Dear Madam President, distinguished guests, and members of ESU

It is a great honour and pleasure that I could address you today, on behalf of the European People’s Party.

But first of all, I owe you apologies on behalf of our President Manfred Weber and Secretary General Thanasis Bakolas, who during this weekend are working hard abroad, preparing future EPP events in different European countries, so they were not able to be with you today.

For many years, ESU has played an integral role in shaping the EPP's values, priorities, and ideas. Our shared values of inter-generational solidarity, inclusivity and democratic center-right policies are at the core of our political family. As the EPP Commissioner Dubravka Šuica has eloquently demonstrated in her work on demography, we must not categorize people, but recognize that ageing is a lifelong process that affects us all. By empowering citizens of all ages, we enrich our societies and strengthen the European Union.

This year, within the EU, we have many important national elections - in Finland, in Spain, in Poland, in Greece.

Ahead of these and the next European elections, our political family is faced with many crucial challenges – devastating effects the global pandemic, war in Ukraine, sky high inflation rates, the energy crisis. The political landscape in Europe is constantly changing, and we must strengthen our political position to counterbalance the influence of populist and extremist parties across Europe. Here today, we are all proud members of the largest centre-right, pro-European, pro-NATO, pro-Ukraine party.

But we must also adapt our strategy to keep up with these changing times and ensure that the EPP continues to deliver European solutions to European problems, to deliver policies that ensure the best possible outcome for our citizens.

So, what is the EPP’s political strategy for these electoral tests?

First, we must communicate our message clearly and consistently. We must present a clear and compelling vision for Europe based on democratic center-right values. We must ensure that our message is accessible to all, using modern communication tools and reaching out to all segments of society. Our Secretary General and the entire EPP team at HQ are working tirelessly to make our party a modern, data-driven political organization, with a strong focus on communication and campaigning. We must ensure that all generations have the digital tools and skills they need to participate fully in modern life. With our commissioners Šuica and Gabriel and with the input of ESU, the EPP will continue to champion this cause.

I encourage you all to watch the EPP’s beacon of Europe video, part of an online campaign launched by the party – a campaign clearly showing our roots and our values, our leaders, and our vision, our EPP success stories.

We are the people’s party. People are at the heart of everything we do.

We must highlight our policy agenda based on the issues that matter most to our citizens. This includes tackling climate change, supporting economic growth, and ensuring security and stability in our region.

We must engage with our member parties, our associations, and voters across Europe.

We must listen to their concerns, so that the EPP can continue to create policies that meet their needs. Our associations are vital to us in this. We must listen to all generational voices ahead of the next European elections.

Not only listen to our seniors when it comes to pensions. We must spearhead policies that matter to all generations, that empower citizens from all stages in life, so they can contribute to society, so they can be independent and valued members of our communities. Your thoughts, concerns and perspectives are essential in our political family, as we approach the elections and prepare our election campaign.

We must invest our time in our people, in strong alliances and solid partnerships with the parties and organisations that share our values.

This means working together to achieve common goals, discussing ideas and policies, and sharing best practices and experiences among our parties so we can learn from each other.

Ahead of the crucial elections in 2024, we must present a united front to our opponents. United, we can once again emerge from the European elections as the largest party in the European Parliament, with an EPP leader as the President of the Commission. And finally, with more seats at the European Council table, following the successful elections in member states, including my own, Poland.

Finally, we must always strive to improve and innovate. We must be willing to experiment with new approaches and technologies and learn from our successes and failures. Only by adapting and improving can we deliver the best possible political strategy, for the European centre-right.

To conclude my remarks here today, my message is: we must work together, listen to each other, uphold our centre-right, EPP values.

We must keep people at the heart of our policies and offer real solutions, not empty promises, and slogans like the populists. The involvement of ESU, of you and your vital network are essential as we prepare for elections.

As the wisest, most experienced members of our political family, we put great faith in your expertise and in your continued engagement in political life. On behalf of the EPP, thank you for all the work you do.

Particularly to President Hermans who in her 10 years as ESU President has contributed so much to our political family.

I look forward to continuing the work between EPP and ESU, work, for the better and brighter future of Europe and its citizens.

Thank you.