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Press Release

## **Mercedes BRESSO new President of UEF**

On an extraordinary Congress on 9-10 April in Brussels, Mercedes BRESSO was elected as the new President of the Union of European Federalists (UEF). Current Member of the European Parliament, Mercedes BRESSO will soon be elected President of the Italian region Piemonte following the recent regional election in Italy.

After 8 years as President of the UEF, the German Member of the European Parliament, Jo LEINEN, finished his term in order to concentrate on his functions as President of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the EP and especially on the referendum campaigns in several countries for the ratification of the European Constitution.

Jo LEINEN was elected on the UEF European Congress in Vienna, April 1997, together with the start of the campaign of the federalists for a European Constitution. Jo LEINEN expressed great satisfaction that the federalist movement was successful in the last years convincing the European Parliament, the Belgian EU Presidency on the Declaration of Laeken as well as the European Convention chaired by Giscard d'Estaing, of the necessity of a European Constitution, which will make the EU more democratic and efficient. "The first European Constitution is **an important step forward, but not yet the end of European integration**", Jo LEINEN declared.

The new President, Mercedes BRESSO, appealed to the federalists that they should mobilise all their forces in the ratification campaigns for the European Constitution, starting with the French referendum, as this has a Europe wide impact, which should not be influenced by national politics. "This is why I will personally rally as President of the European Federalists and as President of a border region, the Piemont, for an ever closer European Union. I shall invite my colleagues, the Presidents of the French regions, to fight for the *Yes*", Mercedes BRESSO declared.

Mercedes BRESSO also announced that the UEF took the initiative to convene a "**European Citizens' Convention**" in **December 2005** in **Genoa** with other NGO's and political parties to prepare the platform for the future steps of European unity.

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### **Note to editors**

The UEF, founded in 1946, is an independent and non-governmental European organisation, campaigning for a federal Europe.

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