

# Democrats International

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• AUTUMN

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## Yes, it is purple again!

### *D66 at the heart of the second purple coalition government*

After negotiations lasting 89 days, a new coalition government was sworn in on August 3, 1998 by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands. Observers of Dutch politics know that seeking compromises and building coalitions are the main characteristics of the political system of the Netherlands. Never one political party or ideology succeeds in gaining an absolute majority. Negotiations have always played a major part in the political process. Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA/Social Democrats), Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD/Liberals) and Democraten 66 (D66/Progressive Liberals) decided to continue the unorthodox formula that shaped the first purple coalition of 1994-1998 (the colour purple emerges by blending the party colours of the three).

In 1994 the three political parties managed to create the first cabinet in modern history without the traditionally dominating participation of the christian democrats. In early 1998 a number of polls showed a large majority of the Dutch voters favouring this type of coalition again. And although D66 lost 10 of its previous 24 seats in the Lower House, both coalition partners made it clear that they welco-

med -and even urged for- the participation of D66 in the next cabinet. The experience of the past four years proved to be successful and lasting, a second 'purple government' was formed, which is now ready to cross the threshold the 21st century.

The program of the new cabinet is both solid and ambitious. Its priorities cover public health, education, and urban development and inte-

gration of minorities. Some major points of the D66 election manifesto are incorporated in the final program. Two examples are a new bill on euthanasia initiated by Roger van Boxtel and the proposal for an elected mayor in stead of an appointed burgomaster, which implies an important democratic improvement of the constitution.

The new cabinet comprises 15 ministers and 14 state secretaries. D66 takes part with 3 ministers and 2 state secretaries.

*The D66 Cabinet members: (left to right) Tom Kok (party chairman, Hajo Apotheker, Els Borst, Roger van Boxtel, Annelies Verstand and Gerrit Ybema.*



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Mrs *Els Borst-Eilers* (66), the D66 number one candidate at the parliamentary elections in May 1998, remains Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport. She has also been appointed deputy prime minister of the new cabinet. Together with *Annetarie Jorritsma* (VVD) she is the first female deputy prime minister in Dutch parliamentary history. Mrs Borst has been a member of D66 since 1968. Because of her distinctive career in the medical and health sector, she was asked by party leader *Hans van Mierlo* in 1994 to become Minister of Health in the first purple government. The new cabinet has increased the budget for Public Health, making it a policy priority for the next four years. The ministerial responsibilities of Mrs Borst comprise: curative care, mental health and addiction policy, pharmaceutical affairs, public health, insurance and price determination, financial policy, care and support for World War II victims, and the health care inspectorate.

Mr *Roger van Boxtel* (44), former vice-chairman of the D66 parliamentary group, is the Minister for Urban Development and Integration of Minorities at the Ministry of the Interior. Within this new ministerial post he succeeds *Jacob Kohnstamm*, the former D66 State Secretary, who initiated the policy on Urban Development and made it a great success. The social and economic problems of large cities will be part of

the responsibilities of the newly appointed fifteenth minister of the cabinet. In and outside D66 *Van Boxtel* occupied a number of functions. He was amongst others political secretary of D66-Amsterdam and member of the National Board of D66. He was vice-chairman of the Foundation Reception Projects for Asylum Seekers, while he still is a member of the board of Theatre Company *Hollandia*.

Mr *Hajo Apotheker* (48), former burgomaster of Leeuwarden, is the Minister for Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries. Born at the rural heart of Groningen *Apotheker* became burgomaster of Muntendam at the age of thirty. He continued his career in 1988 when he was appointed burgomaster of Veendam and later in 1993 of Leeuwarden, the Capital of the Province of Friesland. *Apotheker*, who studied sociology and (town and country) planning at the State University of Groningen, is known to be a tough negotiator. A capacity that will come of use in the light of necessary reforms of Dutch agriculture and the European agricultural subsidy system. The D66 minister is expected to incorporate in his policy a great number of environmental issues.

Mrs *Annelies Verstand-Bogaert* (48) is the new State Secretary for Labour and Care and Emancipation Affairs at the Ministry of Social

Affairs and Employment. Previously she was the burgomaster of Zutphen (1994-1998) and Heteren (1988-1994). After her study of administrative law at the University of Nijmegen she worked as a social security counsel at the municipality of Nijmegen and as a legal adviser of the Province of Gelderland. From 1982 to 1988 Mrs Verstand was municipal councillor in Elst.

Mr *Gerrit Ybema* (52), former MP, has been appointed State Secretary of International Economic Affairs and Trade at the Ministry of Economic Affairs. *Ybema*, who finished his economics study at the university of Groningen with distinction in 1977, started working at the municipality of Enschede and later at the Province of Friesland, where he was responsible for financial planning. As of 1986 he was a policy adviser at the Provincial Executive of Friesland, beside being the chairman of the D66 group in the municipal council of Leeuwarden. In 1989 *Ybema* was elected member of parliament, becoming an expert on financial and fiscal affairs and international economic relations. In 1994 he became chairman of the Standing Parliamentary Committee on Finances. *Ybema* was involved in a number of Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry. As State Secretary he will frequently travel abroad, at which times he may use the title of Minister.

## D66 in the Higher House of Parliament

The members of the Higher House of Parliament (the Senate) are not elected directly by the people, but by the members of the 12 Provincial Councils in The Netherlands. In March 1999 elections will be held for these Provincial Councils, subsequently resulting in a change of the composition of the Higher House in May.

The present D66 Group in the Higher House comprises: *Eddy*

*Schuyer* (Group Leader), *Hanneke Gelderblom-Lankhout*, *Jan Glastra van Loon*, *Ruud Hessing*, *Marie Louise Tiesinga-Autsema*, *Elida Tuinstra* and *Adrienne Vrisekoop*.

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*Eddy Schuyer*

# D66 in the Lower House of Parliament

**D66 has 14 out of 150 seats in the Lower House of Parliament. The group is led by Thom de Graaf.**

**T**hom de Graaf studied law at the Catholic University (CU) of Nijmegen. Besides being a research assistant at the Centre for Parliamentary History, he was a lecturer of constitutional law at the Law Faculty of the CU Nijmegen. He was also a deputy clerk at the Social Security Tribunal and the Public Servants Tribunal at Arnhem.

As of 1985 he worked at the Ministry of the Interior, amongst others as chief of the head division Security Policy and Legal Affairs. From 1991 he continued as deputy director for Police Affairs, including as project leader "Integral Security Policy". He was involved in the reorganisation and legislation of the police force, international law enforcement, crime prevention, and environmental law enforcement.

De Graaf held several administrative positions within D66, he was councillor in the Municipal Council

of Leyden and member of the Lower House Committee-De Koning on constitutional reform. Thom de Graaf is Member of Parliament since May 1994.

From the end of 1994 to 1996 he was vice-chairman of the Parlia-

*Thom de Graaf, Parliamentary Leader*



mentary Inquiry Committee "Methods of Criminal Investigation". He was also Secretary of the D66 Parliamentary Group and member of the Presidium of the Lower House. Since November 1997 Thom de Graaf is the leader of the D66 Parliamentary Group.

The D66 Group in the Lower House comprises Thom de Graaf (Group Leader), Bert Bakker (Deputy Leader), Marijke Augusteijn, Borris Dittrich, Francine Giskes, Jan Hoekema, Ursie Lambrechts, Francisca Ravestein, Nicky van 't Riet, Olga Scheltema, Arthie Schimmel, Pieter ter Veer, Stefanie van Vliet, and Jan van Walsum.

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## Past and present

Writing about past and present of the Dutch political party Democraten 66 does not start at the founding of the party. In Dutch political history there is a long tradition of a progressive alternative to the old liberal and social-democratic parties. In 1901 the so-called Freethinking Democratic wing of the Liberal Union left this party and merged with the Radical League into the Freethinking Democratic League VDB. This party put democratization as one of its main goals. Although the party cooperated with the more conservative liberal parties it stressed the importance of cooperation with the social-democrats. In 1913 the party proposed a coalition of the conservative liberals, the freethinking democrats and socialists. The socialists declined this invitation and remained in opposition until 1939. The Freethinking Democratic League merged in 1946 into the Labour Party PvdA. A minority of the party however joined the Freedom Party. A second minority merged in 1948 with the Freedom Party in today's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy VVD. With these mergers the existence of an alternative between old-style liberalism and social-democracy disappeared.

**I**n 1966, in the middle of the sixties, Dutch society was eager for democratization and more participation of citizens. Not only dissident liberals and social-democrats but also non-partisans joined in forming a new party, Democraten '66.

A party that urged the necessity of radical reforms. Voters should get more influence on policy by means of constitutional reform. The party wanted (and wants) to achieve this aim by introducing measures such as: an elected Prime Minister,

elected mayors and stronger bonds between voters and members of Parliament.

The party consciously sought to break the hold of traditional class

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and religious alignments in favour of a far going program of institutional reform. The party got with its leader, *Hans van Mierlo*, journalist and co-founder of the party, a good result in the elections of 1967: 4.5% of the popular vote and 7 seats in Parliament. Four years later the party joined the Labour Party and the Political Party of Radicals in a shadow cabinet. The party increased its share of the popular vote but remained in the opposition. Ideas for the merger into a new Progressive Party were actively canvassed at the time, not least in D'66. The socialist embrace threatened to become a death-knell to D'66. Before the elections of 1972 more and more voters did not recognize the party as a separate identity next to the Labour Party. The party lost seats and Van Mierlo resigned. In 1974 only 300 members stayed in the party. D66 seemed merely dead.

The physicist and writer *Jan Terlouw* was ready to accept the leadership if the activists could muster 66,000 signatures pleading for D'66 to go on, while signing up at least 1,666 new members. Activists succeeded to meet this demand and the party survived. Terlouw stressed the party's independent position as a progressive liberal party, or as Terlouw called it: a post-socialist liberal party. D'66's main issues were industrial innovation, an active environmental policy and individual autonomy in ethical questions, such as abortion and the need to emancipate individuals of any sex or sexual disposition. A major element in the new policy posturing was the need to meet a new technological era with confidence and an open mind for scientific progress. This new course resulted in a moderate gain 1977 (5.5%) and an electoral victory in 1981 with 11%. D'66 joined a coalition with the Labour Party and the Christian-Democratic Appeal (CDA). This new cabinet soon fell because of major differences of opinion between the main coalition parties. In the transitional period leading up to new elections, D'66 formed an interim cabinet with the CDA to ensure the continuity of

economic policy. This was not accepted by the party's electorate and D'66 suffered a defeat at the next elections only to obtain 4% of the popular vote. Terlouw resigned and was succeeded by the D'66 financial and economic expert, *Maarten Engwirda*. The support dropped further and in the polls the party got not more than 1% of the popular vote. Most observers saw (for the second time) an end for the party.

However, in 1985 the party received a new impulse by means of a political manifesto "A Reason to Be", presented by its original leader Van Mierlo. This manifesto stressed that it is the task of D'66 to radically reform the political culture. As the manifesto stated, D'66 refused to take part in a political role-play in which parties held on to ideological antitheses dating from the last century. The problems which society now faced, such as the increased strain on the environment, the revolutionary development of information technology and the internationalization of the economy, should be subjected to political analysis, unimpeded by ideological prejudices. The party endorsed pragmatism and sees its identity as a synthesis of liberalism and social-democracy. In this way the party forms a progressive liberal alternative for the VVD and the PvdA.

In 1986 the party, with its new abbreviation D66 (without apostrophe), and its new 'old' leader, Van Mierlo, gained 6% of the popular vote. D66 remained in opposition to a conservative coalition government. In 1989 the support of the party rose to 8% of the votes. D66 strove for a left of centre coalition with social-democrats and christian-democrats. Nevertheless, CDA and PvdA formed a left of centre coalition without D66. D66 attempted to be constructive in its opposition towards this coalition. It supported government policy when it was in line with the party's program. However, D66 criticized the government when it failed to meet its own objectives, such as carrying out an active environment policy

and reorganizing government spending. In this period Van Mierlo stressed the possibility of a so-called purple coalition of VVD, D66 and PvdA as a real alternative for the centre-right and centre-left coalitions, in which the christian-democrats were dominant.

At the elections of 1994 the Dutch political landscape changed radically. The PvdA and even more the CDA lost many votes, the VVD and D66 made large gains. D66 got 15.5% of the votes, more than ever before. D66 made a very strong plea for the purple coalition and refused to talk about other coalitions as long as it was not sure that the purple coalition was impossible. At the end the negotiators of the parties succeeded in forming a government of PvdA, VVD and D66.

Van Mierlo became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was joined by three D66-ministers, for the Ministries of Justice, Economic Affairs and Public Health.

The change of the political landscape proved to be lasting after the elections of 1998. Although D66 lost some 6.5% of its votes compared to 1994, the party remained at the centre of a second purple coalition government with VVD and PvdA. Thom de Graaf, D66's main negotiator, managed to retain the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, while securing the ministerial posts for Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries and for Urban Development and Integration of Minorities. "In this way D66 is in charge of both urban and rural development," as Thom de Graaf concluded at the end of the negotiations for purple II.

Never in the party's history it developed into a mass party. Rather than relying on the trappings of a large-scale, formal organization, it threw open membership to all while maintaining a tradition of direct democracy. At the same time the party had a particularly fickle electorate. The party had in the past only few,

but rather faithful supporters. The chief strength of D66 had been that it was potentially an attractive electoral alternative for many forces in the political spectrum, not only for disappointed moderate socialists or liberal Liberals, even former supporters of the christian democrat parties, and even more new voters. Before 1986 the party did not succeed in establishing itself as a really crucial actor in the complex party landscape. After 1986 this has changed. One could say that the party is now really one of the four, almost equal, dominant parties.

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## Identity of D66

D66 can be characterized as a left-of-centre nonsocialist party, which favours pragmatism over ideology and has a strong libertarian tradition. In this way D66 is a progressive liberal party that embraced aspects of socialdemocracy. Hans van Mierlo stated it clearly: "Both liberalism and socialism together have been sources of inspiration for our party. This is justified by the fact that during their historic developments, both movements have taken responsibility for a part of the whole truth, and, consequently have turned that part into the whole truth. As a result, things that were complementary have become opposites, have become caricatures of themselves: Liberty against equality, individual against community, self-regulation against government, individuality against solidarity." The ideas of D66 form a synthesis of both liberalism and socialism.

In a party report called "D66, Outline of a Party", written on initiative of the Advisory Council, four basic ideas are formulated:

1. Every human being should be res-

pected in and of itself. Everybody's private sphere is unassailable, is autonomous. Nobody else has the right to interfere in the private sphere.

2. Every human being is fundamentally equal and has the possibility to take responsibility for his/her own way of life. Everyone should have equal chances to manage ones life according to ones convictions and preferences.

3. Human beings have a shared and common responsibility for society. Common accepted values which arrange relations between people facilitate individuality and responsibility.

4. Life of human beings, public and private, takes place in a natural environment. Life is only possible thanks of this natural environment. It is the resource and the frontier of human development.

For D66 these basic values together are the basis of a sustainable society.

D66 has always had a dislike of using labels to identify the party's identity. Although there were often discussions about calling the party 'progressive liberal' or 'freethinking democrat', proposals in this direction were never adopted. Nevertheless, a characterization as progressive liberal seems to be right if one looks at the four basic ideas.

Concretely D66 aims at a radical democratization of society and of the political system. People should have the supervision over power. This idea of radical democratization is put into political practice by members of D66. The view on man and society that underlies this practice stems from the basic ideas, the idea that people themselves are able and willing to work at a peaceful society. D66 believes in the creativity of people; Whenever possible, people should be able to arrange their own affairs near home. D66 wants to be a party in which people work together in an open, undogmatic atmosphere to find concrete answers to problems. It wants to be a party of pragmatic idealists who also take the interests of others into account. D66 is not linked with a

specific pressure group or class. Therefore, it does not defend the interest of specific pressure groups or classes. The party is aware that although people are not the same, they are equal. The party expresses solidarity with those people who, for whatever reason, cannot actively take part in society.

The identity of the party cannot be found in a label, but should be found in its political programme and attitude.

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## Party Structure

Radical democratization is one of the most eminent aims of D66. This principle also dominates the general structure of the party. Compared to other Dutch parties the decision making process within D66 is very open, while each individual member has a maximum of influence on it. The party is structured in such a way that both executive power and control of it entirely and only belong to the appropriate level in Dutch society. This implies that a local branch can not draft a binding resolution about national issues, but also that the National Congress of D66 can not impose points of view upon lower party bodies.

After paying his/her fee a member has a number of rights, that include free participation and voting right in all assemblies, a individual vote regarding D66 lists of candidates for the election of a committee, the board or a representative body, free candidacy for a function within a D66 committee, board or representative body, and membership of work groups plus a vote regarding the decisions on general and advisory reports.

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## The formal decision making process

	Municipality	Province	National
Members	Local Branch	Regional Branch	Party
Board	Local Board	Regional Board	National Board
Highest Decision Making Body	Local Assembly	Regional Assembly	Party Congress
Representative Body	Municipal Council Group	Provincial Council Group	Group in Lower and Higher House of Parliament and the European Parliament

The scheme illustrates the D66 party structure. The names of the different bodies speak for themselves. The boundaries of a local branch are similar to those of a municipality, however sometimes to those of a group of smaller municipalities.

The determination of political positions takes place in one vertical column. The groups determine their positions without consultation, but in conformity with the law. Because they are elected, group members are bound by the election manifesto, however they remain only accountable for their voting behaviour in the representative body.

In all parts of the party organisation the principle of "one man one vote" is applied: each member present at an assembly has one vote and can not vote by proxy for a group of members. This radical principle applies also to the National Congress. Another important principle is the incompatibility of some functions at the same party level. For instance a member of Parliament can not become a member of the National Board, like a municipal councillor can not become a member of the local board.

Political positions are prepared by Council and Parliamentary groups or the assemblies. Boards have particularly an organisational task: the preparation of assembly meetings and of political discussions, the organisation of public debates, financial administration, etc.

According to the party statutes each board has a chairman, a treasurer and a secretary, who are elected by the respective assembly. The composition of the National Board is however organised differently. The National Board comprises 21 members. Nine of them are elected by the National Congress and form the Executive (Board) of the party: a party chairman, a vice-chairman and a secretary for political affairs, a vice-chairman and a secretary for organisational affairs, a international secretary, publicity coordinator, and a first and second treasurer. The

remaining 12 members -the regional members of the National Board- are elected by the National Congress upon recommendations of the 12 Regional Assemblies.

At present *Tom Kok* is party chairman, while *Wilfried Derksen* is international secretary. The Executive of D66 can be contacted at:

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*Party chairman, Tom Kok*



# D66 in the European Parliament

Since the first direct European elections of 1979 D66 has been represented in the European Parliament, with a short intermission between 1984 and 1989. The 1994 elections for the European Parliament resulted in four seats for D66.

Leaving a diplomatic career of two decades *Jan-Willem Bertens* (62) entered the European Parliament for D66 in 1989. At that time he was the sole D66 representative in the EP. Beside the leadership of the D66 delegation his present portfolio includes the membership of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Committee on Petitions and the Subcommittee on Human Rights. He is also a member of the Joint-Parliamentary Committee EU-ACP (relations between the EU and countries in Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific). Bertens is president of the Subcommittee on Security and Disarmament.

*Johanna Boogerd-Quaak* (54) is a member of the European Parliament since 1994. After finishing her higher education in social and community work, she became amongst others chairwomen of the Regional Board of Employment Services in the Province of Zeeland. This explains for her present membership of the Social Affairs and Employment Committee and of the Committee on Industrial Policy. Besides being a substitute member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, she is also vice-chairwoman of the delegation to the European Economic Area Joint Parliamentary Committee (EEA) and a substitute member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.



From left to right: *Laurens Jan Brinkhorst*, *Jan-Willem Bertens*, *Johanna Boogerd-Quaak* and *Doeke Eisma*

The career of *Laurens Jan Brinkhorst* (61) shows a long involvement in politics, especially regarding European affairs. Educated as a European law expert, he was State-Secretary for European Affairs from 1973 to 1977 and Member of the Lower House of Parliament from 1977 to 1982. For four years he headed the Delegation of the European Commission in Tokyo, then becoming Director-General for Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection (DGXI) in 1987. He was elected member of the European Parliament in 1994. As MEP he is a member of the Committee on Budgets and a substitute member of the Committee on Institutional Affairs. Brinkhorst is a vice-president of the delegation for relations with the Peoples Republic of China and a member of the delegation for relations with the United States. His responsibilities include also the substitute membership of the Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs.

*Doeke Eisma* (58) finished his study of sociology in 1968 at the University of Utrecht. He was a member of the Higher House of Parliament from 1971 to 1977 and a MEP from 1981 to 1984. He entered the Lower House of Parliament in 1986 to become the D66 spokesman on foreign and European affairs, environment and nature conservation, sports and public works. His work at the Lower House included the membership of the Assembly of the Council of Europe and of the Western European Union. Being a MEP again since 1994, Eisma is a member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and a substitute member of both the Committee on Regional Policy and the Committee on Fisheries. He also takes part in the delegation for relations with the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Moldova and the delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee.

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## DEMOCRATEN

# Towards the new European Parliament (1999-2003)

New elections for the EP will be held in June 1999 throughout the member states. Johanna Boogerd-Quaak is the only member of the present delegation who has candidated herself for a new period of five years. By making room for new EP candidates the present MEPs wish to underline the importance of necessary and timely renewal within

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14 out of 150 members of parliament

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7 out of 75 senators

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a modern political party like D66. Because of its uniqueness in Dutch politics the democratic procedure for selecting EP candidates within D66 needs some explanation. All members can candidate themselves for the EP list of D66. An voting advisory committee interviews all candidates (approximately 25 persons) about the motivation for their candidacy and drafts a ranking, which serves as a

voting advice for the party members. Members are free to use the voting advice or not, when they cast their vote for the final list of candidates at the internal election. The number one candidate of the list is directly chosen by the members at the Spring Congress in 1999. The internal electoral system of D66 is unique compared to other Dutch political parties.

## D66 and the ELDR Party

Since 1994 D66 has a full membership of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR) - a political party at European level since 1993 as provided for by the Treaty of Maastricht. The Parliamentary Group of the ELDR Party comprises representatives of ELDR member parties elected to the European Parliament from 12 of the 15 EU

Member States. It also includes some members of the European Parliament who, although their political parties are not members of the ELDR Party, nevertheless promote liberal democrat policies and principles. With 41 members the Group of the ELDR Party is the fourth largest political group in the European Parliament.

## D66 Policies and objectives regarding Europe

1. The promotion of issues within the ELDR such as: a constitution for a democratic European Union with decentralized characteristics, explaining Europe to the citizens, and the future role of political parties at both national and European levels.
2. Involving the citizen, by making the decision-making structures of the Union more democratic, open and effective. The European Parliament must become the co-legislator of the Union on an equal footing with the Council.
3. Completing Economic and Monetary Union according to the criteria and the timetable agreed in the Maastricht Treaty.
4. Internalising environmental costs so that they become an integral part of economic activity, and hence a key factor in stimulating economic growth.
5. Introducing legal, educational and training provisions which allow for a more flexible and dynamic labour market.
6. Cooperation in justice and home affairs under the scrutiny of the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice in order to safeguard individual liberty and social justice; creating common legislation on asylum and immigration policy giving persecuted people the right to claim political asylum; the equitable sharing of costs and services among member states.
7. Developing the European Union into an actor in the international scene by shaping a single European foreign policy, with efficient economic and military structures.
8. The improvement of internal cohesion between the ELDR Party, its member parties and the Group of the ELDR Party in the European Parliament.
9. The further strengthening of political links with Central and Eastern Europe and the identification of suitable partners.