



**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

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

54
55 It is essential to identify the problems and shortcomings of our integration model. We
56 want a Europe of citizens. Therefore, we want to strengthen the principle of
57 subsidiarity, solidarity and personalism, in the framework of a rational division of
58 competences. We also want a transparent institutional structure, able to organize a
59 network of political activity, with the simplification of decision-making procedures and
60 clarification of spheres of responsibility. A network that is able to stimulate the political
61 contribution of the citizens. A European Union of 25 plus Member States presents new
62 challenges as to how to respond to the concerns of its citizens.

63
64 The European Union has to provide a competitive economic framework in order to
65 achieve economic growth and create jobs for European citizens, taking into account
66 social cohesion and environmental standards. This process can only succeed if the
67 social partners and other organizations in our societies face up to their responsibilities
68 in shaping Europe's future. A better coordination of economic policies at a European
69 level and a strict adherence to the Stability and Growth Pact throughout the European
70 Union are essential to maintain economic stability, which is a necessary condition to
71 achieve these goals. Only then we can face the challenges of globalization and profit
72 over time from its opportunities.

73
74 The EPP is convinced that a clear majority of people all over Europe wants a strong
75 European Union that deals with problems swiftly and effectively at the European level
76 problems which cannot be sufficiently addressed by the Member States, either at
77 national level or at regional or local levels, on their own. The security issues posed in a
78 world facing new threats to freedom, democracy and stability will be very important.
79 We must highlight and explain to Europeans the "added value" of European integration
80 and point out the advantages – many of which are taken for granted – that are now
81 part of their daily life. The time has come to re-define the priorities of Europe in a
82 more clear and concise way, and respond with direction, conviction and resolution to
83 the concerns of Europeans. For this task we need a determined and far-sighted
84 political leadership which is inspired by the courage and conviction of Europe's
85 founding fathers. Through this Manifesto, the European People's Party aspires to
86 tackle the challenge at hand.

87

87 **2. The European Union – a Union of Values**

88
89
90 The project of European integration has always been based on common values and
91 the will to work together, in order to achieve freedom, peace, stability and prosperity
92 throughout Europe and to promote its longstanding values. The European Union will
93 continue to be successful if all EU Member States and EU institutions – which have the
94 task of defending the project of European integration - share a focused and cohesive
95 vision of the future, ready to tackle efficiently and effectively their concerns and to
96 play a leading role on the world stage. We must rebuild the self-confidence of
97 Europeans and the European Union as a whole.

98
99 The rich and diverse political culture of the European People’s Party is a characteristic
100 example of Europe itself. Coming together from an array of political traditions, the EPP
101 member parties are united by a core set of values and principles: dignity of the human
102 person, freedom and responsibility, fundamental equality, justice, subsidiarity and
103 solidarity. These values are common to the Member States’ societies, in which
104 democratic pluralism, the rule of law, non-discrimination, tolerance, and private
105 property, based on the social market economy, prevail.

106
107 Facing new trends in the socio-cultural life in the western world, the European People’s
108 Party has always been guided by these values and traditions, including the respect for
109 the family, traditional minorities and historical religions and churches, which, for ages,
110 have been a strong basis for the European civilization. The subsidiarity principle in
111 family law should be observed and this area should also, in the future, remain a
112 competence of Member States. The EU institutions are urged to respect and safeguard
113 this principle.

114
115 Our universal spirit, Europe’s Judeo-Christian roots and common cultural heritage, as
116 well as the classic and humanist history of Europe and the achievements of the period
117 of the Enlightenment, are the foundation of our political platform; our commitment
118 and forward-looking approach for a united and strong Europe has given us the
119 strength to evolve and to tackle effectively Europe’s challenges. Terrorism and
120 fundamentalism, which are directed against our values, intend to destroy our free
121 societies and have no justification.

122
123 Our identity has been shaped by the founding fathers of Europe - Jean Monnet, Robert
124 Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer. They built Europe on the values
125 and ideals which we are determined to defend. The EPP is the political party on the
126 European level which is ready to tackle the huge tasks ahead of us. We want to
127 provide the platform for a new generation of politicians and for new solutions, so that
128 our vision of Europe can be realized.

129
130 Our political methods, based on subsidiarity and solidarity, are the guiding principles of
131 our societies. As we do not believe in the state being responsible for every single area
132 of people’s lives, we do not believe that Europe can work if it deals with issues that
133 can much better be dealt with on a national, or even regional or local, level. That is
134 why the EPP has for years been calling for a clearer distribution of competences
135 between European, national and sub-national levels - the latter on the basis of the
136 national Constitutions. We are aware that the European Union of 25 or more members
137 (and 27 with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, if they prove that they

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

142
143 In order to strengthen the support for the European integration process among our
144 citizens, an explanation of our common European identity is truly fundamental. It is
145 about living in a common geographic and political space of peace, freedom, democracy
146 and prosperity – while promoting our cultural diversity, which is one of the strengths
147 of Europe. Important means to achieve these goals are further steps to integrate the
148 historic heritage and memories of both parts of Europe, creating a balanced moral and
149 political assessment of all recent totalitarian dictatorships. At the same time, new
150 challenges such as the role of Europe in a globalized world, demand new approaches.
151 Many urgent problems in our societies, like the threat of terrorism, illegal migration,
152 human trafficking and organized crime, as well as common challenges, such as energy
153 policy, or common infrastructure projects, can only be dealt with efficiently if we
154 manage to act together.

155
156 The debate on the borders of Europe is at the heart of our common European identity.
157 It has been a long time since Europe was just a customs union that promoted common
158 economic policies. The European Union has already developed into a political union
159 with common borders, in which both the inviolable nature of its internal borders in the
160 sense of the Helsinki Final Act must be assured, as well as the security of its external
161 common borders, as the basis for stability and peace. The feeling of “belonging
162 together” and sharing the same values and principles must, therefore, be exemplified
163 and strengthened, in order not to lose public support for the European project. The
164 balance between the enlargement of the European Union and its consolidation is
165 essential for the viability of the project – otherwise we put at risk the achievements of
166 the past and create enormous difficulties for the future. Therefore, the European
167 Union has to be reformed at latest before the next enlargement, after Romania and
168 Bulgaria.

169
170 Membership of the European Union remains the most attractive option for many of the
171 European neighbours of the EU. In the past decades, EU enlargement has been the
172 main tool for promoting freedom, democracy, peace, stability and economic
173 development, as well as human rights and the rule of law across the whole of Europe.
174 But, following the most recent enlargement to the ten new Member States, and
175 without deepening, the Union has to be much more cautious about future
176 enlargements.

177
178 Any future enlargement has to take into account the EU's ability to absorb new
179 members. The EPP has played a significant role in the successful enlargement of the
180 European Union. Its diligent work has also led to increased security and an economic
181 dynamism. In the Treaty on the European Union, it is stated that any European state
182 which respects its principles may apply to become a member of the European Union.
183 Candidate countries have to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria, which define the conditions
184 for admission, and the obligations undertaken in the accession partnership, and to
185 implement them strictly. European neighbouring countries, which cannot or do not
186 want to become full Members of the European Union, should be offered an especially
187 close partnership with the EU, including multilateral solutions.

188

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

199
200 The EU also needs a neighbourhood policy for the countries of the Mediterranean and
201 those in the east of our continent, enhancing cooperation especially in the fields of the
202 fight against terrorism, management of migration flows, human trafficking, and border
203 controls. The neighbourhood policy should aim at creating and extending a common
204 area of peace, stability, security, respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law
205 and prosperity. Therefore, this policy should refrain from a uniform approach towards
206 all its neighbours but, rather, to devise diverse incentives and obligations for each
207 individual state. This should also include a European perspective for European
208 neighbouring countries. In the future, the EU should expand its contribution to develop
209 democracy and defend human rights in neighbouring countries. Every democratic
210 improvement in these countries should be strongly supported.

211
212 The Barcelona Process is a unique and ambitious initiative, which laid the foundations
213 for a new regional relationship and which represents a turning-point in Euro-
214 Mediterranean relations. Unfortunately, ten years later the main objectives have not
215 been achieved. It is necessary to relaunch the goals of Barcelona, in order to establish
216 a common area of peace, stability and prosperity.

217

217 **3. Clear Priorities, Better Legislation, Less Bureaucracy**

218
219

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

222
223 In a time of accelerated globalization, the citizens expect Europe to help them take
224 advantage of the opportunities provided and to protect them against the dangers
225 incurred. Facing global competition, Europe must openly welcome its youth, its
226 creative individuals, its inventors, its companies, and it must again become a favoured
227 location for all new job-creating activities. Analyzing the surveys carried out regularly
228 by the European Union, it is clear that the main concern of citizens is the economic
229 situation in Europe and the high unemployment in many Member States. The
230 European Union can contribute to the creation of more jobs by establishing a proper
231 economic framework, favourable to more employment.

232
233 First of all, it is necessary to consolidate a sound and stable macroeconomic
234 environment, in order to increase entrepreneurial and consumer confidence. These
235 are both essential requirements for higher growth and more employment.

236
237 Secondly, a solid monetary policy, which tightly monitors the various factors that
238 intervene in long-term price stability, is essential. By keeping inflation low, it is no
239 longer necessary to raise interest rates which can very seriously affect growth rates in
240 Europe.

241
242 The third component is continuing with structural reforms in product, capital and
243 labour markets: ensuring effective competition and completing the internal market,
244 especially in services; achieving the full integration of the financial sector; taking
245 measures to increase the employment rate, especially in those population groups
246 where we are in disadvantage with other economic areas in the World: older workers,
247 young people and women in general. In order to prevent an ageing society, it will also
248 be necessary to strengthen the compatibility of work and family life.

249
250 Finally, we have to focus on establishing direct and concrete measures which
251 encourage business creation. These measures include easing the administrative
252 burden on start-ups, simplifying the regulatory environment, reducing the general level
253 of taxation, improving access for SMEs to sources of finance, particularly risk capital,
254 and promoting a more entrepreneurial culture.

255
256 The creation of the single market - although not fully completed - and a stable
257 Economic and Monetary Union, have been huge successes in this regard. The
258 exchange of goods has created enormous opportunities for companies and created
259 more employment all over the European Union. Now we have to commit ourselves to
260 complete the single market, taking also into account the social dimension of that
261 market, and to introduce the Euro in the new Member States, once they have fulfilled
262 the stability criteria of the Maastricht Treaty, in order to continue this success.

263
264 We believe that the opening-up of the services sector is an important factor for the
265 completion of the Single Market and that a Services Directive will have a strong,
266 positive impact on job creation, as it increases economic dynamism and contributes to
267 the growth of the underdeveloped services market in Europe.

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

271
272 In a globalizing world, only if we allocate more funds on research and development
273 will the Member States of the EU continue to safeguard social cohesion and strengthen
274 economic growth. In addition to this, we need a more innovation-friendly environment
275 in Europe – this means less bureaucracy, more flexibility and more cross-border
276 cooperation in the field of research and development. We must ensure enhanced
277 financial support for our universities and centres of excellence throughout the Union.
278 Education is a life-long process, learned both inside and outside of established
279 educational institutions, and our approach must be one of life-long growth and
280 development over the different stages of one's life. The EPP is convinced that our
281 future position in the global market will depend, to a large extent, on our capacity to
282 innovate. Therefore, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing investments
283 into this field of activities must be at the centre of all our policies carried out at
284 European level.

285
286 Our success in innovation will largely depend on establishing a European Higher
287 Education Area and strengthen the overall quality of our education systems. Effective
288 R&D can only be carried out by qualified researchers that are given the possibility to
289 apply their expertise. The continuous 'brain drain' towards our main competitors on
290 the world markets can be stopped, by improving the attractiveness and quality of our
291 own higher education institutions.

292
293 Solidarity and social, economic and territorial cohesion are important objectives of
294 European integration. The success of the whole project depends on the support of all
295 the EU citizens. This support will be generated only if we curb the gap between the
296 different Member States and regions of the European Union. Having very large
297 economic differences among the Member States and regions of Europe and poor
298 infrastructural links between them, will be a clear obstacle to growth and
299 development. To successfully address these challenges, the enlarged Europe needs to
300 continue an efficient cohesion policy, which should be seen as a practical embodiment
301 of the principle of solidarity.

302
303 In the past decades, some of our nations and the European Union as a whole became
304 too regulated and protective in many areas. This over-regulation - as is proved by
305 many economic studies - undermines competitiveness and costs jobs. We must ensure
306 that future regulations are thoroughly examined before entering into force, in order to
307 determine their impact on industry, particularly on small and medium enterprises, and
308 on new businesses. For us, the highest priority is a more effective implementation of
309 the four basic freedoms (freedom of movement of people, goods, capital and services)
310 as well as the creation of economic growth and new jobs which are highly competitive
311 on global markets and which allow citizens a decent standard of living. If we are
312 serious about fighting unemployment; the rules should enable open markets which
313 guarantee equitable competition and appropriate protection of employees. We have to
314 strengthen our efforts to improve the quality and the effectiveness of EU education
315 and training systems and to create a highly skilled and motivated workforce in the
316 European Union, including rural areas, which still represent 80 per cent of EU territory.
317 In this context, it is important to reinforce common legislation in order to preserve
318 traditional activities and to promote diversification, when necessary. For the next

319 financial period, rural areas need to be supported within a framework of budget
320 stability.
321

322 We have to, in general, increase the employment rate in Europe, including the
323 employment rate of women. The respect of appropriate social protection and of social
324 rights contributes to highly motivated and productive employees. Having big
325 differences concerning the distribution of wealth can become a major obstacle in the
326 process of unification and economic development. We should contribute to the fight
327 against poverty and social exclusion as well as to curb the gap between rich and poor
328 groups in our societies. It is essential to fully integrate Europe's ethnic minorities, such
329 as the Roma, into society.
330

331 We regret any cuts in the Rural Development policy, which could speed depopulation
332 and desertification. The financing package agreed for this policy is not enough to apply
333 properly the new measures included in the modified Rural Development legislation. We
334 ask the European Union to engage in an in-depth reflection on the revision of the
335 financing needs identified in this chapter.
336

337 The European Social Model is rooted in Christian-Social thought and based on
338 performance and social justice, competition and solidarity, personal responsibility and
339 social security. These remain relevant in conditions of globalized markets and rapid
340 changes in economic life. The challenge is to combine powerful new market forces
341 with economic dynamism, humanity and social responsibility.
342

343 The so-called "Lisbon strategy" with its three pillars (economic, social and
344 environmental) finally has to be taken seriously by the Member States, and the
345 necessary and swift steps should be taken to make Europe more competitive and to
346 create a real knowledge-based society. Only if we accept the interdependence
347 between the 'preconditions for more employment' and 'high social standards,' we will
348 be able to safeguard social cohesion. We also have to promote mobility through
349 investment in education and training, and notably in linguistic skills. The problems
350 arising from demographic change and an ageing population can only be tackled if
351 measures are introduced for promoting possibilities to reconcile family and professional
352 life.
353

354 In numerous Member States there is still considerable resistance against many social
355 system and labour market reforms. It has clearly been shown that those states, which
356 tackled reforms early on, are visibly in a better position than those unwilling to reform.
357 Our challenge is to create a sense of understanding, urgency and enthusiasm for the
358 Lisbon Agenda.
359

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

370 growth and employment. We also welcome the initiative of the Commission to screen
371 the 90,000 pages of the *acquis communautaire* for the purpose of reducing them by
372 about a third. Less and better regulation has to be a top priority at the European level
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374

374 **Second Priority: Protecting Europe's Citizens**

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376
377 Our values are threatened by those who want to take advantage of our freedoms. The
378 dreadful terrorist attacks in Madrid and London grossly illustrated that European
379 citizens have become targets of terrorism. The security of our citizens is a priority for
380 the EPP. We have encouraged the United Nations and the European Union to establish
381 the appropriate mechanisms to ensure the identification and protection of potential
382 victims of terrorist attacks, which is one of our highest priorities in this field. Also,
383 other actions have been taken; the EPP has promoted actions such as the European
384 Arrest Warrant, a common definition of terrorism, the creation of a public list of
385 terrorist organizations and individuals, improved co-operation of our different
386 criminal justice systems and the exchange of information (Schengen Information
387 System, Visa Information System and the exchange of fingerprints), among many
388 other achievements. Nonetheless, further steps need to be taken in order to
389 strengthen our security. Mutual trust between the law enforcement authorities of
390 Member States, as well as a clear definition of our objectives, is therefore essential.

391
392 Extremism and terrorism must be fought decisively. Our free societies cannot accept
393 the idea that terrorists should be paid a political price for giving up their criminal
394 activities. In a long term strategy, we must be careful not to give in to fear, hate and
395 violence - and to strengthen cooperation and solidarity with the moderate voices of
396 different cultures. Today as always, the EPP reaffirms its commitment to work for the
397 unity and solidarity of the Member States of the European Union, facing any possible
398 threat intended to undermine freedom. Freedom of expression and religious freedom
399 are fundamental pillars of democracy and their only limitation must be based on
400 personal responsibility and law. The internal security risks in Europe and the fight
401 against terrorism need to be dealt with on a European level. A European Union without
402 internal borders will only be able to tackle the terrorist threat efficiently by combining
403 our efforts and exchanging knowledge and information in an efficient and coordinated
404 manner. In this work, we must never infringe civil liberties.

405
406 By opening the borders between the Member States for people, goods, services and
407 information, we have created one of the freest societies in the world. But freedom is
408 empty without responsibility and security. Therefore, we have to ensure that the new
409 external borders of the Union are optimally protected and legally finalized, relying
410 more on CFSP. The European Union has to strengthen cooperation in the areas of
411 police and justice and activate a common action plan. EUROPOL and EUROJUST, as
412 well as cooperation between intelligence services, especially those of the EU Member
413 States and the US, have a key role to play. In particular, acute international criminality
414 must also be dealt with at the European level. The close cooperation between Union
415 police services and with Europol, is the only way to fight human trafficking, money
416 laundering and drug trafficking.

417
418 In order to fight terrorism efficiently we first need to identify the threats and fight
419 them effectively. A long-term European Global Strategy is, therefore, needed.

420
421

421 **Third Priority: Strengthening Europe's role in the World**

422
423 At the beginning of the 21st century, the world is threatened by terrorism, weapons of
424 mass destruction, regional conflicts, failed states, hunger and diseases. The European
425 Union must therefore develop and implement its Security Strategy, which relies on
426 prevention, and civil and military crisis management.

427
428 Moreover we face a profound challenge of social disorder and injustice when more
429 than one billion people worldwide are still living in absolute poverty. All nations are
430 called upon to help tackle these deep-rooted inequalities. Undoubtedly, Europe has a
431 major influence on the global framework conditions, such as trade regulations and
432 financial mechanisms for development. Therefore, we want Europe to face up to its
433 global responsibility, to speak with one voice and act together.

434
435 The strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as the Security
436 and Defence Policy, complementary to the Transatlantic Alliance, and also the active
437 and concerted defence of Human Rights in international relations, will be crucial for
438 the further development of the European Union. In this respect, we welcome the
439 development of the European rapid reaction force decided in Helsinki, the first
440 interventions of the military units in FYROM and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the civil missions
441 – such as those in Aceh and Gaza - and the creation of the European Defence Agency.
442 We are strongly committed to the implementation of the solidarity clause and the
443 security guarantees, in the framework of structural cooperation, foreseen in the draft
444 Constitutional Treaty.

445
446 The EU must develop an action plan to put its European Security Strategy (ESS) into
447 practice, and to strengthen the authority of international law, effective multilateralism
448 and international bodies, such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court,
449 the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank. The close cooperation with our transatlantic
450 partners - with whom we share common values and interests - is the only way we can
451 solve global problems. A new WTO agreement is necessary to stimulate economic
452 growth and to contribute to the creation of more jobs, provided it respects human
453 rights and especially the recognized standards of the International Labour
454 Organization. In particular, it is important to provide developing countries with fairer
455 opportunities in global markets.

456
457 European integration is a model for the peaceful and future-oriented cooperation
458 between nations in the 21st century - the first experience of self-limitation of
459 sovereignty for the purpose of peace. We should support regional cooperation
460 throughout the world in order to overcome long-standing conflicts and enhance peace.
461 A genuine and durable idea of peace can only be fulfilled if, besides the strong fight
462 against terrorism and extremism, we promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue.
463 Peace, development, human rights, dialogue and interdependence among people and
464 civilizations in a globalized world are the best way to overcome conflicts in the long-
465 term. Europe, being the biggest donor worldwide of both development and
466 humanitarian aid, should play - and should be seen to be playing - a leading role in the
467 field of development and humanitarian aid action. We are firmly committed to
468 solidarity on the international level, to the achievement of the Millennium Development
469 Goals, to a stronger partnership between Europe and the developing world, and to the
470 promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance. The EPP believes that
471 there is an urgent need to halt the spread of poverty in the world, to fight against

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

475
476 We have the ultimate goal of promoting peace, stability, democracy, prosperity, good
477 governance (particularly by combating corruption) and respect for human rights in all
478 countries and, in this respect, we recommend the strengthening of political dialogue
479 with all regions. This will also be crucial in order to deal with the increasing pressure
480 of immigration in the Southern and Eastern borders of the European Union. The
481 consolidation of the European Neighbourhood Policy is also of strategic importance for
482 achieving these objectives.

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484 **Fourth priority: Human dignity implemented in everyday life**

485
486 Practices which are illegal in at least one of the Member States shall not be financed
487 by community funds.

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490 **Fifth Priority: Sustainable Development and Protection of the Environment**

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

496

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

505

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

519

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

525

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

528

528 **4. A more transparent Europe capable of Action**

529

530

531 **More Democracy and functioning Institutions**

532

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

545

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

550

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

562

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

573

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

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

580

581

582 **Transparency and Subsidiarity are key factors**

583

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

600

601

602 **Better Policies – comprehensible to the citizens**

603

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

616

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

623

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

628

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

633
634 The EPP is committed to making its own contribution to the process of bringing EU
635 policies closer to the people. We are convinced that European political parties have the
636 responsibility to play an active role, by contributing to the opinion-making process at
637 European level and by expanding all forms of dialogue and debate with national
638 parties and citizens. This will require vigorous efforts by the EPP, in close cooperation
639 with its member parties. The EPP will re-orient the focus of its media strategy to the
640 fundamental political issues dealt by the European institutions and make effective
641 interventions for the benefit of Europeans. We expect our member parties to give
642 much more prominence to the European dimension in both their internal debates and
643 electoral campaigning.

644
645 Moreover, the EPP will invite the European social partners and representatives of
646 European civil society (consumer organizations, NGO's, human rights organizations,
647 etc.) to explain the importance of European cooperation and integration to Europe's
648 citizens. Only a coordinated and joint approach by political parties and the
649 organizations of civil society will be able to reinforce public support for the European
650 Union among the citizens of Europe.

651 **5. Conclusion – Committed to the European Idea**

652
653
654 Peace and reconciliation were the prime ideals of the founding fathers of Europe and
655 of their heirs. They were chained by two wars that shattered the continent. The
656 whole world was dragged along in this destruction. The human values of the Western
657 civilization were hurt in its deepest core and millions of Europeans were subjected,
658 after World War II, to Communist rule.

659
660 Never again war! Finally, divergent interests and conflicts had to be peacefully
661 resolved through consolidation and common decision-making in European institutions.
662 This ideal developed into the biggest historical reform of the 20th century. It sets an
663 example for the entire world.

664
665 The fathers of Europe already belong to history. Their heirs are certainly equally
666 motivated to safeguard peace and promote reconciliation; but have never been
667 confronted with the cruelty of war. Today they face totally new challenges and
668 fundamental risks.

669
670 Through globalization, our present world is merging into one. It is a dangerous
671 illusion to believe that nation states alone are still able to confront this challenge and
672 to secure the economy, well-being, culture and identity of the European peoples. Only
673 when a new generation of leaders emerges, which are capable of convincing and
674 committing their citizens to the European idea, will it be possible to assure the future
675 of their people.

676
677 Thanks to European integration, there has been peace, security and prosperity on our
678 continent for more than half a century. Today, the European Union guarantees the
679 consolidation of the young democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and the
680 Balkans, and contributes to the economical revival of Western Europe. The diversity of
681 languages, cultures and religions provides big opportunities for everyone's life. It is a
682 permanent mission for European society.

683
684 We want to make a contribution to this positive process and to seize the opportunities
685 it offers. Most citizens, whether or not they adhere to a religion or church, are willing
686 to cooperate, stand together and to commit themselves in a show of solidarity. The
687 European People's Party makes, through this 'Manifesto', an open plea for their
688 support and contribution forwarding order to fulfill our common goals.