

process, and indeed, of the European Union itself.

The European Union exists to put an end to the conflicts of the past and to bring peace, justice and well being to our peoples.

It has achieved this to a remarkable extent over almost half a century. Today, peace, justice and well being are steadily being spread throughout Europe as preparations for enlargement go ahead.

This enlargement will benefit not only the old and new member states but also neighboring countries, with which we have close ties. No new dividing lines will be drawn across our continent. Indeed, each new candidate will bring to the EU its own political, economic, cultural, historical and geographical heritage, thus enriching Europe as a whole.

Cyprus's own heritage includes a tradition of good public administration, a vibrant economy, the talent and creativity of its people and the close links they have established in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

The flow of benefits is, of course, reciprocal. The European Union will bring to Cyprus a model of peace and reconciliation, the freedom of the single market and a set of institutions and policies that meet the needs of all member states.

However, those institutions and policies need redesigning to enable them to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Next year, Cyprus—together with the other candidate countries and the existing Member States—will be taking part in a structured debate on our future policies and how best to run the Union. "Who should do what" is one of the key questions.

The debate will lead to a new Inter-Governmental Conference in 2004, and Cyprus will already be invited to join in preparations for that IGC.

Another key issue in the great debate is how to involve Europe's citizens more closely in designing and implementing European policies. After all, the European Union exists for its citizens and must be built by them.

In particular, we need their support for enlargement. People naturally fear the unknown, and political leaders (both in existing member states and in the candidate countries) should take time to explain to the general public why enlargement is in everyone's interest.

It will boost not only economic prosperity but also political security and stability in Europe. We must spell this out to our citizens, who may be perplexed by the technical nature of the accession negotiations.

Cyprus is advancing well in these negotiations. This is above all a reflection of your own efforts as legislators in putting into place a system of laws containing the same principles and provisions as European Union law.

Parliament is working expeditiously and your fast-track procedure for transposing EU laws and rules, the "acquis", is a model of its kind, on which I congratulate you.

It is thanks to your efforts, and to the efforts of your government and negotiators, that Cyprus is amongst the frontrunners in the accession process.

Your country's preparations for membership must continue to be pursued vigorously. A number of politically or technically difficult issues such as taxation, competition, agriculture, justice and home affairs still have to be resolved. Further legislative work must also be done in some fields on which negotiations have been provisionally concluded, such as telecommunications and the free movement of goods.

We are aware that you are planning a major tax reform, partly aimed at adapting your tax regime to the EU system. We will follow with interest the progress of the reform legislation through this House.

Of course, passing the necessary laws is not the end of the story: those laws also have to be implemented effectively in each candidate country. Monitoring the candidates' progress in this respect is, of course, the Commission's job. But, as you know, the existing Member States are also closely following this progress, particularly in sensitive areas such as the environment, maritime transport, competition and the prevention of money laundering.

I am personally very pleased to see the high degree of consensus Cyprus has achieved on the transposition of EU law. It is a sign of your country's healthy democracy that there is genuine diversity of political views and genuine competition between political parties, yet there is also underlying agreement on fundamental principles. This unity in diversity is the very essence of politics and society in Europe today.

Diversity is of course one of main characteristics of Cyprus. It is a source of richness and of pride but it has also, over the years, been a source of recurrent conflict. The European Union lends its full support to efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem and salutes in particular the continuing work of Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary General, and his special representative, Alvaro de Soto. The European Union would be delighted if their efforts were to bear fruit before enlargement, though—as you know—this is not a pre-condition for Cyprus's accession.

How inspiring it would be for Europe, and for the world at large, if Cyprus were to heal its wounds and if Greek and Turkish Cypriots were to enter the European Union together on the basis of a settlement which took into account the interests and concerns of all parties!

The United Nations, and others working towards a settlement, are well aware of those concerns. In the months since the proximity talks were, alas, suspended, they have been working hard in the common interest of all citizens of Cyprus. We were disappointed that the Turkish Cypriot leadership did not accept the UN Secretary-General's invitation to resume talks in September. Despite these disappointments, however, the UN is persevering in its efforts and the European Union gives them our full backing.

I very much welcome the recent improvement in relations between Greece and Turkey and hope that this will facilitate the search for a settlement of the Cyprus question. I am profoundly convinced that a settlement is within reach.

Let me stress that the European Union, with its acquis, will never be an obstacle to finding a solution to the Cyprus problem. The European Union never seeks to determine the constitutional arrangements or the security arrangements of its member states. Such matters are up to them.

I am confident that the European Union can accommodate whatever arrangements the parties themselves agree to in the context of a political settlement. As an EU Member State Cyprus will of course have to participate in the Council of Ministers "with one voice".

The European Commission is seeking to broaden understanding of the acquis, and related issues, throughout Cyprus. Given a political settlement, EU membership will bring

benefits to all Cypriots and in particular will enable those in the northern part of the island to catch up rapidly in terms of economic performance and living standards.

Following a settlement, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots will participate in the work of EU institutions, helping run the Union and shape its future.

Meanwhile, projects involving both communities on the island can address specific problems, dispel misconceptions and improve understanding.

Projects of this sort deserve the active support of all political leaders. They also demonstrate in practical terms the commitment of the people of this island to overcoming the problems of the past and reaching a settlement.

There is a window of opportunity now for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to reach an agreement before Cyprus's accession. Every effort should be made to take full advantage of this opportunity. History would not look kindly on those who knowingly let this opportunity slip.

A political settlement before Cyprus's accession is our strong preference. But let me make one thing clear. Cyprus will join the European Union, and it will be among the first candidate countries to do so.

The timetable is set out. We are aiming to complete negotiations with all countries that are sufficiently prepared by the end of next year, with a view to accession in 2004. We hope that Cypriot citizens will participate in the European elections in 2004. There can be no question of delaying an historic process in which the security, stability and well being of Europe as a whole is involved.

During my visit to Cyprus, I shall be meeting citizens from various walks of life, including both Greek and Turkish Cypriot trade unionists. I detect a yearning on the part of all Cypriots to be part of the European project.

As President of the European Commission I say to all the people of Cyprus "Welcome! The European Union will only be complete when you, and the other European peoples who aspire to membership, are ready to join us".

Thank you.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE
CENTER 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call to the attention of the House of Representatives an important anniversary which will be commemorated in my district on Nov. 13. The Domestic Violence Service Center (DVSC) will observe the 25th anniversary of its founding. I am pleased to have the opportunity to commend the center for its tireless dedication to helping women and children in crisis.

Originally called Womencenter when it was first conceived in October 1976, the DVSC began as an assessment agency to focus on the needs of area women. The pleas for help from battered women in the first six months were overwhelming. Because of this, the Womencenter refocused its purpose to address the issue of domestic violence and how it affects women and children in the Wyoming

Valley. A task force was formed to study the issue. The result of that meeting was the founding of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV). The first coalition of its kind in the United States, the PCADV is still a leader in victims' rights issues in the State and the Nation.

In 1977, the Womencenter received a grant to develop a full-time domestic violence program. Services expanded and a liaison with Legal Services of Northeastern Pennsylvania was established.

A speakers' bureau was begun to promote community awareness. In 1978, the task force established the first shelter for battered women in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Within one week, the unadvertised shelter was completely filled to capacity. That June, the Womencenter incorporated as the Domestic Violence Service Center. A board was formed and the first officers were elected.

The number of clients served by the DVSC has grown from approximately 700 in the 1985-86 fiscal year to more than 2,400 per year at present. The Domestic Violence Service Center has served the area as a shelter, an advocacy agency, an outreach center, and a counseling center.

The DVSC has been on the forefront of public education of domestic violence and involved with other social service agencies and the District Attorney's office in creating a county-wide protocol for the handling of domestic violence cases. The center has coordinated with local police forces to create a common protocol in handling the actual distress calls and has coordinated with local health care providers to develop a family violence medical protocol that has been adopted by all hospitals in the county as well as by numerous home health care professionals and physicians' offices. Most recently, in July 2001, the center received funding to support its partnership with Northeast Counseling Services to implement a Mental Health Advocacy Project, a first of its kind in the state. The project will cross-train mental health and domestic violence staff and provide informed services to clients of both agencies.

Led by President Mary Ellen Roberts and Executive Director Ellen Moyle Harris, the DVSC serves as an example to the entire State of Pennsylvania. The center also plays a leadership role statewide through representation on PCADV committees including ones that handle legal advocacy, contracts, legislative and planning matters. In addition, Pat Kwetkauskie, a DVSC representative, chairs the Pennsylvania Medical Advocacy Task Force and has also chaired a committee of the former Attorney General's Domestic Violence Task Force. DVSC staff and training team volunteers have also presented workshops and lectures at state, regional and national conferences. At a statewide PCADV conference in 1991, 12 members of the DVSC board, staff and advisory committee were honored with Leadership in Action awards.

The DVSCs Court Advocacy, Medical Advocacy, STOP Violence Against Women Projects continue to be integral parts of DVSC services, and the center continues to provide technical assistance to agencies in other counties that are interested in duplicating DVSC programs.

Most importantly, the Domestic Violence Service Center has provided shelter for thousands of battered women who flee their homes, often in the middle of the night, afraid for their lives and the lives of their children.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of domestic violence affects the entire community. Each year, the center conducts a solemn and poignant candlelight vigil at the Luzerne County Courthouse to commemorate Domestic Violence Month. I have had the honor of participating in this event. I am proud to commend the hard-working staff, board of directors, and volunteers on their dedicated effort to help those who would otherwise be trapped indefinitely in a crisis situation. Through their work and dedication, they offer a place for women and children to turn to break the cycle of violence. Although this anniversary is not a celebration, it is a call to each of us to help stop this devastation of the American family. Mr. Speaker, I hope this anniversary will expand public awareness of the important work that the DVSC does.

SUPPORT FOR H.R. 3253, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CENTERS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, as an original co-sponsor of H.R. 3253, the National Medical Emergency Preparedness Act of 2001, I strongly support this important legislation which will improve our national ability to respond to acts of terrorism and other medical emergencies. I look forward to quick action on this legislation and commend my friend and colleague, Chris Smith, for authoring this measure.

The National Medical Emergency Preparedness Act of 2001 would create National Medical Preparedness Centers within the Department of Veterans Affairs. These centers would have several important missions. In addition to training medical personnel to recognize the symptoms of exposure to chemical, biological and radiological weapons, the National Medical Preparedness Centers will provide important national leadership in the development of new diagnostic tests, vaccines, and treatments for chemical, biological and radiological terrorist threats.

Last month, on October 15, the Committee on Veterans Affairs received testimony on VA contingency missions to the Department of Defense in times of war or national emergency and as a participant in the Federal Response Plan during disasters. Federal agencies described a critical role for the Department and expounded upon additional roles, given the resources, the Department could play.

In response to that hearing, H.R. 3253 was introduced. The National Medical Emergency Preparedness Centers established by this legislation will provide important contributions to innovation and leadership in the detection of biological, chemical, and radiological hazards, the development of vaccines to prevent dev-

astating consequences we have seen from exposures to toxins such as anthrax and effective treatment for exposures to pathogenic materials.

VA has many successful models of Centers that combine research, education and training, and patient treatment. Among such "centers of excellence" are its Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Centers, its Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Centers, its Parkinson's Disease Research Education and Clinical Centers and other centers selected on a competitive basis in order to create living laboratories for applying state-of-the-art care to patients that need it. The synergies of these centers' missions combine to produce innovative research and technologies to their respective fields.

VA has much to offer the Nation in establishing Centers that can build upon its existing expertise, but break new ground in further exploring areas that directly affect the lives of all Americans. I believe the benefits to our public health would far outweigh the \$20 million annual cost to fund these Centers. As we continue our quest to protect our homeland, we must find leaders within the community to assist our efforts to protect Americans. VA can and should be part of this leadership team.

RECOGNIZING EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT, DR. RAMON DOMINGUEZ

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an individual who has done an exceptional job at the El Paso Community College (EPCC). Dr. Ramon Dominguez is retiring from EPCC after 28 years of public service to this institution, the 4th largest community college in the state of Texas. Dr. Dominguez has done an outstanding job in overseeing the day-to-day operations of the college's five branches and an operating budget of about \$77 million. He has provided leadership and direction to the 2,800 employees and about 24,000 students, 82 percent of whom are Hispanic.

Dr. Dominguez is easy going and has a soothing nature about him. He received overwhelming support from the faculty, staff, and students when he became the President of the Community College in May of 2000. Shortly after being sworn in as President, Dr. Dominguez began reorganizing EPCC's top administration. He demonstrated his beliefs in being highly inclusive and sharing the governing of EPCC. He also showed that he is approachable, fair, willing to listen, hard-working and committed to the students and the college.

Dr. Dominguez graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in 1971 with a secondary education degree. As soon as he completed college, Dr. Dominguez began his focus on serving people. He has always held the goals of teaching, counseling, and mentoring as his top priorities and has contributed greatly to the success of others, especially the students.