

PES Activity Report 1999 – 2001

“From Milan to Berlin”

Over the past two years, the PES has focused its activities primarily on two areas. Firstly honouring the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” set out in our manifesto for the European elections and secondly, undertaking the reforms needed to consolidate and develop the Party in the light of changes European political parties are having to make to conform to the new Treaty.

Contained in the annex is a chronological list of all PES activities over the period 1999 –2001.

1. PES political activities

European elections 1999

During the 1999 European election campaign, the PES helped member parties exchange speakers for their campaigns. Most of our Prime Ministers and Party Leaders met in Paris on May 27th at a big meeting organised by the PS to mark the start of the European election campaign. From that point on, numerous Leaders, MEPs and key political figures ventured into different countries to promulgate socialist principles, values and ideas.

The European election manifesto translated into the 11 official languages of the EU was widely distributed in all Member States and put on the PES Internet site and the sites of some member parties.

Employment and the promotion of a social Europe

“Putting jobs first”¹

“Promoting a social Europe”²

Over the last few years, employment has been – and continues to be – the number one concern of Europe's citizens and of the PES. Ministers and spokespeople for our parties in opposition have been meeting regularly to exchange views and ideas and to agree proposals and common positions aimed at stimulating job creation and modernising the economy and the European social model. Their work, and that of our Prime Ministers, has contributed greatly to the establishment and development of the Lisbon Process; a process in which the Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres, has played a key role. Several PES roundtables on employment and social affairs have enabled those responsible to air and debate policies with participants and the public in those countries visited.

The Euro

“Making the Euro a success”³

In their detailed preparations for the introduction of the Euro, PES Leaders and ECOFIN Ministers have played and continue to play a major role in the making Economic and Monetary Union a success.

¹ See first of the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” (1999 European election manifesto)

² See third of the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” (1999 European election manifesto)

³ See fourth of the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” (1999 European election manifesto)

The Charter of Fundamental Rights

“Promoting Citizens’ Rights”⁴

The European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights is a socialist and successful initiative. The process was launched in May 1999 under the German Presidency at the Cologne European Council and was concluded under the French Presidency at the Nice European Council where the Charter was formally presented. In the course of the Convention, socialist and social democrat representatives, heads of state and government, of national parliaments, of the European Parliament and the Commissioner fought a hard battle to ensure the inclusion of a number of social rights and to improve the formulation of some articles to reflect the principles and values defended by the PES and its parliamentary group. The Leaders publicly welcomed their efforts during their meeting at Molliets on the eve of the Biarritz European Council.

Enlargement

“Uniting Europe”⁵

The Enlargement Working Group recommenced its work following the Milan Congress under the direction of vice-presidents Lena Hjelm-Wallen and Jan Marinus Wiersma . This group – which has held a series of meetings in several candidate countries – has not only met with political contacts but also with academics, journalists, trade unionists and NGOs in an attempt to take the pulse of civil society in these countries. Delegations meeting in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Cyprus were better able to understand the hopes and fears of citizens generated by the integration of their countries into the EU. All of this work has been carried out in close co-operation with the PES Parliamentary group, in particular with its own Enlargement Working Group.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

“Acting together for peace and security in the world”⁶

Security and defence

The PES, in close co-operation with its Parliamentary Group, has given much thought to the question of the security and defence of the European Union. A working group co-ordinated by vice-president Jan Marinus Wiersma, has prepared a working document “Nouvelles Dimensions de la Sécurité : La PESC et davantage”. This document provides a common approach for all our parties to the different dimensions of European security and defence and takes into account their sensitivities and positions in this field.

An extraordinary Bureau meeting held on January 11th was entirely devoted to this subject. Our Defence Ministers – among them PES President Rudolf Scharping Vice-President Akis Tsohatzopoulos, the relevant spokespeople from our parties and the Union’s High Representative for CFSP – held a very interesting exchange of views with PES Bureau Members. The discussion was based on the above mentioned working paper. The Parliamentary group took charge of following-up this activity and organised a conference on 29th May last year in which PES party representatives took part.

⁴ See seventh of the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” (1999 European election manifesto)

⁵ See sixteenth of the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” (1999 European election manifesto)

⁶ See seventeenth of the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” (1999 European election manifesto)

South East Europe Stability Pact

In July 1999 at the Vienna Conference organised by the PES, social democrats and socialists agreed to involve themselves fully in the economic and social reconstruction, stabilisation and democratisation process in South East Europe and to embark upon a whole series of activities – seminars, roundtables and other meetings – enabling the PES to contribute to the establishment and development of the Stability Pact in the different countries of the region. Between November 1999 and April 2001, the PES held more than ten meetings covering most of the region (see the chronological annex). Co-operation with the European Forum for Solidarity and Democracy and with foundations close to the PES, have proved to be very fruitful.

PES and young people

“Supporting youth in the 21st Century”⁷

Roundtable “What kind of Europe do we want for future generations?”

On 1st July last year – the first day of the French Presidency – 500 young people (400 from France and some 100 from other European countries), held an exchange of views in Paris with key political figures on subject areas close to their hearts, most particularly jobs. They also had the chance to put their point of view directly to PES President Rudolf Scharping, the President of the PES Group Enrique Baron and last but not least French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. This roundtable was judged to be a huge political and media success and a model of PES/ECOSY co-operation.

PES Summer University

Last summer, over 100 young people from member parties, PES associates and observers, came together at the fourth PES Summer University held in Bommersvik, Sweden – home of the SAP’s youth organisation’s education and training centre – to discuss EU enlargement and security policy, a question of crucial importance after the Kosovo crisis. The debate was enriched greatly by the participation of young activists from Serbian democratic opposition parties. A special Internet page enabled people to follow the debates and watch live pictures.

Summer 2000 saw the PES Summer University move to Dublin. Eighty young activists gathered in the prestigious Trinity University to put their points of view on a number of international relations issues to key PES political figures – notably the Leader of the Irish Labour Party, the PES President and the President of the PES Parliamentary Group, political scientists, journalists and University professors.

Publications linked to these two events containing minutes, photos and declarations have been widely distributed.

PES Stagiaires

The rules governing the Joop Den Uyl stagiaire fund have been changed in order to better plan and rationalise PES traineeships. Some twelve young activists from EU countries and also from Turkey and Israel have had the chance to deepen their knowledge of the PES by being actively involved in preparing its activities.

⁷ See eighth of the “21 Commitments for the 21st Century” (1999 European election manifesto)

PES Roundtables

The PES and its member parties, together with the Parliamentary Group and its national delegations, organised a series of roundtables dealing with key 21st century subjects. For a year, from March 2000 to March 2001, PES parties hosted 11 roundtables. The press impact they have achieved has been considerable and has been a significant contribution to promoting the image of the PES to the public in the different countries visited. The PES and the Group have distributed a joint periodical – “Roundtable” – on these activities to provide information on its work to journalists, academics, unions and other bits of civil society. This was also published on the Internet – reaching all corners of the world.

A review will be published at the Berlin Congress. A photo exhibition covering key parts of the different debates from all the roundtables will be held in the Estrel Centre, location of the Congress.

2. Activities of PES bodies and preparations for its 5th Congress

PES Summits

Since the Milan Congress, PES Leaders have met on the eve of every European Summit, exchanging ideas, proposals and positions on the items on the summit agenda but also on key political topics linked to building Europe and on particular PES issues such as the development of European political parties and PES reform.

At the press conferences which have usually followed these meetings, the Leader of the host party, the PES President and the President of the PES Group have responded to questions from journalists, thus ensuring press coverage for these meetings.

These meetings have been carefully prepared by the “Sherpas” who have met each time to swap information and to ensure the optimal preparation of these “socialist” summits.

Ministerial co-ordination

Pre-meetings to Council meetings have taken place regularly under the German, Finnish, Portuguese, French and Swedish Presidencies (see chronological annex).

PES Bureau

The Bureau met according to its usual timetable contributing greatly to elaborating and putting into place PES policies and activities as well as to the question of PES restructuring. Important and intense debate have taken place covering such delicate subjects as the Intergovernmental Conference and European security policy. Representatives from sister parties in the applicant countries have made interesting contributions to the debate on enlargement and the future of the European Union.

PES Presidency

Over the past two years, the PES President has met very regularly with his Vice-Presidents and with the President of the PES Group. These “Presidency” meetings have been very informal and have allowed them to better plan PES activities and to react rapidly to events of direct concern. So, during the “Austrian Crisis”, the President called an emergency meeting in Frankfurt to discuss the situation and to adopt a declaration taking up the PES position.

Last summer, during its meeting in Dublin, the PES Presidency looked very seriously and deeply at the development of European political parties (Article 191, Treaty on European Union), at the restructuring and consolidation of the PES and at the reform of its statutes. This thought process set off work under the direction of Vice-president Heinz Fischer and was followed-up in the various PES bodies. It will be continue through to the Berlin Congress and will become part of the adoption of new statutes.

Preparing the 5th PES Congress, Berlin 2001

The Berlin Congress has been carefully prepared by the Bureau. Numerous focused co-ordination and preparatory meetings have taken place. As proposed by Vice-president Ruairi Quinn, delegates were nominated several months in advance by their parties. Their participation in the drawing up of the various resolutions to be adopted at the Congress has therefore been far more intense than in the past.

3. Developing European political parties and reform of the PES

Development and consolidation of European political parties

The PES played a very active role in preparing the new Article 191 of the Treaty dealing with European political parties, adopted at the Nice European Council. The Presidents of both the PES and the Parliamentary Group of the PES, and their respective Secretaries General, were fully involved in this process and, in collaboration with their counterparts from the other European parties, made a considerable contribution to formulating the new Article. They are also taking a very active part in the debate on the structure, functioning and financing of European political parties and in preparing a draft statute for them.

Reform of the PES

Bearing in mind this new situation and the changes in the PES which will result from the accession of new members of the European Union, the PES has undertaken an in-depth reform, based on experience acquired on working methods and structures, which has been translated into new statutes to be adopted at the 5th PES Congress.

Consolidation of the PES

In March 2000 the Bureau adopted the paper called "Developing the awareness and cohesion of the PES", prepared under the supervision of Vice-President Ruairi Quinn, which contains six concrete proposals aimed at strengthening the profile of the PES in the member parties and reinforcing the democratic basis of our European party, at both European and national level.

The various issues concerning the future of European political parties and the consolidation of the PES will be the subject of the declaration "Strengthening the PES" which will be adopted at the 5th PES Congress in Berlin.

4. PES communication and publications strategies

Party campaigns and organisation

Keen to follow-up the "campaign and communications" working group which met up until the 1999 European elections, the PES organised a seminar in Oslo (17th/18th March 2000) on modern methods of party organisation. The parties had the chance to discuss their different experiences and swap ideas on the best working methods. Topics such as the use of new technologies, internal party democracy and the role of the media were examined in detail.

Internet

The PES Internet site (www.eurosocialists.org) goes on developing. A real "shop window" for the PES, regularly updated, this site allows researchers, journalists, students and other visitors to find information on the structure, tasks and activities of the PES. Most of the web pages exist in the four working languages of the PES – French, English, German and Spanish. There is a direct link to the site of each PES member party and to that of the PES Parliamentary Group.

Publications

Approved in Milan, the election manifesto was translated into the 11 official languages and throughout Europe. The manifesto was also available on the PES Internet site. The Milan Congress was the subject of a publication widely distributed to our parties and PES sister organisations.

The secretariat publishes a PES handbook which is regularly updated.

Annex

"From Milan to Berlin"
Indicative chronological list of the PES activities 1999-2001

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Place</u>
- 1999 -		
March 9	Ministerial co-ordination "Social Affairs & Employment"	Brussels
April 14	Leaders' Summit on Kosovo	Brussels
May 25	Ministerial co-ordination "Ecofin"	Brussels
June 2	Leaders' Summit	Germany (Cologne)
June 16	Leaders' meeting	Brussels
June 29	Leaders' meeting	Brussels
July 6	Bureau	Brussels
July	Conference on the establishment of the Stability Pact for south-eastern Europe	Austria (Vienna)
July 26 - August 1	ECOSY Summer Camp	Italy (Livorno)
July 27 - August 1	Summer University on "the new Europe - an enlarged EU and a new Security structure"	Sweden (Bommersvik)
September 9	Bureau	Brussels
October 14	Leaders' Summit	Finland (Tampere)
November	Round Table on Security followed by a visit to Kosovo	FYROM (Skopje)
November 7	Ministerial co-ordination "Ecofin"	Brussels
November 8	Ministerial co-ordination "Trade & Industry"	Brussels
November 10	Presidency meeting	Finland (Helsinki)
November 11	Ministerial co-ordination "Social Affairs & Employment"	Brussels
December 1	Ministerial co-ordination "Justice & Home Affairs"	Brussels
December 2	Ministerial co-ordination "Research & Energy"	Brussels
December 2	Bureau	Brussels
December 9	Leaders' Summit	Finland (Helsinki)
- 2000 -		
February 10	Ministerial co-ordination "Social Affairs & Employment"	Lisbon
February 13	Presidency meeting	Austria (Vienna)
March	Round Table on economic recovery	Croatia (Zagreb)
March 2	Ministerial co-ordination "Justice & Home Affairs"	Lisbon
March 12	Ministerial co-ordination "Ecofin"	Brussels
March 9	Bureau	Brussels
March 17	Round Table on the Future of Social Democracy in the 21st Century	United Kingdom (London)
March 17-18	Seminar on Modern Political Parties	Norway (Oslo)
March 22	Leaders' Summit	Portugal (Lisbon)
March 29	Ministerial co-ordination "Environment"	Brussels

May 4-5	Round Table "Turning challenges into opportunities"	Czech Republic (Prague)
June 8	Bureau	Brussels
June 14	Ministerial co-ordination "Research"	Brussels
June 18	Leaders' Summit	Portugal (Porto)
June 17	Round Table on the implementation of the Stability Pact for south-eastern Europe	Croatia (Zagreb)
June 26	Round Table "Fighting back against Rightwing populism in Europe"	Switzerland (Bern)
June 29	Women Standing Committee	Brussels
July 1	Round Table on "What Europe for future generations?"	France (Paris)
July 1-2	Meeting with the Forum and other Foundations on "Democratic Reform in south-eastern Europe and the role of political parties in Civil Society"	Albania (Tirana)
August 26	Presidency meeting	Ireland (Dublin)
August 22-27	Summer University on conflict resolution, enlargement in the EU and the new relations between Europe and the USA	Ireland (Dublin)
September 28	Bureau & Presidency meeting	Brussels
October 2	Ministerial co-operation "Telecom, Trade & Industry"	Luxembourg
October 7-8	Round Table on the implementation of the Stability Pact for south-eastern Europe	Bosnia & Herzegovina (Sarajevo)
October 12	Leaders' Summit	France (Biarritz)
October 16	Ministerial co-operation "Social Affairs & Employment"	Luxembourg
October 21	Round Table on "Rights and Values in 21st Century Europe"	Austria (Vienna)
October 27-28	Round Table on "Media and Democracy in Europe"	Italy (Milan)
autumn	participation in a meeting of the Forum on the roman question	Slovakia
autumn	participation in a meeting of the Forum on youth co-operation	Estonia
November 3-4	Meeting on the enlargement of the EU	Poland (Warsaw)
November 7	Ministerial co-operation "Ecofin"	Luxembourg
November 17-18	Round Table on "Europe's modern economy & modern welfare state"	Netherlands (Amsterdam)
November 20-21	Delegation to Cyprus	Cyprus
November 29	Ministerial co-ordination "Justice & Home Affairs"	Brussels
December 2	Round Table on "Globalisation & the Future of Welfare"	Sweden (Stockholm)
December 6	Leaders' Summit & Presidency meeting	France (Nice)
December 7	Women Standing Committee	Brussels
December 21	Ministerial co-ordination "Telecom, Trade & Industry"	Brussels
- 2001 -		
January 11	Bureau	Brussels
February	Seminar of the Forum on political networking	Bulgaria

February 8	Women Standing Committee	(Sofia) Brussels
February 11	Ministerial co-operation "Ecofin"	Brussels
February 12	Ministerial co-operation "Education"	Brussels
February 16-17	Round Table on "Migration & Cultural Identity"	Spain (Saragossa)
February 16-18	ECOSY Congress	Austria (Vienna)
February 23-24	Round Table on "Knowledge economy, Education and Employment in Europe"	Greece (Athens)
March 1	Seminar of the Forum on local policy	Latvia (Riga)
March 3	Round Table on "New Economy, New Social Challenges"	Belgium (Antwerp/ Mons)
March 5	Ministerial co-operation "Social Affairs & Employment"	Brussels
March 14	Ministerial co-operation "Justice & Home Affairs"	Brussels
March 22	Leaders' Summit	Sweden (Stockholm)
March 30	Bureau	Brussels
April 6-8	Round Table of the Forum on "Economy in transition - from State Economy to private Economy"	Yugoslavia (Belgrade)
May 7	Bureau	Berlin