



Declaration of the PES Presidency “Call for the Progressive revival of Europe”

Berlin, 13 March 2017

The EU is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaty this year, celebrating the common path that brought peace, prosperity and stability. There is no doubt that the EU is one of the most successful historical achievements for promoting democracy, cohesion, diversity and equality, including gender equality and women’s rights. It has improved the lives of millions of Europeans and has offered hope for a better future. However, the Union that was built 60 years ago has never been so strongly criticised as today. As a consequence, as the Party of European Socialists, we also approach the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaty with a heavy sense of responsibility in the face of the many challenges ahead of us.

This anniversary comes in a very difficult context. We are living in a new global context ushered in by the Trump administration, the rise of authoritarian regimes and so-called “illiberal democracies”. Globalisation has not yet been regulated so as to keep lifting people out of poverty while putting an end to inequalities.

In Europe, after several positive steps that included support for the democratisation of Europe’s south in the 1980s, the unification of our continent in 1989 and the enlargement in 2004 that aimed at cementing democracy and improving economic and social conditions throughout the Union, the EU entered into a phase of fatigue. The financial crisis in 2008 was a turning point from which Europe has not yet recovered, and it exacerbated the existing inequalities within countries and between member states. Years of neoliberal policy and austerity have undermined the social fabric in many countries. They have eroded the EU as a champion of social rights and of equality. For many Europeans, the EU has become the face of austerity. The institutional complexity of the European institutions, combined with a need for more clarity and transparency, have created a distance between Europeans and their Union. In addition, the EU has all too often been taken as an easy target for scapegoating. As a consequence, these realities have eroded citizens’ trust in the EU, to the point where, in June 2016, the citizens of one member state, the UK, voted to leave the Union. All this only reinforces the national-populist forces who are seeking the disintegration of the Union. The EU must reinvent itself, or it faces the risk of disintegration.

Because the situation is critical and the difficulties of the EU are widely exploited by populists, this 60th anniversary has to mark a real shift in the policies of the EU. We want the EU to play again its role as the best tool to bring prosperity and equality for its 500 million citizens. We fight for a Europe that is fair, brings progress and protection, and helps citizens face the challenges of this century. The white paper on “the Future of the EU” published by the European Commission marks the start of a crucial, in-depth discussion in which the PES will be active and make proposals. For this reason, the PES is setting up a High-Level Working Group on the Future of the EU.

We want 25 March 2017 to mark a return to the social roots of the European Union, based on these fundamental objectives.

1. We want to bring **shared prosperity** to everyone, by ensuring equal opportunities, safety nets and fair wealth redistribution policies. We want **a true programme for upward economic and social convergence in Europe**. We are fighting against inequalities in our societies, between regions, and between member states.
2. We want a **Social Europe** where social rights are defended, and never undermined by economic considerations and competition rules. We want not only more jobs, but also better jobs, with **decent minimum wages across Europe** of at least **60% of the average wage of each Member State** (unless already at a higher level) to be reached either by law or through collective bargaining.
3. We want labour rights and social protection to cover all forms of employment, including those created in the digital economy and the care sector. We want a European programme of employment guarantees for young and long-term unemployed people, which could be developed in future into a European unemployment insurance scheme. We want to **end social dumping**, to ensure that the principle of equal pay for equal work at the same place is respected. We want to close the 16% gender pay gap and to facilitate the conciliation between personal and professional life.
4. We want **young women and men** to find their place in society, to become active and engaged citizens, and to integrate into the labour market.
5. We want a **Europe of democracy**, closer to its citizens, with all levels of government - from local to European - playing their part to the full. We want a Europe that ensures that that all member states respect the rule of law. We want countries to promote democratic values through pluralism and transparency, by truly representing society's diversity and enabling everyone to participate. We want to end all discrimination, including discrimination in the labour market.
6. We want a **green EU**, to safeguard a healthy and natural living environment for present and future generations, and to lead the world in implementing the Paris climate agreement.
7. We want a Europe where the **fundamental rights and freedoms** of everyone are protected and the **safety of every citizen** is guaranteed. This includes strong action to eradicate sexual and gender-based violence and to respect, advocate and implement women's rights and LGBTI rights across policy fields, for which Europe has been a longstanding champion.
8. We want a Europe of humanism, equality and unity where Schengen cannot be taken apart.
9. We want a Europe that does everything possible to prevent people from dying in the attempt to reach our continent and **welcomes all refugees and migrants who have the right to be here**, and respects the right to claim asylum. We want effective **integration** policies, and acknowledge the benefits of migration on societies.
10. We strongly support the EU enlargement policy, because we believe it to be of vital importance that candidate countries have a real and **open possibility for accession**, not just as a driving force for regional cooperation, institution-building, political reforms and political stability, but also to show the strong prospect of a united Europe. In a changing and uncertain world, we want stronger common action in the field of **foreign, security and defence policies**, guided by clear principles and values, **to build a safer, more resilient and fairer world**.

To support these objectives and shift European priorities, these are our **proposals for the progressive revival of Europe**:

- 1. A Compact for a Fair Economy, with a new and reinforced long-term European investment strategy.** It must have sufficient means to support a **just energy transition, industrial and digital innovation and youth programmes** to boost job creation and promote social and territorial cohesion. The flexibility margins of the Stability and Growth Pact and the **budget rules** must encourage public investments, the implementation of progressive reforms and the viability of the welfare state. The **European budget** must promote balanced growth, upward structural convergence, high employment and social progress. At the same time, we are determined to work actively towards the completion of a more democratic, social and jobs-oriented Economic and Monetary Union. The EMU needs an effective economic stabilisation tool, such as a Eurozone budget. We will continue our discussion on the creation of a European Treasury to safeguard the stability of our common currency.
- 2. Measures to promote real fiscal justice.** This must include a commitment to ensure high safeguards for citizens' deposits and to tackle the 'too big to fail' problem. It must also establish a strong framework to fight **tax evasion, tax avoidance and tax havens**, including the implementation of a common corporate tax base and converging towards a common corporate tax rate. This is an international problem demanding the attention and cooperation of international fora. Finally, we also want to implement the Financial Transaction Tax without undue delay.
- 3. A strong European Pact of Social Rights with binding targets.** We want to ensure the **primacy of social rights with a social progress protocol**. We want every European to have the guarantee of basic income security and universal access to quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health rights. We want effective, accessible and high quality public services. We want a clear European legislative framework ensuring decent working conditions for all forms of employment and reduce the gender pay gap by 2% per year per member state for member states that have a gender pay gap above 10%. We want a **decent national wages floors** across Europe. Whether in employment or out of employment, no one should be left behind. We want to promote the **progressive structural reforms** that fight unemployment and inequalities, strengthen the social model, and ensure smooth and sustainable economic recovery.
- 4. A European Youth Plan of €100 billion.** It is based on employment with the strengthening of the **Youth Guarantee**. It is based on **education** to ensure that the Erasmus+ programme truly benefits all young people. It is based on culture, with a **European Culture Cheque**. And it is based on a **European Child Guarantee** to ensure that every child has free healthcare, education, childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition.
- 5. A new dynamism for European democracy and open societies.** Europe must do more to ensure the respect of rule of law in every member state. We want to put citizens at the centre of decision making and participation at local, regional, national and European level, and make political institutions more accountable. If member states do not respect core democratic values, EU surveillance mechanisms must be activated and member states can be sanctioned to ensure their compliance.
To reinforce European democracy, we remain committed to the process that we initiated in 2014 for a common candidate for the European elections. We want to open a real debate in Europe, to enhance citizens' engagement with the EU and strengthen the role of European political parties.
- 6. A Fund for a Fair Transition.** It is now high time for the EU to take the next leap towards a clean economic model based on renewable energy and resource efficiency. The fight against climate change, with the implementation of the COP21 agreement for a greener and healthier environment, is not only an ecological necessity. It is also a matter of social fairness, and of economic emergency. Our commitment to the UN's 2030 Sustainable

Development Goals, alongside social partners and civil society, is to ensure that the ecological transition is efficient, swift and socially fair.

7. **An EU gender equality strategy**, so that the EU and all its member states have a clear and ongoing commitment towards women's and gender equality, politically, economically and socially. Faced with conservatism, extremism and anti-women rhetoric, the EU can not afford to lose its leading and exemplary role in this field on the global level, and has a responsibility to work towards gender equality in line with the UN 2030 Agenda.
8. An efficient and balanced **European security strategy**. Tackling terrorism is an urgent priority, which no member state can tackle on its own. This is why we are calling for greater cooperation between member states and the European security agencies. But repressive measures alone cannot lead to a sustainable solution. Police work must go hand in hand with measures for social fairness, integration and the respect of everyone's fundamental rights.
9. A harmonised and effective **EU policy on asylum and migration** based on the principles of solidarity, responsibility and humanism. The internationally recognised human right to asylum and protection should continue to be a cornerstone of our policy. Member states have to fulfil their commitments on resettlement and relocation, and address the need to extend the current quotas. We want a Europe that develops a specific strategy for the Central Mediterranean, Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan routes in full accord with our values and principles. Europe has a duty to find a solution for the issue of unaccompanied minors, and provide responses to the needs of vulnerable migrants. We need to strengthen our cooperation with third countries in order to tackle the root causes of migration, to mainstream migration, fight against smuggling and trafficking in human beings, ensure safe and legal channels for refugees, and enhance legal migration opportunities. We must have effective integration policies, and develop a strong positive narrative of inclusion and non-discrimination to fight the populist rhetoric against immigration, which is contributing to anti-EU sentiment.
10. We need a strong, united Europe together with EU candidate countries, a strong common foreign policy, and a mutualisation of our defence means in order to face the rising tensions in the world. Europe, more than ever, needs to step up its role at the global level.

These objectives and proposals are the cornerstone of our call for a progressive revival of the European Union. They are the basis on which we want to continue building a Europe that promotes respect, non-discrimination and true gender equality. A Europe that engages in trade agreements which promote fair growth and job creation, and fully defends fundamental EU values including human and social rights, sustainable development, the environment and consumer protection. A Europe where everyone's security is guaranteed and all fundamental freedoms and rights are fully respected. A Europe that lives up to its humanitarian and legal duty to save lives and help those in need of international protection, and that promotes shared responsibility between member states. A Europe where diversity is a source of richness. A Europe that plays its role in promoting stability, peace and democracy around the world.

25 March must be more than a ceremonial anniversary. It is the moment to change Europe and return it to the path of social justice and shared prosperity. We are committed to making that change a reality.