



DRAFT

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Democratic Coalition Congress – 30 June 2017

Speech Sergei Stanishev

Dear friends, *agapiti s̄indrofi* [*translation: dear comrades*]

I am very happy to be here with you here today. This is particularly important for me. As you will remember, I was at every one of the congresses of PASOK in recent years. And you will remember that on every occasion I insisted on the need for unity between the forces of social-democracy. Disunity harms us in Europe, it harms us in Greece, it harms us in every country.

So I think that today is a particularly important day. I hope that this will be a landmark in the efforts to unite the forces that naturally belong together. Your forces. The forces of every party and organisation that is represented here today. And I sincerely hope, that you will be joined soon by those who have not yet crossed the rubicon, to join in this great reunification. [*NOTE: this is a reference to To Potami, Diamanatopoulou*]

Your country needs a strong social democratic presence. *Europe* needs a strong social democratic presence. There are three conditions for this to become a reality. First Unity, unity, unity. Second values, values, values. And third dialogue, dialogue, dialogue. What you are doing here today is the right way forward.

It is not easy of course. The impact of the crisis has been terrible on your country. And it has been terrible on our political family. But by your very presence here today you are showing that your heart is in the right place. You are showing that you are ready to turn the page, and focus on rebuilding unity, reconnecting with citizens, restoring a solid basis.

You know better than I do, that your country needs the honest, progressive solutions that you can offer.

But there is also another dimension. There is no doubt that we must step up our collective efforts to change Europe, away from the austerity-only approach of the conservatives. For a more progressive Europe. For a more social Europe.

This is a fight that we have been undertaking together for years, with you, and with all the other members of the European Socialist family. For jobs. For a real Growth agenda, for a real progressive Investment programme, for a Europe that puts citizens at the heart. Our family has managed to change some things in that direction, but much remains to be done.

As President of the Party of European Socialists, I want to express my full support to your coalition. Your country needs it, and Europe needs it.