



**1957 – 2007 HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EU!
NOW THE NEW SOCIAL EUROPE
Leaders conference, Berlin, 24 March 2007**

Socialists and social democrats declare that the European Union, celebrating its successes on the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, must use its strengths to take Europe forward into the 21st century.

The successes of the European Union are many – peace, enlargement, the stabilization of democracy, increased prosperity, the cohesion of member states and regions, freedom of movement, the single market, the single currency, progressive social and environmental legislation.

But Europe is at a turning point. It faces profound challenges – global economic competition, growing inequalities in Europe and the world, an ageing society, climate change and energy supplies. Europe also faces crucial political choices on how to deal with these challenges.

Europe has never gained by standing still, and will lose out massively if it is not able to respond effectively to a changing world. These changes must be shaped. We, Europe's social democrats and socialists, stand for managing these changes.

Socialists and social democrats believe that Europe's social market economy is a strength that Europe can build our future on; our welfare states are an asset – not a burden to be discarded. We believe our common values of solidarity, equality and respect for diversity are the correct principles for shaping the future. We believe our Europe of 27 is a strength for tackling the challenges ahead.

A New Social Europe must be the political ambition of the European Union – a new project for a common direction for renewing and revitalizing the European social model. Europe needs new policies to ensure that everyone can participate in, contribute to and benefit from our Europe. We need economic growth and new quality jobs with fair wages, new and better forms of social protection and rights, active labour market policies, equal opportunities, life-long learning, new ways to combine family and working life. If we make the right choices we can avoid a race to the bottom, and instead gain acceptance of the European Union by its citizens and provide hope for people throughout the world.

To build on its first 50 years, the European Union must work more intensively and effectively than ever to deliver on its responsibilities both within Europe and in the world

- To pursue the eradication of poverty, sustainable economic growth, innovation, full employment, economic, social and territorial cohesion including through stronger economic cooperation and reform.
- To uphold fundamental rights in Europe.
- To extend stability, peace and prosperity by welcoming more European nations into its fold, and by promoting closer links with our neighbours.
- To halt and reverse climate change, to protect our environment, and at the same time ensure sustainable and efficient energy for Europe.



- To fight international terrorism and crime, human trafficking, and illegal immigration, in full respect of fundamental rights.
- To promote the successful integration of immigrants into our societies.
- To be a force for global peace, human rights, inter-cultural dialogue, decent work, development and democracy, and speak with a stronger, united voice on world affairs
- To ensure the security of its member states and its citizens .

To tackle these challenges we need a stronger political Europe, not a weaker Europe. A stronger and united Europe is also necessary to welcome new member states in the European Union, if they meet the criteria.

But, we cannot do it without a better treaty, without agreement on the outstanding constitutional and institutional issues. We believe that the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights offers a new connection between the citizen and Europe. The PES, together with our national parties and governments, will strive to promote the institutional changes needed in the European treaties as a matter of urgency, and in any case before the European Elections in 2009.

Today, 50 years after the start of our collective project, socialists and social democrats appeal to civil society, to the social partners, and to all progressive forces to keep working together for a more democratic, social, open, transparent, and efficient EU, for more and better Europe, for the benefit of European citizens.

