

Speaking Points fro PM C. Simitis
(For the PES meeting – 16.10.2003)

Topic: EP elections 2004

1. The elections of 2004 for the European Parliament –the sixth direct election since 1979- would take place at a historic moment for Europe. It would be the first time that the elections would have a truly pan-European dimension. For the first time ever, the citizens of the twenty-five member states will have the chance to elect their representatives to the European Parliament. Secondly, it would be the first time that the citizens would go to the polls while the Union would, hopefully, have a Constitution to underpin its democratic character. Thirdly, it would also be the first time that the elections would occur while in twelve member states, the single currency, the Euro would be in circulation.

2. Moreover the Euro-elections would take place against the backdrop of a much changed political and cultural environment since the last elections in 1999. The momentous events of eleven September 2001 (9/11) and the Iraqi war have highlighted in a dramatic fashion the new security threats and risks confronting us. New issues have also acquired prominence in the political agenda like those of migration, organized crime,

terrorism while the traditional problems like these of employment/unemployment, social exclusion, economic performance are still with us. All those influence political attitudes and behaviour and determine electoral outcomes.

3. We, the PES, must work out a coherent and ambitious **electoral strategy** for the 2004 elections with the following basic components and goals in mind:

- To mobilize the public and the European citizens in order to ensure the highest possible turnout in the elections. This would be a precondition for our party, the PES, to return as the biggest political group in the new European Parliament of the enlarged European Union.
- To project the social democratic values and objectives as an essential element of the European construction that could bridge the apparent gap between the ordinary citizen and the European institutions. Our political, economic and social objectives remain the ones that can meet the expectations of European citizens and thus convince them that the Union could be an institution that far from threatening, it could reinvigorate and strengthen the European social model.
- To define a set of priorities that would clearly and convincingly answer the pressing needs of the European

society –combating unemployment, racism and xenophobia, advancing economic and social cohesion, promoting growth and sustainable development.

- To emphasize the role the European Union can play as a global actor in promoting peace, stability and cooperation based on the rules of international law and multinational, democratic governance and institutions.

As we are about to accomplish two historic tasks, the enlargement and the constitutionalization of the Union, the PES could emerge as the leading political force in the new EU.

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