



PES Statement - 24 February 2011

PES welcomes opposition leader Mustafa Ben Jafaar and calls for real transition to democracy in Tunisia

PES President, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, and PES Presidency members welcomed Mustafa Ben Jafaar, the leader of the Tunisian opposition party FDTL (Forum démocratique pour le Travail et les Libertés) at their meeting in the PES headquarters in Brussels on the 24th of February 2011. Mustafa Ben Jaafar addressed the PES Presidency, composed of representatives of PES member parties*, in a discussion on the Tunisian revolution and the ongoing waves of unrest in the Arab world.

The PES welcomed the peaceful revolutions in Tunisia that have created a moment of hope in the Mediterranean region and beyond. The PES Presidency expressed its support to the Tunisian people driven by legitimate democratic aspirations. The PES also voiced its support for the FDTL and its fundamental role as opposition party at this very delicate moment in the country's transition.

Nevertheless, the PES expresses concerns over future developments. There is a well-founded risk that the current government, the formation of which has not followed a democratic consultation, will not deliver on the expectations of the Tunisian people. Many of the cabinet members, including the highest office of Prime Minister, have strong links to the former ruling party, the RCD, and thus the regime. The PES calls on the Tunisian government to deliver urgently a roadmap for a real transition.

In the meantime, the National Committee for the Safeguard of the Revolution needs more international support in order to ensure that the government will respect the pace for reforms. It is not just a question of changing political personalities but changing the political system.

Tunisia will be a model for all and therefore needs coordinated efforts for it to be a success story. The EU must be vigilant as it has an obligation to ensure a successful transition to democracy. Therefore, the PES demands to the European Union to play a more active role to safeguard the Revolution. The PES calls on the European Union not to go back to business as usual and to rethink its former policy. The EU failed policies vis-a-vis the Mediterranean region must come to an end. The PES urges the EU to invest in democratic transition by supporting fair and transparent elections, promoting the role of political parties and foundations. The fostering of political capacity and pluralism, the cementing of democracy and its institutions, social fairness and progress, the promotion of economic development and a favorable environment to investments are some of the areas on which to focus.

The PES will form a Task Force to ensure the follow up of the Tunisian revolution and to ensure its success.

The PES will organise its next PES Euromed Conference on 28-29 April 2011 in Tunis, Tunisia, together with representatives of the opposition and political parties of the region.

