved.

II. ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL, AND MONETARY POLICY

Growth and Competitiveness - the basic preconditions for increased employment

1. The creation of new jobs is of the highest priority. In order to improve the employment situation, the EPP demands favourable framework conditions for the growth and competitiveness of the European economy.

Growth:

2. To enhance growth, the EPP favours:
 - creating and maintaining a macroeconomic environment which helps market forces to blossom and encourages enterprise. The politico-economic and legal framework for enterprises, savers, investors, and consumers should be rendered stable, transparent, and predictable; administrative hurdles - especially those which are harmful to SMEs - should be removed, and financial policy made supportive of innovation and investment;
 - pushing for a monetary policy which enhances stability and ensures adequate savings, low interest rates, and realistic investments. A low inflation rate also simplifies wage negotiations and leads to moderate wage demands;
 - use of resources available at national and Community level in order to put in place infrastructure projects in the areas of transport, energy, and telecommunications which will accelerate the consolidation of the internal market;
 - strengthening measures to overcome hurdles to the free movement of goods and services which, despite European directives to the contrary, have in some cases been retained by national administrations;
 - keeping social peace and social dialogue, and stimulating productivity by giving workers a share in the wealth they help to produce.

Competitiveness:

3. The two most important factors in creating and improving productivity are increasing the rate of innovation and reducing production costs.
4. To encourage innovation, patent law would be improved in order that, for an appropriate period, intellectual property is protected against imitations. The EPP also favours tax breaks for investments in research and innovation. Special attention in this area should be paid to non-material investments. The EPP demands mechanisms which make it possible to transfer technology developed in universities to business, and from military research to civil research.

5. Efforts at regional level play an important role in improving European competitiveness. Regions and cities must be able to build up their specific potential and make use of the opportunities afforded by local conditions. Hence the need to give sufficient scope for an autonomous local and regional economic policy.
6. Capital costs should be reduced by means of currency stability, elbow room for reducing interest rates, and better organisation of capital markets. Currency union will make an important contribution to this. Further measures which help to reduce the costs of investment capital are easier access to venture capital and the application of a legal identity for European businesses. The EPP also explicitly favours further reductions in energy costs by opening up national markets, as the Commission has already begun to do. This creates room for manoeuvre in reducing the role of the state while retaining the same quality of administration.

Coordination of National Economic Policies

7. The success of the economic and currency union will largely be determined by the degree to which national finance and wage policies are consistent with common monetary policy.
8. Growth, competitiveness, and employment will not be enhanced if monetary policy - which is aimed at ensuring stability - is undermined by lack of budgetary discipline or excessive wage agreements. The EPP will support every individual Member State's freedom to effectively shape their national economic policies while at the same time showing due responsibility for the overall European project. In financial policy, a great deal of coordination has been achieved already through the Pact on Stability and Growth.
9. The increasing liberalization of the markets resulting from the completing of the Single Market means that competition is needed; said policy being one devoid of social, fiscal and environmental dumping among EU businesses, and between national Member States. The tax levels in the Member States are, in general, too high in order for Europe to be globally competitive. A downward adjustment of the tax level is a matter of national responsibility. High taxes and the lack of co-ordination between national tax systems have resulted in a high degree of tax competition among Member States which in some areas has reached a damaging level, one which threatens the positive effects in terms of production and employment to be expected from the realization of the Single Market. Furthermore, the lack of fiscal co-ordination and harmonisation, and the excessive degree of tax competition, are causing a progressive loss of sovereignty in taxation policy by Member States and hence their fiscal instruments. The consequence is progressive erosion of the tax base. Particularly negative competitive effects on most Member States' border regions results from unacceptable cross border distortions in economic flows.
10. Therefore agreements must be reached on minimum standards and progressively adjusted.

11. Still existing fiscal exceptions to the rules (European “tax oases”) should be removed as quickly as possible. Beyond that, progress needs to be made as soon as possible on changing the VAT system from the principle of the country of destination to that of the country in which goods originate. When the EURO is introduced, especially, urgent attention must be paid to the harmonization of the taxation on savings.
12. To promote economic growth it is important to maintain dialogue in order to guarantee social peace and to stimulate productivity by motivating workers and encouraging worker participation and to promote, to this end, social coordination at EU level as well.

Economic and Monetary Policy in Foreign Relations

13. To give the Currency Union a strong voice outside the EU, the EPP calls for the President of the European Central Bank (ECB), and the Commissioner responsible for currency questions, to be represented at meetings of International Monetary Fund bodies. The EPP is firmly committed to defending the independence of the European Central Bank.
14. Regarding the real economic sector, the EPP calls on the EU, in line with its obligations to the WTO, to support further liberalization of international trade. This also offers developing countries a better opportunity to integrate into the world economy.
15. Further trade liberalization includes the systematic fight against protectionism in the private sector. The EPP supports the Commission initiative to set up an international regulatory framework for competition between those operating in the private sector. At the least, the Commission’s powers in the area of competition policy should be strengthened and cooperation with competition authorities in the US and Japan supported, so that where there are trans-border limitations on competition, no contradictory decisions are made.

Transport Policy which favours Growth and Respects the Environment

16. The common European transport policy is of central importance for economic recovery and social cohesion in the EU. We need a uniform growth-oriented and environmentally safe transport area in order to make the internal market a reality and to promote economic growth and respect for the environment.
17. In the interests of sustainable long-term mobility a greater effort needs to be made to switch the long-distance carriage of goods from road to rail, inland waterway and coastal shipping. Greater encouragement should therefore also be given to the use of combined transport.
18. To attain this objective, substantial changes will be required to the organisational and cost structures of existing state-owned railways in particular. Through liberalization of the railway market, rail must at last become a competitive and customer-oriented mode of transport.

19. In order to achieve environmentally safer use of the various modes of transport, the costs of using infrastructure must be charged effectively and uniformly to the individual modes of transport in the EU.
20. The expansion of the trans-European transport network needs to be substantially speeded up in order to provide better connections between transport infrastructures which have up to now primarily been nationally oriented and to close gaps in the transport network. The trans-European transport network should also be extended to the Central and East European applicant states in particular as this is the only way of preparing would-be member states for accession to the Union.

III. Ways of creating more employment

Full employment - the EPP's Central Goal

1. Those who are affected by long-term unemployment in practice hardly have a chance of being participants in society. It is true that, thanks to state support, the unemployed are sure of surviving financially, but genuine possibilities of participating in many areas of life are only possible for those who are gainfully employed. Fighting unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, is therefore one of the EPP's central goals. The EPP is therefore guided by the following principles:

Subsidiarity

2. In the fight against unemployment, as in other domains, the EPP believes in the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity within the European Union.
3. Many of the causes for it can only - or more effectively be countered - at national or regional level. Other causes can better or more efficiently be addressed at Union level. The causes of unemployment should therefore be countered where this has the best chance of success.

Europe's Common Currency

4. The EURO has a good chance of becoming a stable currency. A stable currency offers businesses greater security in their planning. Investment, and as a consequence employment, will therefore increase. In order not to endanger these chances of employment, the EPP will back a stable EURO. If attempts to interfere with the independence of the European Central Bank, or to undermine the Growth and Stability Pact, will be opposed.

Europe's Internal Market

5. The European internal market offers business a large domestic market of more than 300 million consumers. As a result there is rapid and ready demand for innovations in production. European businesses can, thanks to the internal market, ensure that they achieve larger market-share than heretofore. This will in turn create many new jobs. The EPP will therefore continue to support a functional internal market.

Increased Employment through Competition

6. The single market can only achieve its full benefit if there is competition in all parts of the market. The EPP therefore calls emphatically for the determined liberalization of the telecommunications market. Basic telecommunications technology (eg telephone lines) enable a multiplicity of new areas of employment in information, communications, and services (electronic commerce, call-centres, Intranet, Extranet, traffic management systems, electronic mailing, long-distance diagnostics etc.)

7. Despite the change to an information and services society, the industrial sector will retain an important role, both economically and in employment policy. On the one hand it has the potential to produce many new jobs. On the other, a multiplicity of new services grow up around industrial enterprises. The EPP therefore supports a clear improvement in the framework conditions. These include determined liberalization of the energy markets.
8. Those trying to gain a livelihood often face severe financial problems. It is no different for small and medium-sized companies developing their business, and trying to make new investments. Opportunities for new jobs are thus unnecessarily wasted. The EPP therefore supports liberalization of the capital and finance markets.

Increased Employment through Deregulation

9. The EPP will therefore work to make sure there are no unnecessary new tangles of red tape in Member States as a result of EU directives and directions. The thicker the forest of regulations, the greater the obstacles, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. These are restricted in their activities, and therefore need fewer workers. Also, for employment reasons, the EPP supports constant checking of existing regulations with the object of reducing regulations. A time-limit on legislation ("sunset-legislation") is a promising way of achieving this goal.

Increased Employment by Reducing Subsidies

10. Subsidies do not create new jobs. It is true that subventions can temporarily delay job-losses in stagnating and shrinking markets, but they cannot stop the process. Resources have to be taken from growing areas of the economy to retain old jobs. The result is fewer jobs which are likely to be durable; not only because of the transfer of real resources, but also because activities in prospering branches of the economy are less profitable because of the burden of subsidies.

Encouraging the Transfer of Information

11. The 15 Member States have developed numerous tactics in the struggle against unemployment. Often knowledge about tactics deployed in other Member States can help a Member State to solve its own employment problems. So constant exchange of information about successful tactics in individual Member States and regions is a necessity, and should be continued.

Increased Employment through Greater Labour Market and Working-Time Flexibility

12. Growth remains a precondition of more employment. But how strongly employment grows through economic growth depends on the flexibility of the labour market. Fundamentally, the task is to achieve greater flexibility in the labour market, and in the responsibility taken for this by Member States and the social partners. The EPP actively supports the legislature planning for such dispositions, and calls upon the trade unions

and employers' organizations to reorganise their collective negotiations to ensure social dialogue within the European Union.

More Jobs as a result of Self-Employment

13. The last few years have seen a renewed growth in self-employment. This is a good thing. Self-employment is far from having reached its limit as a source of employment. The EPP will do all it can to improve, if necessary, the framework conditions for those people establishing their own businesses. The party will, for example, see to it that EU citizens establishing a business in another EU Member State are faced with as few hurdles as possible.

Increased Employment through Better Chances for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

14. The framework conditions and encouragement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must be improved, both to increase their number and their possibilities of employing more people. Taken as a whole, SMEs are our biggest employers and must be given the best framework conditions for adapting to a globalised world.

Increased Employment through Greater Employability

15. Those starting their careers often fail because of a lack of aptitude in holding down a job. This does not just apply to adolescents who have left school prematurely, but also to many young people who have finished their education. The quality of school education must be improved. Young people must in particular acquire the key qualifications. These are writing, reading, mathematics, foreign languages, practical computer skills, and the sciences. Beyond this, there are other general skills such as reliability, capacity to concentrate, a sense of responsibility, knowing how to operate in a team etc. which are also integral to employability. Such knowledge and skills should therefore be taught more intensively and with more success in European schools than has so far been the case. Wherever the European Union can contribute to greater employability, the EPP will give its support. This is especially the case in the learning of foreign languages. The EPP will strongly support the facilitation of school exchanges between different Member States.

IV. REFORM OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL

Present and Future Challenges to the Social Market Economy

1. In a modern industrial society a functioning social safety net is essential because it encourages people to take risks. But social support must be developed in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, they must help people to help themselves, and must not obstruct market forces.
2. The European Social model must take account of diverse factors made up of both faults and difficulties of financing social security and social assistance :
 - limitations of the welfare state;
 - the continuing increase in the number of people of retirement age and the falling birth rate;
 - the unemployment figures;
 - the evolution of structures in society and the family and the precariousness which may result from these.
3. If even more jobs are not to be lost in an increasingly competitive world, then taxes and social contributions cannot continue to rise, but should rather be cut, which itself could create new financing problems. Finally the atomization of society and the disappearance of traditional family structures is making more and more people dependent on a functioning social security system paid for by all, with the higher costs inherent therein.

Social Security

4. The EPP regards social assistance as a safety net for those who are really in need. The party pursues a policy of actively keeping people independent of social assistance as long as possible, or encouraging them to leave it as quickly as possible, and strengthening their sense of personal responsibility as active members of society. The 'community of solidarity' must always include basic support, which - where necessary - should be supplemented by individual provision. The community of social care cannot cover every personal risk. The major risks must in any event be a challenge to community solidarity. The individual should complement the benefits provided by mutual security systems by making his/her own provision for the future.
5. The EPP favours reducing the tax on labour, which should only be balanced by transferring what is absolutely necessary to other sources of finance. But care must be taken to ensure that an excessive burden is not placed on business. European solutions are needed for the introduction of alternative sources of funding. Nonetheless, it goes without saying that for the EPP the public system of social protection must be considered a basic principle of social security, upon which the individual's own system of protection are an added extra. Part-time work and flexible working hours offer the possibility of integrating more men and women into working life, and thus stabilising contributions to social insurance systems.

Providing for the Elderly

6. EU Member States must deal with the implications of longevity in their populations. The effect is that the number of people receiving social security constantly mounts in comparison with the numbers paying contributions. The challenge we thus have to confront is that of constructing a system which is viable in the long-term while at the same time still providing security for the elderly, avoiding loss of competitiveness through excessive social costs, and a fair spread of the burden between the generations. Exclusively favouring a particular model for earning a living must absolutely be avoided. Therefore the discontinuation of working careers, and the achievements of those bringing up children, or looking after older members of the family, must be taken into account. The goal is to achieve care for the elderly which is independent, and ensures a livelihood. It is important to ensure the best possible economic growth and as high a level of employment in the EU as possible, so that a growing number of people are paying social security contributions.
7. The pension systems in individual Member States are historical, having developed in a variety of ways, and the need for reform is correspondingly various. But in all cases pension systems will always offer basic support, which can then be supplemented by company insurance systems and extra individual contributions. Legal pension rights can not be questioned. The necessary reforms must be introduced quickly so that individuals can plan their lives. A more flexible pensionable age, coupled with appropriate contributions - either to or from pensioners - is another important element of better, individually-tailored, provisions for the elderly.
8. All discrimination against senior citizens in the labour market, mobility (e.g. driver's licence), social security, politics or culture, should be eliminated. Senior citizens have the right to participate at all levels of social life and to be properly represented. Formulas of social mobility should be introduced in order to permit senior citizens to contribute to socio-economic progress, thanks to their experience and know-how.

Equality of Men and Women

9. The EPP proposes to move towards equality in family life as well as in professional life by managing working time in a way that currently applies only to women: part-time work, career breaks, parental leave, and leave for pressing family reasons. We propose a reduction in working time by taking a whole career into account in the form of a time-credit, with the same model applicable to everyone, which would be compulsory to take during a person's working life, in consultation with the social partners. Generalised in this way, without being linear, this measure would allow for satisfying the very diverse workers' demands for free time. It should generally help the employment situation, and take account of the needs of the business. It would progressively replace all the current forms of temporary suspension of employment contracts.
10. On the employment issue, the EPP will support all measures which allow for suppressing effective discrimination against women in recruitment practices, salary,

and promotion. We support positive action against all forms of discrimination. We call for statistics to be broken down by sex so that the situation of women in the employment market can be specifically followed.

11. In the area of health, the EPP notes a lack of specific information differentiating between men and women in medical research, the use of medication, and the treatment of certain illnesses. We therefore call for gender to be taken systematically into account in these areas, including medical diagnoses.
12. In education and training, the media plays a decisive role in the transmission of values and the socio-cultural roles attributed to men and women. Apart from the training of educators and teachers (see Chapter V), the EPP demands that the European Union establish rules to be respected by the media to ensure that they broadcast an image which values women. It will introduce a proposal along these lines to the Committee on Women's Rights.
13. The EPP commits itself to establishing a plan of positive action for its own organisation intended to achieve equal democracy.
14. The EPP attaches a special quality to Sundays as a day for common meditation, family life and recreation for as many people as possible.

The Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion

15. One of the EPP's priority objectives is the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It goes against our principles of solidarity and social justice if a substantial percentage of the population is - through no fault of their own - living below the poverty line and in a state of permanent insecurity.
16. One of the most important elements in the fight against poverty and social exclusion is employment policy, not only at national, but also at European level. The social partners must be given a major role in both national and European decision-making processes.
17. It is also important that social security systems should continue to offer a minimum level of social protection. The exclusion of certain social groups from the labour market must be avoided. Much can be done to re-integrate such groups by re-organising the labour market and adapting labour costs so that new jobs can be created.
18. The EPP is convinced that a policy which stimulates solidarity between generations at a local level, and which includes integrating programmes for both young and old will contribute greatly to the fight against social exclusion.

Putting Minimum Social Standards in place

19. Better implementation of internationally-agreed minimum social standards, particularly against child labour and workers' rights, requires a stronger common position to be taken by the EU in the relevant international organisations such as the International

Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In so doing, the European demand for enforcement of these minimum standards should not be misunderstood as protectionism, but as a call for the development of essential independent systems of social protection in the third countries concerned. This is an area in which the EU can provide active assistance in the form of pilot projects.

Worldwide Rules for the New Era of World Free Trade

20. The internationalisation of economic activity, and the growing number of economic mergers pose both a challenge and an opportunity. With the decline of tariff obstacles to trade, there are more and more dangers to free trade and fair competition from non-tariff obstructions.
21. For this reason, the EPP strongly supports the continuation of world trade talks in the framework of the WTO aimed at achieving further progress in liberalisation. Internationally binding rules on competition must also be progressively developed, so that globalisation does not destroy what has been achieved and foment trade wars. The EU must continue to push for internationally open markets and fair competition.

V. EUROPEAN TRAINING AND EDUCATION POLICY

1. Training and education are the foundation stones of the future. The EPP considers it vital to encourage mutual cooperation and coordination agreements on education in Europe, while at the same respecting the principle of Member States' autonomy and the principle of subsidiarity and it is convinced that the Union must act only at the level where it bring added value to national policies.

Foundations of Education and Teaching

2. The existence of an adequate level of education in all Member States of the European Union, and equal access to education for all inhabitants, are the key to European training and education policy. Gender or ethnic background should never be an obstacle to the right to education.

Freedom of Choice of School

3. In a democratic and open society it is a matter of course that pupils can go to the school of their choice. Private schools based on private initiative represent freedom and a sense of responsibility in a society. Parents should have the freedom to choose the school which convinces them it can best fulfil the needs of their children. This includes private schools. The state must provide resources equally to every child.

Taking Individual Abilities into Account

4. Schools and educational systems which do not take into account the different abilities of their students should be rejected. Every individual should be supported in the educational framework to achieve to the best of his/ her abilities, level of development, and the requirements made of him/ her. Therefore models for pre-school education should be developed. During a child's very early years, excellent possibilities exist for cultural, linguistic and social integration. Children's learning and behavioural problems can be recognised early and something done to counter them. Moreover, it is the clear responsibility of a society in which often only one parent is present, or both have to be away from home all day, to fill the gap and to promote the family so that parents can adequately fulfil their responsibilities.

The Role of the Family

5. The family must remain the central element in the education of young people. The role of parents, as well as the family environment, cannot be replaced by an educational establishment. Children and young people need a great deal of affection and attention of a kind which is only available from their parents and the intimate family circle. However school should support parents in bringing up their children.
6. Different educational possibilities should promote equal opportunities between men and women. Gender should not be an obstacle to choosing a particular educational course, any more than it should today obstruct one's choice of profession.

Educational Objectives

Promotion means Making Demands

7. The quality of teaching must be guaranteed. Every form of education involves making an effort, and effort is also its precondition. Only teaching that makes demands on pupils will prepare them for the multifarious challenges of the future. But education should not be exclusively limited to achieving a material result. School success ought not therefore to be measured merely on the basis of grades achieved. Other aptitudes (manual, cultural, social) must also be taken into account, even where these are not readily expressed as school grades.

Promotion of Artistic Skills

8. Artistic activity and openness to cultural treasures enrich human existence. Education should therefore advance understanding of culture and art. It should support those on a voyage of discovery and help them develop their creative and artistic skills and talents.

Passing on Values

9. In our time, which has seen such a plethora of knowledge and data, and it is impossible to find one's way through the variety of different life-philosophies, we need religious instruction as a valuable orientation-aid. Guidance in established religious convictions is useful to society because society can only be carried and shaped for the future by people with sturdy roots.
10. The EPP is firmly against school systems and educational structure which marginalise the values and norms which are the precondition of a free and responsible society. Creating mature citizens who identify with democratic ideals is an important educational goal. The EPP's Basic Programme (Article 163) sets out the basic values : the Christian cultural heritage, human rights, acceptance of fundamental democratic ideals, as well as equality for men and women regardless of ethnic background. Unbiased teaching of European and world history is an important means to ensure the passing on of such values; environmental education and sensibility to the dangers of drugs must also be considered as important factors in education policy.

Qualification for the Labour Market

Promotion of Mobility

11. School pupils, trainees, and students must acquire better mobility through encouraging knowledge of foreign languages. Learning a language cannot begin early enough. One, or perhaps two, other languages should be integrated into the school timetable as early as elementary and pre-school education. The existing multi-faceted European exchange and mobility programmes in the bi-lateral, and multi-lateral area, should therefore be further enhanced. Practical application of such programmes must not be

allowed to calcify through excessive bureaucracy. In this connection, grants and scholarships should also be maintained for students and trainees where their courses are transnational or cross-border. Restrictions on funding which confine students and trainees to what is on offer nationally should be removed as far as possible. A trans-European voucher system for higher education could serve this purpose.

12. But the full possibilities of mobility can only be realized if the various national school certificates, diplomas, and leaving certificates are also a clear indication of qualifications. Documentation relating to school, university, and training certificates must be reliable. Transparency must be as self-evident as the possibility of comparison. EU Member States must ensure a certain standardization in school and training diplomas and professional qualifications. Directives of the European Union regarding mutual qualifications and professional titles must be improved and more effectively implemented by Member States.

Openness towards New Technology

13. European educational structures must create the pre-conditions for exploiting the labour opportunities in the areas of micro-electronics, bio- and information-technology. There should be particular support for scientific and technological areas of study. More people should be going into science and research so that Europe is once more the centre for forward-looking technologies. Without compromising an individuals' freedom to study what they wish, bridges must be built between science and economics and the humanities.

Further and Professional Education

14. Given ever more intense international competition, and very rapid advances in technological progress, the value of further education must not be underestimated. An employee's ability to adapt to the changing world of employment is becoming an overriding factor. So teaching how to learn for life is one of a school's central tasks.
15. Artisan and manual professions are as important as theoretical studies. That is why professional, practical education and vocational training have a special value to which more importance should be attached, with smaller classes, the encouragement of part-time learning and studying, increased investments, and strengthened cooperation between technical schools and industry.
16. The bridge between school education and the world of work must be extended. Training must be practical and adapt to the fast-changing situation in the professional world. In this connection there must, apart from flexible school structures, be a constant dialogue between the responsible politicians and representatives of the world of work and education. There must also be constant monitoring of vocational training syllabi, and training must be adapted to technical and organisational change in the world of work.
17. It is unacceptable for young people to leave school without having considerable basic

knowledge. On the threshold of the 21st century, there must be no tolerance of illiteracy or semi-literacy. Moreover, no young person should leave formal education without at least a vocational qualification. Apprenticeship programmes should be encouraged.

Teachers' Qualifications

18. Apart from the specialized knowledge a teacher needs to impart knowledge and functional skills, he or she must have a command of modern information technology, as well as psycho-pedagogic understanding and sociological knowledge in dealing with pupils and their family circumstances.
19. Modern information and communication technology is changing the world. Children not only ought to get used to it as soon as possible, ICT can also offer an adequate new way of learning, allowing teachers to deliver pupil-oriented education in a way that has not been possible before. Teachers need to be aware of this and should be retrained where necessary.
20. Special attention needs to be devoted to the education of the educators. They should have perfect knowledge of the school system both in theory and practice, and suitably high-quality scientific, pedagogic, and social competence. They must be in a position to make constant evaluations and updating of their own knowledge and methodology.
21. The concepts of 'gender' and 'interculturalism' must be integrated into the training programmes for teachers and educators. Sexist or ethnic stereotypes must disappear from school and be replaced by co-education. This will introduce children from the earliest possible age to the concept of equality.
22. Teacher-training must help to place teachers in a framework of European citizenship and durable development. The EPP hopes that Socrates II will be used to reinforce a new sense of responsible citizenship among teachers.

Higher Education

23. The basic freedoms of higher education include, *inter alia*, the right to hire scientists and teachers, to decide on teaching methods and the forms of examinations, to determine the balance of research to teaching, and for institutions to take economic responsibility for themselves. The students' freedoms include choosing their university, to choose their curriculum, and to decide individually on their professional goals and how to attain them.
24. Decisions on the development of universities must not be taken only by the responsible authorities, state or otherwise, but should be developed in a spirit of partnership by representatives of the teaching staff, personnel, and the student body. All higher education institutions should be treated equally by the state, regardless of whether they are public, private, or private initiatives.

Access to Higher Education

25. Everybody should have an equal opportunity of higher education. This equality only relates to financial, social, and ethnic characteristics; it does not mean free, unlimited access for all. This right also depends on certain qualifications, such as final diplomas or secondary school diplomas/certificates.
26. On the subsidiarity principle, the EPP respects different national traditions concerning tuition fees. The EPP is in favour of further extending access to higher education, based on intellectual merits but not financial means. At the same time, the EPP favours further extension of students' independence, and choice in all decisions related to higher education studies, as the best guarantee for a stable evolution of science and society. The state has an important role to bridge such gaps by introducing an adequate system of grants and loans.

Mobility and Internationalisation

27. The EPP supports a policy of international exchange. Contacts with other academic institutions help universities' mutual exchange of information, which is essential for high-quality research. Bilateral programmes also increase higher education's independence from the state.
28. Mobility within the EU and exchange programmes have been the way cooperation and innovation at European level have been strengthened. Financing for such programmes has to be secured, since these are also investments in better European understanding and competitiveness.

VI. RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

Research and Science

1. Research and innovative technologies are and will remain essential pre-conditions for economic progress, in productivity and prosperity. For today's Europe they are also a decisive instrument to meet the three challenges of unemployment, planned enlargement, and economic globalisation.
2. In terms of percentage GDP or per head, Europeans spend comparatively less on research and innovation than Americans or Japanese. This at least partly explains our backwardness in bio-technology and information technology. But it is precisely these sectors which look most promising for the future. Europe must spend a comparable percentage of its GDP to research and innovation to Japan and the USA.
3. Even if Europe can be proud its place in the area of basic research, it is not succeeding in exploiting this for industrial innovations or new patents, thus turning it into added value for the economy and the employment situation. This contradiction can be explained by the complex inter-relations of economic, fiscal, institutional, and cultural factors, which needs to be corrected.
4. Popular fears and reservations about certain scientific developments, and their possible effects on health and the earth's ecological balance, have to be addressed. These risks need to be assessed and minimized. But this caution should not lead to a one-sided, systematic rejection of all technological progress based on the argument that not all risks have been excluded.
5. To improve Europe's scientific and technological potential, the following measures are needed :
 - a) Continued development of a "Scientific Community", one which has already been started through the various Commission programmes;
 - b) Improvements in the area of research and innovation through optimal use of inter-disciplinary cooperation in research, marketing, and production, and the effects of their synergy;
 - c) Encouraging mobility among scientists, as well as tax relief for research and researchers;
 - d) Guaranteeing enough protection for scientific achievements, without putting unnecessary obstacles in the way of their dissemination;
 - e) Maintenance and - if possible - stocking up of the Union's resources for research programmes, while at the same ensuring that such resources are invested sensibly and duplication is avoided. Concentration on turn-key

- technologies of the future and projects which have a so-called 'European added value';
- f) Improvement of companies' access (especially SMEs) to the capital market. Creation of a favourable environment for the expansion of this market at European level, to increase capacity and liquidity;
 - g) ensuring as much safety as possible and adhering to ethical principles;
 - h) Encouragement of a better public attitude to the goals and problems of science and research;
 - through a better accord between scientific aims and the aspirations of society;
 - through greater transparency in decision-making;
 - through better protection against the damaging effects of certain developments.
 - i) Improved access for SMEs to R&D programmes. In order to ensure that SMEs obtain the budgetary means designated to them. The European Commission's definition of SMEs in its recommendation of 3 April 1996 should be strictly applied when it comes to awarding the budgetary means.
 - j) Integration of students
The academic world should take full account of students' interest in research at an early stage of their academic studies, in order to give them motivation and responsibility in the real academic world.
6. The European Union already has a task in the area of science and technology policies. The coming about of a European normative framework would serve as an orientation of political decision-making in considering research and technological development at the European level. Support for bio-medical research from the European Commission should be in accordance with the ethical framework mentioned above. The European Commission should refrain from financing research prohibited in a Member State, thus undermining national policies.
 7. The EPP invites EU Member States to cooperate more closely in fields such as artificial methods of reproduction and public information aimed at empowering human beings to make responsible decisions; commercial exploitation of surrogate motherhood; gender selection on grounds other than medical considerations; medical experiments on human beings; the protection of genetic information; organ donation, and the prohibition of commercial trade in human tissue and genetic material.

VII THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALISED CRIME

1. The threat posed by organised crime is one of the gravest challenges facing modern society, undermining democratic institutions, distorting the free market economy, obstructing fiscal policy, and increasing the perception of insecurity. Internationally-organised criminals respect no boundaries either in traditional areas such as terrorism; protection rackets; prostitution - especially of women and children; drugs; gambling; corruption; and illicit arms-dealing, nor in fields such as large-scale economic crime and, increasingly, environmental crime.
2. Organised criminals use the most modern technology and in the market place of the 21st century are increasingly ignoring national legal systems. The time is ripe to depart from traditional models of crime-fighting, which are based on an outdated conception of impermeable borders, and to use methods based on close cooperation by the judiciary, intelligence organizations, experience gained within the framework of external security, police, and customs authorities working together transnationally.
3. Member States must show their political will to take coordinated action capable of dealing effectively with this common problem. The creation of a space of liberty, security, and common justice represents one of the great challenges for the European Union to achieve in the coming years.
4. To fight the scourge of organised crime more effectively, it is vital to establish a common definition of the judicial concept of organised crime in the penal legislation of Member States.

Measures to be taken

Judicial cooperation

5. Judicial cooperation constitutes one of the most effective means of combatting organised crime. Efforts by Member States in this area have already borne some fruit, but these must be reinforced in the coming years, in particular by adopting measures with the following objectives:
 - prevention of conflicts between jurisdictions;
 - compatibility between different national organs in this domain;
 - the progressive adoption of common minimum norms regarding the elements constituting offences;
 - the progressive harmonisation of national penalty norms.

Europol

6. Now that the Europol Convention has been ratified, the remaining hurdles must be overcome to enable Europol to undertake the tasks assigned to it. In due course, Europol should be accorded executive and operational powers thereby making it possible to pursue crime effectively. Europol should be financed from the EU

budget, and be subject to judicial and democratic review by the Court of Justice and the European Parliament. Europol should be allowed to concentrate on tackling serious international crime, and not be overloaded with an excessively wide range of other crimes. Where national authorities need assistance, national police forces should remain in charge of investigative actions on their own territories. The forging of closer co-operation with applicant states and other neighbouring states is a priority. The development of Europol's operative jurisdiction requires the introduction of a parallel legal guarantee for citizens.

Exchange of Personnel and Joint Training

7. There are at least 121 separate police forces in the 15 EU Member States. Only when there is broad acceptance among them of cross-border and agency co-operation can we hope to be truly successful. Exchange of staff and joint training, particularly of the next generation of leaders of these forces, is essential for building up mutual confidence. In this way the most efficient methods and new ideas can be easily shared and acted upon. EU programmes such as GROTIUS, SHERLOCK, STOP, OISIN, and FALCONE, should be encouraged and if necessary expanded, as they provide the basis for more co-operation, the exchange of administrative and police officials, and for joint training.

Compatible Crime Statistics

8. A key area in need of improvement is that of gathering reliable crime statistics. Proper analysis of the crime situation and of developing trends is impossible without reliable and comprehensive statistics. The priority is to aim for agreement on the definition of crimes and how to counter them. In this connection, a real policy on crime should be established at European level: this would unquestionably fix target priorities in the area of organised crime and lead to the eradication of the problem.

Cooperation between the European Union and non-EU Countries

9. The problem of organised crime goes well beyond the boundaries of the EU. Co-operation with non-EU states is therefore essential. The EU must particularly assist the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, notably through Phare funding, to improve their policing and judicial systems, which would enable them to better tackle organised crime. We also need to strengthen police and customs intelligence co-operation between the Union and accession states, possibly resulting in joint structures/operations. Cooperation with the countries of the Mediterranean Basin, within the framework of the Barcelona process, is likewise of paramount importance for the development of the Union.
10. Russia is a particular problem because of its size and its rapid economic changes. TACIS funding should be made available to help it develop and modernise its criminal justice system, including improvement of financial supervision.

Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism

11. European Union cooperation in the fight against terrorism must be reinforced. The Union must find ways of defending the liberty of its citizens and the security of its Member States against malevolent enemies. Cooperation in the areas of policing and the judiciary, exchange of information, intelligence, and political solidarity, are elements in the fight against terrorism.

Co-operation Against Crime

12. Legal harmonisation must be pursued in areas where it is necessary for the cooperation of police forces. The methods and needs of customs, police, and lawyers for the pursuit, arrest, and prosecution of drug-dealers vary considerably allowing some criminals to avoid punishment. Conflicts or inability to act in cases where drug transfers are being observed, the bugging of vehicles, the trans-national pursuit of criminals, swift arrests, and differing search methods, are all examples of how existing laws hinder rather than help cooperation and the achieving of satisfactory results.
13. Consideration should be given to the establishment of some kind of European public prosecutor for a limited number of cross-border offences, on the understanding that investigative actions and subsequent judgements would remain with national bodies. We call for the harmonisation of national penalties and of prosecution procedures for trans-national criminality (definition of crimes, of penalties, and procedures). The implementation of the 1996 Resolution on the Sentencing of Persons Convicted of Drug Trafficking and that all Courts of Justice in the EU must send out a very clear message that every form of drug trafficking will be severely punished.

Money-Laundering

14. Central to the fight against organised crime are effective measures against money-laundering. Existing directives in this area must be implemented in their entirety. Furthermore, a sensible, concentrated campaign by legislators, banks, lawyers, tax inspectors, and security organisations is needed to strip away the basic *raison d'être* of organised crime, namely the profit. This will also involve surveillance of so-called tax-havens on territories associated with the EU, and an examination of Member States' legislation on banking secrecy.

Specific Measures to Fight Drug-Related Crime

15. In seeking to achieve a drugs-free society, more effective measures to tackle production of, and trafficking in, drugs must be accompanied by measures to prevent drug-taking, particularly by young people, and by increasing the opportunity for drug addicts to have access to treatment programmes, rehabilitation and therapy.
16. Any legalisation of narcotic and psychotropic drugs is unacceptable. Legalisation of 'soft' drugs would serve to push traffickers into organising, more energetically than before, the distribution and sales of ever more dangerous drugs. The EPP therefore stands firmly behind maintaining the United Nations Conventions on narcotic and psychotropic substances, and insists that all EU Member States sign up to, ratify, and

observe these in both spirit and in practice.

17. Clauses should be written into international treaties committing our partners in Asia, North Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, to the eradication of drug production and trafficking. We should also assist producer countries serious about stopping drug production by providing expertise and finance for alternative crops. They should be accorded better access to our markets. Funding under partnership and cooperation agreements could be used in Asia, TACIS funding in the CIS states, MEDA funding in the Mediterranean region, Caribbean Initiative funding in the Caribbean and funding under the ACP Convention in the ACP States.
18. In deprived regions, the breeding ground of crime must be eradicated by the provision of educational and training opportunities. The idea of partnership between local communities, the social partners and state partnership along the lines formulated, for instance, in Commission President Santer's Confidence Pact, should be developed as the model for the economic and social regeneration of these communities.
19. In addition, the adoption of the Community's action plan on drug prevention for the first time offers the opportunity to develop and fund a common strategy, one which could develop into a comprehensive prevention programme, with family and school as the fundamental axes of this struggle. The exchange of experiences in the fight against drugs should also be given an institutional framework beyond the borders of the European Union.

Carrying out Investigative Controls not based on Suspicion or Dependent on Results

20. At national level, the main goal must be to create designated zones, close to borders, along international transit routes and at traffic hubs, in which investigative searches can be carried out. In particular security checks involving controls, without grounds for suspicion or in connection with an incident, can make a useful contribution. The EPP therefore appeals to all countries to introduce this effective instrument as quickly as possible in response to the constant increase in criminal mobility.

Traffic in Human Beings

21. Recent statistics suggest that each year some 500,000 women are forcibly and illegally brought to EU states from Central and Eastern Europe to be exploited physically and psychologically as prostitutes. The EPP is committed to countering this crime through deterrent punishments and an intensified campaign against it, meaning prevention and an information campaign, better treatment of the victims of human traffic, free legal advice and assistance, making it easy to receive temporary residency permits (*permis de séjour*) where individuals cannot safely return to the country from which they have come.

Fight Against the Traffic and Sexual Abuse of Children must be Intensified

22. This fight starts with severe condemnation of the production, possession and traffic in pornographic material involving children. Legislation must provide for the prosecution of residents of Member States who have committed sexual crimes against a child abroad, even where the foreign state where the offences have been committed has not become involved in the case. Once a person had been convicted of crimes against children, that person should never be permitted to exercise either a profession, or be involved in a voluntary activity which involves children.

Missing and Abducted Children

23. Missing, sexually exploited and kidnapped children remain matters of cardinal concern for EU Member States. The creation of a European NGO networks based on existing experience (e.g. Child Focus in Brussels) must be encouraged.

VIII. IMMIGRATION AND THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM

Towards a Common Immigration and Asylum Policy

1. We feel responsible for ensuring a just policy towards all those who seek shelter in the European Union. Agreed common regulations on immigration and asylum in the European Union are of decisive importance to the European People's Party. A clear, unambiguous policy must be put in place, both in relation to individual Member States and to third countries, one which above all differentiates very precisely between the right of asylum and the right to immigrate, and includes appropriately differentiated regulations.
2. Divergent laws and procedures in the EU do not make sense. This is all the more problematic insofar as citizens from third countries legally resident in one EU Member State can travel freely within the EU's borders. Given that internal EU borders are being progressively removed, and in view of the agreement to integrate the Schengen Agreement into the new Treaty of Amsterdam, the introduction of a common immigration and asylum policy is a priority for the coming years.

Asylum

3. Political refugees currently obtain asylum in EU Member States under the Geneva Convention, which guarantees protection from persecution on the grounds of race, political opinion, religion, nationality etc. or belonging to a specific social group. This practice must be circumscribed by reciprocal confidence between Member States and their respect for human rights in accordance with the Protocol annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam.
4. Assessment of asylum-seekers must also take into account whether they are being persecuted on the basis of rules initiated by a state or state authority.
5. Those afflicted by poverty, hunger, or natural catastrophes must be given the best possible humanitarian aid either in their own country or as close as possible to that country.
6. The European Peoples Party is committed to the Geneva Convention on Refugees and stresses the need to introduce common EU laws and procedures as soon as possible. Applicants for asylum must be distributed among EU Member States, which logically implies common regulations. If this does not happen, a number of EU Member States will continue to accept a disproportionate share of refugees, since asylum-seekers will naturally apply to those countries most likely to accept them and where social security benefits are most generous.
7. The decision on whether or not there are genuine rights to asylum should be made in a legal procedure which satisfies the recognised minimum standards laid down in the Council Decision of 20.06.1995. In particular, the prohibition of turning away set out in the Geneva Convention on Refugees must be respected in that an asylum-seeker's

- statement of persecution is verified before he/she is sent back to the country alleged to have persecuted him/her.
8. Apart from the right to a judicial hearing, applicants for asylum have the temporary right to remain, access to translation and legal representation, and to the fulfilment of their basic needs in the state responsible for hearing their application for asylum.
 9. An asylum-seeker should be permitted to enter only if the inward journey is direct, that is, if he is not already in another state where he/she is safe from persecution, and could have applied for asylum there. Claims for asylum which are obviously without foundation must be settled in an accelerated procedure. Border controls and the checks of claims to asylum must be performed by trained and competent personnel.
 10. The European Peoples Party stresses that applicants for asylum are obliged to cooperate with the assessment of their application. As soon as the applicant is in a place of safety, the responsible authorities must be informed about an asylum applicant's inward journey using false papers, or none at all. If an applicant refuses to give relevant information on the basis of which a decision can be reached about whether (s)he should be sent back to his/her country of origin, this should be taken into account when his/her case is decided. In this connection we would like to stress that every state has a duty to take back its own citizens. Return to countries of origin should be facilitated by repatriation agreements.
 11. Following a successful application for asylum, the spouse and children under the age of majority should be able to exercise their right to family reunification.

Refugees Not Covered by the Geneva Convention

12. People fleeing *en masse* from wars or similar situations in their country need help and solidarity. They must for a limited time be given protection if there is no other way of helping them near their home countries. Refugees will be repatriated as soon as the reason for their flight no longer persists and their lives are no longer in danger.
13. The legislation of most Member States also provides for the possibility of granting protection, outside the scope of the Geneva Convention, to individuals persecuted for reasons not laid down in the Convention, or who, exceptionally, cannot be sent back to their country of origin. The EPP supports moves to align these national provisions and practices, as a complement to the Geneva Convention.
14. Within the EU, a system should be evolved which spreads the burden more fairly among the Member States, so that some are not disproportionately affected by a large number of refugees. The European People's Party further proposes that political decision-makers work together at international level to ensure that each continent solves its own refugee problems. As far as possible this should be done with the economic support of the world community, especially the industrialised countries.
15. The European People's Party takes the view that it should be possible to send asylum-seekers, or those granted permanent residence, back to their own countries if they

have committed crimes. This should also apply to those who have been granted asylum, or the right to remain, on the basis of incorrect information, unless such an expulsion order clashes, in particular cases, with international conventions. However, equal treatment for nationals and foreigners demands that there should be a list of sanctions, for instance in the case of false statements.

Immigration

16. In view of the significant developments in Member States' experience of immigration over recent years, a review of practices and procedures on the basis of the new Amsterdam Treaty is called for. At the same time, a reduction in migratory pressures must be achieved through decisive EU intervention in conflict regions, the extension of development aid, and economic and political co-operation with the countries from which immigrants are coming, notably Africa. It is essential that Member States elaborate an active policy, being both political, economic, and social, to integrate immigrants who have entered the state legally. Immigration policy should take account of the economic and social position, particularly the labour market situation in order to ensure social acceptance and avoid social tensions.
17. The fight against illegal immigration should be stepped up, notably by breaking up the organised gangs who smuggle people in, often putting the lives of their victims at risk.

Citizenship, Enfranchisement and Integration

18. Acquiring citizenship in an EU state must be a possibility for citizens of third countries. The decision then depends on the law of the state in which the applicant is seeking nationality. Beyond that, it is necessary to take into account agreements on avoiding dual nationality.
19. The principle of single nationality must be upheld. Multiple nationality can cause conflicts of loyalty. Multiple nationality hinders complete identification with one state. Therefore it does not encourage but rather prevents integration. Moreover, citizens with two or more nationalities are privileged compared to citizens with only one nationality.
20. For third country nationals, a general right to vote is normally linked to the acquisition of citizenship. Granting the right to vote in local elections is up to the Member State.

Integration of Foreigners

21. Integration is an essential part of immigration policy. Experience shows that individuals of different cultures may be mutually enriched by living alongside one another. Cultural differences between the indigenous population and migrants from abroad must not lead to open conflicts or to the destabilisation of social structures. Particular efforts should be focussed on helping to integrate those with the right to settle, in order to ensure co-existence between people of differing origins. The EPP is committed to promoting suitable EU measures for this purpose. Specific measures must be taken in relation to

women emigres. One such example is the teaching of basic literacy, which will enable them to integrate into society, something they are not invariably able to do in their country of origin.

22. The EPP is in favour of organised voluntary return and reinsertion projects (to avoid forced return) for asylum seekers who are not recognised and for illegal foreigners. In these projects, returnees could become “agents” of development in their own countries.

IX. EUROPE'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE AND ECONOMIC STABILITY IN THE WORLD

Strengthened Common Foreign and Security Policy

1. The European Union needs a Common Foreign and Security Policy to make it a political power capable of acting in accordance with its values and common interests, capable of reinforcing its own security and of safeguarding and reinforcing international security, capable also of strengthening international cooperation, the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms.
2. Preventive diplomacy and prompt peace-keeping operations must become part of an integrated concept which goes beyond the more long-term and principally economic instruments hitherto deployed by the EU. The EU must improve its capacity to prevent conflict through high-level political intervention. Introducing preventive and peace-keeping operations is a good start. The ongoing UN mission in FYROM is one of the most successful examples of how to avoid tension in an area of extremely high tension. Such peacekeeping and enforcement missions should preferably have the mandate of the UN Security Council or the OSCE, but be carried out and financed, if need be, by the WEU and the EU. The EPP once more stresses the need for appropriate mandates, clear and precise rules of engagement, and military equipment adapted to every particular conflict-situation.
3. The advantages of preventive diplomacy and action are now becoming recognised on a global level. Activities and initiatives regarding conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy require coherent, comprehensive, and integrated approaches and thus the close co-operation of all policy instruments – diplomacy, the army, trade and development co-operation – based on their comparative advantages. Systematic and persistent violations of human rights are often a first sign of impending conflict with many victims. We must also, within the framework of the CFSP, work together with a real, responsible, and coherent policy on control of arms export which goes further than simply exchanging information in this area.
4. The OSCE has successfully contributed to the easing of regional conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya, Nagorno Karabakh, and other regions and has also been entrusted with Verification in Kosovo. It has thus proven its continued importance. The EPP is committed to the principle that the security policy adopted by the EU should be pursued in close cooperation with the OSCE. Any competition between the various institutions handling political security must be avoided.
5. EU Member States which are permanent or temporary members of the UN Security Council should not just represent themselves, but deliberately and systematically promote EU policy. A complete rethink of the composition of the UN Security Council is becoming more and more urgent. The EU should aim to be represented in its own right in the UN Security Council. Until this happens, EU Member States should vote together.

A Strong NATO Open to New Members

6. Only NATO has the military strength and organisation needed for reliable military security. The EPP is therefore convinced that the presence of the USA remains absolutely vital. But Europe must contribute more actively to the common defence effort. No-one in Europe is currently planning to increase defence spending. For the foreseeable future, Europe is unwilling to make substantial increases to its defence budgets. The strengthening of a WEU integrated into the European structures as the European pillar of NATO, and the avoidance of duplicate structures by simple access to NATO's infrastructure, is thus of vital importance.
7. The EPP welcomes NATO's dialogue with countries of Central and Eastern Europe who want to become members. Those countries which have sought membership, but will not be admitted in the years to come, should not be allowed to drift into a no-mans-land. So political, civilian, and military co-operation between NATO and countries falling short of membership must be further intensified, through the Partnership for Peace Programme (PFP) – to increase the inter-operability of the military organisation of these countries up to NATO standards – and through the Euro Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) for political consultation. We place special importance on the fact that NATO has also recognised the Baltic States as aspirants for membership. NATO should also be open to current members of the EU who are not yet members of the Alliance.

Key Strategic Regions

Russia and The Ukraine

8. Partnership and Co-operation Agreements with Russia and The Ukraine are a vital plank of EU foreign policy, and should be further developed. The major task remains that of lending support to the strengthening of democracy and economic reform and of averting a multi-dimensional internal crisis with important external spill-over effects. We welcome the fact that Russia has - thanks to the NATO-Russia Founding Act - been closely tied into Europe's security structure. An ongoing dialogue with Russia is a vital means of avoiding the creation of tension and the construction of new Cold War-style border lines in Europe. The Ukraine plays a key role in European security, and so EU policy should aim to consolidate Ukraine's independence.

Turkey

9. Further economic integration based on the Customs Union will promote political cooperation with Turkey. The EU should maintain pressure on the Turkish government to accelerate democratisation, improve dialogue and co-operation, use peaceful means for the settlement of conflicts, ensure the protection of minorities, human rights, and compliance with international law. The EU also underlines the urgency of resolving the Cyprus conflict. At the same time, the EU is called upon to fulfil the obligations to Turkey to which it is committed under the Mutual Financial Protocol.

Former Yugoslavia

10. Ensuring lasting peace in the western Balkans remains a priority challenge to the conscience of the European Union. The EU, NATO, and OSCE must together determine the framework for a durable political solution to the conflicts in the region.

Albania

11. The EU must follow the situation in Albania very closely, pressing the government and the parliament to work in a spirit of national reconciliation which respects the rule of law, the local authorities, the independence of judicial power and the freedom of the press. All of this is a precondition for continued help from the international community.

Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region and the Middle East

12. Over the coming years special attention has to be devoted to the implementation of the action plan adopted by the Barcelona Ministerial Conference on Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The EPP supports a rapid conclusion of remaining association and co-operation agreements with non-Member States of the region. The conclusion of such agreements would represent an important step towards increased economic integration, prosperity and stability, which in turn would reduce social tension and discourage religious fundamentalism. Deepened political cooperation is also vital in the fight against organised crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism. The EU must strive for a progressive extension of European internal security standards to the external borders of the partner countries.
13. The European Union must work in partnership with the USA and therefore strengthen its political commitment and provide a new input into the Middle East peace process, thus making a more active contribution to a stable and sustainable peace.

Cooperation with ACP States and Latin America

14. EU-ACP relations should be strengthened with emphasis on the principles and methods of good governance. Greater coherence of EU trade, agriculture, environment and development co-operation policy is called for. EU and Member States' foreign aid policies should be better co-ordinated, and clearly directed to support the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions and a vibrant macro-economic and micro-economic framework for a social market economy. One major task should be to give greater support to better integration into the world economy, namely within the framework of the WTO, as well as to increase regional trade. The Great Lakes Region calls for more profound and continuous EU engagement.
15. The EPP aspires to the development and strengthening of relations and dialogue between the European Union and Latin America. In this context, the next Conference of Heads of State and Government in Rio in 1999 will allow for deepening cooperation, particularly in the economic, commercial, and cultural arena. Current negotiations, with

Chile, the MERCOSUR countries and especially those with Mexico must have a successful outcome. Europe must advance towards a strategic partnership with states taking the path of democracy and modernisation and that are respecting the rule of law, human rights and principles of good governance. It is with regret that the EPP observes the situation of the Cuban people who continue to suffer under one of the world's last dictatorships.

Democracy and Security in Asia

16. The EU's priority in Asia, for strategic and security as well as moral reasons, is to foster democracy and human rights. This cannot be achieved by economic and political exclusion. Increased trade and cooperation makes a vital and positive contribution to political development. It must go hand in hand with intensified, political and diplomatic pressure for democracy and human rights. To be successful, however, this can only be achieved by means of EU solidarity. Common action by the European Union is also essential for fostering dialogue, and prompting other confidence and security-building measures with regard to the arms race, border and maritime disputes etc. Political and economic pressure on the military government in Burma is necessary in order to bring this country back to democracy and respect for human rights.

X. (SAFEGUARDING CREATION) PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. In EU Member States there has been a clear improvement in environmental protection. The EU's environmental policy has made a decisive contribution to this. The EPP emphasizes the necessity for a common European policy on the environment. The EU is destined to take on a pioneering international role in this. But Member States should be permitted to go further in environmental policy at national level, provided that introducing such national regulations does not lead to distortions in economic competition.
2. The Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty created the basis for European environmental policy. The EPP is determined to develop the European Union further, into an environmental union. The EPP therefore explicitly supports the results of the June 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, which set in granite the concept of sustained development in the Preamble and in EU Treaty Article 2.
3. On environmental issues, the Council in principle decides by qualified majority. Where it does not, QMV should be introduced. The EPP welcomes the fact that the Amsterdam Treaty introduces the principle that the co-decision procedure should be applied to environmental legislation. Furthermore, in order to realize comparable ecological standards in the European Union, regional grants need to have stronger links with Europe-wide environmental objectives. The infrastructure funds and support programmes (e.g. PHARE, TACIS and MEDA) should also be aligned with this objective.
4. In this connection, the EPP supports complementing environmental laws with voluntary agreements, and an energy tax harmonised on a Europe-wide basis, one which does not affect the overall level of tax or damage competition, and also environmental taxes, ecological regulation, and in particular voluntary but binding agreements. Industry should be more involved in problem-solving. Such commitments will allow European policy to advance the cause of the environment in industry and economy without necessarily having recourse to regulatory tools. The EPP is moreover open to further, efficient environmental tax instrument policies such as solutions involving the issuing of certificates.
5. Effective implementation and enforcement of European environment law must be guaranteed on a lasting basis. Much more attention must be paid to shortcomings at the level of enforcement. The EPP calls on the Member States to eliminate the causes of these inadequacies affecting enforcement in the Member States (lack of organisational structures, staff shortages, inefficient administrative, monitoring and supervisory structures at regional and local level). The EPP calls for the establishment of independent enforcement checkpoints under the European Environment Agency. The EPP calls on the Commission to draw up a proposal for a network of environment inspectors from the Member States to combat deficiencies in verification and enforcement in a decentralised and flexible manner. More than in the past we want to

see ecological features in taxation law, environment levies, compensation arrangements, certification and liability rules and voluntary self-restraint measures.

6. The EU should actively continue the work for global sustainable development in the framework of the United Nations and international environmental conventions.
7. The EU should investigate whether a system of 'emission bubbles' and trade in emission rights could be introduced within the EU.

Energy

8. The EPP supports priority being given to measures promoting efficient energy consumption. Modest and responsible energy consumption and the establishment of new and renewable energy sources will be the two pillars on which to build a long-term ecological policy, a policy which will make provision for sustainable development. The instruments of market economy and stimulation of research and development will be key factors in achieving this goal. Environment investments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are more effective and have a more substantial impact than investments in Western Europe, which may only lead to marginal improvements.
9. The EPP attaches great importance to achieving of the objectives of the Climate Convention. The European Union should take a leading role in world-wide climate protection. Over the next decade, emissions of carbon-dioxide, nitrogen-oxide and methane need to be substantially reduced. We strongly support the EU's goal of reducing exhaust gases emissions in the EU by 15% by the year 2010. We hope to persuade other leading industrial states to join us in this project and also developing countries with rapidly growing industry and energy sectors.
10. Anchoring climate protection and a reduction in CO₂ emissions in the European Treaties is at the centre of EPP policy. In this connection, the EPP strongly supports the development of global strategies leading to a reduction of CO₂ emissions in the earth's atmosphere.
11. An energy tax harmonised on a European basis, and based on the amount of CO₂ emission, could be an instrument in achieving these objectives.

Traffic

12. The EPP supports the continuing work on legislation to impose stricter limits on exhaust gas emissions by road vehicles and the introduction of environmentally-friendly fuels.
13. A coherent transport policy must ensure there is a satisfactory level of public transport : not only in order to protect the environment but also to save time and to assist in the saving lives lost on our roads.
14. The EPP seeks better networking of the various means of transport. A harmonised Europe-wide railway network is needed. The current situation with differing standards

and bureaucratic problems is no longer acceptable. Harmonisation must aim at making the railways competitive enough to attract future increases in long-distance freight traffic. Infrastructural developments should be innovative. With regard to the Trans-European Networks, the EPP will concern itself with ensuring that the Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment, making environmental compatibility tests compulsory for Member States, is applied.

Waste

15. The EPP supports a policy along the hierarchical lines of 'avoid, evaluate, and dispose. The goal of EU waste policy must be to avoid waste. In this connection, the EPP strongly supports stricter environmental norms on waste-tips and waste incineration plants. Only where this is impossible should more re-cycling mechanisms and the thermal use of waste be considered. The thermal use of waste must be restricted by high emission standards.
16. Over the long-term, production, distribution, and consumption, on the one hand, and utilisation and waste-disposal on the other, must be linked together in one economic cycle. The EPP strongly supports the concept of product responsibility meaning that producer, distributor, and consumer carry the responsibility for avoiding waste, re-cycling, and dumping waste.
17. The EPP is very concerned about the illegal transport of toxic waste to third countries, especially in the Developing World. The EPP strongly supports the introduction of regulations which effectively counter this development and ensure that illegal transport is brought back at the expense of the sender.

Water

18. The EPP commits itself to the development of a common EU policy to protect water. Only a coherent law on water can ensure that the ecological demands made in multifarious aspects of water use, notably drinking water, can be satisfied Europe-wide. In this connection, the key points as far as Europe's interests are concerned are preventive measures and the same obligation for all Member States of the European Union. Only a preventive water protection policy applied to those causing the damage, can halt environmental dumping in Europe. Only by welding together the necessary elements and instruments of water protection into a framework of hydro legislation at EU level can the challenge be matched; such a legal framework must afford effective protection to the eco-system, preserve and improve water quality, develop guidelines on water, as well as harmonise regulations which catch the attention of the media - such as the Directive on Integrated Avoidance and Reduction of Pollution, the Seveso Directive, checks on environmental costs and eco-auditing, all in line with a future European Framework Directive on Water.