

Mr Paolo Alli, President of Alternativa Popolare

Brussels, 24 January 2024

Dear President Alli,
Dear Friends of Alternativa Popolare,

I would like to sincerely thank you for inviting me to the first National Congress of Alternativa Popolare. Regrettably, due to earlier commitments, I will not be able to be with you in Terni for this special occasion. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some thoughts, with a particular attention to the months ahead of us.

2024 is undoubtedly a pivotal year for democracy worldwide, with more than fifty elections in seventy-six different countries, and a total of two billions people called to express their vote. In this scenario, the European Parliament elections in June will bring four-hundred million people to the polls. In Italy, many regional and local elections will take place throughout the year, among them also in Umbria – this will be an intense electoral year for all of us!

In a world of turmoil, with two conflicts at our doorsteps, the rise of populism and radicalism, and economic uncertainty, the European elections will be extremely important not only to preserve the Union as we know it today, but also to continue shaping it. As EPP, our political proposal is rooted in our Christian democratic values and it is based on the integration process initiated by our founding fathers De Gasperi, Adenauer and Schuman. Their heritage - our European Way of life - cannot be taken for granted.

In our electoral Manifesto that will be officially adopted in Bucharest in March, we will clearly emphasize that we stand for a Europe that preserves the rule of law and democracy, a Europe that protects its borders against illegal migration, a Europe that empowers his citizens by creating jobs while reducing red tapes, a Europe where environmental sustainability is not pursued to the detriment of our industry and economy, a Europe which upholds family values and promotes family- and child-friendly policies and an intergenerational approach to tackle the demographic challenges ahead. As a strong advocate of the Social Market Economy, the EPP wants to put in place inclusive policies which benefit every citizen and every part of society and ensure all Europeans – however young or old, wherever they live, whatever their work, both women and men – can play a valuable role within society.

Putting the people - their interests and their concerns - at the centre of our political action is not only a methodological approach for the EPP, but is the very essence of Christian democracy, this is what truly makes us a People's party.

When it comes to foreign policy, the EPP is determined more than ever to conceive our Union as a global political actor and to reinforce its capacity. For this reason, we should continue working to make our Europe ready to defend itself by developing a common defence in synergy with NATO, and by speaking with one voice in foreign policy.

We will continue supporting Ukraine. In this regard, I would like to thank once again Alternativa Popolare for donating more than one hundred generators to our fellow Ukrainians last year. You proved that solidarity is not an empty word, but it is made of concrete actions.

Even though the challenges ahead are numerous, 2024 is an opportunity for our political family to reaffirm its leadership at the European level. And we will do so. But all of this can only be achieved through unity. Unity of the centre-right and of our EPP parties in each European country will be crucial to make of all of this a success.

While thanking you for your continuous support and valuable engagement during the past ten years as member of the EPP, I would like to wish you a successful congress. I am sure it will lead to fruitful exchanges and debates which will be meaningful for all of us.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Weber', written in a cursive style.

Manfred WEBER
EPP President