

For a modern, pluralist and tolerant Europe

We, the European socialist, social democratic and labour parties, reaffirm democracy, freedom, equality and solidarity as our central political values.

The belief that all humans are of equal worth is fundamental to our vision and our purpose as a movement. We fight racism because it disfigures society at a cost to everyone in it and because it diminishes the human dignity that is everyone's birthright.

Real justice can only thrive in a society that is open and tolerant. The free expression of different cultures, different faiths, different orientations and different life choices is the basis of an open society. Prejudice, discrimination and intolerance are the enemies of a common European cultural heritage which build its identity not on the membership to a same ethnic group, to a same soil or to a same blood but on sharing the same principles and fundamental rights for people.

The universality of rights in which we believe is not limited by colour or creed. That is why social democrats have led the way with legislation across Europe to oppose discrimination and to ban expressions of race hatred. But there must be more to the creation of a successful multi-ethnic society than measures to combat racism in its overt form. We must also create a positive climate in which all ethnic communities have the full opportunity to contribute their creativity and talents to the societies in which they live. We must reject cultural chauvinism and make it clear that our national and European identities are shared concepts which all communities have a role in helping to shape.

The promotion of tolerance and mutual respect has always been a central objective of social democracy. But it is all the more relevant to the modern world. The global era and the revolution in communications have produced global population movements without parallel in history. Successive waves of immigration have added greatly to Europe's ethnic and cultural diversity. We do not see this as a threat. It is an asset which has strengthened our economy, enriched our culture and broadened our understanding of the world.

The countries of the European Union, and the countries in the accession process, share a common set of values of freedom, equality and tolerance. We seek to share these values with our neighbours. In particular we will work in the former Yugoslavia to close the past of ethnic hatred and ethnic nationalism. We offer a future to the new democracies of the Western Balkans based on equal rights for all citizens regardless of ethnic identity.

Therefore we reaffirm our support for the Charter of European political parties for a non-racist society and commit ourselves to upholding its principles. In particular, all PES parties adhere to the following principles of good practice and invite other European political families to do the same:

- To refrain from any form of political alliance or co-operation at all levels with any political party which incites or attempts to stir up racial or ethnic prejudices and racial hatred.
- To strive for fair representation of citizens without distinction of origin at all levels of the parties with a special responsibility for the party leadership to stimulate and support the recruitment of candidates from these groups for political functions as well as membership.
- To strive for fair representation and democratic involvement of all ethnic minorities in society and its institutions. Democracy is not the property of the majority and our concept of citizenship is an inclusive one.

Bigotry and racism towards people of different ethnic identities is parent to xenophobia towards the foreigner. Those who cannot come to terms with ethnic diversity at home will be incapable of building a successful, modern Europe. Conversely, we who support pluralism at home are better equipped to forge strong partnerships abroad. We must ensure that political chauvinism and narrow nationalism are consigned to Europe's past.