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Press release – for immediate release

MEPs and former Presidents to speak at the conference organised by the Historical Archives of the European Union to celebrate 40 years from the first direct elections to the European Parliament

Ahead of the vote in May 2019, the Historical Archives of the European Union are organising the conference "40 Years of European Parliament Direct Elections", taking place on Thursday 22 and Friday 23 November 2018 in the 'Refettorio' of the European University Institute, at the Badia Fiesolana.

Among the distinguished speakers will be former EP Presidents **Enrique Barón Crespo**, **Pat Cox**, and **Klaus Hänsch**, **Monica Frassoni**, Co-chair of the European Green Party, **Alain Lamassoure**, Member of the European Parliament, **Íñigo Méndez de Vigo**, member of the Spanish Parliament, as well as nearly 20 ex-MEPs brought over by the European Parliament's Former Members Association.

The Conference is jointly organised by the Alcide de Gasperi Research Centre and the Historical Archives of the European Union, with the support of the EUI Robert Schuman Centre, the EUI School of Transnational Governance, the Rome Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Association 'Friends of the Historical Archives of the EU', the European Parliamentary Research Service, the European Parliament's Office in Rome, and the European Parliament's Former Members Association.

Since the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, the political and institutional relevance of this institution has steadily grown. The EP established itself as a key actor in the European Union's policy-making process, acquiring legislative, supervisory, and budgetary responsibilities. The conference will discuss the evolution of the EP, highlighting not only its expansion as a powerful institution, but also its role in democratising decision-making processes at the supranational level. The distinguished speakers will also look forward to May 2019, debating the relevance of the growing powers of the EP in a political context where the legitimacy of the EU is increasingly questioned and Eurosceptic parties seem to be gaining popularity across the continent. The panels will bring together high-profile academics and political actors who will share insights and experiences about the role of the European Parliament in the construction and democratisation of the EU.

About the European University Institute

The European University Institute is an international organisation set up in 1972 by the six founding member states of the then European Communities. As a Higher Education institution, its aim is to provide advanced academic training for doctoral and post-doctoral researchers, and to foster research in fields of particular relevance for the development of Europe. With 23 contracting states, the Institute hosts around 1000 academic members in its departments of Economics, History, Law, and Political and Social Sciences; it is home to the Max Weber Programme for Postdoctoral Studies; the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies; the School of Transnational Governance; and the Historical Archives of the European Union.

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