

Prospering families for a prosperous Europe or What is good for the family is good for Europe

Resolution adopted by the EPP Political Assembly
23rd January 2015



The European Peoples Party,

- recalling that 2014 was the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family;
- having regard to efforts to promote a society favourable to children and families in the Athens BASIC PROGRAMME, which was adopted at the 9th EPP Congress in November 1992;
- having regard to the fact that clear and resolute support of the family, stimulating political and economic support for childcare and children's education would help to rejuvenate Europe and reverse the current trend for declining birth rates, as stated in the EPP programme "A Union of Values", which was adopted at the 14th EPP Congress, January 2001;
- having regard to the right of a man and a woman to conclude marriage and establish a family as their fundamental human right deeply anchored in human nature and in International Law (UDHR, 16); also confirmed in the Party Platform, art. 211, EPP Statutory Congress, Bucharest, October 2012;
- recognising the fragility of families in contemporary European societies;
- being aware of the demographic situation in the Member States, which is leading to serious economic, social and cultural challenges;
- whereas recognition of human dignity of individual men and women lies at the core of a functioning family;
- recalling that the family is a place of handover of individual and community values and Judeo-Christian cultural tradition in Europe;
- acknowledging other forms of life communities and their needs;
- underlining that throughout the ages, the core of social wellbeing in European nations has been fuelled by a social order based on stable and lasting family bonds, consisting in stable and lasting marriages between a man and a woman oriented towards, and with responsibility for, their children.

General considerations

- A functioning family as described above is an objective stabilising factor for society. The majority of Europeans still perceive the family as a beacon, a harbour for hope and a place of mutual respect, understanding, care and support, as an intimate community where individuals can experience unconditional love.
- A properly functioning family is still the foremost shelter for the material and psychological safety and security for individuals, helping them to overcome difficult life situations, such as illness, unemployment or poverty, and it effectively helps to prevent homelessness.

Empowering the family is therefore the best way to protect individual citizens and strengthen the whole society. Family is the first and most important place for the socialisation of the individual.

By any scientific and empirical evidence the family is the safest haven for raising children. The extended family (grandfather, grandmother, and broader circle of relatives) is a stabilising factor that strengthens the identity of the individual man and woman. The value of a family is universal for all cultures and religions.

Therefore, the European People's Party

- Strongly affirms that the family is a core cell of human society and has a central role in it.
- Acknowledges that the family precedes the state; therefore, the principle of subsidiarity should be vigorously applied in favour of families in all aspects of social life.
- Believes that the family is the optimal place for the conception, birth and upbringing of children, as well as for living and ageing.
- Acknowledges the role of the family as an irreplaceable means for the transfer of values, culture, ethnical identity and linguistic diversity between the generations. Family is place of natural solidarity between the generations.
- Affirms that according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children;
- Acknowledges the importance of stable families; broken families generate suffering in many forms, in particular to their most vulnerable members – to children. At the same time, such broken families produce huge costs for society.

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- Is aware that today's families are facing increasing pressure and are loaded with numerous burdens without adequate recognition for their achievements.
 - Stresses the importance of the unpaid and invaluable work and care that takes place in families for the preparation of new generations, thereby helping to preserve the functionality of our social systems. The achievements of families are essential for the survival of society.
 - Underlines the importance of childcare schemes and work policies which increase the possibilities of mothers and fathers to combine parental duties and the best ways to continue their career or freely to choose a period of parental leave.
 - Holds as an example the successful public policies introduced by Member Parties of the EPP that help families by various tax allowance systems, employee and pension benefits. These measures should above all prevent overburdening bigger households.
 - Acknowledges the fundamental role of the family as the cornerstone for the future of Europe. Preserving the family's integrity and its capacity of 'raising the future' in an optimal framework must be at the core of our policy. This will do credit to our common European political family.

Policy challenges

In order to empower the family in its functions and responsibilities, the European People's Party:

- Calls on the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council to observe the principle of subsidiarity, as first laid down in the EU Treaty of Maastricht, with regard to family and related cultural and ethical matters, which are competences of the Member States.
- Calls on the Member States to acknowledge the indispensable social foundation laid by families; to thoroughly evaluate the causes and consequences of increasing family breakups, and to promote public policies which protect and support the good of families and their full and effective functioning.
- Calls on the Council, the Commission, the European Parliament, and the Member States to encourage European cooperation and the exchange of best ideas and practices that have a positive impact on the families. In this respect it calls on the Commission to ensure that NGOs and other initiatives supporting the well-being of families receive the necessary financial and political support from the European Union.
- Calls on the Commission, the Parliament and the Member States to integrate a family perspective at European and national levels by introducing a family impact report or assessment as a standing part of policymaking - known as 'family mainstreaming'.

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**If you have any question
you would like to ask
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