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**Common Declaration of the European People's Party
and the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament
On the 50th Anniversary of Signature of the Treaties of Rome**

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Berlin, 24 March 2007

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1. Fifty years after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the Heads of State and Government, Party Chairmen and the Presidency of the European People's Party (EPP), as well as the Presidency of the Group of the EPP in the European Parliament, will meet on 24 March 2007, within sight of the Brandenburg Gate, long the symbol of the painful division of Europe and now, since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the symbol of reunification. The EPP, together with Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin, wishes to celebrate the signature of the Treaty of Rome, the Founders of the European Union and the success of this historical project. This is for us an opportunity to contribute to the promotion of the European idea.

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2. At the same time, we wish to honour the farsightedness and courage of those who, after the end of the National Socialist dictatorship, introduced the process of European integration, thereby bringing about a turning point in the history of our countries. The integration of Europe was primarily the achievement of European Christian Democrats like Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi and Helmut Kohl. This is our honour and, at the same time, our commitment. The EPP - with Angela Merkel as President of the European Council, José Manuel Barroso as President of the European Commission and Hans-Gert Poettering as President of the European Parliament - has become the leading political force of the European Union. We are determined to live up to this responsibility in the interest of Europe and all its citizens.

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3. The reunification of the continent - divided for centuries by nationalism, by war, and by domination over other peoples - is now a reality, with the enlargement of the Union from the initial six States to 27 Member States at the present time. For far too long, the fate of Europe appeared inextricably bound with war. War encouraged the growth of inhuman totalitarian regimes bringing death and suffering to millions of human beings. With the collapse of Communism, the European Union currently represents a space of freedom, security and well-being for nearly 500 million people. We also wish to honour the courage and self-sacrifice of those who, for decades, resisted Soviet and Communist oppression in their countries, while maintaining the spiritual and moral values which we defend. We owe our freedom to their determination, as well as to the determined actions of the governments of democratic Europe and the solidarity of the North Atlantic Alliance.

46 4. The European Union, as a community of values, is based on Democracy, Freedom,
47 inalienable Human Rights, as well as the protection of minorities. Our universal spirit,
48 Europe's Judeo-Christian roots and common cultural heritage, as well as the classic and
49 humanist history of Europe and the achievements of the period of enlightenment, are
50 the foundation of our political family. The European Union was born from the fusion of
51 the free will of the Member States, in a spirit of reconciliation and solidarity. We are
52 convinced that the European Union represents the best response to the great
53 challenges of the 21st Century - globalisation, the threat to our security, and the
54 preservation of our well-being.

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56 5. We are committed to a strong Europe based on subsidiarity and cultural diversity.
57 The European Union is built upon the Nation States and renders them capable of acting
58 together in a globalized world. The diversity of languages, cultures and traditions is an
59 asset to our common strength. We want a Europe of Citizens, concentrating on the
60 essential tasks, in the interests of all Member States. In the interests of citizens,
61 European integration has been greatly advanced by the European Single Market, the
62 Euro, and the Schengen Agreement. We wish to continue this process of development
63 with the participation of all Members of the European Union. We decisively object to
64 any proposals that attempt to transform the Union into a Free Trade Zone. We confirm
65 our belief that the Community method, from our point of view, is the most appropriate
66 for solving Europe's common problems. The Union, as a whole, is capable of action as a
67 result of the initiative of the Commission, the decision by qualified majority of the
68 Council, and the equal co-decision of the European Parliament.

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70 6. In view of the recent enlargement of the European Union, we now have to enhance
71 its capacity to act, strengthen solidarity between the Member States and to reduce
72 bureaucracy. The European Union needs more democracy, transparency and efficiency.
73 That is why today, 50 years after the signing of the Treaties of Rome, we are united in
74 our aim of placing the European Union on a renewed common basis before the
75 European Parliament elections in 2009.

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77 7. We wish to assist the development, in a spirit of friendship and partnership, of
78 relations between the European Union and European States which are not members. A
79 perspective of accession is given on the condition of fulfilment of the necessary
80 conditions on the side of the applicant countries and given the capacity to integrate on
81 the side of the European Union.

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83 8. We want the European Union to speak with one voice in foreign affairs as well. New
84 challenges to our security, such as international terrorism and the spread of weapons of
85 mass destruction, require a strong European Union in the service of peace, freedom
86 and human rights in the world. We therefore wish to ensure the consistent and
87 continual development of common policy in foreign affairs, security and defence.

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89 9. We wish to help Europe strive in the age of the globalization by promoting a spirit of
90 freedom and social responsibility. This should allow us to enhance our competitiveness
91 and our social security, since globalization represents the best opportunity for the
92 worldwide assertion of the fundamental ideas of European integration. Acting together,
93 in close association with our partners in the world, we will be best suited to promote
94 our opportunities for the future. Priority must be given to strengthening the
95 competitiveness and powers of economic growth within the European Union, the

96 safeguarding and creation of new jobs, and to ensuring a safe, cost-effective and
97 environmentally-friendly energy supply while guaranteeing social security. We wish to
98 intensify the community of values and interests of the European Union with the United
99 States of America through close cooperation in security policy, leading to a trans-
100 Atlantic economic partnership.

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102 10. The EPP regards 50 years of successful European integration as a commitment to
103 the re-invigoration of the European idea in the 21st Century. As the leading political
104 force of the new Europe and as heirs to the legacy of the Founding Fathers of the
105 European Union, we are determined to live up to our responsibilities to future
106 generations. The greatest challenge facing us today is to preserve Creation. This can
107 only be achieved through the common efforts of all peoples and nations. The European
108 Union has played a leading role in many international agreements on environmental
109 protection, particularly on combating climate change. The Union must continue to lead
110 the way in the future, and continue to be a source of inspiration to those who remain
111 unconvinced of its potential.

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113 11. After 50 years of European integration, we are able to look back proudly to our
114 achievements. Many things that seemed inconceivable 50 years ago appear obvious
115 today. There have, of course, been setbacks and disappointments, but they have been
116 far outweighed by the achievements of the Union. These achievements give us courage
117 to face the future. Our task, as politicians, is to reconcile conflicting interests and find
118 solutions to problems. The spirit of the Treaty of Rome will enable us to face the
119 challenges that lie ahead. The EPP, in the spirit of the Treaty of Rome, will continue to
120 work for the consolidation of European integration, in the service of all citizens and on
121 behalf of peace and freedom in the world.

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