



PES Presidency Declaration

In support of strong European action to contain and recover from the COVID-19 crisis

Adopted on 27 May 2020

The unforeseen spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has presented European societies with one of their greatest challenges in decades. Public life was suddenly paused and only essential services were allowed to carry on. No one would have expected that the world would be living in a state of emergency and that the dramatic effects of the virus would lead to a social, economic and health crisis. We are facing a historical moment, where the European project is at stake.

The PES family was fast to mobilise, with our Leaders, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Regional Officials, Mayors, Commissioners, Parliamentarians, member parties and affiliated member organisations to fight the different consequences of the virus. The PES coordinated our political family's reaction to this unprecedented crisis hitting all member states, notably through the PES strategy to contain and recover from the COVID-19 crisis. It is a recognition and a victory for our political family's efforts and involvement. We have called for an ambitious mobilisation with an EU Recovery Fund equipped to face the crisis, support the most affected (women, youth, seniors, etc) and build a green, social, digital, gender equal, and sustainable future for Europe's economies and societies. We have called for the Social Pillar, the European Green Deal, a social revision of the European semester and the EU Gender Equality Strategy to remain the framework for our collective action and shape a fair future of our European societies. We have insisted that the defence of the rule of law, democracy and equality remain non-negotiable throughout.

The PES Presidency welcomes the Next Generation EU plan of €750 billion presented today by the Commission, of which €500 billion will be given in grants through EU programmes and €250 billion in loans. It reinforces the long-term EU Budget by increasing the total EU financing power to €1.85 trillion, through a more sustainable financing of the EU's budget with new own resources. The Commission's plan is an important and timely initiative to support without delay the countries, regions, cities and sectors that were hit the most, including a strong international dimension. We want to underline the commitment and hard work of our PES Commissioners to deliver that Plan. It follows the important resolution adopted by the European Parliament where the S&D Group played a fundamental role.

This plan must strengthen our social model as well as the green and digital transitions and must be based on our common European values. The recovery will be green, social, gender-sensitive and future-oriented. It sets the foundation for deeper coordination and promotes social and territorial cohesion in the whole of the EU so that no one is left behind. With an ambitious, forward-looking European strategy and a solid EU Recovery Fund, the Commission will be able to work in the interest of all its citizens, to protect them, their jobs, and to relaunch the economy. It is a unique opportunity to move forward towards a more progressive Union. On the basis of this proposal, the Member States and the Council must act without delay in a bold way, with more ambition and for immediate implementation to respond to the dire needs of citizens, paving the way for a new chapter in EU history.

Now, Europe needs to stand united. This crisis reminds everyone that the EU is a political project; a project that places solidarity between countries, regions and people first. For us, Party of European Socialists, the recovery must build a future of social justice, equality, democratic accountability, the rule of law, human rights, quality education and healthcare, strong public services, an innovative economy, cultural creativity and respectful and inclusive societies.



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