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PES 10TH CONGRESS
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BUDAPEST

PES Roadmap toward 2019

Adopted by the PES Congress

Introduction – Who we are

The Party of European Socialists (PES) is the second largest political party in the European Union and is the most coherent and united political movement. In a number of member states our family leads the government, in some states we are part of the government coalition, in others we are the leading opposition party while we are overall strongly present in regions and cities. Our parties all over are working to improve people's lives by promoting equality, diversity, social justice and fair and sustainable growth.

The **PES is our common platform**, where our members come together: activists, party executives, Secretary Generals, Leaders, youth organisations, MPs, MEPs, European Commissioners, Ministers and Prime-Ministers of socialist, social-democratic, labour and democratic parties and organisations within Europe. Together, we change the European political agenda. We also exchange best practices and engage in political campaigning. Our main aim is to support our member parties and organisations.

Founded in 1992, we have advanced from a common initiative to being a major European political party. Together with our members we engage with citizens to pursue a European agenda following the principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, social justice and democracy, as well as to promote the respect of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and respect for the Rule of Law.

2014 – 2019: A new political cycle

Our common campaign for the European elections of May 2014 and the preparations during the 18 months ahead have brought our political family to a new level and quality of cooperation and campaigning. For the first time in the history of European democracy we had a **common candidate, a common manifesto and a European wide grassroots mobilisation**. We were the initiators of a major change in European democracy. Our common campaign was a democratic innovation, which has set the standards for the future. Given the enormous challenges that the European Union and democracy in Europe are faced with today, we want to take further steps to strengthen the PES and define a new way forward.



We are now at the start of a new European political cycle. The **PES has already made outstanding progress in its development as a strong and united political party** on the European level in the last twenty years, and we are committed to strengthen it further.

We are currently leading 11 governments, but also taking part in 6 others as junior coalition partner. However, our family of social democrats did not manage to become the biggest political group during the 2014 elections. Although the last European elections were sometimes a historical success in some member states, it was also a defeat in other member states where we saw social-democrats defeated by right wing populists. We missed our goal to get a progressive majority because we failed to convince voters that between conservatives and populists, the actors of solidarity and equal justice are social-democrats. In most states our main competitors can be found amongst green or radical left wing parties.

The conservative EPP became again the largest group, although they lost 53 MEPs when our family only lost 5. Right wing and left wing populists and nationalist parties gained territory. Moreover, right wing extremist parties won a large number of seats by calling against further European integration.

We have to show that the PES parties represent a clear alternative. We have to prove to our citizens that the PES, within the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Council, is able to promote and concretely implement our call for a change of paradigm in European policies, from blind austerity to investment, growth policies and solidarity.

The social-democratic family needs to elaborate a common electoral strategy for the next European elections. The PES needs to engage with people by addressing the European political issues at stake during those elections. We had a common Manifesto, a common candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission, we need to build on these important steps with a continental campaign and a common strategy to all social-democrats.

We have taken stock of the results of the 2014 EU elections, amongst others by having a detailed scientific post-election analysis prepared of the **PES voters' profile 2014**. Together with the study 'profiling PES voters 2009' and other electoral data this helps our member parties to be able to develop a strategy to target best potential voters in the run-up to the 2019 European elections. The turnout in 2014 was 42,6%, which is almost the same number as in 2009 (43 %). Despite the fact that **young voters** between 18-24 years of age are the most positive of all age groups towards Europe, only 28% went to vote. The average age of PES voters in 2014 went up to 53 years compared with 51 years in 2009. We need to show young people that they can count on socialists to make Europe a safe space for them again, as they are the first struck by the crisis and believe less and less that democracy can make a difference to their lives. It is our responsibility to prove them wrong. Only 41% of all female voters casted their votes in 2014. The percentage of women amongst PES' sympathizers went down from 58% in 2009 to 55% in 2014. All international studies show that **progressive parties can only win with women and young voters supporting** them. Therefore the PES in close cooperation with its member parties, PES women and YES, will step up its efforts to engage with women and youth in the run up to 2019.

We need to regain the trust of workers, employed and unemployed, whose interest are the ones our movement was born to defend. We need to reconnect with this core constituency of ours.



2014 – 2019: Support and strengthen our member parties in order to win

The PES should not only be a platform for member parties and organisations to discuss European policies, but also a place where **member parties come together** to formulate the political vision, strategies and policies for socialists, social democrats and progressives across Europe.

We will further strengthen our political movement by:

- **continuing to exchange best practices and electoral strategies;**
- **offering the presence and visibility of our leaders and Prime Ministers' networks;**
- **co-organising events with our member parties in the member states;**
- **providing training to member parties and organisations and activists;**
- **echoing the communications of our member parties and organisations.**

In order to become the **strongest political force in Europe in 2019**; to become the **biggest group in the European Parliament** in an alliance of MEPs from our sister parties and those sharing our common values and political agenda, and the leading group of a progressive coalition; and to deliver the next president of the European Commission, we will continue to help support and strengthen our member parties. The strategic political, electoral and practical exchange and cooperation in the framework of the **Taskforce national elections** of the last two years with our member parties. The **Leaders' meetings; the Secretary Generals' network; campaign managers' network; the media network and the taskforce elections** are good examples to maintain and reinforce.

In the framework of the Taskforce national elections we will increase our focus on the co-organisation of activities **with member parties in EU member states**, to get out of the so called Brussels bubble. Together with the S&D Group, we will also strengthen the cooperation among national parliamentary groups. And we will keep **providing training to member parties and organisations and activists**, in the framework of the **PES European Training Academy**.

PES activists played a key role in getting the common candidate message across to voters in the last election through the 'knock the vote' trans-European grassroots mobilization campaign. This was only possible because of the joint efforts and cooperation of the PES, the member parties and activists together. This potential must be nurtured to achieve an even greater impact in 2019.

Furthermore, we will continue to strengthen the coordination with the S&D group, FEPS, YES, PES in the CoR and to launch a structured coordination with the new European Commissioners from the PES family.

Strengthening the Party of European Socialists is fundamental for the future of European social democracy and for all socialist, social-democratic, labour, democratic and progressive parties in Europe. The PES and its member parties and organisations are **strongly committed** to investing all our energy and resources into developing our vision, modernizing our structures, broadening our bases and achieving our common ambition of **winning elections and leading** in Europe and in the Member States in order to develop a progressive society in the 21st century.



The European political cycle

Our **main challenge** for the European political cycle ahead of us is to win the European elections and to become the **first group in the European Parliament in 2019** and have our common candidate elected as **European Commission President**. To this end we will:

- Actively **set the European agenda with clear social-democratic and progressive ideas** by developing effective cooperation with the S&D group, EU Commissioners from our political family, the PES Group in the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), PES Women, the Young European Socialists (YES), ESO, Rainbow Rose, and other PES partners, to disclose, coordinate and make better use of available information, policies and existing resources within our political family.
- Build together a **social-democratic and progressive strategy** in order to (re)gain power in the member states, at local, national and European level – to become a more visible actor at European level.
- Further establish the **PES as a relevant political and visible actor at European level as well as on the national and international levels** and to strengthen our ties with strategic partners, in particular the progressive parties outside the EU, the trade-unions, and notably ETUC and the sectoral federations, and civil society actors – in close cooperation with PES member parties and member organisations, in order to build a mobilisation and a social majority in Europe around our project and values.
- Promote and **strengthen European democracy and equal societies** within the EU, reinforcing social democracy as a frontrunner in the fight against populism, erosion of the rule of law and electoral abstention.
- Further **develop the PES as a European political party** by implementing the new regulation on European political parties and further build cooperation with other European political parties.

We will strive to have a gender-balanced Commission in 2019 and encourage governments to appoint more female Commissioners. Gender equality will be one of the decisive criteria for our support to the new Commission.

Our main aims are to reach a progressive majority in the Parliament to finally change people's lives in Europe; to strengthen our political family in the run up to the 2019 European elections; to enter the elections with a common manifesto and a common candidate; to become the biggest group in the European Parliament and to deliver a PES president to the European Commission.

2014 – 2019: Policy priorities

Europeans, women and men, must have decent jobs that allow them to have a **good quality of life**. Yet here is the legacy of the economic policies of the last five years, in stark figures: nearly 27 million Europeans who want to work, cannot find a job, including nearly a quarter of our young people. 120 million in Europe are at or under the poverty threshold. Therefore our efforts for the European Union during these 5 years are aimed to **bring back job creation** through public and private investment into the real economy, a **productive economy**, a **sense of solidarity and community** and respect for all **people**. We want to put citizens back in charge and bring back hope to Europe's youth.



We have to **advance the European political agenda with clear social-democratic and progressive ideas** and common projects, with a particular focus on the following 7 policy priorities:

- **Full employment through a progressive economy agenda** for sustainable growth, decent work and investment
- A strong **social, healthy and environmentally committed Europe** with high social and fiscal standards to put an end to social and fiscal dumping
- **Gender equality, equal and age-friendly societies and fight against discrimination**
- **Democratic societies**, in a democratic and transparent Europe, fighting against corruption
- A real and progressive **policy on migration**
- A Progressive European Union for a **Fairer World**
- Transformation of our energy and production models in order to **protect the environment**, the planet and mankind

The main concerns of citizens in Europe¹ remain the **economic situation** and **unemployment**. Through these times of major challenges for the European Union, our member states, our parties and our common social democratic answers and policies are much needed.

The European political and socio-economic context leads us to work even closer together. We will launch policy initiatives to promote a European Union which will bring back job creation, a productive economy, public investment and quality of public services, in a sustainable framework.

In order to create decent jobs, we need investment and a renewed, innovative **industrialization**, with respect for the environment. The PES will step up its efforts in the **fight against climate change**. The EU has to tackle social and health inequalities in order to reach the Europe 2020 poverty and social exclusion target. The PES will continue the **youth guarantee** campaign and the **fight against tax havens**. In addition, the PES will develop and launch new topical campaigns, which need support from all member parties and organisations, for example around the topics of decent **job creation, democracy and equality** (Europe for Equality (E4E)). All campaigns will be coordinated with the PES member parties, and member organisations.

Our vision includes a sense of community and respect for people, in which **democracy, equality and transparency** will be at the core. We contribute to raise awareness in Europe; to this end we will actively use occasions such as the Europe Day to increase citizens' involvement. The key principles for our mission are: cooperation, interaction, solidarity and subsidiarity. We can only win if we work closely together to develop a Europe based on progress, jobs, equality, social justice, economic fairness, sustainable and green growth, health and consumer protection, territorial cohesion and active democracy. The PES will promote the vision of a well-managed migration policy based on solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, as a real opportunity for our societies to counter populist rhetoric.

Strong cooperation with trade unions, NGOs and **civil society** is also required; this is why

¹ Standard Eurobarometer 81, spring 2014

2. PES manifesto 2014



the PES and SOLIDAR have been reinforcing their close cooperation. For this purpose, we will set up a structured dialogue with trade unions, civil society organisations and initiatives both on the European and the national level.

The PES will foster common actions among its member parties and organisations. The PES will keep strengthening its commitment towards **LGBT rights**, which are an intrinsic part of civic rights, with closer links to Rainbow Rose.

The work of the PES is part of a wider international movement. Our fundamentals are based on **international** values. Our work and vision do not stop at the borders of the EU. We will continue to participate and invest in relationships with international partners outside the European Union. Working on a fairer world remains central part of our policy agenda and activities.

