

An interview to Ms Bantzaki
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1. The People's Party manifesto was adopted at the Congress. How will the Party be approaching the elections and what are the key issues it will look to address?

Indeed, that was the first time that a centre-right manifesto for the European Elections has been co-signed by people from Central and Eastern Europe, 5 years after the European reunification and 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. That happened in Warsaw, a city and a nation that suffered too much through the years by racism, war, Soviet Bloc and lived through major catastrophes.

The EPP slogan for the coming elections is 'Strong for the People' and I remind you that the name of the party has the word People in the center of its name, 'European People's Party', and of course in the center of its politics too.

Through this political manifesto adopted in this Congress attended by some 3000 people, a package of proposals were adopted dealing with the main challenges nowadays in Europe and the whole World. The proposals focus on five major areas, such as:

- economy and how to deal with the current crisis;
- climate change;
- the response to the challenge of demographic change;
- security or Making Europe a Safer Place (including immigration, food security and the threat of terrorism);
- and finally the role of Europe in the world.

2. You took part in the Study Groups organized by the party during the convention. What were the focus points of these events? What Was the focus of your own contribution?

Yes, this is right; I took part in all the 4 Study Groups that were organised during the first 2 days before the Congress, as preparative meetings for the final manifesto. In those groups, some very interesting lectures were given by members of European Parliament, as well as by the host polish government officers and the European Parliament's officers too. The 4 Study Groups lectures referred to the major areas mentioned before, and after that, discussions took place and conclusions were driven

for each section. I would rather mention the contribution of the greek delegation of New Democracy, that promoted a resolution on the freedom of Religion that was adopted unanimously by the Congress. This resolution refers to the recognition of Ecumenical Patriarch by Turkey as the religion leader of 300 million orthodox worldwide, the re-opening of the Religious School of Chalki etc.

3. Polls suggest the new European Parliament will split evenly between center-right and center-left forces. How do you believe this will impact on the Union's policy making environment and what challenges lie ahead in your opinion?

Talking about EPP, we talk about the strongest and most influential political group in the European Parliament, with 288 members coming from 74 member parties and it is the only European political group assembling members from all 27 countries of EU and furthermore the group that is in power in 19 out of the 27 Countries in EU. EPP's people believe that this is the political party that can act decisively to overcome the current crisis and to come back as quickly as possible to economic growth and sustainable jobs. In this crisis EPP works actively and responsibly while other political parties base their campaigns in slogans and rhetoric but not in realistic proposals, actions and goals as EPP does. EPP focuses on equilibrium between market and social responsibility; because the main message EPP is sending today, just a month before elections, is based in 2 words: Solidarity and Responsibility. The main challenge today is the current global economic crisis, its impact to our societies and how we will manage to show solidarity with all the people and families affected by this crisis. What we need is a social market economy, transparent, innovative, green and sustainable. And closing, EPP believes that it is the party that really is "Europe's Driving Force" and that it will remain such after the coming elections too.