



**Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
Socialists & Democrats  
in the European Parliament**

**European Parliament**  
Rue Wiertz 60  
B-1047 Bruxelles  
T +32 2 284 2111  
F +32 2 230 6664  
[www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu](http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu)

Brussels, 1 December 2009

## **Activity report June-December 2009**

### **Group of the progressive alliance of Socialists and Social Democrats in the European Parliament**

#### **PES Congress Prague 6 December 2009**

#### **Introduction and summary**

This report of activities differs from Group reports to the PES Congress in the past. The report has a short time frame concentrating on activities and developments since the June 2009 elections to the European Parliament. The PES Group activities during the last EP mandate have been documented and distributed extensively in the run up to the European election campaign. The following document can be found on [www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu](http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu) : "A proud record of achievement -Socialists at work in the European Parliament of 2004-2009".

This new mandate started with the establishment of the new Group of the progressive alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (see paragraph 1) incorporating all those forces represented in the former PES Group as well as the MEPs of the Italian "Partito Democratico".

Following the disappointing election results of June this year, the number of posts of responsibility for the S&D Group were limited. Taking this into account the negotiations were nevertheless extremely successful and resulted in a number of key positions both in the Bureau of the EP as well as among the Committee chairs. (par. 2.1).

Following the elections, the political balance of the EP has undergone changes, making it more difficult than before to establish progressive majorities (par 2.2.). This in turn has made it all the more important to promote, together with the PES, broad common Socialists, Social Democratic and progressive strategies (par. 2.3).

Chapter 3 presents the major political priorities of the S&D Group (par.3.1) followed by the consequences of the Lisbon Treaty (par.3.2) and the intention of the S&D Group to contribute to the debate on the future of our political family (par.3.3).

## 1. The progressive alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the EP

The results of the 2009 European elections were disappointing with 184 out of 736 seats, instead of the 217 out of 785 seats during the last mandate. The S&D Group dropped to an exactly 25% share of the European Parliament, which is 2,6% less than the share of the PES Group during the last EP mandate.

The new S&D Group is as EU-wide as it could possibly be, with national delegations from all 27 EU Member States, including affiliated members from Cyprus and Latvia.

Already in the run up to the elections there had been preparatory talks to see how the Italian list of Partito Democratico could work together with the Socialist family. Part of the understanding which was reached following the elections and after consultation with the PES leadership, was the setting up of a new Group with a name with which all Italian Members could identify:

Group of the progressive alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

After Martin Schulz had been elected with massive support as President, the S&D Group constituted its Bureau with the following membership and competences:

Maria Badia I Cutchet	Group information and communication
Monica Flasičková Benova	Citizens' Europe
Véronique De Keyser	Human rights, development and international trade
Edit Herzog	Treasurer
Stephen Hughes	Economic and social model
Stéphane Le Foll	Agriculture and budget
Adrian Severin	Foreign affairs and security
Gianluca Susta	Fisheries and cohesion policy
Hannes Swoboda	Parliamentary secretary
Marita Ulvskog	Sustainable development and competitiveness

## 2. The S&D Group in the new European parliament

### 2.1 A successful constitutive session

The constitution of the European Parliament has shown that a reduced number of S&D MEPs does not by definition result in a weaker position within the European Parliament. A combination of good candidates and skilful negotiations has resulted in numerous key positions, both at the level of the governing bodies of the institution as well as that of the parliamentary Committees.

With the support of the S&D Group, the Polish EPP Member Jerzy Busek became President of the European Parliament in the understanding that the S&D Group will present a candidate for the second half of the mandate. The S&D Group subsequently dominated the elections for EP Vice-Presidents whereby the 5 Socialists candidates (out of 14 in total) ended up among the first seven EP Vice-Presidencies: Giovanni Pitella, Stavros Lambrinides, Miguel Angel Martinez Martinez, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt and Libor Rouček. Moreover with Lidia Geringer De Oedenberg a S&D Group Member became EP Questor with the highest support of all candidates.

As a consequence the Group has a firm involvement in EP internal policies regarding personnel, budget, parliamentary reform, the statute of members and assistants as well as in conciliation and the EP relations with national parliaments, the Mediterranean, candidate countries, Latin America, the UN, ACP and the eastern neighbours of the EU.

Also when it comes to Chairs of Parliamentary Committees the S&D Group has had a successful constitutive session. While the number of chair positions (6 out of 21) was limited (according to the d'Hondt system), the following key positions were assured:

Pervenche Berés	Committee on Employment and Social affairs
Paolo de Castro	Committee on Agriculture and Rural development
Jo Leinen	Committee on the Environment, public health and food safety
Juan Fernando López Aguilar	Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home affairs
Vital Moreira	Committee on International trade
Brian Simpson	Committee on Transport and Tourism

## 2.2 Building majorities in the new European Parliament

The June 2009 elections resulted in the following division of seats over 7 political Groups:

Group of the European People's Party	265
Group of the progressive alliance of Socialists and Democrats	184
Group of the alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe	84
Group of the Greens / European Free alliance	55
European Conservatives and Reformist Group	54
Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green left	35
Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group	27
European Parliament	736 seats

On the right and extreme right, two new Groups were established: the European Conservatives and Reformist Group, mainly consisting of conservative euro-skeptic forces from the United Kingdom, Poland and the Czech Republic and the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group being a collection of anti-European, xenophobic and extreme right wing MEP's.

With the EP making a swing to the right, the S&D Group is faced with the big challenge of nevertheless playing a decisive role in the European Parliament, which as from December 1st onwards has seen its powers considerably widened with the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty. During the previous mandate, as the second political grouping, the PES Group managed to play a leading role in bringing about the necessary political majorities for example, the EU directive for services in the internal market and the Reach regulation on chemicals dangerous to consumers and the environment.

These majorities were first of all based on a high degree of consensus within the PES Group and subsequently by linking up with the Greens and the GUE Group in combination with an attempt to split the Liberals and/or EPP. Traditionally when it comes to social and economic issues a more centre oriented Group of PPE MEP's, can under certain circumstances be made part of a majority. When it comes to progressive values, ethical questions and non-discrimination, the Liberal Group is a potential partner.

Recently however it has become clear how difficult it is to establish this last type of progressive majority in the new parliament. A condemnation of the concentration and monopolization of the media in Italy was blocked by the right wing, from centre-right to extreme right, protecting the Berlusconi government. At the same time the right wing resolution was not adopted either.

All group resolutions were voted down as well. Despite a unanimously united S&D Group, the S&D, ALDE, Greens and GUE joint resolution received 338 votes against, 335 in favour, with 13 abstentions. The EPP, ECR and EFD resolution was rejected by 322 votes to 297 with 25 abstentions.

The S&D Group will continue its fight to establish progressive majorities in the European Parliament by uniting first of all the left and by subsequently trying to prevent the right from establishing a majority against the S&D Group.

### **2.3 The need for broad Socialist and Social Democratic strategies**

The need to establish broad Socialist and Social Democratic strategies has never been greater. In the European Parliament, S&D MEPs have lost some ground; in Council there is a clear conservative majority and within the Commission, the situation is the most difficult, with only 6 out of 27 Commissioners stemming from our political family. The fact that our Commissioners have received important portfolios does not take away the problem that the degree of right wing dominance in the Commission is dramatic, making this institution unrepresentative in view of the de facto political balances in the EU. Regretfully some PES parties in government did not or were not able to claim these positions for own representatives.

In this situation the PES and the S&D Group have no other option than to invest more than ever before in stronger links between Socialist and Social Democratic members in the three EU institutions as well as national Parliaments. The importance of this can be illustrated on the one hand by the decision-making regarding the Commission President, where no common strategy was established, and on the other by claiming the position of High Representative, where unity led to success.

The re-election of José Manuel Barroso as Commission President might have been inevitable in the light of the current conservative majority; it was also characterized by the absence of a common approach by our political family. While several PES governments gave their support, other parties campaigned against. In this context the S&D Group ended up with a vote in the European Parliament where a majority of Members supported the Group line to abstain, but where a minority gave its support and others voted against. Lessons have to be learnt by all concerned at national and EU level, to prevent this situation to reoccurring in future.

That internal coordination can lead to strength was recently proven in case of the nomination of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security policy, Catherine Ashton. The S&D Group, supported by the PES, managed to convince our government representatives to claim the important position of High Representative for our political family. This claim was honored thanks to the PES governments rallying around a common candidate. This unique form of cooperation with a significant role for the PES and the Parliamentary Group should be basis for the establishment of further common strategies in the future.

### 3 The S&D Group political priorities

#### 3.1 Major priorities per policy area

For the S&D Group, the defining political battle of the new legislature will be over a new model of development, reflecting a shift from a narrow, market-dominated vision towards a wider vision of our society, with a different balance between economic, social and environmental concerns; a new balance between market forces and smart regulation; and a new central role for sustainability.

Central to our approach is our insistence that a greener economy must go hand in hand with a fairer, more prosperous Europe. We believe that a new more sustainable economic model is central to our fight against climate change and will create invaluable opportunities for employment and wealth creation. We intend to keep this topic high on the political agenda, with a twin focus on protecting the environment and boosting high quality jobs. The PES Manifesto commitment to create 10 million new green jobs by 2020 will be a core objective, supported by actions on renewable energies, energy efficiency in older homes, sustainable transport, re-skilling and R&D.

Among the key battlegrounds will be the new EU 2020 strategy, to be launched next year; financial regulation; the restoration of full employment; decent work and stronger social rights - including gender equality, a revised Posting of Workers Directive and a Framework Directive on Public Services.

No less important will be the forthcoming battle on the EU's Financial Perspectives - and the related issues of spending on agriculture, fisheries and cohesion policy - which will have far-reaching consequences for the Union's capacity to serve Europe's citizens. The Group will insist that EU institutions must first agree on the tasks to be entrusted to the Union - including the new Lisbon Treaty responsibilities - and that when this is settled, the resources must match the tasks. We shall pose the question of how to put the EU's budgetary resources on a rational footing, how far spending should shift to new areas - such as climate change - and how to finance an ambitious recovery plan, with adequate solidarity between the Member States.

We shall push for the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. It must be directed towards food policy objectives, environmental sustainability and territorial development. A reformed CAP must improve access to food for the most deprived, cope with increasing instability in agricultural markets and take account of the Union's role in the global food balance.

The Group wants reform of the Regional Development Framework Programme to re-affirm the importance of regional cohesion and solidarity and to adapt regional policy to new challenges, linking it more closely to the wider EU 2020 strategy. Implementation must be made more transparent and more efficient. Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy must tackle overcapacity and produce sustainable fisheries; regionalise responsibilities; support small-scale fisheries; reform the Common Market Organisation and develop the international dimension, including new criteria for partnership agreements with third countries.

In the area of Citizen's Europe, there are four issues of strategic importance in which the Group will face a fierce battle to defend and promote our values of common human dignity, common humanity and personal security.

Our work against right wing extremism, (including its effect on the Roma,) will emphasise our strong and united position against extremism and highlight divisions and weaknesses in our opponents. On immigration, asylum and integration, our approach,

using the EP's greater powers post-Lisbon, will tackle the roots of migration to the EU and asylum seeking, and also a positive approach to legal migration and integration. We will seize the initiative to promote a sustainable asylum policy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, European and international legislation.

Our Group will maintain pressure for an ambitious European approach on non-discrimination, ensuring that the already existing legislation is properly implemented, used and monitored - and that the horizontal directive is not buried or watered down in Council.

We shall work to ensure that the Lisbon Treaty produces a more democratic Europe for the citizen.

Foreign Affairs priorities may be best described in concentric circles: our further work on enlargement will be based on a fair, rational and inclusive concept. We are developing Group initiatives for ambitious policies for EU's Neighbourhood encompassing the Black Sea Synergy, energy security, initiatives on frozen conflicts and the further improvement of Euro-Mediterranean relations. The Group will strongly engage itself in the European Parliament's Middle East working group and continue, through seminars, conferences and missions, to contribute to the broader debate.

Relations with traditional global partners will focus on the strengthening of the transatlantic partnership at parliamentary level, building constructive and trust-based relations with Russia and launching an EU - US - Russia triologue with our interlocutors in Congress and the Duma to possibly develop joint initiatives. The Group will engage in parliamentary dialogue with China and India and develop initiatives to consolidate political relations with our interlocutors in Latin America.

An improved security structure for Europe and the world will be the goal of the Group's work concerning the future of NATO and European security and defence identity.

The effects of the financial crisis and climate change have a joint impact on developing countries and deserve our specific attention. Development Policy priorities will focus on continued sound financing of aid, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, reform of the global institutions and the conclusion of fair Economic Partnership Agreements. In our Human Rights policy we will concentrate on parliamentary scrutiny of the related EU instruments, improving coherence in democracy building and promoting EU Human rights guidelines.

International Trade Policy has to improve EP control on human rights and on social and environmental standards, contributing to the reform of world governance and to reflections on the balance to be achieved between commercial opening and the legitimate protection of economic sectors, workers and consumers.

### **3.2 The Lisbon Treaty and its consequences**

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has major consequences for the competences of the European Parliament and as a consequence for the instruments in the hands of the S&D Group to implement its political priorities. With a few exceptions, the new Treaty places the European Parliament on an equal footing with the Council as a lawmaker in areas where this has not been case so far, notably in setting the EU budget (the EP enjoys full parity), agriculture policy and justice and home affairs. This vast increase in co-decision powers for the European Parliament requires internally a re-structuring of the

S&D Group secretariat making the Group as effective as possible in light of the new competences.

Also the Lisbon Treaty is an additional reason to strengthen the relations between Socialists and Social Democrats in Council, Parliament and Commission, as well as in the national Parliaments which received additional powers. The S&D Group will strengthen its efforts to promote, alongside the PES, this internal coordination and cooperation at EU level and be active in the Socialist International and the Global Progressive Forum to cooperate with Socialist, Social Democratic and progressive forces around the world.

### **3.3 The need for a debate on the future of European Social Democracy**

The Bureau of the S&D Group has discussed the dwindling support for Socialists, Social Democrats and progressive forces throughout Europe over the last years in general and the disappointing results of the elections to the European Parliament of June this year, in particular.

The Group welcomes the fact that the PES has made the strengthening of our political family a major theme of its Prague Congress. Currently the electoral support for a majority of our parties is particularly low and a mobilisation of parties, parliamentarians, foundations and party members at all levels is an absolute necessity.

It is first of all up to the PES to ensure that the debate on the future of European Social Democracy becomes a truly cross border discussion and not the sum of national deliberations. The S&D Group, in full respect of the role of the national parties and the PES, intends to make its own contribution to the debate making use of the fact that the Group constitutes a unique permanent meeting place of European Socialists, Social Democrats and progressive forces.

In this debate the S&D Group would like to work with the PES to counter a fundamental problem in our family. Over the last decade the EU and its institutions in general and the cross border cooperation of Socialists and Social Democrats in particular has not received the appropriate attention from Socialists, Social Democrats and progressives at national level. Both the European Party and the Group in the European Parliament are living with the consequences. Several of our friends at national level, including party militants but also party leaders, have to be reminded that the EU and its institutions constitute a major (potential) instrument for Socialists, Social Democrats and progressives to implement the policies and policy changes we stand for. The entering into force of the Lisbon will be helpful in ensuring that this wake-up call is heard.

-----