

# **Manifesto**

## **EPP Statutory Congress**

### **17-18 October 2012**

#### **Bucharest, Romania**



# **EPP Manifesto**

(Adopted at the EPP Congress in Bucharest, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012)

## **The European People's Party -**

### **What we stand for**

#### **1. Who are we?**

Our political family is the driving force of European integration. The European Christian Democrats were founded in 1976 as the first European party – the European People's Party. We have since become the party of the centre and the centre right. At the end of the East–West conflict we became the decisive political actor in the reunification of Europe. During the economic and financial crisis we have kept Europe together. And we will lead Europe out of the crisis.

#### **2. What are our values?**

- We put the human being at the centre of our convictions. We human beings have an inherent natural dignity, which makes us unique. This is valid both for those of us who believe in God as the source of truth, justice, good and beauty, as well as those who do not share this faith but respect the same universal values as arising from other sources. We recognise Greek and Roman heritage, Judeo and Christian values, as well as the Enlightenment, as being the roots of our civilisation.
- Freedom, which is a central human right, is only possible when coupled with personal responsibility.

- Men and women have equal rights. This should be reflected in all policies.
- All human beings must enjoy equal opportunities and therefore we will ensure the effective implementation of these for persons with disabilities.
- Our actions are based on the principles of justice and aim to pursue the common good. We are committed to further eliminating the causes of inequality and poverty.
- This is only possible in a society marked by social cohesion and solidarity, which includes a respect for tradition and for associations and the domains in which people take initiatives and work and live together.
- Solidarity is a joint responsibility: the strong should help those in need, who in turn have to make an effort themselves to improve their situation according to their abilities.
- We have an obligation towards future generations to hand over the same or even better opportunities than we enjoy by defending freedom and democracy, ensuring solid public finances and preserving a healthy environment.
- Political decisions should be taken as closely as possible to the citizens; political authorities should not do what people can do themselves, whether individually, in their families or in civic organisations. Subsidiarity along these lines is a central value for our political family.
- The only political system in which these values can thrive is in a pluralist democracy, in which citizens accept

responsibility. The best economic concept to safeguard them is the Social Market Economy based on environmental sustainability in which competitiveness and entrepreneurial freedom are balanced with social justice. The appropriate framework for this is a strong European Union, which provides the best answers to the challenges of our times.

### **3. What are the challenges?**

- Today, Europe is facing its greatest challenge in half a century. The financial and economic crisis has dramatically increased unemployment and inequalities in opportunity and income. Millions of people are being deprived of prospects for the future. The crisis was triggered by events in the United States; however, its root cause was massive economic imbalances within the Eurozone as well as in the world economy. This was made worse by excessive public and private debt in many Member States, over consumption, and unethical behaviour in the financial and real estate sectors, as well as a lack of innovation and competitiveness.
- There is a danger that populism and political radicalism will spread. They are threats to our democracies and to the European Union.
- A new wave of globalisation has made countries and economic actors more dependent on one another than ever before; at the same time, Europe risks losing its prosperity.
- The rate of youth unemployment has reached an alarming level, undermining the hopes of an economic rebound,

damaging support for the European Union among young people and contributing to political instability.

- Global Climate change has intensified and resource scarcities are increasing.
- Our personal lives as well as our societies are being changed profoundly by the rapid development of information and communication technology.
- Our societies are ageing, which puts our social security systems under increasing strain.
- The inclusion of marginalised groups and the integration of legal immigrants remain important challenges.
- Around the world, young democracy movements and civil society require our support through coherent and farsighted policies. The EU has a special responsibility for its closest geographical neighbours to its East and South.

For all of these challenges we need to find ambitious answers and actions in which people can believe and trust. Building on our past achievements, it is up to our political family to relaunch the European project. We are committed to doing so with fresh energy and with confidence in our basic values.

#### **4. What do we want for Europe's future?**

- We want a European Political Union. The EU will, over the coming years, have to be fundamentally reformed. The Union and the Member States will exercise more powers jointly.
- In future European elections, citizens must be able to make clear and comprehensible choices about the policies of the European Commission. The first steps in this respect are truly pan-European elections as well as a direct

election by the people of the President of the European Commission.

- The key to Europe's future is combining budgetary discipline and the promotion of sustainable growth, while safeguarding social Europe and defending the Euro are among the most profound expressions of the European integration process.
- This means modernising our economies and reducing bureaucracy as well as strengthening fiscal and economic governance at the EU level. It also means working harder and longer. We all have to develop smarter ways of saving as well as spending. In the EU, solidarity is best translated into practice through the implementation of territorial, economic and social cohesion.
- Respect for work is at the core of our policies. We have to seek all opportunities to boost employment, with special regard to the young generation.
- We need to complete the Single Market. Removing the last obstacles to a truly free movement of people, services, goods and capital will be indispensable. We will continue to work for freer and fairer international trade.
- We need to promote the family in a way that reflects our fundamental values, enables parents to combine work and family life and encourages solidarity between the generations.
- Health and wellbeing are essential to our happiness as well as opportunities for participation in society. This does not only depend on material goods and it must, therefore, always remain in the central focus of our policies.
- We must constantly improve our education systems, focusing both on knowledge and skills, and we must

promote research and innovation more efficiently and make it more useful. Mobility, languages, adult learning and creativity will have to be encouraged in the professional world as well as in education more than they have previously been.

- We reaffirm the rights of traditional minorities within the Member States and we protect our European traditions and cultural heritage.
- Our common Immigration and Asylum Policy has to be further strengthened, striking the right balance between finding the talents we need, helping victims of political and religious persecution and fighting irregular migration.
- We have to reinforce the Europe of citizens, ensuring that they can enjoy their rights within an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. This means we have to reinforce the free movement of citizens, to protect their security, to reinforce external border control, based on solidarity between Member States, to fight effectively against crime, corruption and irregular migration and to enhance the cooperation between police and judicial authorities.
- We want to contribute to the successful integration of immigrants, which entails not only rights but also obligations on their part. Immigrants have to respect our core values, human rights and the rule of law.
- Enlargement of the European Union has extended an area of peace, stability and prosperity to almost the entire continent.
- The enlargement process will continue to attract new candidate countries. We have to respect the capacity of the Union to integrate new states which meet specific criteria before joining. European countries which cannot

or do not want to become members of the European Union should be offered other forms of partnership with the EU.

- The European Neighbourhood Policy as a key instrument to build close relations with neighbours, based on European values, should be fundamentally enhanced. It should lead towards creating a ring of friends of the EU, who are also friends amongst themselves, thus projecting security and prosperity.
- We have to effectively combat climate change and strengthen biodiversity. This means not only working relentlessly towards binding international agreements but also creating incentives for more efficiency and renewable energy through emission trading as well as more sustainable consumption in general. It also means that all countries, and especially the richest, will have to constantly adapt their lifestyles and use of resources to the demands of smart green growth.
- The European Union needs a common energy policy that provides energy security, increases efficiency and is sustainable as well as affordable for consumers.
- We need a real European foreign policy in which our Member States speak with one voice and amalgamate their strengths. This will mean that more EU foreign policy decisions are taken by a vote and not unanimously. Even and especially in times of budget cuts, we have to develop our common defence capabilities by better sharing resources within the framework of NATO and the EU. A solid transatlantic partnership, based on shared values, is indispensable to Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- We need a new strategy to promote democracy and human rights. We have to live up to our responsibility towards the world by improving our development assistance strategies and strengthening global institutions. While recognising that the Western combination of democracy and the social market economy is not the only model around, we uphold Europe's democratic standards and economic and social model that inspire and encourage people all over the world in their struggle for freedom and prosperity. We will continue to help democrats around the world and help the poorest countries to help themselves.
- We need an internet policy that strikes the right balance between the freedom of speech and freedom of creation, on the one hand, and the protection of personal data and the rights of authors and consumers, on the other hand. The Digital Single Market has the potential to create new jobs and to make our economy more competitive and dynamic.
- Political parties are indispensable to the future of our democracy. We want parties that are both closer to the citizens and more European. Parties will have to develop and improve their ways of letting members and voters participate in decision making. At the same time, the political families at the European level will have to become stronger.

The future of Europe is in our hands and is our responsibility as the largest political family. We are committed in our policies to making this a prosperous, successful and secure future for all citizens.