



Madrid, 27 October 2006

PRESS RELEASE

■ EPP/COR GROUP ADOPTS RECOMMENDATIONS ON LEGAL AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES FOR EUROPE

Isidoro Gottardo, President of the European People Party's (EPP) Group in the Committee of the Regions (CoR) believes that "the EU needs a more organised and coordinated European policy on migration and immigration, involving Member States and cooperating with local and regional authorities". In the framework of the EPP Group in CoR's annual extraordinary meeting in Madrid on 27th October 2006, he also called for the sharing of responsibilities and financial burdens to be an integral part of any European approach.

The EPP asks Commissioner Frattini to evaluate how to actively involve local and regional representatives in framing immigration policies, starting with the Tripoli Conference between the EU and the African Union scheduled for 22nd and 23rd November 2006.

The declaration which was adopted in Madrid also recommends that based on a principle of solidarity, emergency financial instruments be created for areas poles identified as centres of strongest migration influxes. The EU and the Member States should also secure adequate financial means and reinforce specific programmes needed to integrate immigrants in the political and social life of the host country in the form of language training, cultural and civic training, and teaching programmes on European values.

Greek Minister of Interior, Prokopios Pavlopoulos shared his experience on how the Greek government is facing the challenge of immigration. "Interaction between locals and immigrants can be positive, but there are preconditions which must be met. This includes legal residence, social integration, and improved economic conditions for immigrants" he states. This was supplemented by cases presented by the Presidents of the Regions of Madrid and Sicily, Esperanza Aguirre and Salvatore Cuffaro respectively, and José Manuel Soria for the Canary Islands, as President of the Partido Popular in the region.

The President of the EPP, Wilfred Martens concluded the meeting by underlining that "the EU needs more legal immigration. With the same conviction, we cannot tolerate illegal immigration". He underlined the importance of a well coordinated joint EPP position at the December Council meeting, based on discussions such as the one held by the EPP in the CoR today, in order to reach a clear-cut position on immigration in Europe.

For the full declaration and more information on the meeting:

www.cor.europa.eu/eppweb/activities/extraordinary.htm