



"Tony Robinson"  
<TRobinson@europarl.  
eu.int>

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To: undisclosed-recipients;;  
cc:  
Subject: Cook welcomes new rules on European political parties as  
'boost for democracy'

News from the Party of European Socialists

19 June 2003

### **PES President Robin Cook: 'Party statute is a boost for EU democracy'**

PES President Robin Cook welcomed the European Parliament and Council's agreement today on a European Party Statute as 'a boost for democracy at EU level'.

The scheme guarantees full transparency and accountability in the financing of European parties.

Said Mr Cook: 'It is the best possible response to the Court of Auditors who had criticised the present situation in which political groups in the European Parliament are the main source of finance for their party federations'.

Mr Cook praised the Greek Presidency of the Council and EP report author Jo Leinen for their key roles in securing a compromise in line with proposals from the PES and its European sister parties.

Governments opposed to the new rules used the need for unanimity to block agreement on a statute in 2001. But a breakthrough became possible this year with the Nice Treaty's provisions for majority voting.

Said Mr Cook: 'Right wing eurosceptic forces in government in Italy and Austria as well as the Danish government were skilfully isolated and the majority we needed for the statute was secured.'

PES Secretary General Antony Beumer said that today's decision did not yet include the annual budget for the European parties. He said: 'A decision on this will be taken during the budgetary procedure this autumn. The Commission has proposed a total of 8.4 million euro. The five party federations have indicated that a slightly higher amount should be made available so that they can maintain the present scale of their activities.'

He added: 'Now that a statute has been adopted, the five European parties are faced with the challenge of setting up independent organisations that will be operational immediately after next year's European elections.'

'The PES intends to rent or buy a 'Brussels House of Social Democracy' and is

currently in talks with some other social democrat organisations about sharing the building.'

The five European political parties are the Party of European Socialists, the European People's Party, the European Liberals, the European Greens and the European regionalist party DPPE-EFA

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Tony Robinson  
Spokesman, Party of European Socialists  
GSM ·  
Fax ·  
<http://www.pes.org>



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