

New Visegrad Plus Initiative - EPP Group MEPs hold talks with Central European EPP Foreign Ministers. Jacek Saryusz-Wolski MEP and György Schöpflin MEP

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The participants of the first informal meeting (12 September) in the European Parliament, with six EU Foreign Ministers from Central Europe, agreed on overall cooperation including most specifically the Eastern Partnership, energy security, the Western Balkans and the European External Action Service. They agreed to mutually support the Central European candidates to obtain key posts and important responsibilities in the EEAS and to act jointly in view of ensuring the respect of the principle of geographical representativity in the new diplomatic service.

"The Lisbon Treaty in force and the shared values in the EPP family provided this remarkable window of opportunity to establish enhanced cooperation within Central Europe in the Visegrad Plus formula, and to engage in a constructive dialogue between Members of the Council and the European Parliament", said Jacek Saryusz-Wolski MEP, Head of the Polish Delegation in the EPP Group, Vice-President of the European People's Party and one of the two initiators of the meeting.

2011 will be shaped by Central Europe. Central Europe has shared interests, history and cultural affinity. The subsequent Hungarian and Polish Presidencies should assure that Central Europe is present not only geographically as the eastern flank of the EU but also as a political actor.

"If there is one thing which the history of European integration can tell us is that each country's national interest is best served by a degree of cooperation and mutuality", emphasised György Schöpflin MEP, the other initiator of the event.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Ministers Teodor Baconschi (Romania), Mikolaj Dowgielewicz (Poland), Mikuláš Dzurinda (Slovakia), János Martonyi (Hungary), Nikolay Mladenov (Bulgaria), Karel Schwarzenberg (Czech Republic) and five MEPs representing five Central European delegations in the EPP Group- Andrey Kovatchev (Bulgaria), Eduard Kukan (Slovakia), Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (Poland), György Schöpflin (Hungary) and Traian Ungureanu (Romania).

All participants agreed to hold the informal meetings on a regular basis.