

## MARTIN SCHULZ AT THE PARLIAMENT OF THE BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION

On Wednesday 20 April 2016, Martin Schultz, President of the European Parliament, paid an official visit to the parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region, his first appearance before a regional parliament. The President, Charles Picqué, had invited him in order to strengthen dialogue between the Brussels-Capital Region and the European institutions it hosts, and help encourage a better understanding of European issues.

After a discussion on the numerous challenges facing Europe, Mr Schulz paid homage to the capital's inhabitants for the courage they showed by their peaceful behaviour and solidarity following the attacks of the 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

He stated that all Europeans were touched by the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> March and underlined the importance of "ensuring that young people have a future here so that they don't look for one elsewhere". His view is that they are the primary victims of the economic crisis and consequently it is their capacity to build an identity which has been dented, which opens the door to populism in Europe.

"Populists have a scapegoat for everything, but they have solutions for nothing" he added, stressing the need to keep pushing further with European integration "whatever the outcome of the referendum in the United Kingdom".

In his speech Mr Schulz also spoke about the refugee issue, behind which – according to the President of the European Parliament – certain countries hide to cover a "crisis of solidarity".

During the visit Mr Schulz exchanged views with the various political groups represented.

In closing, he reminded his audience that when you are part of the European Union you have rights, but also duties and responsibilities. In a crisis situation, it is important to remain together and unite our strengths.