

Friends,

It's really great to see us all TOGETHER here tonight.

The whole progressive family: European Socialists and Democrats;
the trade unions who are our proud historical partners;
the youth organisations to whom the future belongs.

We know our values are strong:

Freedom, democracy, equality, solidarity, justice.

And we know our commitment to those values is strong too.

But as progressives, we face a challenge.

We have to translate our values into the language of Europe in 2016.

We have to use words that people understand today.

We have to show that we can tackle the priorities of today's Europeans – and indeed the world.

So what are these priorities?

I recently read a study entitled 'What worries the world?'

It was done across 25 countries. Ten of the countries were from the EU.

The others included Brazil, India, China, the US, Japan, Russian and Turkey.

So what is the answer? What worries the world?

Unemployment, and Social Inequality.

Unemployment and Social Inequality are two of the top three issues that the people from all these countries are most worried about in 2016.

This should be an inspiration for us!

Because Unemployment and Social Equality – these are some of our highest priorities too, as socialists and social democrats.

They are the core battlegrounds where we fight, and have always fought.

Our priorities are the world's priorities!

But where are the people queuing up to support us in this mission?

In Europe in 2016, sometimes it feels like we are almost alone.

Now, you might say,

migration and terrorism are what's *really* topping the agenda in Europe.

And that's true.

In the same survey, migration and security indeed came out top among some European countries, mainly from the north west.

Of course, social democrats and progressives in those countries are not part of the problem – they are part of the solution.

But why don't we focus on the things that we do best?

Why don't we concentrate our efforts on what we know we are good at – fighting for equality, solidarity and fairness?

Take the European Youth Plan, for example.

Better education, better jobs for our young people.

Easy access to Europe's cultural treasures.

Stronger rights for children.

Proper healthcare and affordable childcare for every toddler in the Union.

Isn't that what people tell us they want? A better life for themselves and their children?

And we have already started this work, in the name of those people.

It was us, the Socialists & Democrats, who introduced the Youth Guarantee.

We helped more than 9 million European people to find jobs.

And it is us again today, fighting for an extension to this successful programme, now it's facing budget cuts.

We have to take on a lot of fights – and we have to win them.

It's not just the vital battle for youth.

It's also austerity.

Taxation.

Social rights.

As a social democrat in Europe today,

it is so easy to feel isolated, like you are the only one who cares.

But in fact the opposite is true.

We know that our priorities are each other's priorities – that is why we are TOGETHER here today.

And we know that our priorities are also the world's priorities.

So we know that people will follow us.

If we can show them the way –

TOGETHER.