



Confronting the extreme-right in Europe: our way

Resolution adopted by the PES Presidency on 14th October 2010

The PES expresses its **deepest concerns about the worrying electoral trends of extreme-right parties** as shown recently in Austria, Sweden, Hungary and the Netherlands. This trend is not new and confirms persistent high results for the extreme-right elsewhere: they are now unfortunately part of the political landscape.

These parties develop anti-immigration, xenophobic, anti-islamist and anti-democratic theses, which are against our fundamental values. They do not respect rights of minorities and instil hate on the grounds of religious and ethnic origins. Both this is and religious extremist ideology go against our fundamental European values.

The PES expresses concerns and frustration at the recent statements of so called main stream politicians which send a dangerous and insidious signal that such extreme views are acceptable. Recent comments by French centre right politicians on the Roma question, Italian leaders coming to their aid and by German regional leaders on the very idea of immigration, or acceptance of support to a ruling coalition in the Netherlands, have only exacerbated the situation.

We cannot accept this state of play. We need to tackle this issue and reverse the trend, by isolating those extreme-right parties, by sending an unambiguous message to European citizens that the political platforms of these parties are wrong, *in their entirety*. Then and most importantly, socialists and social-democrats must define an alternative by providing answers that overcome the fears and sense of uncertainty that creates these situations.

Asserting our values and modernising our programme is the democratic way to confront and defeat the extreme-right.

1 – Fight the causes that led to a rise of extreme-right parties

The PES acknowledges the role of the economic crisis in this situation. We pledge to **fight the economic and social despair** that has nourished this rise of the extreme-right. The anti-immigration discourse of the extreme-right gets us nowhere. Putting people against each other will not solve the challenges facing European societies: we want to build a society where everybody belongs, not one based on exclusion. We believe that in a society respecting each and every citizen's rights to have a decent life with high social standards, the fear of the other could not be exploited any longer by the extreme-right.

The Conservatives and Liberals majority has a responsibility to bear, by putting forward extreme austerity measures, which have led to social and economic desolation. 5.1 million young people are denied the right to work – an increase of 36% in 2 years. 23 million in total face the dole queues. Retirees are being challenged about their right to a decent pension, those in need their right to social welfare.



The conservative Majority response to this explosive mix is to start playing the ‘politics of fear’, which, when coupled with their ‘austerity fixation’, amounts to a collective failure of the ideas of the right.

The PES is addressing the lack of hope in the future by putting forward proposals for a long term inclusive recovery.

The PES will **fight abstention and disenchantment towards politics**. An electorate that is disengaged provides the dangerous ground for the rise of the extreme-right. The PES’ objective is to re-engage with citizens, in order to regain their trust in politics and in the social-democratic family. We have a specific responsibility as social-democrats in empowering people, to make them able to fully exercise their citizens’ rights.

2 – A call to all European political parties to agree with our code of conduct towards extreme-right parties in Europe

The PES is convinced that the fundamental rights of the EU must be employed to halt the extreme-right parties’ discourses and actions.

The PES stresses its commitment to the founding principles and values of the European Union as exposed in the Preamble of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*:

“The Union is founded on the **indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity**; it is based on the **principles of democracy and the rule of law**. It places **the individual at the heart of its activities**, [...]”

The PES reasserts its **attachment to the fundamental rights of the EU**, as stated in the *Charter*, and in particular rights for every EU citizens to:

- Human dignity
- Right to liberty and security, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and of association, right to education, right to asylum, protection in the event of removal, expulsion or extradition
- Equality before the law, non discrimination, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, equality between men and women,

The PES, in line with Article 3.2 of its Statutes, will not accept any declaration or action threatening those principles, nor to have any relations with a Party not sharing them. We make the motto of the EU, “unity in diversity”, ours and ask all other European political parties to do the same.

The PES, in order to confront the rise of the extreme-right by **isolating those parties from the political scene**, urges all European political parties to sign up to the principles of the *Charter of European Parties for a non-racist Society*, adopted in Utrecht in 1998, and to adopt the following code of conduct:

- Condemn all racist, xenophobic, discriminatory or nationalistic statements or actions.
- Not get into a ruling coalition or electoral alliance with a Party inciting or attempting to stir up racial or ethnic prejudices and racial hatred, at European or national levels.
- Refuse an implicit support from a Party inciting or attempting to stir up racial or ethnic prejudices and racial hatred to form a government.
- Fight the legitimization of the discourses of such Parties by refusing to engage into their terms of the debate, by not taking up their ideas into its political platforms nor in the policies it implements when in government.
- Isolate its members not respecting those principles.

