

## **EPP Party Reform**

*Adopted by the EPP Congress on 30 April 2025 in Valencia, Spain*

As EPP, we have built a Europe where people's dignity, security and freedom always come first. Our history, our heritage, our Judeo-Christian roots, and our cultural diversity define us. We are proud of our roots and confident about the future. We do not tell citizens what to believe or what to fear, but we listen to them, respect them, and deliver for them. We are bridge-builders. Over the past years and thanks also to the power and electoral success of our member parties, the EPP has successfully confirmed and strengthened its position at the heart of European decision-making. We are today the decisive power in the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council. We have secured the lead candidate process. We have developed a party manifesto as a guiding document for the next Commission. We have succeeded in interlinking the EPP work in the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council for example with EPP-Summit and -Retreat Statements and a programmatic upgrade of ministerial meetings. Belonging to this party allows us to be stronger, through information sharing, agenda-setting power and having friendships among likeminded politicians across Europe and beyond. We want to utilize the party's strengths to the fullest, strengthen its structures, optimize its internal coordination and upgrade its communication, to become a true modern European party. Therefore, we seize this opportunity to reform our party in an inclusive and transparent joint team effort. This document is the result of our party's internal consultation with our leadership, our member parties, our Groups in parliamentary assemblies, our associations, foundations and associated entities.

The EPP has always been at the forefront of orienting European decision-making and will continue to do so in the future. We want to evolve from being a forum for dialogue and meetings to a common space where European decisions are made. We know that being in a majority in every European legislative institution, we now have a decisive responsibility to deliver the concrete changes expected by citizens across Europe. To reach that goal, we want our new unity, our new spirit and our new style to be reflected in our party structures as well as in our programmatic work in the future. We want to achieve this through five measures: politicizing our party further, bringing increased responsibility to the structures we have, fully embracing and preparing the future of the Spitzenkandidat process, realising EPP party life to the fullest, and bringing Europe further together in the best interest of its member parties.

### **1. We want to politicize the EPP further**

- **We upgrade our ministerial meetings and enshrine them in the by-laws**  
In preparation of Council meetings, EPP ministerial meetings have proven successful to coordinate positions and discuss current affairs in member states. We want to enshrine them in our by-laws. We ensure their added value by working on the participation of ministers where needed and seek to realise meetings in as many policy formats as possible. We however also want to attribute to them a longer-term role. For such long-term strategic discussions, for example at the start of a Council presidency, co-chairs may decide to exceptionally open ministerial meetings to EPP member parties in opposition and/or associated member parties, possibly in an informal retreat format in a European. The goal to have in mind is to maintain the EPP line, both in the short term and in the long term. In addition, it should always be possible to invite on an ad-hoc basis

member parties in opposition, associated members when the respective topic directly concerns their state, or the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies when relevant topics arise on the Council agenda.

We furthermore believe the ministerial meetings should be co-chaired by the co-legislators, meaning by one Council member and one Member of the European Parliament. The EPP Vice President responsible for the corresponding portfolio would then also be invited to the respective ministerial meetings.

- **We strengthen our cooperation and politicize the EPP's programmatic work on core EPP topics through working groups with politicians of every level**

Upon presidency proposal and following political-assembly decision, standing working groups will be created to discuss and prepare programmatic work on policy areas, based on developments and EPP core topics that require coordinated action. Likewise, to react rapidly to occurring developments, the presidency may decide to create ad-hoc working groups. Working groups shall bring together representatives from member parties of different levels, associations, associated entities where relevant, and our Groups, to engage in long-term policy coordination and deliver programmatic work. Members of different working groups are nominated by member parties, associations, associated entities where relevant, and Groups, and endorsed by the Political Assembly. Upon presidency proposal following consultation with member parties, working group chairs are elected by the Political Assembly. In order to coordinate EPP positioning across organs, a link with the EPP Group, with EPP ministerial meetings and with EPP Summits should be established.

- **We bring EPP Leaders together**

Our EPP Summits organised in preparation of European Council meetings shall be enshrined in our by-laws as should be the formats of enlarged Summits and of the Leaders' Retreat, a yearly informal meeting between leaders in one of the European Union member states to discuss long-term EPP strategy at Leaders' level.

- **We redefine and strengthen the agenda of our Political Assembly**

The Political Assembly is the strategic organ and the general assembly of the EPP. The regular meetings of the political assembly provide also an opportunity for all EPP family members to meet and discuss. The Political Assembly is between the EPP Congresses the primary decision-making body of the party. Each Political Assembly should have clear key topic(s) with at least one programmatic paper – prepared by EPP bodies. Adopted documents shall be of political relevance and serve as a basis for EU policy making. We use the political assembly meetings as platforms for political committee reporting and organise thematic working sessions in which we exchange with society. We encourage member parties to identify and propose topics for discussion at Political Assemblies. As already started in Lisbon in 2022 and continued with Helsinki, Munich and Valetta, we shall invest more in political assemblies in different European capitals.

- **We organise a yearly Summer University**

Once a year, we convene a Summer University in which party members meet informally to discuss the activities of the different meeting formats. This includes

group leaders of EU institutions and parliamentary assemblies gathering to coordinate the messaging and meet in their respective bodies. The chairs of

ministerial meetings will assess the discussions and the meeting format of ministerial meetings. Members of political committees will meet to discuss their work and define the practical way forward for the coming year. Nevertheless, the Congress and the Political Assembly remain the sole body to take decisions collectively with all party members. The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies will play a key role and contribute to the preparation of the Summer University.

## **2. We bring increased responsibility and inclusive participation to the structures**

- **We upgrade the Presidency's responsibilities.** Presidency members today already have dedicated responsibilities, including relations with associations, member parties, content work, financial responsibilities (Treasurer). Yet, to maximise coordination, Vice Presidents would also become responsible for specific thematic portfolios liaising with, taking part in, and reporting on dedicated ministerial meetings and/or political committees. They could also engage in benchmarking action to compare and analyse member-party activities in member states and EU candidate countries.
- **We establish or strengthen where applicable and of added value coordination between the European Council, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, and the European Commission.**
- **We establish a regular reporting mechanism to associations** and Member parties about summits, ministerial and presidency meetings, in which they are not represented.
- **We regularly gather the leaders of the different EPP Groups in the various parliamentary assemblies** in a coordination to discuss and align positions in said assemblies.
- **We strengthen a gender balanced inclusive participation.** The EPP in its internal functioning shall promote equal gender representation in all processes of managing, decision making and representation. We shall moreover seek to implement it for all authorized entities of the EPP during elections and appointment of representatives and delegations to internal party organizations and bodies.

## **3. We prepare the future of the Spitzenkandidat process**

- **Without EPP, there would not have been a Spitzenkandidat process.** We believe in it and want to strengthen it. To that end, we develop a dedicated playbook to prepare for the future Spitzenkandidat, in which the practical aspects related to the nomination process, the campaign process and the election preparation are described.

#### **4. We bring Europe closer together**

- **Complementary to our member parties, our associations and foundations connect us with European society.** They understand best what is in the voters' minds. They are best placed to organise dialogues with citizens. We will intensify engagement with them following Presidency and ministerial meetings. We engage in a mapping exercise to identify the need for creating one or more new associations, to reinforce our links with society, such as an EPP Farmers' association. We invite our associations and foundations at the start of each calendar year to present their activities from the previous year and their goals for the year ahead.
- **With the help of the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, we engage in outreach to national think tanks in member states.** Without duplicating contacts and work of national member parties, we want to feel the pulse of societal developments in member states and candidate countries. We believe a solid contact network of think tanks can help with that.
- **We make individual EPP membership possible for citizens of EU Member States.** Identifying with a European political party should first and foremost happen through national party membership. Yet, we believe also that a European identity means it should be possible to become part of a European political party as an individual. Such a membership involves a membership cost, provides access to regular European political news and allows to gather in EPP networks in member states' capitals, such as the EPP Brussels network.

#### **5. We realise "EPP party life" to the fullest and upgrade considerably our political communication**

- **Our messages should be spread fast and coherently across our member parties.** On a regular basis therefore, we offer communication outreach to members of national parliaments, regional parliaments and mayors, to inform them of European policy issues and raise awareness for upcoming legislative developments. Where possible and needed, we do this in different languages.
- **We set up timely newsletters to member parties covering EU institutions decisions and updates from member parties, as well as thematic communication channels between European, national and regional member-party representatives,** to ensure fast and up-to-date information sharing on major policy initiatives. They involve newsletters or briefing sessions, such as the recently created 'EPP Café Connect'.
- **We want to propagate the network and expertise of our various member parties and associated entities.** The strength of a European political party is defined by the expertise of its various member parties and associated entities. During election campaigns, member parties should be able to fully use the EPP trademark to promote its role in the EPP bodies in European decision-making. While we avoid doubling existing structures and by all means avoid unnecessarily spending member parties' contributions, we will regularly organise campaign

managers' meetings and workshops to discuss latest trends in political campaigning, to pool information and to exchange best practices. In the same vein, member parties can call on EPP sister parties to activate their networks to reach out to diaspora voters (in accordance with the existing rules for European parties) and specific voter groups that member parties may find hard to reach.

- **Where needed, we facilitate dialogue and coordination between EPP member parties in one country.** To foster inclusive and effective interaction between all levels, we identify member states, in which we have more than two member parties, where a national coordination platform can be established if the member parties of that member state request this. Such a platform is composed proportionately to the respective number of elected members in the European Parliament and shall coordinate and decide by consensus or, failing that, by a simple majority vote.
- **We want to coordinate our political messaging better.** For this, we will regularly organize communications directors' meetings, whom will also pool information on disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference. We will involve our networks when relevant according to their expertise on specific topics.
- **We organize regular fact-finding missions and study visits to EU candidate countries and other countries in the European neighbourhood.** Through cooperation with EPP member parties, we help the countries to meet the demands for EU membership and adopt the changes needed. Staying in close contact with what is happening around us, is of importance. To that end and where the opportunity arises, we engage in fact-finding missions or study trips to familiarize with and develop relations with relevant countries, parties or topics.