


# For a Europe of the Citizens: Priorities for a Better Future

**("Rome Manifesto")**

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## 1. Introduction and Analysis

The process of European integration is the greatest achievement in the history of our continent. The European Union has given its citizens enduring peace, freedom, stability and prosperity. Our political family has influenced this historical development in a decisive way. Since enlargement by ten new members, Europe has made an enormous step forward towards reunification. Two years later, we can already see the enormously positive effects for our citizens all over Europe – in political, economic and social terms. The unification of Europe has created growth and employment throughout Europe. The European project must remain what its founding fathers envisioned it to be – a project for hope and prosperity for the entire continent.

We are the political force that has shaped the European project like no other. From the founding of the European Communities after the Second World War to European reunification, with the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, and the introduction of the EURO, it is courageous statesmen belonging to our political family that have played a decisive role. Now the European People's Party is determined to shape the Europe of the future. Today, as in the past, the extreme Left and the extreme Right often rejected European integration and still demonstrate today that they have no ideas for the future of Europe. Throughout history, the EPP has been the European party with a clear vision for Europe because we are committed to solve the problems and to address the concerns of our citizens. Europe has to take the necessary actions to achieve its goals.

The EPP is convinced that it was the right decision to draft a Constitutional Treaty as a new basis for the European Union. We want the achievements and reforms proposed by the Constitutional Treaty to become reality, in order to make the European Union work in a more transparent, democratic and efficient way. This will increase the support for the European Union among its citizens.

However, the outcome of the referenda in France and the Netherlands has shown that public support for the way in which European integration is carried out, is decreasing. The outcome of these referenda was not accidental, but represents a tendency that is growing stronger in many EU Member States. This is partly linked to the fact that national governments do not sufficiently highlight the benefits of the European Union to their citizens. Our citizens want a strong Europe and they want Europe to deliver an added value and to deal with the problems that concern them. The European Union is too often identified with negative aspects of bureaucracy and un-transparent decision-making processes, and blamed for the challenges and consequences of globalization on our economies and in our societies.

The most recent enlargement has been viewed by the EPP as a "win-win" achievement which has brought substantial benefits to all Member States. Despite this fact, many citizens are becoming more and more critical of the European Union. Many people are critical about enlargement without the solution of some important internal problems and, in general, about the direction in which the Union has developed. This cannot merely be explained by a lack of information about the EU; a change in approach is needed: it is not the citizens who should go looking for information, but information should go looking for the citizens. Therefore, we propose to strengthen EU identity by fully engaging citizens in the process. Only a Union which is cohesive and which

defends its common values and standards, will be strong enough to safeguard our common interests in the world.

It is essential to identify the problems and shortcomings of our integration model. We want a Europe of citizens. Therefore, we want to strengthen the principle of subsidiarity, solidarity and personalism, in the framework of a rational division of competences. We also want a transparent institutional structure, able to organize a network of political activity, with the simplification of decision-making procedures and clarification of spheres of responsibility. A network that is able to stimulate the political contribution of the citizens. A European Union of 25 plus Member States presents new challenges as to how to respond to the concerns of its citizens.

The European Union has to provide a competitive economic framework in order to achieve economic growth and create jobs for European citizens, taking into account social cohesion and environmental standards. This process can only succeed if the social partners and other organizations in our societies face up to their responsibilities in shaping Europe's future. A better coordination of economic policies at a European level and a strict adherence to the Stability and Growth Pact throughout the European Union are essential to maintain economic stability, which is a necessary condition to achieve these goals. Only then we can face the challenges of globalization and profit over time from its opportunities.

The EPP is convinced that a clear majority of people all over Europe wants a strong European Union that deals with problems swiftly and effectively at the European level problemswhich cannot be sufficiently addressed by the Member States, either at national level or at regional or local levels, on their own. The security issues posed in a world facing new threats to freedom, democracy and stability will be very important. We must highlight and explain to Europeans the "added value" of European integration and point out the advantages – many of which are taken for granted – that are now part of their daily life. The time has come to re-define the priorities of Europe in a more clear and concise way, and respond with direction, conviction and resolution to the concerns of Europeans. For this task we need a determined and far-sighted political leadership which is inspired by the courage and conviction of Europe's founding fathers. Through this Manifesto, the European People's Party aspires to tackle the challenge at hand.

## 2. The European Union – a Union of Values

The project of European integration has always been based on common values and the will to work together, in order to achieve freedom, peace, stability and prosperity throughout Europe and to promote its longstanding values. The European Union will continue to be successful if all EU Member States and EU institutions – which have the task of defending the project of European integration - share a focused and cohesive vision of the future, ready to tackle efficiently and effectively their concerns and to play a leading role on the world stage. We must rebuild the self-confidence of Europeans and the European Union as a whole.

The rich and diverse political culture of the European People's Party is a characteristic example of Europe itself. Coming together from an array of political traditions, the EPP member parties are united by a core set of values and principles: dignity of the human person, freedom and responsibility, fundamental equality, justice, subsidiarity and solidarity. These values are common to the Member States' societies, in which democratic pluralism, the rule of law, non-discrimination, tolerance, and private property, based on the social market economy, prevail.

Facing new trends in the socio-cultural life in the western world, the European People's Party has always been guided by these values and traditions, including the respect for the family, traditional minorities and historical religions and churches, which, for ages, have been a strong basis for the European civilization. The subsidiarity principle in family law should be observed and this area should also, in the future, remain a competence of Member States. The EU institutions are urged to respect and safeguard this principle.

Our universal spirit, Europe's Judeo-Christian roots and common cultural heritage, as well as the classic and humanist history of Europe and the achievements of the period of the Enlightenment, are the foundation of our political platform; our commitment and forward-looking approach for a united and strong Europe has given us the strength to evolve and to tackle effectively Europe's challenges. Terrorism and fundamentalism, which are directed against our values, intend to destroy our free societies and have no justification.

Our identity has been shaped by the founding fathers of Europe - Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer. They built Europe on the values and ideals which we are determined to defend. The EPP is the political party on the European level which is ready to tackle the huge tasks ahead of us. We want to provide the platform for a new generation of politicians and for new solutions, so that our vision of Europe can be realized.

Our political methods, based on subsidiarity and solidarity, are the guiding principles of our societies. As we do not believe in the state being responsible for every single area of people's lives, we do not believe that Europe can work if it deals with issues that can much better be dealt with on a national, or even regional or local, level. That is why the EPP has for years been calling for a clearer distribution of competences between European, national and sub-national levels - the latter on the basis of the national Constitutions. We are aware that the European Union of 25 or more members (and 27 with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, if they prove that they

fulfill the requirements) needs a different approach than the Communities of the six founding members. It is clear that a European Union of 25 Member States needs to have sufficient budgetary means to fulfill its tasks. The Constitutional Treaty offers the right answers to most of the problems.

In order to strengthen the support for the European integration process among our citizens, an explanation of our common European identity is truly fundamental. It is about living in a common geographic and political space of peace, freedom, democracy and prosperity – while promoting our cultural diversity, which is one of the strengths of Europe. Important means to achieve these goals are further steps to integrate the historic heritage and memories of both parts of Europe, creating a balanced moral and political assessment of all recent totalitarian dictatorships. At the same time, new challenges such as the role of Europe in a globalized world, demand new approaches. Many urgent problems in our societies, like the threat of terrorism, illegal migration, human trafficking and organized crime, as well as common challenges, such as energy policy, or common infrastructure projects, can only be dealt with efficiently if we manage to act together.

The debate on the borders of Europe is at the heart of our common European identity. It has been a long time since Europe was just a customs union that promoted common economic policies. The European Union has already developed into a political union with common borders, in which both the inviolable nature of its internal borders in the sense of the Helsinki Final Act must be assured, as well as the security of its external common borders, as the basis for stability and peace. The feeling of "belonging together" and sharing the same values and principles must, therefore, be exemplified and strengthened, in order not to lose public support for the European project. The balance between the enlargement of the European Union and its consolidation is essential for the viability of the project – otherwise we put at risk the achievements of the past and create enormous difficulties for the future. Therefore, the European Union has to be reformed at latest before the next enlargement, after Romania and Bulgaria.

Membership of the European Union remains the most attractive option for many of the European neighbours of the EU. In the past decades, EU enlargement has been the main tool for promoting freedom, democracy, peace, stability and economic development, as well as human rights and the rule of law across the whole of Europe. But, following the most recent enlargement to the ten new Member States, and without deepening, the Union has to be much more cautious about future enlargements.

Any future enlargement has to take into account the EU's ability to absorb new members. The EPP has played a significant role in the successful enlargement of the European Union. Its diligent work has also led to increased security and an economic dynamism. In the Treaty on the European Union, it is stated that any European state which respects its principles may apply to become a member of the European Union. Candidate countries have to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria, which define the conditions for admission, and the obligations undertaken in the accession partnership, and to implement them strictly. European neighbouring countries, which cannot or do not want to become full Members of the European Union, should be offered an especially close partnership with the EU, including multilateral solutions.

By the means of an especially close partnership, a common economic area could be created to the benefit of both the countries concerned and the EU itself. However, it should be more than a "European Economic Area". It should include close political consultation, especially in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs (border control, cooperation in juridical affairs, the protection of human rights, exchange of information about human trafficking and drugs), as well as Foreign and Security Policy (especially the common fight against terrorism) and respect of the external borders of the Union. The EU should encourage these states to commit themselves to stronger regional cooperation amongst themselves. This would enable Europe to strengthen peace and stability as well as economic prosperity, throughout the continent, by alternative means to membership.

The EU also needs a neighbourhood policy for the countries of the Mediterranean and those in the east of our continent, enhancing cooperation especially in the fields of the fight against terrorism, management of migration flows, human trafficking, and border controls. The neighbourhood policy should aim at creating and extending a common area of peace, stability, security, respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and prosperity. Therefore, this policy should refrain from a uniform approach towards all its neighbours but, rather, to devise diverse incentives and obligations for each individual state. This should also include a European perspective for European neighbouring countries. In the future, the EU should expand its contribution to develop democracy and defend human rights in neighbouring countries. Every democratic improvement in these countries should be strongly supported.

The Barcelona Process is a unique and ambitious initiative, which laid the foundations for a new regional relationship and which represents a turning-point in Euro-Mediterranean relations. Unfortunately, ten years later the main objectives have not been achieved. It is necessary to relaunch the goals of Barcelona, in order to establish a common area of peace, stability and prosperity.

## 3. Clear Priorities, Better Legislation, Less Bureaucracy

First Priority: Creating a more innovative and cohesive Europe for more growth and jobs

In a time of accelerated globalization, the citizens expect Europe to help them take advantage of the opportunities provided and to protect them against the dangers incurred. Facing global competition, Europe must openly welcome its youth, its creative individuals, its inventors, its companies, and it must again become a favoured location for all new job-creating activities. Analyzing the surveys carried out regularly by the European Union, it is clear that the main concern of citizens is the economic situation in Europe and the high unemployment in many Member States. The European Union can contribute to the creation of more jobs by establishing a proper economic framework, favourable to more employment.

First of all, it is necessary to consolidate a sound and stable macroeconomic environment, in order to increase entrepreneurial and consumer confidence. These are both essential requirements for higher growth and more employment.

Secondly, a solid monetary policy, which tightly monitors the various factors that intervene in long-term price stability, is essential. By keeping inflation low, it is no longer necessary to raise interest rates which can very seriously affect growth rates in Europe.

The third component is continuing with structural reforms in product, capital and labour markets: ensuring effective competition and completing the internal market, especially in services; achieving the full integration of the financial sector; taking measures to increase the employment rate, especially in those population groups where we are in disadvantage with other economic areas in the World: older workers, young people and women in general. In order to prevent an ageing society, it will also be necessary to strengthen the compatibility of work and family life.

Finally, we have to focus on establishing direct and concrete measures which encourage business creation. These measures include easing the administrative burden on start-ups, simplifying the regulatory environment, reducing the general level of taxation, improving access for SMEs to sources of finance, particularly risk capital, and promoting a more entrepreneurial culture.

The creation of the single market - although not fully completed - and a stable Economic and Monetary Union, have been huge successes in this regard. The exchange of goods has created enormous opportunities for companies and created more employment all over the European Union. Now we have to commit ourselves to complete the single market, taking also into account the social dimension of that market, and to introduce the Euro in the new Member States, once they have fulfilled the stability criteria of the Maastricht Treaty, in order to continue this success.

We believe that the opening-up of the services sector is an important factor for the completion of the Single Market and that a Services Directive will have a strong, positive impact on job creation, as it increases economic dynamism and contributes to the growth of the underdeveloped services market in Europe.

It will be necessary to improve the realization of the principle of free movement for workers, as laid down in the Treaty on the European Community while respecting the competences of the EU Member States.

In a globalizing world, only if we allocate more funds on research and development will the Member States of the EU continue to safeguard social cohesion and strengthen economic growth. In addition to this, we need a more innovation-friendly environment in Europe – this means less bureaucracy, more flexibility and more cross-border cooperation in the field of research and development. We must ensure enhanced financial support for our universities and centres of excellence throughout the Union. Education is a life-long process, learned both inside and outside of established educational institutions, and our approach must be one of life-long growth and development over the different stages of one's life. The EPP is convinced that our future position in the global market will depend, to a large extent, on our capacity to innovate. Therefore, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing investments into this field of activities must be at the centre of all our policies carried out at European level.

Our success in innovation will largely depend on establishing a European Higher Education Area and strengthen the overall quality of our education systems. Effective R&D can only be carried out by qualified researchers that are given the possibility to apply their expertise. The continuous 'brain drain' towards our main competitors on the world markets can be stopped, by improving the attractiveness and quality of our own higher education institutions.

Solidarity and social, economic and territorial cohesion are important objectives of European integration. The success of the whole project depends on the support of all the EU citizens. This support will be generated only if we curb the gap between the different Member States and regions of the European Union. Having very large economic differences among the Member States and regions of Europe and poor infrastructural links between them, will be a clear obstacle to growth and development. To successfully address these challenges, the enlarged Europe needs to continue an efficient cohesion policy, which should be seen as a practical embodiment of the principle of solidarity.

In the past decades, some of our nations and the European Union as a whole became too regulated and protective in many areas. This over-regulation - as is proved by many economic studies - undermines competitiveness and costs jobs. We must ensure that future regulations are thoroughly examined before entering into force, in order to determine their impact on industry, particularly on small and medium enterprises, and on new businesses. For us, the highest priority is a more effective implementation of the four basic freedoms (freedom of movement of people, goods, capital and services) as well as the creation of economic growth and new jobs which are highly competitive on global markets and which allow citizens a decent standard of living. If we are serious about fighting unemployment; the rules should enable open markets which guarantee equitable competition and appropriate protection of employees. We have to strengthen our efforts to improve the quality and the effectiveness of EU education and training systems and to create a highly skilled and motivated workforce in the European Union, including rural areas, which still represent 80 per cent of EU territory. In this context, it is important to reinforce common legislation in order to preserve traditional activities and to promote diversification, when necessary. For the next

financial period, rural areas need to be supported within a framework of budget stability.

We have to, in general, increase the employment rate in Europe, including the employment rate of women. The respect of appropriate social protection and of social rights contributes to highly motivated and productive employees. Having big differences concerning the distribution of wealth can become a major obstacle in the process of unification and economic development. We should contribute to the fight against poverty and social exclusion as well as to curb the gap between rich and poor groups in our societies. It is essential to fully integrate Europe's ethnic minorities, such as the Roma, into society.

We regret any cuts in the Rural Development policy, which could speed depopulation and desertification. The financing package agreed for this policy is not enough to apply properly the new measures included in the modified Rural Development legislation. We ask the European Union to engage in an in-depth reflection on the revision of the financing needs identified in this chapter.

The European Social Model is rooted in Christian-Social thought and based on performance and social justice, competition and solidarity, personal responsibility and social security. These remain relevant in conditions of globalized markets and rapid changes in economic life. The challenge is to combine powerful new market forces with economic dynamism, humanity and social responsibility.

The so-called "Lisbon strategy" with its three pillars (economic, social and environmental) finally has to be taken seriously by the Member States, and the necessary and swift steps should be taken to make Europe more competitive and to create a real knowledge-based society. Only if we accept the interdependence between the 'preconditions for more employment' and 'high social standards,' we will be able to safeguard social cohesion. We also have to promote mobility through investment in education and training, and notably in linguistic skills. The problems arising from demographic change and an ageing population can only be tackled if measures are introduced for promoting possibilities to reconcile family and professional life.

In numerous Member States there is still considerable resistance against many social system and labour market reforms. It has clearly been shown that those states, which tackled reforms early on, are visibly in a better position than those unwilling to reform. Our challenge is to create a sense of understanding, urgency and enthusiasm for the Lisbon Agenda.

But the European institutions have also to be more serious and consequent in regard to this priority, in all areas of legislation and action. Full compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact is important for the credibility of the European Union. We ask the European Commission to undertake an independent Impact Assessment for all new legislative proposals, with special attention to their impact on SMEs. The same should be foreseen in the other institutions when proposals are amended. The Member States and regions should be consulted in the process of Impact Assessment at an early stage, due to their important role in the implementation of EU law. We welcome the initiative of the European Commission to also screen old proposals, which are still in the legislative process and to withdraw them if they would have negative effects on

growth and employment. We also welcome the initiative of the Commission to screen the 90,000 pages of the *acquis communautaire* for the purpose of reducing them by about a third. Less and better regulation has to be a top priority at the European level

## Second Priority: Protecting Europe's Citizens

Our values are threatened by those who want to take advantage of our freedoms. The dreadful terrorist attacks in Madrid and London grossly illustrated that European citizens have become targets of terrorism. The security of our citizens is a priority for the EPP. We have encouraged the United Nations and the European Union to establish the appropriate mechanisms to ensure the identification and protection of victims of terrorist attacks, which is one of our highest priorities in this field. Also, other actions have been taken; the EPP has promoted actions such as the European Arrest Warrant, a common definition of terrorism, the creation of a public list of terrorist organizations and individuals, improved of co-operation of our different criminal justice systems and the exchange of information (Schengen Information System, Visa Information System and the exchange of fingerprints), among many other achievements. Nonetheless, further steps need to be taken in order to strengthen our security. Mutual trust between the law enforcement authorities of Member States, as well as a clear definition of our objectives, is therefore essential.

Extremism and terrorism must be fought decisively. Our free societies cannot accept the idea that terrorists should be paid a political price for giving up their criminal activities. In a long term strategy, we must be careful not to give in to fear, hate and violence - and to strengthen cooperation and solidarity with the moderate voices of different cultures. Today as always, the EPP reaffirms its commitment to work for the unity and solidarity of the Member States of the European Union, facing any possible threat intended to undermine freedom. Freedom of expression and religious freedom are fundamental pillars of democracy and their only limitation must be based on personal responsibility and law. The internal security risks in Europe and the fight against terrorism need to be dealt with on a European level. A European Union without internal borders will only be able to tackle the terrorist threat efficiently by combining our efforts and exchanging knowledge and information in an efficient and coordinated manner. In this work, we must never infringe civil liberties.

By opening the borders between the Member States for people, goods, services and information, we have created one of the freest societies in the world. But freedom is empty without responsibility and security. Therefore, we have to ensure that the new external borders of the Union are optimally protected and legally finalized, relying more on CFSP. The European Union has to strengthen cooperation in the areas of police and justice and activate a common action plan. EUROPOL and EUROJUST, as well as cooperation between intelligence services, especially those of the EU Member States and the US, have a key role to play. In particular, acute international criminality must also be dealt with at the European level. The close cooperation between Union police services and with Europol, is the only way to fight human trafficking, money laundering and drug trafficking.

In order to fight terrorism efficiently we first need to identify the threats and fight them effectively. A long-term European Global Strategy is, therefore, needed.

## Third Priority: Strengthening Europe's role in the World

At the beginning of the 21st century, the world is threatened by terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failed states, hunger and diseases. The European Union must therefore develop and implement its Security Strategy, which relies on prevention, and civil and military crisis management.

Moreover we face a profound challenge of social disorder and injustice when more than one billion people worldwide are still living in absolute poverty. All nations are called upon to help tackle these deep-rooted inequalities. Undoubtedly, Europe has a major influence on the global framework conditions, such as trade regulations and financial mechanisms for development. Therefore, we want Europe to face up to its global responsibility, to speak with one voice and act together.

The strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as the Security and Defence Policy, complementary to the Transatlantic Alliance, and also the active and concerted defence of Human Rights in international relations, will be crucial for the further development of the European Union. In this respect, we welcome the development of the European rapid reaction force decided in Helsinki, the first interventions of the military units in FYROM and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the civil missions – such as those in Aceh and Gaza - and the creation of the European Defence Agency. We are strongly committed to the implementation of the solidarity clause and the security guarantees, in the framework of structural cooperation, foreseen in the draft Constitutional Treaty.

The EU must develop an action plan to put its European Security Strategy (ESS) into practice, and to strengthen the authority of international law, effective multilateralism and international bodies, such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank. The close cooperation with our transatlantic partners - with whom we share common values and interests - is the only way we can solve global problems. A new WTO agreement is necessary to stimulate economic growth and to contribute to the creation of more jobs, provided it respects human rights and especially the recognized standards of the International Labour Organization. In particular, it is important to provide developing countries with fairer opportunities in global markets.

European integration is a model for the peaceful and future-oriented cooperation between nations in the 21st century - the first experience of self-limitation of sovereignty for the purpose of peace. We should support regional cooperation throughout the world in order to overcome long-standing conflicts and enhance peace. A genuine and durable idea of peace can only be fulfilled if, besides the strong fight against terrorism and extremism, we promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Peace, development, human rights, dialogue and interdependence among people and civilizations in a globalized world are the best way to overcome conflicts in the long-term. Europe, being the biggest donor worldwide of both development and humanitarian aid, should play - and should be seen to be playing - a leading role in the field of development and humanitarian aid action. We are firmly committed to solidarity on the international level, to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, to a stronger partnership between Europe and the developing world, and to the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance. The EPP believes that there is an urgent need to halt the spread of poverty in the world, to fight against

stigmatization and discrimination, to combat major diseases, and to reaffirm the importance of maintaining the Union's commitments for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including meeting the targets for overseas development aid.

We have the ultimate goal of promoting peace, stability, democracy, prosperity, good governance (particularly by combating corruption) and respect for human rights in all countries and, in this respect, we recommend the strengthening of political dialogue with all regions. This will also be crucial in order to deal with the increasing pressure of immigration in the Southern and Eastern borders of the European Union. The consolidation of the European Neighbourhood Policy is also of strategic importance for achieving these objectives.

## Fourth priority: Human dignity implemented in everyday life

Practices which are illegal in at least one of the Member States shall not be financed by community funds.

## Fifth Priority: Sustainable Development and Protection of the Environment

The concept of sustainable development aims to improve the life of citizens in the European Union. Europe needs to strengthen the link between protection of the environment and a competitive economy through realistic and flexible legislation, the subsidiarity principle and confidence in private initiative.

Combating climate change is of utmost importance and should lead to the promotion of carbon-free energy sources at the European level. The preservation of the Union's biodiversity and water resources is our responsibility for future generations; legislation in the field of noise, waste, air quality, soil protection and chemicals will contribute effectively to improving the urban environment and public health. A more sustainable transport policy will be achieved by completing the Trans-European Networks, preventing congestion, enhancing inter-modality and promoting cleaner, safer and more competitive modes of transport.

The recent natural catastrophes around the world and the rise in oil and gas prices show the need to reinforce cooperation in the areas of environmental protection and energy policy especially in the field of energy efficiency, energy saving and non-CO2 emitting energy sources. This is essential, not only because the protection of the environment cannot be done by individual states alone, but also because of the rise in energy prices, which has affected the economic situation of the entire European Union. This is why the EPP is firmly in favour of a cleaner environment and sustainable development. The protection of the environment also involves our historic and natural heritage and this requires immediate action; a common approach towards a more sustainable policy, by developing a European action plan. A European energy policy strategy and the creation of a Single European Space for Energy, will help energy supply and energy independence, in particular for investing in non-CO2 emitting energy sources such as nuclear and renewables.

The recent gas crisis between Russia and its neighbours and the rise in oil and natural gas prices, call for a common European response to common energy challenges. Security of energy supply requires a sizeable effort on research, more diversification of energy sources, a common political position towards external suppliers, and a mechanism of solidarity between Member States in the event of a crisis.

The policies and actions so proposed require an adequate level of community financing, including a possible allocation of new own resources.

## 4. A more transparent Europe capable of Action

### More Democracy and functioning Institutions

The ongoing process of European integration demands the strengthening of democratic participation in the European decision-making process. Democratic procedures need to be applied in those areas where the Member States have conferred competences to the EU. The newly enlarged Union has put greater pressure on the current institutional structure and decision-making procedures. Interests are more diverse, discussions need more time and decisions become increasingly difficult. Some of the current institutional arrangements of the Nice Treaty are, from our point of view, insufficient for the proper functioning of the enlarged Union. The majority of citizens is clearly in favour of a more transparent and democratic Europe. But currently its decisions are often perceived as very distant and not fully democratic and accountable. Ironically, the Constitutional Treaty addresses many of these shortcomings and offers considerable improvements.

The political problems and institutional weaknesses that the Convention was set up to address will persist and grow – unless and until the reforms enshrined in the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe are brought into force. This can only be achieved successfully if the will and the concerns of the citizens are taken seriously.

Therefore the EPP proposes that the process leading to the ratification of a European Constitutional Treaty should be continued after the period of reflection, taking full account of the outcome of this period. New impetus should be given by the European Council in the first half of 2007 at latest. We call on the governments of the EU Member States to involve their national parliaments in the European legislative process at an early stage. In order to ensure that the EU institutions abide by the principle of subsidiarity, the Constitutional Treaty establishes an early warning system and a right of action against the EU institutions, constituting an efficient instrument to fight bureaucracy and red tape. In this prospect, it is also absolutely necessary to reinforce the links between the European institutions and the national parliaments and between the national parliaments themselves.

The reforms foreseen in the Constitutional Treaty – which were the result of a broad consensus between the representatives of Member States, National Parliaments, the European Parliament and the European Commission in the Convention - need to be implemented. An institutionally paralyzed Union would contribute to the skepticism of citizens towards the European Union in general. Therefore we support the Draft Constitutional Treaty as a whole, firmly rejecting the idea of "cherry-picking". The EPP always stressed the necessity of accompanying the enlargement of the European Union with reforms for more democratic and transparent decision-making processes, and more simplified and flexible mechanisms that would keep the enlarged European Union capable of action.

In January 2001, the EPP called for a Convention to elaborate a Constitutional Treaty for the EU. At the Estoril Congress of October 2002, the EPP presented its ideas for a "Constitution for a Strong Europe". Many of these ideas became part of the Draft Treaty because the EPP played a major role within the Convention. Our ambition was

to shape the new Constitutional Treaty for a more democratic, transparent and efficient Europe.

**Transparency and Subsidiarity are key factors**

The introduction of a new, more transparent voting system, an enhanced role of the European Parliament, as well as a "Minister of Foreign Affairs" and a President of the European Council, would increase the transparency of decisions taken at EU level, improve efficiency, and enhance Europe's capabilities and image in world affairs. Moreover, the importance of the European elections – resulting in the designation of the President of the European Commission - is essential if we want to take the democratic rights of European voters more seriously. The Constitutional Treaty also introduced a clearer distribution of competences between the Union and its Member States, with an innovative supervisory power granted to National Parliaments, enabling them to guarantee the respect for the subsidiarity principle. With the early warning system, national Parliaments can safeguard the principle of subsidiarity in the decision-making process at the grass-roots level, and bring an action before the Court of Justice in case of a breach of this principle. In particular, we underline the importance and the function of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and its common values and citizens' rights. Thus, if we want to increase public support for the European project, the implementation of all these elements must be facilitated.

**Better Policies – comprehensible to the citizens**

The communication policy and the public relations campaigns of the European institutions have delivered rather poor results. Future public information campaigns should be more focused and policy-oriented, and address the specific issues which our citizens expect to be solved by the European Union. An effective information and communication strategy must also actively demonstrate to citizens how belonging to the European Union benefits their daily lives. This can include the achievements already made by the EU affecting the everyday life of the people (e.g. increased mobility, lower telecommunication costs, lower flight prices, a common market and a single currency with greater choice and lower prices for all consumers, cross-border environmental protection, peace-keeping missions, democracy-building beyond the EU, transnational police cooperation, the concerted fight against terrorism, the promotion of student and youth exchanges, etc.).

For the greater understanding and acceptance of European integration, we need clear results and effective policies on the European level, the reform of the European Union decision-making process, and improved transparency – these actions will be more effective than costly public campaigns. Besides mere communication, all EU institutions should work out proposals for reforming their procedures, making them less bureaucratic and more accessible to the average citizen and the media.

The EPP believes that the European dialogue will only overcome the constitutional crisis if it engages not only each EU institution but also national and regional parliaments, local government, political parties, social partners, civil society, the academic community and the media.

The EU institutions, in close partnership with the Member States, must ensure that rigorous budgetary discipline is enforced in the expenditure of Union funds, so that citizens can have confidence in the effectiveness, efficiency and "added value" of Union programs.

The EPP is committed to making its own contribution to the process of bringing EU policies closer to the people. We are convinced that European political parties have the responsibility to play an active role, by contributing to the opinion-making process at European level and by expanding all forms of dialogue and debate with national parties and citizens. This will require vigorous efforts by the EPP, in close cooperation with its member parties. The EPP will re-orient the focus of its media strategy to the fundamental political issues dealt by the European institutions and make effective interventions for the benefit of Europeans. We expect our member parties to give much more prominence to the European dimension in both their internal debates and electoral campaigning.

Moreover, the EPP will invite the European social partners and representatives of European civil society (consumer organizations, NGO's, human rights organizations, etc.) to explain the importance of European cooperation and integration to Europe's citizens. Only a coordinated and joint approach by political parties and the organizations of civil society will be able to reinforce public support for the European Union among the citizens of Europe.

## 5. Conclusion – Committed to the European Idea

Peace and reconciliation were the prime ideals of the founding fathers of Europe and of their heirs. They were chained by two wars that shattered the continent. The whole world was dragged along in this destruction. The human values of the Western civilization were hurt in its deepest core and millions of Europeans were subjected, after World War II, to Communist rule.

Never again war! Finally, divergent interests and conflicts had to be peacefully resolved through consolidation and common decision-making in European institutions. This ideal developed into the biggest historical reform of the 20th century. It sets an example for the entire world.

The fathers of Europe already belong to history. Their heirs are certainly equally motivated to safeguard peace and promote reconciliation; but have never been confronted with the cruelty of war. Today they face totally new challenges and fundamental risks.

Through globalization, our present world is merging into one. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that nation states alone are still able to confront this challenge and to secure the economy, well-being, culture and identity of the European peoples. Only when a new generation of leaders emerges, which are capable of convincing and committing their citizens to the European idea, will it be possible to assure the future of their people.

Thanks to European integration, there has been peace, security and prosperity on our continent for more than half a century. Today, the European Union guarantees the consolidation of the young democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and contributes to the economical revival of Western Europe. The diversity of languages, cultures and religions provides big opportunities for everyone's life. It is a permanent mission for European society.

We want to make a contribution to this positive process and to seize the opportunities it offers. Most citizens, whether or not they adhere to a religion or church, are willing to cooperate, stand together and to commit themselves in a show of solidarity. The European People's Party makes, through this 'Manifesto', an open plea for their support and contribution forwarding order to fulfill our common goals.