

## JOSEPH DAUL, CHAIRMAN OF THE EPP-ED GROUP IN THE EP IN AN INTERVIEW FOR EUROPE GATEWAY

---

Published at: 15-06-2007

Source: [Portal Europe](#)

---



**The EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament has voted unanimously in favour of the membership of five newly-elected Bulgarian MEPs from the political party GERB. Gateway EUROPE interviewed EPP-ED Group Chairman Joseph Daul on his expectations of the new MEPs.**

*Note: Mr. Daul chose to answer the questions of Gateway Europe in written form.*

**Did you already have the chance to meet personally with your new Bulgarian colleagues and what are your impressions of them?**

The EPP-ED Group voted on Wednesday the membership of the five new Bulgarian MEPs. I personally welcomed all of them and am pleased to see their enthusiasm and interest to take up their duties as MEPs.

**What in particular does the EPP-ED group expect from the Bulgarian members until 2009?**

We believe that they will work for the accomplishment of our political priorities in the best interest of Bulgarian citizens. I expect that they will make known our Group in Bulgaria as the most efficient and powerful political force in the European Parliament.

**After the European elections in our country, you have welcomed the new Bulgarian MEPs who will join the EPP-ED group. Does the EPP-ED group intend to keep contacts with its previous**

## JOSEPH DAUL, CHAIRMAN OF THE EPP-ED GROUP IN THE EP IN AN INTERVIEW FOR EUROPE GATEWAY

---

### **Bulgarian members and in what way do you think the continuity should be maintained?**

Of course, the former four Bulgarian MEPs as well as the Observers are our friends and good partners. We will continue to keep close links of collaboration in the future. I think they are the best ambassadors of our values and political goals back in Bulgaria.

### **The two traditional center-right parties - Democrats for strong Bulgaria and the Union of democratic forces - failed at the European elections. Following this defeat, does the leadership of the EPP-ED group intend to further cooperate with these parties?**

There are ups and downs in the political life of a party. The problems during the last few years led to the bad results at these European elections. My friendly advice toward them is what the slogan you have on the doorstep of the National Assembly in Bulgaria says: "Unity makes strength".

### **The experience of the former Bulgarian MEPs and Observers will be an added value to the Bulgarian centre right parties and they should benefit from this.**

Given the fact that the new center-right party shares views that are in contrast with those of Democrats for strong Bulgaria for example, how can they both belong to the EPP family?

The GERB puts forward its application for membership in the EPP. Now it is time of serious scrutiny of the party program. The EPP comprises more than 70 centre right parties in Europe.

### **Bulgarian observers think it is possible for GERB to win the next parliamentary elections in Bulgaria and that it is probable for GERB to rule in coalition with the Socialist party. What is the position of the EPP-ED group about coalitions of its member-parties with representatives of the left?**

We expect to see victorious not only the GERB at the next general elections but other centre right parties as well. It is urgent that their leaders overcome their past divergences and set forward the ambitious goal of consolidation and governing.

### **Before the second round of the presidential elections in Bulgaria in 2006, when the choice was between Mr. Parvanov (Socialist party) and Mr. Siderov (Ataka party, far-right), Mr. Hans-Gert Poettering called on the Bulgarian people to vote for Mr. Parvanov. Mr. Poettering was your predecessor as chairman of the EPP-ED group, now being President of the EP. Do you share this view now, as chairman of the EPP-ED, and what do you think was the effect on the Bulgarian voters?**

I respect the discussion taken in the past, but we are living in the present and preparing for the future. In general I will not recommend that people vote for the extreme left or the extreme right.

### **Some observers say that the EPP-ED group in the EP aims at maintaining the highest possible number of members and that you have chosen to be close to GERB just because of its major electoral potential. How would you react to this?**

When we are the strongest political force in the EP it is natural to be a target of animosity or jealousy. We are the single Group, representing all member states thanks to the vote of almost 500 million Europeans. Working in a democratic way we strike to promote our political interests. It should be clear that the EPP-ED Group is a group of rich traditions and 50 years of political life, based on of genuine values. We have not accepted every applicant for membership made to us in the past.

### **Are there concrete established criteria for the EPP-ED group for choosing its members - would you please clarify the way in which you have taken the decision that GERB is a relevant partner party?**

## JOSEPH DAUL, CHAIRMAN OF THE EPP-ED GROUP IN THE EP IN AN INTERVIEW FOR EUROPE GATEWAY

---

Yes, we have Rules and we apply them. The five members elected in Bulgaria on 20 May 2007 have applied for membership and agreed to abide by our Rules and promote our political program. We look forward to working with them in the interest of Bulgaria and Europe.



*Joseph Daul was born on 13 April 1947 in Strasbourg (France). He has been married since 1969 and has two children and five grandchildren. He graduated from the Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Défense Nationale (IHEDN - Paris) in 1981. After having been elected in 1999, he joined the EPP-ED Group. In January 2007, he was elected Chairman of the EPP-ED Group. He remains member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and substitute member of the Committee on International Trade and of the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.*