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**MEETING OF THE EPP-ED GROUP PRESIDENCY
AND HEADS OF NATIONAL DELEGATIONS**

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Tallinn, ESTONIA

SECURITY FOR CITIZENS:

FOR A EUROPE OF STRENGTH AND STABILITY

CONCLUSIONS

EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

The external borders of the EU are crossed every year by more than 300 million travellers, EU citizens and third country nationals combined. Europe is and will continue to be the world's favourite tourist destination. In order to share its values and support economic growth, the EU must remain open and accessible to others.

The EPP-ED Group believes that the dismantling of the EU's internal border controls is one of the greatest achievements of European integration. An area without internal borders, which has expanded from 15 countries in 1995 to 27 countries at the end of 2007, cannot function without shared responsibility and solidarity in managing its external borders.

The ambitious agenda set by the Commission and the Council in 2002 in the plan for management of the external borders of the EU Member States, has now been completed. The legislative framework has been consolidated. The Schengen Borders Code entered into force in 2006. Simplified rules for local border traffic have been introduced. An operational dimension has been added with the establishment of the FRONTEX Agency. The concepts of burden-sharing and solidarity have been given real meaning by the European Border Fund which, for the first time, allocates substantial financial resources to these policy areas.

In this context, our Group calls for an increase in the FRONTEX budget, along with an extension of its mandate. The current situation shows that more FRONTEX operations are needed to secure our external borders. The EPP-ED is looking to the new Stockholm Programme on Justice and Home Affairs to consolidate and build on all these achievements.

There is a need, however, to look at border management in the context of immigration policy as a whole. This includes a review of the asylum acquis, implementation of the Returns Directive and use of the monies allocated to the return fund, and developing elements of a common approach to

migration policy, touching on legal avenues to migration, integration as well as agreements with third countries to encourage circular migration.

EU-RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

1. For the EPP-ED Group, relations with Russia, which is the third largest trading partner of the EU, the fourth largest trading partner for the Eurozone and one of the EU's most essential energy suppliers, are of high importance for the purposes of cooperation on mutually-respected undertakings.
2. For the EPP-ED Group, it is important to underline that the EU shares with Russia not only economic and trade interests, but also an objective to act in the international arena, as well as responsibility for global issues and issues concerning the common European neighbourhood.
3. For the EPP-ED Group, it is essential that enhanced cooperation and good neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia are expected to be based on mutual trust and common values of democracy, respect for human rights and the Rule of Law as well as on cooperation on international issues and should therefore be of key importance to the stability, security, and prosperity of the whole of Europe.
4. The EPP-ED Group is of the opinion that Russia's invasion of Georgian territory, followed by the recognition of the two break-away enclaves, puts a serious question mark on Russia's reliability and readiness to build, together with the EU, a common space of security in Europe. It also has to conclude that Russia's credibility as a trustworthy provider of energy has been undermined due to the cut in gas supplies in January 2009.
5. The EPP-ED Group considers it important that the EU be aware of the fact that Russia is officially viewing energy not as a commodity, but as a foreign policy instrument to advance its political interests and divide the recipient states.
6. Preparing the future framework for relations with Russia, the EU is called upon to become more aware of its own potential and values and should insist on honouring these values on an equal level with economic interests on the occasion of every major mutual contact.
7. The EPP-ED Group is convinced that the establishment of genuine democracy and the Rule of Law in Russia will provide a trustworthy basis for a fruitful long-term cooperation. It is therefore important to intensify relations with citizens' organisations and the democratic opposition. The EPP-ED Group is concerned that the European Left is conducting a misguided Russian policy, avoiding principled critics of the authoritarian trends and, in fact, mistrusting the capability and needs of Russian citizens for a democratic society.
8. Having this in mind, the EU is called upon to conduct a common and compassionate policy which will be inspired by the ideals and examples of Russian democrats such as Andrei Sakharov, Sergei Kovalyov and Anna Politkovskaya.
9. The EPP-ED Group insists on the treatment of Russia as an equal partner which has to fully meet its own international commitments. Russian policies that are orientated to having exceptions (e.g. refusal to implement the Energy Charter Treaty after having signed it) have to be opposed in principle.
10. The EPP-ED Group draws attention to the importance of fully using the possibilities of the new Eastern Partnership to support building democracy and a free market economy in the Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and other states, bringing them closer into the relationship with the EU. The success of these efforts will provide hope for democracy and also in Russia itself.
11. The EPP-ED Group is of the opinion that Russia's well-prepared disproportionate counter-attack, triggered by the Georgian troops in South Ossetia and extended to the other Georgian territories, as well as the aggressive military action in Abkhazia, followed by the recognition of the two break-away enclaves, puts a serious question mark on Russia's readiness to build, together with the EU, a common space of security in Europe.

12. The EPP-ED Group insists on a broad, wide-ranging and legally-binding new agreement between the EU and Russia, based on a shared commitment to human rights, covering a whole range of cooperation between the parties and representing a step-up from the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, both in terms of the depth of the commitments and subjects covered.
13. But the EPP-ED Group also insists on the fact that the violations by Russia of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, and its role in the gas abruption at the beginning of 2009, have seriously endangered relations between the EU and Russia and the negotiations on the new agreement.
14. The EPP-ED Group is therefore of the firm conviction that the EU's relationship with Russia must be based on respect for the rule of international law and all binding Agreements and Treaties to which Russia and the EU Member States adhere, including the UN Charter and the European Court of Human Rights, the principles of the Energy Charter Treaty, as well as the rules and commitments incumbent on members of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE EU: THE BALTIC SEA STRATEGY

1. The EPP-ED Group supports the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region that will be presented to the European Council in June 2009 and will be one of the main priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency during the second half of 2009.
2. For the EPP-ED Group, the Baltic Sea Strategy should aim at four main objectives:
 - **To make the Baltic Sea region a more prosperous place by supporting balanced economic development across the region**
 - Deepening the integration of the markets in the region is imperative to tackle the low competition in the region.
 - The older EU Member States must drop all their restrictions on the new Member States joining the common labour market.
 - The transport system must be improved to support the further integration of regional economy.
 - Kaliningrad could act as a pilot for regional integration with Russia. The aim is to create a common economic space between the EU and Russia.
 - The region is too dependent on Russian energy and must develop a diversity of supply.
 - **To address the urgent environmental challenges related to the Baltic Sea**
 - The Baltic Sea is one of the most polluted seas in the world. The EU needs a coherent action plan to protect the Baltic Sea. It must not support any new, even supposed, pollution.
 - The loading of eutrophication nutrients into the Baltic Sea must be drastically reduced via new activities in the EU Agricultural Policy. Co-operation between the EU, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine is also needed.
 - Protecting the Baltic Sea should be taken into account when developing the transport policy and infrastructure, including the building of pipelines.
 - Co-operation between EU Member States and between the EU and Russia should be further developed to reduce the risk of oil tanker accidents, oil field exploitation and to improve nuclear safety.

- Baltic Sea fisheries must be developed in a sustainable way.
- **Addressing culture and education**
 - Establishing links between Universities throughout the region is vital to create centres of excellence.
 - A common think-tank, focusing on the interests of the region as a whole would contribute to a common understanding among decision-makers and decision-making across the region.
 - Student exchange in the region should be promoted. Particular attention should be paid to exchanges between old and new Member States.
 - The exchange of civil servants between Member States should be enhanced, particularly within the region.
 - The EU should support national governments' initiatives in the field of modernising educational infrastructure as well as in organising cultural tours and exhibitions.
 - **Making the Baltic Sea region a safer and more secure place**
 - A stable and close relationship between Russia and the EU, including trust-building measures, is imperative for the security of the whole region.
 - The development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy must recognise and take seriously the security concerns of all the Member States in the region.
 - A strengthened Europol presence and security co-operation is required to combat the significant level of organised crime in the region.
 - Fighting counterfeiting requires co-operation between police and border control authorities.
 - The spread of HIV/AIDS and high figures of alcoholism call for co-operation in the social and health sector.
3. The EPP-ED Group stresses that the Strategy must receive adequate funding in order to be able to fulfil its objectives, calls for an own EU budget line for the Baltic Sea Strategy, possibly under the European Neighbourhood Policy and Partnership Instrument, supplementing the current funding of the Northern Dimension by the EU, Member States, third countries, the EBRD, the EIB and the Nordic Investment Bank.
 4. The EPP-ED Group supports the Northern Dimension framework which brings together the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation, as the basis for the external aspects of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region in areas of economic cooperation, freedom, security and justice, external security, research, education and culture, environment, nuclear safety and natural resources, and social welfare and health.
 5. The EPP-ED Group reaffirms the Northern Dimension Partners' responsibility for the prosperity of Northern Europe, its sustainable development and the well-being of its population.

For the EPP-ED Group, Belarus could be encouraged to participate in expert level cooperation in the Northern Dimension framework.

INTERNET SAFETY

1. The EPP-ED Group expressed concern about the cyber attacks on Estonia (also known as the Estonian cyber war) which began on April 27 2007 and swamped websites of Estonian organisations, including the Estonian Parliament, banks, ministries, newspapers and broadcasters.
2. As protection against cyber attacks becomes more and more of a priority for the EU, and as the likelihood of terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure is increasing, the EPP-ED Group strongly welcomes the NATO decision to agree on the future establishment of a new body, the Cyber Defence Management Authority (CDMA), based in Estonia, which was given the task of initiating and coordinating an "immediate and effective cyber defence action where appropriate" in order to coordinate a political and technical response.
3. The EPP-ED Group supports every initiative aimed at improving the security of networks. In this respect, the existing EU agency dealing with telecommunications security, the European Network and Information Security Agency, based in Crete, must be strengthened. At the same time, a European body that operationally deals with the security of telecoms must be created.
4. The EPP-ED Group has long considered the need to ensure security on the internet as one of the essential components of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. Indeed, at its Paris Study Days, it adopted a policy incorporating this into its strategy for improving security for European citizens. It looks forward to the Stockholm Programme later this year, urging the Council to include credible, robust and comprehensive measures to improve internet security, without compromising basic freedoms, and ensuring a high level of data protection.
5. The EPP-ED Group welcomes the decision in November 2008 of the Council of Ministers to establish an EU-wide platform for collecting information at Europol on cyber crime and child pornography. The Group believes such a platform could prove to be a very useful tool in fighting this threat to our security, and calls on Member States to ensure that adequate funding is provided to make it effective. The EPP-ED Group strongly supported the allocation of €55m to continue the measures foreseen under the Safer Internet Action Plan, and looks forward to seeing the continued evolution of Europol's work in combing the internet in search of terrorist activity, not least in the framework of the Check the Web Project.