

EPP-ED



Ten priorities for the EPP-ED

Group 2009-2014

Putting people at the heart of Europe



EPP-ED

Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
and European Democrats in the European Parliament

EN



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«The UK Delegation makes known its general reservation on the 'Ten Priorities for the EPP-ED Group 2009-2014' in line with its special position within the Group.»

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Joseph DAUL, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament

Of all the urgent needs now facing us, perhaps the most important is to understand, analyse and interpret the current crisis and provide effective and lasting responses.

This crisis is like no other before. It is more than a mere economic and financial crisis; it is a crisis of values.

When debt becomes the norm; when people live beyond their means and when behaviour is governed by speculation; when European birth rates fall to their current levels and families seek an easy and comfortable life rather than facing up to their obligations and saving money; then what we are facing is clearly a crisis of values.

This crisis of values, along with the ensuing bad habits and mistakes, is undoubtedly at the root of the current crisis.

This crisis is a deep one, and it has only just begun. Its political importance must not be underestimated; it will inevitably lead to greater imbalances, both in Europe and the world.

This is why, in addition to the pragmatic solutions that are now gradually being implemented, we will only overcome this crisis by making profound changes in our attitudes and behaviour. We have to be courageous enough to stand up and say this.

The MEPs of the EPP-ED Group have spent more than 200 weeks working together over the course of the last parliamentary term. Building on their long-term relationship with their voters, and on their knowledge of what the European Union can do in concrete terms, they have overcome their different national sensitivities to forge common beliefs as to how to respond to the world's challenges.

They had an opportunity to express these convictions in a 'Decalogue' - a statement of ten key points.



Since then, they have constantly listened and reflected in order to build further on these beliefs, and they now wish to reaffirm them in the face of the current crisis in order to provide their own response to the concerns of Europe's peoples.

The EPP-ED Group has never pursued an abstract model of society, nor aspired to implement an economic ideology. What we are offering the European people are values, attitudes, a particular view of humankind. This primacy of the person and these principles must now be reaffirmed with new vigour.

We believe that it is men and women, their right to build a family and improve their lives, that must form the ultimate aim of any political action. Now

more than ever, our ability to face up to, and overcome, the crisis depends on them. We need to instil in them trust and courage once more.

The European Union cannot remain silent in the current situation; it does not have the right to remain detached. It must set an example and show that it can change things when entrusted with such a task.

Joseph DAUL

Chairman of the EPP-ED Group
in the European Parliament

Jaime MAYOR OREJA

Vice Chairman of the EPP-ED Group
in the European Parliament

Jaime Mayor Oreja, Vice Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament





For a Europe of values

1 Upholding strong values

The European Union needs to update, reassert and modernise its values: freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, along with respect for human rights, including those of minority groups. These values are common to all Member States, in a society characterised by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women.

The essential pillars of our political activity must be to safeguard family values – particularly in response to challenging demographic trends and a falling birth rate – and to defend freedom of education. After all, the family is the basic unit that enables people to overcome crises, help each other, and prepare for the future. Our policy must be to strengthen families, ensure inter-generational solidarity and the passing on of values and heritage.

The EPP-ED Group supports the laicism of the State, where this is a positive secularism that protects freedom of religion in a spirit of cooperation based on dialogue, mutual respect and reciprocal independence.



The European Union needs to update, reassert and modernise its values: freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, along with respect for human rights, including those of minority groups.

Economic rights are not secondary rights. They must be forcefully reasserted. Our Group believes that freedom of education, research, enterprise and competition are individual rights and the basis of a healthy and prosperous economy. There can be no justification for infringing these rights, which must, on the contrary, be further enhanced.

The value of effort, work, ownership and saving is insufficiently upheld. The current reforms aimed at reducing the burden on those wishing to work, save and invest must be continued.

The EPP-ED Group therefore wishes to express these convictions in concrete terms:

Now more than ever, the European Union must protect human dignity:

- ↳ providing a decent standard of living for all;
- ↳ protecting human life, without avoiding the debate on bioethics;
- ↳ fighting discrimination and violence;
- ↳ protecting marriage;
- ↳ supporting the family as the primary place of socialisation and personal development;
- ↳ promoting true equality between men and women.

Intolerance may be on the rise but the European Union must fight for freedom of conscience, expression and religion throughout the world:

- ↳ guaranteeing complete freedom of speech, whilst also respecting personal freedom;
- ↳ protecting freedom of conscience and of religion and fighting all forms of intolerance towards all religions anywhere in the world;
- ↳ ensuring that national minorities can maintain and develop their culture and the essential elements of their identity (religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage), out of a respect for the common good.

The European Union must promote peace as a value, using all means possible:

- ↳ promoting peace efforts in places of tension and conflict;
- ↳ becoming involved in dialogue between cultures and religions;
- ↳ fighting relentlessly against any form of terrorism.

The European Union must protect economic freedoms within its boundaries:

- ↳ strengthening the four basic freedoms of the internal market (free movement of goods, services, people and capital), and developing legislation enabling equal access for all;
- ↳ guaranteeing freedom of teaching, education, research, conditions for developing a freedom of spirit and the factors essential for a knowledge-based economy;
- ↳ guaranteeing free access to its territory and equal treatment for legal immigrants whilst fighting against illegal immigration and human trafficking;

↳ helping to encourage the right of everyone to work more in order to increase their resources, particularly young people, the retired and women;

↳ contributing to strengthening the rights and security of savers and shareholders.



2 Developing a firm and deeply-rooted transatlantic relationship

The European Union needs a firm and deeply-rooted transatlantic relationship in a context of mutual respect and understanding

The transatlantic relationship is an end in itself in terms of defending the West's common values.

It also forms an essential tool for ensuring that the European Union's voice is heard in the world and for influencing global choices.

There is a clear and mutual need for a common approach to global challenges such as the financial crisis, climate change, energy security and nuclear proliferation.

The EPP-ED Group will prioritise a balanced development of transatlantic relations, based on the firm conviction that this is the only way to defend our most basic common values.

The European Union needs a firm and deeply-rooted transatlantic relationship in a context of mutual respect and understanding.



The EPP-ED Group believes that:

- ↳ transatlantic relations are a cornerstone of our external policy and must be strengthened;
- ↳ a common approach with our transatlantic partners is desirable when dealing with major geopolitical actors and working towards common policies for regional challenges;
- ↳ the strengthening of NATO requires greater European defence effectiveness, which remains vital for discussions on security;
- ↳ cooperation on energy security issues is one of the most important pillars of transatlantic relations;
- ↳ cooperation with the US administration is necessary, particularly with regard to issues where transatlantic differences have existed such as the role of the International Criminal Court, energy security and climate change;
- ↳ the United States should treat all citizens of EU Member States equally when it comes to the visa regime, on the basis of full reciprocity;
- ↳ the EPP-ED supports the mechanisms put in place by the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) and will continue to support the work by both parties to complete the 'Lighthouse' projects;
- ↳ a functioning and competitive transatlantic market must be achieved by 2015 in the context of greater involvement of the US Congress, the Canadian Parliament, the European Parliament and the national parliaments;
- ↳ a 'Transatlantic Assembly' must be established.

3 Developing and deepening the neighbourhood pursuing a policy of enlargement

The European Union requires the development and deepening of the Neighbourhood Policy

There is a de facto human continuity between the EU countries and all those who live in Europe and around the Mediterranean. This continuity creates human, economic and cultural exchanges with countries which are recognised in different ways by the EU: as candidates, associates, neighbours, etc.

We now have to transform this geographical continuity into a space for effective solidarity, in which the same fundamental values are shared.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, the Union for the Mediterranean and the strategic partnership with

There is a de facto human continuity between the EU countries and all those who live in Europe and around the Mediterranean.

Russia must be developed, enhanced, and their instruments rationalised. Concrete projects must be implemented in areas of the environment, education, mobility, and economic exchanges.

The EPP-ED Group also supports the idea of a more sophisticated and comprehensive EU strategy for the Black Sea that goes beyond the current initiative and envisages the establishment of a Cooperation and Security Agreement for the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, which should involve the EU, Turkey and all the littoral states as equal partners - seeking the full involvement of Russia.



EU accession involves accepting a common political vision underpinned by common values

Enlargement is one of the European Union's most powerful policy tools. It has helped to overcome the division of Europe and contributed to peace and stability throughout the continent. It has inspired reforms and has consolidated common principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as well as the market economy.

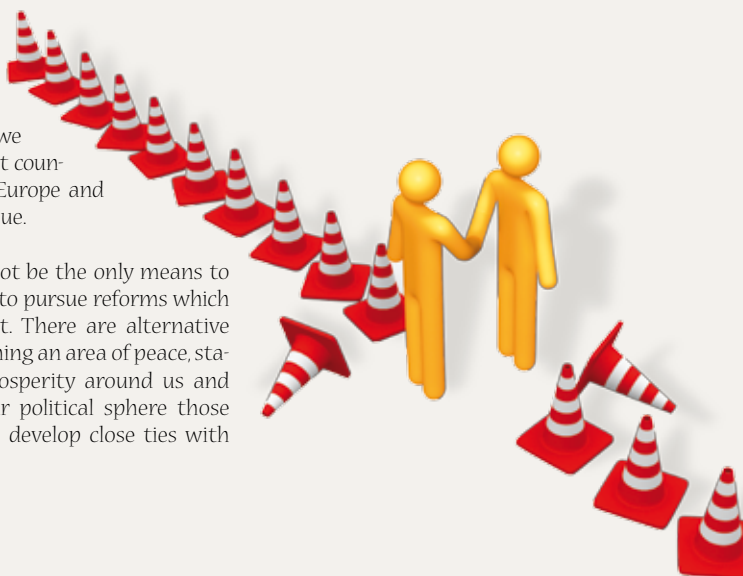
However, we now have to ensure that the EU remains cohesive. Rushing towards further enlargement without adequate consolidation and preparation could damage the cohesion of the Union – whose resources will be reduced by the economic crisis – and affect its capacity for action and solidarity.

Moreover, before deciding whether new countries should join - in addition to those who already have a membership perspective - we must ensure that applicant countries share the vision of Europe and the goals we want to pursue.

Accession to the EU cannot be the only means to persuade other countries to pursue reforms which are in their own interest. There are alternative methods such as establishing an area of peace, stability, democracy and prosperity around us and anchoring safely into our political sphere those neighbours who want to develop close ties with our Union.

The time has come to fill the conceptual, political and legal gap between the European Union's two main external policies – enlargement and neighbourhood – by developing a new concept for the architecture of the European Union's relations with its neighbours

According to this vision, these common policies should pursue the overall goal of assisting the eastern and southern neighbours to gradually achieve EU standards. They should be shaped jointly with the participating countries on the basis of specific decision-making mechanisms along the lines of a European Economic Area Plus (EEA+), or even a European Commonwealth.





For a Europe of growth

4 Pragmatic and targeted responses to the financial crisis, better coordination of economic policies and the completion of the single market

Responding to the financial crisis and preparing for recovery

A serious crisis of confidence is shaking the global economy and financial activity. Europe is affected: we have seen a significant slowdown in growth, and European enterprises – particularly SMEs, the main providers of employment and engines of growth in Europe – are facing increasing financial difficulties. Insecurity dominates: households worry about their purchasing power, workers about their employment, pensioners about their retirement and savers about their deposits.

The Union cannot remain silent and inactive. Respect for the principle of subsidiarity must go hand in hand with the coherence and solidarity of Member States.

The EPP-ED Group makes the following pragmatic proposals:

- ↳ there is a need for a coherent and shared overall strategy with regard to economic policy to encourage a rapid return of growth throughout Europe with contained inflation. We must support the purchasing power of European households as a priority, and prevent undue complication in the tax system, which discourages initiative;
- ↳ in the current climate, particular focus must be placed on safeguarding the banking systems in order to ensure sustained financing of the economy and security plus confidence for savers. We must also encourage anything that will prevent undue tightening of finances for households and enterprises, particularly SMEs;
- ↳ improving transparency and accountability in the financial sector is necessary to correct the dysfunctions and to create mechanisms that would avoid excessive risk-taking in the field of

finance. In this context, the EPP-ED Group favours a reinforcement of the European system of supervision and the greatest possible coordination of financial regulation policies within the Eurozone;

- ↳ great efforts must be made to fight against excessive debt in households and to support saving, a source of investment;
- ↳ measures promoting freedom of enterprise, transfer, recruitment, establishment, self-employed or part-time work must be encouraged to prepare for the recovery.



Better coordination of economic policies

The EPP-ED family believes that a return to growth in Europe can be stimulated through better coordination of the Member States' economic policies, particularly with regard to implementing National Reform Programmes (NRPs).

Better coordination of economic and fiscal policies will encourage a revival of European economic activity and job creation.

To this end, the EPP puts forward a number of proposals:

- ↳ holding summit meetings of the leaders of Eurozone countries before each European Council meeting;
- ↳ drawing up a consolidated account of the public finances of the Eurozone, including the Community budget;
- ↳ informing the public of the national budget headings that contribute to the funding of Community policies;
- ↳ fully involving the national parliaments of the Eurozone by organising a joint annual debate by teleconference on the budget guidelines for the following year.



Speeding up completion of the Single Market

An innovative and growing Single Market that is open and efficient is the only lasting response to globalisation and the economic crisis.

One of our Group's constant priorities is to promote policies that will enable the Single Market to achieve high rates of economic growth and expand consumer choice.

Europe cannot aspire to high social ambitions until growth has recovered. Our Group rejects the fatalism of a 'European decline'. Now more than ever, free competition and a spirit of enterprise must be championed as factors that will create jobs and thus protect purchasing power. Particular attention must be paid to SMEs.

An improved internal market is the key to success. Every barrier to the Single Market that falls creates the possibility of new competitive jobs.

The EPP-ED Group is calling for:

- ↳ completion of the Single Market in the energy and transport sectors, with rapid expansion of trans-European transport networks, the services sector and, in particular, the business services sector;
- ↳ continued efforts to combat the bureaucracy that is paralysing Europe's growth and prosperity by preventing companies and people from achieving their full potential within the Single Market;
- ↳ introduction of an Internal Market Test, examining the impact of any major new legislative measure, in any policy area, on the four freedoms;
- ↳ recognition that innovation must be the engine of Europe's growth and prosperity and that it must form the core of the European response to globalisation.

The EPP-ED will therefore champion proposals leading to:

- ↳ the effective protection of intellectual property in Europe, by promoting an affordable, simple and effective EU patent regime;
- ↳ the completion of public procurement rules and the use of public procurement as a tool for boosting innovation;
- ↳ a Small Business Act for Europe, giving innovative SMEs the confidence, legal clarity and access to finance to succeed in the Single Market;
- ↳ particular focus on the digital economy and converging technologies.

The freedoms offered by the Single Market must be readily available to all citizens. In fact, frustrations still remain with such everyday issues as registering a car, gaining access to medical care in a different Member State or even purchasing a product on-line.

The EPP-ED should identify and tackle these barriers by proposing:

- ↳ a citizens' consultation to pinpoint the main difficulties experienced and a call for action by the Commission and Member States;
- ↳ support for new initiatives to provide a consistently safe and secure environment for consumers.



5 Reform of the European budget and its financing

The EPP-ED believes that the European Union's financing model is exhausted and should therefore be substantially reformed.

Indeed, the political union of a Europe of 27 still has the budget of the small economic community of the 1980s. Its expenditure focuses far too much on traditional policies, to the detriment of the more innovative measures demanded by the Lisbon Strategy. Its funding is based on contributions from national budgets, which puts it at the mercy of the financial difficulties of the unluckiest, least European, or worst-managed Member States.



The EPP reiterates the proposals adopted on 29 March 2007 with an 80% majority:

- ↳ definition of the principle of cost neutrality, at the same level as the subsidiarity principle. What we increase in one area we must reduce by the same amount in another. The Union does not have the right to fall into debt. That is the prerequisite for any kind of EU budgetary reform;
- ↳ as such, it is extremely urgent that we carry out an initial reform, with a view to simplifying the contributions from national budgets;
- ↳ these contributions will have to be gradually replaced by genuine own resources which are no longer a burden on national budgets. This will not mean taking a step forward in European integration, but returning to the spirit and the letter of the very first Treaties of 1951 and 1957. A major debate should be opened on the nature of those resources. The EPP-ED rejects the idea of creating a European tax to finance the Community budget;
- ↳ a political agreement should be reached on financing as well as on a new apportionment of expenditure under the Community budget so that it is better able to finance the Union's political priorities. The principle of co-financing, which is consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, should be the rule.



A political agreement should be reached on financing as well as on a new apportionment of expenditure under the Community budget.

3

For a more secure Europe

6 Stepping up the fight against terrorism and protecting the public from organised crime

Terrorist organisations, and particularly jihadist terrorism, represent the main threat to our coexistence and our values.

Anti-terrorism falls under the competence of the Member States. There is, however, a political role for the European Union, which must create an overall security system at the European level.



Defining a truly European political project aimed at quelling jihadist terrorism:

- ↳ we have to combat terrorism, not a religious movement. A clear distinction must be made between Islam and jihadist terrorism;
- ↳ though carried out in the name of religion, attacks on human life are acts of hatred motivated by a totalitarian political vision that shows contempt for religion. The European Union and Member States must show zero tolerance when dealing with violent attacks and threats;
- ↳ a balance must be found between the fight against terrorism and the protection of fundamental rights;
- ↳ the criminals who carry out the attacks are not the only ones responsible for them. Those who are accomplices in attacks through their defence of, and support for, criminals must be pursued and punished;
- ↳ the European Union must adopt a framework decision harmonising the conditions for the expulsion from EU territory of all those who incite terrorist acts;



- ↳ the European Union must tackle the infiltration methods used by terrorist groups to recruit new members, especially from amongst underprivileged populations and in prison environments;
- ↳ cooperation between intelligence services is essential. The creation of a European Information Centre, the effective application of the principle of availability of documents and data, the organisation of meetings between the different and numerous information services of the EU Member States, should be considered priorities of the Union;
- ↳ the European anti-terrorist strategy must be further coordinated: links and synergies must be created between the Commissioner for Freedom, Security and Justice, the European Council's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and Europol's Director;
- ↳ regular meetings must be organised between the home affairs ministers of every Member State, the Commissioner responsible, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the directors of Europol, Eurojust, SITCEN and Frontex;
- ↳ the European Union's foreign policy must make the distinction between regimes and governments that support terrorism, either implicitly or explicitly, and those that do not, and act accordingly;
- ↳ the European Union must focus on intercultural dialogue. In this spirit, the EPP-ED undertakes to step up the meetings it holds every year in the context of the dialogue with Islam.

Protecting the public more effectively from organised crime

In order to protect its citizens, the European Union must act against the threat of organised crime. To combat these threats, we need to envisage joint actions to prevent and combat crime and criminal organisations. We need a joint mobilisation of police and legal resources to ensure that the perpetrators of offences and the product of their crime find no refuge in the Union.

7 Developing a coherent energy policy in order to combat climate change and sustainable development

The EPP-ED Group supports the establishment of a diversified energy mix, promoting higher energy efficiency in all activity sectors, the completion of the internal energy market and the development of a coherent foreign energy policy.

Towards a zero or low-CO₂ emitting energy mix

The EPP-ED calls for:

- ↳ more investment in R&D for clean technologies such as carbon capture and storage, hydrogen and methanol energy, biofuels, biogas and biomass, which will allow us to rely on indigenous sources of energy in a sustainable way;
- ↳ more emphasis on clean energy technologies such as nuclear energy on the part of those States that favour it, the use of clean technology when using fossil fuels and the use of renewable wind, marine, solar and thermal energies;
- ↳ large-scale renovation of the cities (building stock, district heating systems, public transport);
- ↳ increased cooperation and dialogue between Member States in order to avoid drastic consequences for the price and quantity of imported sources and for the overall levels of the EU's CO₂ emissions.

Energy efficiency as a key driver of competitiveness and respect for the environment

Energy efficiency in all sectors represents the most cost-effective and rapid way to reduce our energy dependence on imports, rationalise consumption in households and industry and drastically reduce our CO₂ emissions. This requires the involvement of all economic and social sectors.

The EPP-ED Group advocates:

- ↳ fiscal incentives for citizens and companies undertaking renovation works in the building sector and for the purchase of energy efficient vehicles and appliances;
- ↳ providing users with accurate information so that they can rationalise their energy consumption, encouraging new technologies such as smart meters in particular;
- ↳ continuing the rapid development of cogeneration in our energy-intensive industries and encouraging other sectors of industry to follow suit.

the context of measures sustainable development



The internal energy market as enabler of open competition, higher efficiency and cost-reflective prices

Completion of the internal energy market is essential to the success of our security of supply and environmental goals. However, many obstacles to the free movement of gas and electricity within the EU still remain: lack of interconnection capacity between Member States; lack of harmonisation of basic technical rules; political protectionism; and the coexistence of 27 different regulatory frameworks.

The EPP-ED Group supports:

- ↳ further technical and regulatory harmonisation, placing all companies on a level playing field so that they can serve customers throughout the Union, increase interconnection capacity, and create competition in isolated and closed-off areas;
- ↳ setting up social programmes for vulnerable sectors of society without interfering with the market;
- ↳ encouraging a truly integrated and open market in order to ensure that energy prices reflect actual production costs; an efficient market is also essential to encourage the significant investment necessary for the introduction of renewable energy sources.

Creating supportive energy diplomacy

The EU represents more than 500 million consumers and therefore needs to establish a real energy diplomacy.

Solidarity mechanisms need to be established between Member States in case of emergency situations. The gas supply crisis over the past two years as well as the two EU-wide blackouts have demonstrated the need to improve physical interconnection and rapid reaction mechanisms, in order to avoid the potentially critical consequences these events can have on the economy and on society.



8 Ensuring food safety and security

European agriculture must develop a dual-pronged strategic objective: to feed Europeans independently and healthily.

Increased food security

Today, the demand for food supplies, particularly in the emerging countries, the strong demand for unprocessed products for animal feed, the increasing production of crops for non-food purposes, including biofuels, and climatic events resulting in falling harvests have all contributed to a rapidly increasing global demand, leading to a decline in international reserves and, consequently, an increase in agricultural commodity prices, which has an impact on the price of food products.

The European Union will need to contribute to a doubling of world food production in order to respond to the needs of 3.5 billion more people between now and 2050. To lessen the risk of a world shortage and to safeguard its self-sufficiency in food, Europe will need to produce more, and produce it more effectively and sustainably.

The EPP-ED Group advocates:

- ↳ the permanent abolition of any set-aside areas within the EU;
- ↳ setting up of buffer stocks of staple foods;
- ↳ accelerating moves to the production and utilisation of second generation bioenergy (which processes manure and agricultural waste materials);
- ↳ the abolition of any financial support provided for planting energy crops;
- ↳ research and development into new technologies (including GM) for food, animal feed and energy production;
- ↳ assessment of the impact of organic farming in terms of reduced food production: the production of organic products is, of course, acceptable but these systems require more land to produce the same amount of food as conventional farming;
- ↳ better analysis of the impact of the current EU environment/land use policies on agricultural output.

Enhanced food safety

Where food is concerned, EU citizens are ever more demanding with regard to the nutritional quality of products and their safety.

The EPP-ED Group pays special attention to the right of the consumers to decide for themselves, particularly by means of effective legislation on food labelling, the nutrition and health claims made on food, and GM foods. Information and education are essential to enable our citizens to take responsible decisions, but the EPP-ED rejects a policy of forced educational indoctrination and a lifestyle decreed by law.



The EPP-ED Group recommends:

- ↳ strengthening the management of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and giving it a key role in providing independent and science-based decisions and information to Member States and consumers on food safety;
- ↳ supporting the philosophy of the 'farm to fork' approach throughout the food chain;
- ↳ supporting the 'polluter pays' principle regarding hygiene standards in the handling and production of feed;
- ↳ applying EU standards, including sanctions, to imported feed and food;
- ↳ encouraging well thought-out use of pesticides, fertilisers and animal health products;
- ↳ promoting correct, accurate and science-based food labelling instead of a dictatorial legislation and stifling bureaucracy;
- ↳ organising information campaigns aimed at healthy lifestyles, supported by the EU;
- ↳ that each consumer must be able to make a responsible choice regarding his or her respective lifestyle; each citizen must be aware of his or her own responsibility and the responsibility of parents for their children;
- ↳ preserving traditional and regional specialities and cuisines as part of our cultural heritage.

9 Developing a joint immigration policy

The EPP-ED family believes that one of our strategic priorities must be a common European approach to immigration.

With the enlargement of the Schengen area, which removes internal borders and strengthens external ones, the Member States are moving towards a growing mutual dependency in terms of immigration and asylum, since a decision taken by one Member State has consequences on the others. This reality renders a common EU immigration policy not just necessary but also inevitable.

Firmly combating illegal immigration

There are currently millions of people living illegally in Europe and their number is constantly increasing. The EPP-ED Group understands that in order to achieve public support for legal migration, Europe must prove that it can be effective in combating illegal immigration.

The EPP-ED Group is in favour of:

- ↳ strict measures to control external borders;
- ↳ an effective return policy for illegal immigrants;
- ↳ strong support for Frontex and Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs);
- ↳ stronger cooperation on combating the criminal activities and criminal organisations that often lie behind mass immigration and human trafficking;
- ↳ strengthening a common visa policy.



Solidarity and cooperation with third countries

Immigration policy should be based on solidarity since Member States, notably those most exposed to mass influxes, cannot deal with immigration on their own.

The EPP-ED Group supports the following:

- ↳ enhanced solidarity at European level for Member States that are facing a disproportionate burden;
- ↳ allocation of the necessary resources for the functioning of instruments such as the Frontex agency;
- ↳ enhanced cooperation with countries of origin and transit countries.

Better organisation of legal migration

Orderly and managed legal migration can be beneficial both for the migrants concerned and for the recipient countries.

The EPP-ED Group advocates:

- ↳ common initiatives on legal migration for highly skilled and unskilled workers;
- ↳ pursuing the establishment and implementation of the Blue Card for highly skilled workers;
- ↳ working towards a system of legal migration for less qualified or unskilled workers, which would be limited in time;
- ↳ implementing a strict but fair policy on family reunification in cases of legal migration.

Enhanced asylum coordination

The EPP-ED Group recognises that some third-country nationals merit protection and asylum in the EU, either through refugee status or through other types of international protection.

The EPP-ED Group proposes:

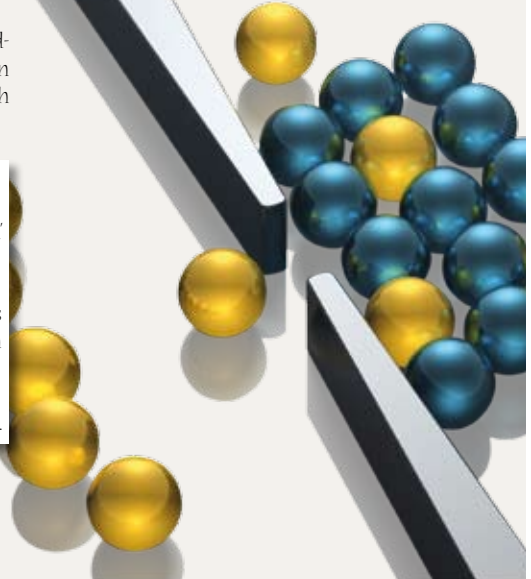
- ↳ the adoption of a common definition of 'asylum' throughout the EU;
- ↳ establishing procedural safeguards as well as common standards in the processing of asylum applications;
- ↳ enhancing the protection of vulnerable persons.

Enhancing integration and intercultural dialogue

The EPP-ED Group supports the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue and the integration of legal migrants into their host societies, in the interests of the migrants and of the host societies themselves.

The EPP-ED Group calls for:

- ↳ the integration of legal migrants through the adoption of integration measures, including the acquisition of practical and language skills, whilst not going beyond what is available for host country citizens.



For a Europe of greater solidarity

4

10 Greater solidarity between the Member States as part of the cohesion policy and upholding the values of the European social model

The EPP-ED Group believes in balanced territorial development

The crisis may have negative consequences on the development of the EU's more disadvantaged regions, and those who live and work there. This is why the EPP-ED Group advocates an ambitious territorial cohesion policy.

In order to respond to tomorrow's societal challenges, such as demographic change, migration, globalisation, environmental and climate challenges, and in the light of the new EU territorial cohesion objective, social and cohesion policy will have to be revised in 2013.

The EPP-ED Group believes in promoting work and dialogue within companies

The greatest social injustice is high unemployment. This is why the EPP-ED Group proposes enhancing solidarity around work and its promotion as a founding value of the European social model, calling for:

- ↳ better access to strategies for coping with change so that everyone can gain new skills for new jobs, protecting people rather than specific jobs and promoting greater employability through lifelong learning;

- ↳ a more flexible organisation of work that fosters reconciliation of work and family life and incorporation of older workers in the labour market;

- ↳ the free movement of workers is essential for the true completion of the internal market, which will allow the European economy to be more dynamic, and efforts to this end must be stepped up;

- ↳ the promotion of entrepreneurial initiatives;

- ↳ the promotion of the universal concept of 'decent work', with four objectives:

- ▶ job creation,
- ▶ guaranteeing rights at work,
- ▶ gradually extending social protection,
- ▶ promoting dialogue between workers and employers and negotiated conflict resolution.

Latest internal publications published in 2008

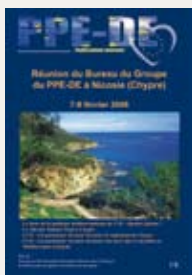
«Political Strategy» Unit

EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament



↓
The ten priorities for the EPP-ED Group

March 2008
FR, EN, DE, NL, ES



↓
Meeting of the EPP-ED Group Bureau in Nicosia (7-8 February 08)

April 2008
FR, EN, DE, EL



↓
4th Joint Parliamentary Meeting on the Lisbon Strategy

June 2008
EN



↓
Meeting of the EPP-ED Group Bureau in Slovenia (17-18 April 08)

June 2008
FR, EN



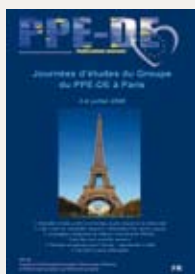
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8th Summit of Chairmen of the EPP-ED Parliamentary Groups in the EP (15 April 08)

October 2008
FR, EN



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Joint Parliamentary Meeting on the Western Balkans (26-27 May 08)

October 2008
EN



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EPP-ED Study Days in Paris (2-4 July 08)

October 2008
FR, EN



↓
Group Presidency meeting on the island of Réunion (26-29 November 08)

November 2008
FR, EN



↓
Conclusions of the EPP-ED Horizontal Working Group (9 December 08)

December 2008
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47-53 rue Wiertz
B - 1047 Brussels
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- Internet:** <http://www.epp-ed.eu>
- E-mail:** epp-ed@europarl.europa.eu
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