

The logo consists of the letters 'S&D' in white, bold, sans-serif font, set against a solid red square background.

Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament

The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of people walking in a brightly lit, modern interior space. The floor is light-colored and tiled. The background wall is a vibrant red. The motion blur gives a sense of activity and movement.

ACTIVITY REPORT

of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
in the European Parliament

FROM BUDAPEST TO LISBON

3 years of challenges for the S&D Group

PES Congress, Lisbon
7-8 December 2018

This activity report of the S&D Group is a continuation of the reports submitted to the PES Congresses in Rome and Budapest. It covers the largest part of the 2014 - 2019 EP term-of-office, and the activities and achievements of the S&D Group successively led by Gianni Pittella and Udo Bullmann.



FOREWORD

Dear Comrades,
Dear Friends,

This report sets out the activities of the S&D Group over the past 3 years.

It is clear evidence of what we have managed to deliver together over the last few years through hard work and determination, even in the face of major challenges such as the financial crisis with its severe economic and social consequences. We can be proud of the battles we have won, and we should not be shy to talk about our successes.

Now, a few months ahead of the European elections, we as a Group are fighting for the right goals: we are determined when it comes to defending our most important values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law against the enemies of a united Europe. We are the leading force in the fight against right-wing populism and any attempts to manipulate our elections. We stand

for a better migration policy - fighting its causes, pushing for coordinated search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, and demanding the fair relocation of refugees in Europe. This is a strong position in view of the challenges that lie ahead.

But Comrades, let us not stop here. We can and must build on our past successes, and at the same time look forward to fresh new approaches. We are calling for a radical change in Europe, based on a sustainable model of development that combines social, economic and environmental policies. The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are at the core of our new way of doing politics. We have to preserve our planet for future generations. We have to fight fiercely and strongly. We have to stand united to defend our values, our Europe. Together, we can!

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'U. Bullmann'.

Udo Bullmann
S&D Group President

Since the PES Congress in Budapest in June 2015, the S&D Group has been faced with many challenges in a radically right-wing dominated Parliament. Even though our political family managed to maintain its position after the 2014 European elections with more or less 25% of the seats, the global picture in the EP had changed dramatically. Despite massive losses, the EPP remained the biggest political group. The extreme right, populist, Eurosceptic and xenophobic parties made a major breakthrough, and went on to establish two, and later three political groups. The radical left too made substantial gains.

FROM BUDAPEST TO LISBON

The S&D Group put up a fierce fight through difficult times

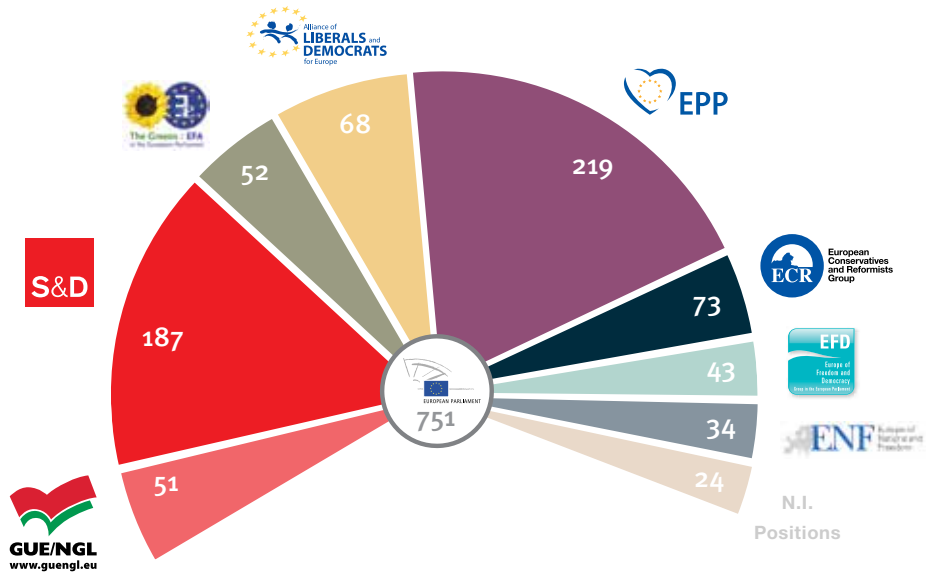


Budapest Congress, 2015

European citizens have been through years of economic and social crises, caused by irresponsible ultraliberal policies, aggravated by the wrong responses based on blind austerity. Clearly back then, our political family had not been visible enough in delivering the right message and in providing answers and solutions with the necessary force. Meanwhile the populists with their demagoguery managed to exploit many popular fears and spread anger.

Today the European project is endangered, and distrust in Europe has led us to the verge of Brexit. We deeply regret the outcome of the Brexit referendum, and continue to show solidarity with our comrades in the UK. We believe that the pro-Remain march in London in October, which was attended by over 700,000 citizens, was a clear sign that all is still not lost. The march was proof that UK citizens want a fresh opportunity to keep their country in the EU. This time they want to base their decision on real facts and the truth, and not on misinformation and lies. We stand by them. If Brexit does go ahead, we are in favour of a new, constructive relationship between the UK and the EU, but our red lines are clear.

Share of seats in the European Parliament - situation on 9 October 2018



Udo Bullmann, S&D President, at the YES Summer Camp, Spain, July 2018

Any new relationship should not lower standards, nor undermine our social model or citizens' rights. It should guarantee a fair solution to the Irish border issue, and respect its commitments by concluding a proper financial settlement.

The migration crisis has boosted the populists and has been pushed to the top of the political agenda, revealing a divided Europe where the principles of solidarity and humanitarian aid have been challenged by national egoism. The development of illiberal democracies like those in Hungary or Poland, and the ability of xenophobic parties to reach governmental positions as in Austria or Italy, are cause for concern for democrats across Europe. Some forces on the centre-right are again tempted by a radicalisation of their positions, and are aligning themselves to the extreme right. We saw divisions in the EPP over the Hungarian Fidesz party's membership, and its final decision not to expel them. It was indeed shameful for a political family that professes to be at the very core and origin of European values.

The turmoil within the CDU - CSU's historical coalition caused by migration issues was also a case in hand.

On the international stage there are also concerns. The White House is run by a confrontational and unpredictable populist who is set on annihilating decades of multilateralism and international cooperation. Russia is developing an aggressive attitude as well. Both see the EU as an enemy to be undermined, with the help of European nationalists and extreme right parties, as well as the widespread use of fake news, trolls and hackers. They are disseminating hate, creating division and influencing- even sabotaging electoral democratic processes.

Indeed, we have been through troubled times, but this is no reason to give up our principles and values! Although still fragile, economic recovery has begun. It would not have been possible without the efforts of our political family. We have pioneered many initiatives, be it to regulate the financial sector, to stimulate an ambitious EU

investment plan, or to provide our young people with the Youth Guarantee. These are just a few examples of the important role our political family has played, and must continue to play in the remobilisation of progressive forces throughout Europe. It is only the S&D Group that can offer a fairer alternative to simplistic and misleading populist promises on the one hand, and dead-end conservative and liberal policies on the other.

These are just a few examples of the important role our political family has and must continue to play in the remobilisation of progressive forces throughout Europe. It is only the S&D Group that can offer a fairer alternative to simplistic and misleading populist promises on one hand, and to dead-end conservative and liberal policies on the other.

There is another significant political trend in Europe. It is based on the idea of a new political centre able to tackle populism and Euroscepticism, and uphold the defence of Europe and its values. Let us be clear. We will not be deceived by the liberals' siren song. The Macron project is perhaps pro-European by nature, but it is also a repeat of the ultra-liberal policies that damaged our economies and paved the way for populists. Socially unfair and economically based on the obsession of liberalisation and laissez faire, this is not the model that we believe in. We can offer more than that to our citizens.

In Spain, Portugal and Sweden, our political family has been instrumental in keeping democracy in place, and in developing progressive policies and economies based on solidarity. Our many achievements in the EP have shown just how strong we can be when we are united.

Our Group also has an important role to play through its close cooperation with the Party of European Socialists. As a parliamentary Group, we are able to build alliances and move forward with a progressive political agenda. This is where cooperation between socialist and democrat members from all EU member states takes

place on a daily basis, creating synergies, and giving us the ability to significantly influence European laws and policies.

The political landscape in Europe is evolving fast, and new progressive political forces are emerging. We want to unite these forces around our values.

The emergence of progressive civil society movements, often on-line, is another social phenomenon that we cannot ignore. We must build bridges with these rapidly growing groups of (e-) citizens. We are proud of the numerous initiatives we have taken to open up dialogue and work with NGOs, trade unions and progressive social networks. In this regard, we work closely with Avaaz, a 48 million member strong network of activists, whose progressive political agenda dedicated to the European project, is close to our hearts.

We have been meeting people outside the Brussels 'bubble', through a series of "Together" and "Go Local" events. The aim is to foster open and frank discussions with citizens about the future of Europe, and to answer questions on key political issues affecting their daily lives. The "Together" concept is a journey across Europe to bring together progressive thinkers and to exchange ideas and shape our common future. At the end of each event, statements are adopted on different themes, as a source of inspiration for our future policies. The debate continues on a dedicated website open and accessible to all.

Another important and fruitful experience is the "School of Democracy", where we invite young people from all over Europe and beyond, to discuss their concerns and expectations with high-level politicians and academics. With this open form of discussion, we create a unique and dynamic laboratory of ideas. Over the last four years, we have established a community of 400 young people still active on social media, spreading progressive ideas and values with a remarkable multiplying effect.

"It is only the S&D Group that can offer a fairer alternative to simplistic and misleading populist promises on the one hand, and dead-end conservative and liberal policies on the other."

Furthermore, through the “Progressive Economy” and the “Progressive Society” initiatives, we have developed a long-term reflection process on the future of our continent, an alternative and fairer economy at the service of citizens, and a socially and environmentally sustainable development model for Europe.

In this context, we promoted the Independent Commission for Sustainable Equality. Its report on “Sustainable Well-being for All – Our Common European Future” gives an in-depth analysis of the crises within our societies, and presents an inspiring set of audacious proposals for a radical change of direction.

We continue to cooperate closely with our sister parties and organisations such as the PES, YES, FEPS, and with socialist groups, both in other European institutions, and in national parliaments. We are also in close contact with progressive forces around the world, through the Global Progressive Forum. This forum brings together progressive politicians and decision-makers, as well as civil society and trade union leaders from all corners of the world. Discussions take place on a range of subjects, such as alternatives to neoliberal globalisation, how to combat racism, how to deal with the dictatorship of financial markets, and to promote democracy, human rights and solidarity in the world.

We initiated and promoted the selection process of our ‘Spitzenkandidat’ in a fair and democratic way. We believe that this open process enhances our visibility across Europe, and conveys to citizens the transnational nature of our political family and values.

In the run up to the 2019 elections, we Socialists and Democrats must focus on our core values - solidarity, our alternative for a progressive society and economy, and our drive for a different and socially fairer Europe. We need to reaffirm our very identity. We took the first step in 2017 by pulling out of the grand coalition with the EPP; this coalition had jeopardized our political visibility for far too long. At that time, Gianni Pittella's candidacy for President of the Parliament was opposed by a right-wing coalition consisting of the EPP, the Liberals from ALDE and the Eurosceptic ECR Group. It was a disparate alliance whose main goal was to maintain the economic and social status quo in Europe, and block the implementation of progressive policies.

We shall prove to European citizens that we are the genuine alternative to ultra-liberalism and the casino economy that goes with it. We are fierce opponents of those spreading hate and division among people, and who promote nationalist selfishness. We will continue this fight in each one of our countries right up to the European elections. In the meantime, let us proudly consider our long record of achievements as a major political Group, and a progressive force within the Seat of European democracy, the European Parliament.



Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain



School of Democracy, Italy, June 2018



Theresa Griffin and Judith Kirton-Darling, S&D MEPs







March for Europe, S&D delegation, Rome, March 2017



Our ambition for Europe:

**A FAIR
SOCIETY AT
THE SERVICE
OF CITIZENS**

Social justice, solidarity, a fair society: those are integral parts of our political DNA, and our Group has achieved a lot in this respect.



"No more walls in Europe" rally, Brussels



Maria João Rodrigues, S&D Vice-President

"We will continue to put pressure on the Commission and the Council to take concrete measures, so that EU law and policies properly address the social needs of our citizens."

We have consistently called for the establishment of a real and ambitious social pillar at EU level, and we welcomed the Gothenburg proclamation for a European pillar of social rights as an important first step. Nonetheless, we will continue to put pressure on the Commission and the Council to take concrete measures, so that EU law and policies properly address the social needs of our citizens - and in particular those working in the most uncertain situations. Concretely, we want to see: the implementation of rules on universal access to social protection, a legal framework to protect new atypical types of work as a result of digitalisation, reduced inequalities, guaranteed high social standards, decent wages and strong collective bargaining. Furthermore, social rights should be fully anchored in the European Semester and in the country-specific recommendations, so that European cohesion is not only based on economic considerations, but on social aspects too.

The revision of the Posting of Workers Directive was one of the S&D's key demands. The shortcomings of the original legislation left the door open to social dumping and unfair competition. It was widely exploited by populists criticising the European project, and by some employers playing workers off against each other. Despite diverging views across Europe, the updated rules have proved to be a huge success. They are based on essential principles: equal pay for equal work in the same place, fair treatment of workers from day one of their posting, and fair wages in line with collective bargaining agreements. Workers are entitled to various allowances and benefits, as well as the reimbursement of travel expenses and decent accommodation. This is over and above their salaries.



Stop Violence Against Women, Brussels

More generally, it was our political family that made sure that the scourge of social dumping and precarious employment was fully acknowledged. It was the first step towards further concrete action EU-wide. We were firmly on the employees' side, supporting the petition signed by staff at McDonald's to highlight their insecure jobs, and the abusive nature of fixed-term contracts. We also supported action by Ryanair employees, and remain firmly committed to fighting the shady methods and business models of low-cost airlines. We want to ensure good working conditions for all, and prevent companies from exploiting differences between national legislations. This would give rise to competition between employment standards and conditions within Europe. The Social Affairs Committee has just adopted an ambitious report on better working conditions, which guarantees better rights and protection for all workers. Negotiations with member states will soon get underway.

Every employee deserves a proper contract, and not the insecurity of undeclared work. We have set up a platform to tackle undeclared work; we want to look at ways to deter it and to transform it into declared work. Negotiations on the future European Labour Authority are ongoing.

We also worked decisively to strengthen the European Network of Employment services, further integrating labour markets, giving employees access to mobility services, facilitating the placement of jobseekers throughout Europe, and contributing to the reduction in unemployment and skill shortages.

Too many workers in Europe are at risk of losing their jobs due to the short-term, purely profit-oriented vision of big companies, who reward shareholders rather than the workforce. This is further aggravated by the absence of a genuine European industrial policy. We took the lead in this fight, and supported workers from the manufacturing and steel industry who were victims of plant closures. We called for a re-industrialisation policy and denounced the financialisation of the economy, calling for mechanisms to be put in place that would protect workers from abusive dismissals.

The high level of youth unemployment is a scandal. We were the driving force behind the Youth Employment Initiative, and we recently obtained an increase in its funding. We also fully supported the extension of Erasmus for the 2014 - 2020 period, and insisted that it included projects to support social inclusion, in particular for refugees and migrants. We were also behind the Commission's proposal to launch a European Student card, and that is now in the pipeline. The idea behind the student card is to complement Erasmus by facilitating the recognition of diplomas and qualifications, and to give access to cultural and educational facilities across Europe. We will continue to support the European Solidarity Corps initiative, promoting social and civic engagement among young people. The S&D Group worked hard to establish rules so that volunteers would enjoy non-profit activities and decent working conditions. We were instrumental in ensuring that this new initiative would have its own budget, without impinging on other well-established and valuable programmes, such as Erasmus.

In our modern societies today, parents are often both working and taking care of their children. It is important for the S&D Group that there is a balance between work and family life. In this regard, we succeeded in convincing the Commission to come forward with a proposal on the work-life balance, which would include well-paid and non-transferable parental leave, and well-paid paternity leave and carers' leave. The Employment and Social Affairs Committee recently adopted an ambitious report on this issue, and it is currently being negotiated with the Council.

Precarious families should no longer exist in our societies, and we have continuously called for a European Child Guarantee for children at risk of poverty. The Child Guarantee would offer free childcare and healthcare, free education, decent housing and proper nutrition for every child at risk.

Our Group has always been committed to gender equality and we have continuously called for more action at EU level - such as a Directive on reducing the gender pay gap. We won the first battle. The Commission has produced an action plan on this issue and we will continue to advocate for the inclusion of the gender equality dimension across all EU policies, including budgetary aspects as well.

Furthermore, we have been instrumental in building a majorities in the European Parliament to resolutely defend sexual reproductive health and rights, including access to safe and legal abortion.

We have taken numerous initiatives to combat violence against women, and we fully support the Istanbul Convention. We stand firm in the fight against sexism in public advertisements, and in preventing and combatting mobbing and sexual harassment in the framework of the MeToo campaign. We strongly support the protection of vulnerable groups of women such as refugees and asylum seekers, or victims of sexual abuse, trafficking and labour exploitation. On workers' health and safety, we improved the Directive on carcinogens and mutagens by including repro-toxic substances in the scope.

In the transport sector, we worked hard to ensure that social rights and labour laws, as well as the right to training, good working conditions and the right to strike, would not be weakened by EU transport legislation. Recent examples of this are the Port Services regulation, rules governing the aviation sector, and the fourth railway package. We strongly defend the same principles for truck drivers in the scope of the mobility package.

"Our Group has always been committed to gender equality and we have continuously called for more action at EU level."



Zita Gurmai, President PES Women, and **Cécile Kyenge**, S&D MEP



Iratxe García Pérez, S&D MEP



Edouard Martin, S&D MEP



Marie Arena and **Julie Ward**, S&D MEPs with **Josef Weidenholzer**, S&D Vice-President



Together event, Brussels, October 2017

Consumer protection is another policy field where Europe can demonstrate its added value in the daily lives of citizens. Exorbitant roaming charges and extortionate bills for international phone calls are now a thing of the past. This is thanks to our persistent demands and decisive action.

We consistently pushed for and obtained a Commission proposal for an EU-wide collective redress mechanism that is urgently needed to protect consumers. The diesel emissions scandal is a case in point.

The internet has revolutionized our way of life and our economies to such an extent that online safety can be considered as a right for every consumer, and a way to enhance social inclusion.

In this regard, we fought for a robust Website Accessibility Directive, and we are negotiating with the Council for a broader Accessibility Act, which would improve access to products and services for disabled people and the elderly. We also put an end to unjustified geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on e-consumers' nationality or place of residence.

Cybersecurity is a real issue for public authorities and services, as well as big companies and citizens alike. We worked hard for measures to strengthen cybersecurity, and were pleased with the adoption of the Network and Information Security Directive, which will improve EU-wide cooperation in this field.

The S&D insisted on and achieved a better degree of flexibility in the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact. This was our response to the unnecessary harsh austerity measures and the absurd economic inflexibility that were imposed by conservative forces in Europe. They were supported in the Parliament by an ad hoc coalition made up of the EPP, ALDE and Eurosceptic groups. Guided by our golden rule, we obtained the right for countries in the Economic and Monetary Union to temporarily deviate from the existing rules governing a balanced budget and excessive deficit reduction, when this could serve to benefit the recovery of their economy through strategic investment.

NO
TAX HAVENS



A FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

at the service of all, not the greedy few

"The switch to a more sustainable economy is at the top of our political agenda, and we want to make the financial system work towards this goal."

We welcomed the agreement reached between the Eurogroup and Greece on debt relief measures. It was a milestone marking Greece's return to the path of sustainable growth and autonomy. It also signalled an end to austerity, painful sacrifice and social mayhem. We called for an ambitious reform of the Economic and Monetary Union system, in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

In light of the trauma of the 2008 financial crisis, we resolutely called for the establishment of a Eurozone fiscal capacity to strengthen the EMU's ability to mitigate economic shocks. The Commission has now come forward with a legislative proposal for a European Investment Stabilisation Function.

The Banking Union was another of our noteworthy achievements. It assists in stabilising the Eurozone and in securing deeper integration of the EU's financial system. It supervises the banking sector, assesses risks, protects citizens' deposits, limits the need for public risk sharing and the use of taxpayers' money to assist banks affected by crises. We now have on the table a Commission proposal for a European-wide Deposit Insurance Scheme, which would complete this process.

We showed our strong support for citizens affected by abusive financial practices, reacting positively to the petitions from those who were made homeless, while still having to pay mortgages, due to the failings of so-called safe and reliable financial bodies.

Our demand for an investment plan to support jobs and growth was one of our key conditions for lending our support to the Juncker Commission. Four years on, the outcome is quite positive, with the adoption of various strands of funding through the European Fund for Strategic Investments, and the future Invest EU Programme.

These types of funding are for quality projects that promote job creation, as well as economic, social and territorial cohesion. We welcome the extension of the investment target from 315bn to 500bn euros.

The switch to a more sustainable economy is at the top of our political agenda, and we want to make the financial system work towards this goal. So far, our calls

for legislative proposals aimed at boosting investments in low-carbon technologies, and in renewable energies and sustainable businesses have paid off. New legislation will be effective in reshaping the economy in a socially and environmentally- friendly way.

European citizens who have been severely hit by years of austerity and economic recession, have been rightfully outraged by the Panama papers and LuxLeaks scandals.

They revealed the extent of the widespread practices of money laundering, tax evasion, tax avoidance, and unfair tax competition between member states. Our Group had previously sounded the alarm, and condemned such practices. It was thanks to us that subsequently, special committees of inquiry were set up to investigate the scandals.

Furthermore, we were in the driving seat as regards the revision of the Anti-Money Laundering Directive. We wanted to ensure that the public had access to information about owners of companies and trusts. This was to facilitate the identification of those using 'shell' companies for money laundering and tax evasion purposes. We were also fully behind the Directive which set up the automatic exchange of information between tax administrations. This mechanism improved procedures for preventing tax avoidance and tax evasion.

Furthermore, we fought for the country-by-country annual tax reporting of multinationals in the EU to be made public. This type of overview is a way to prevent companies from avoiding taxes using cross-border tactics.

We improved the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, which is comprised of a set of rules for calculating the taxable profits of companies in the EU. It was extended to companies of all sizes, and it urged member states to adopt rules for optimising the recovery of tax income that is currently lost. In response to the rapidly growing digital economy, we further insisted that the Commission come forward with a proposal to ensure that digital companies pay fair taxes. Finally, we successfully called for a Commission proposal to protect whistleblowers across the EU. These are people who come forward to report breaches of EU law in many different fields, including taxation.

"We led on the circular economy package, updating waste management rules with a set of ambitious measures focusing on prevention, reuse and recycling."

Kathleen Van Brempt, S&D Vice President

Eric Andrieu, S&D Vice President



RECONCILING THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Our Group has been consistent in its commitment to the UN's 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. We firmly believe that a clean environment is an essential part of people's well-being, and a matter of solidarity between people and generations. Our socialist approach means that putting an end to the ill treatment of workers and the overuse of our natural resources should go hand in hand, and our political family is the only one able to combine and implement these priorities. In this regard, we successfully earmarked funding for projects for climate action in the context of the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

In line with our unequivocal support for the Paris Agreement, our Group has actively promoted a just transition to a low-carbon economy, and decisively contributed to the improvement of EU legislation on binding greenhouse gas emission reductions, as well as emission performance standards for cars and trucks, as well as emission reductions for other atmospheric pollutants. We demanded that an inquiry committee be set up to investigate the emissions scandal in the car industry, and as a result of our work, measures were put in place to tighten up the approval and surveillance of new cars. We also stood firm in negotiating a fair revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme, to provide better incentives for the decarbonisation of the industry. Facing an uncompromising Council, we also fought hard for more ambitious targets for biofuels.

The EU's energy policy is a potentially big player in the just transition towards sustainable development. Our Group led the negotiations on energy efficiency and renewable energy in the scope of the clean energy package, and successfully obtained much more ambitious targets for 2030 than those first pledged by the EU. We encouraged consumers' domestic production of renewable energy, and made it an obligation for member states to facilitate energy efficiency measures for the poorest and most vulnerable people. This is fully in line with the manifesto on energy poverty, adopted by our Group in 2016.

Furthermore, in our approach to agricultural policy, we made sure to put a strong focus on environmental, health and sustainable development aspects. This was the case when we discussed legislation that was part of the Common Agriculture Policy reform. We managed to take the lead in ensuring that the reforms were in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, and we encouraged the production of healthy food. We were successful in defining legislation that would safeguard genuine organic production and farming, and would for example, protect farmers against the monopolies created by major seed companies. We will keep on calling for and insisting on an ambitious legal framework for the protection of farmers against abusive practices in the food supply chain.

We adopted the same vision when revising the Common Fisheries Policy. We worked hard to promote sustainability in the industry, to enhance the conservation of natural resources, to ensure the traceability of food products, and to provide a decent income and fair working conditions for fishermen. Our Group was influential in the way it steered the revision of the Common Fisheries Policy towards a more environmentally sustainable path. However, since then and despite our efforts, we regret the poor level of implementation of the CFP in this context. Furthermore we also banned the cruel and unsustainable practice of electric pulse fishing.

We took a similar approach on pesticides and herbicides, in light of the findings of the EP's special committee of inquiry. The committee examined the EU's authorisation procedure for pesticides, and we stood by our principles, defending the health and wellbeing of our citizens as a priority. We condemned the stance taken by the Commission and the member states which was clearly in favour of the big companies that produce these potentially toxic chemicals. We also called for more transparency in the EU's risk assessment procedures.

During negotiations on the new European law on transmissible animal diseases, we linked the need for better public health to animal well-being. We also strengthened EU laws on food and food contact materials, as well as on the quality and safety of feed and water, coupled with better implementation and control. We also opposed the Commission's proposal on food from cloned animals and their offspring, as there were not enough safeguards and restrictions.

On health matters, we made sure that the legislation on the assessment of medical devices was updated and fit for purpose. We also took the lead in calling for and driving through legislation establishing joint clinical assessments of health technologies across the EU. We were also effective in calling for a coordinated health action plan against the worrying development of antimicrobial resistance in both humans and livestock.

We led on the circular economy package, updating waste management rules with a set of ambitious measures focusing on prevention, reuse and recycling. We insisted on higher recycling targets for urban waste as well as specific targets for other waste streams including packaging and plastics. Promoting a circular economy where the value of products are kept in circulation, safeguards our natural resources and demonstrates our commitment to sustainable economic and social development. We have also been strong advocates for reducing food waste, in line with the UN SDG reduction targets.

Transport has a major impact on our environment, and the S&D Group called for a radical switch to more sustainable modes of transport, including alternative fuels infrastructure, a more rapid transition towards electric vehicles with ambitious quantitative targets, and the full implementation of the "polluter pays" principle. We also called for ambitious road safety measures, in view of the 2050 no fatalities target for Europe. Safety was already at the top of our agenda when we voted for the Regulation on the European Aviation Safety Agency.

During negotiations on the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, our Group deeply regretted the reluctance on the part of member states to support a budget that would fully reflect and support European ambitions. Sadly, we were proved right.

AMBITION AND COHESION

at the heart of our European project

"In view of the forthcoming multiannual framework, we will continue to insist on a budget that is robust and effective, and that is governed by more flexible rules and procedures."



Antonio Costa, Prime Minister, Portugal and Udo Bullmann, S&D President



Together event, Brussels, October 2017

The EU's inability to deal adequately with the many crises that took place over the last years was aggravated by its budgetary limitations. In view of the forthcoming multiannual financial framework, we will continue to insist on a budget that is robust and effective, and is governed by more flexible rules and procedures that facilitate its implementation. We will also continue to insist on the need for a system of own resources in the future, as well as mid-term reviews for updating priorities according to changing needs or new developments. Such priorities should include action to tackle unemployment or to support sustainable development. The MFF 2021 - 2027 proposal falls far short of meeting the needs of a stronger and fairer Europe. We are deeply disappointed by the Council's rigid stance and unwillingness to move. There is a risk that decisions could be postponed to the next legislature. We will therefore continue to fight to find an adequate solution.

Sound regional policies are essential if we want to further encourage solidarity and cohesion across Europe. The many projects and programmes funded by the EU can give citizens and communities a sense of its added-value to their daily lives, making them feel part of the European project. Our Group has worked consistently on a range of issues; we proposed an urban agenda that would promote social inclusion, demographic change and sustainability. With regard to cohesion policy post-2020, we are calling for adequate budgetary resources and simplified decision-making procedures. We also insist on the active involvement of all stakeholders including NGOs and local, regional and national authorities. Employment, climate change, demography and the integration of migrants are key priorities. We are also determined that there be a focus on macro-regional policies, which act as an effective intermediary layer between the EU and its neighbours as a whole.



Together conference, Valencia, Spain, September 2017



School of Democracy, Italy, June 2018





Tanja Fajon and **Elena Valenciano**, S&D Vice-Presidents,
UN world refugee day, Brussels, June 2018

PASSIONATE DEFENDERS

of European values, citizens' rights and the rule of law



The European project is at a crossroads in its history. Its fundamental values - European solidarity, human rights and democracy - are being threatened by populists and extremists, who are exploiting the migration crisis for their own questionable aims. It is high time for democrats and pro-Europeans to mobilise and show their absolute commitment to the values and principles that have guaranteed decades of peace, prosperity and democracy. Our Group has seen off many challenges in defence of these principles.

We have repeatedly denounced the current Polish and Hungarian governments for their deplorable anti-democratic behaviour. We were fully behind the European Parliament's condemnation of their actions, and we mustered the overwhelmingly broad support for the vote that triggered the Art.7(1) procedure against Hungary. The Council will now decide if there is a risk of Hungary breaching EU values.

Migration and the refugee crisis have been at the top of the agenda for some time, and the European Union has been unable to come up with a long-term plan. Our Group has continuously fought for humanitarian solutions. We advocated for an integrated approach to migration based on solidarity and responsibility-sharing, as well as respect for fundamental rights, a balanced approach towards third countries, and generally a more positive vision of what migration can offer. Better integration into our societies, our education systems and our labour markets should be at the top of the agenda, rather than obsessive security policies. Our Group has proudly welcomed young refugees among our trainees. We call on the EU to defend these principles within the United Nations. Furthermore, at international level we demanded the full recognition of climate migrants, supported by an international legal protection instrument.

As regards asylum, we fought for a thorough reform of the unworkable Dublin regulation and other laws, including reception standards, and the conditions under which asylum seekers would qualify for international protection.

We will continue to call for the adoption of legislation on Humanitarian visas for those seeking international or humanitarian protection. Such visas would be delivered by the embassy or consulate of any EU member state, and would give asylum seekers the freedom to apply for protection in the member state concerned.

We believe that citizens who provide humanitarian assistance should be praised, not criminalised. We therefore called on the Commission to come forward with guidelines to prevent the criminalisation of citizens who give this type of assistance.

We are deeply committed to the defence of minorities and have consistently fought against anti-semitism. We will continue our fight for respect for the Roma people, and for the rights and dignity of LGBTI people.

Our Group was instrumental in building a broad majority within the EP in support of the resolution condemning neo-fascist violence in Europe. It denounced the increase in extreme-right violence, and deplored the 'normalisation' of these ideologies, and other forms of intolerance. The resolution also stressed that the EU and its member states have legal instruments in place for taking action. The Council Framework Decision on combatting certain forms of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law is one example. This gives the Commission the power to launch infringement procedures against those member states that have not complied with the provisions laid down in this framework decision.

The protection of privacy was another battle we took up and won. We successfully managed to revise and improve the legislation on personal data protection. In this respect, we welcome the entry into force of the General Data Protection Regulation, setting global data protection standards, to give EU citizens more control over their own personal data, and improve their security both online and offline. We also took a strong stance on the issue of individual privacy in the digital era, in light of the Facebook/Cambridge Analytica scandal, and many other cases of online breaches of privacy and identity theft. It was our Group that led the debate and mobilised a broad parliamentary majority to back a strong resolution demanding action to protect citizens' privacy. It also called

for urgent action to counter election meddling and threats from an army of trolls and hackers, spreading online disinformation and undermining democracy. We are unfortunately dealing with a Council that favours industry and its unethical business practices, rather than individual privacy concerns. We have time and again defended citizens' rights when negotiating new laws. For example, on Passenger Name Record transfer and processing, we were consistent in making sure that our right to privacy, and more broadly our rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, would not be endangered.

We believe that justice and security go hand in hand with citizens' rights. In our view, and contrary to what the Eurosceptics believe, we consider European cooperation as a real asset, and we successfully ensured the setting up of the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

We believe in the full participation of citizens in the democratic process, and the European Citizens' Initiative is a unique and innovative instrument in this respect. We supported the new proposal for a regulation addressing the shortcomings identified over the past years, in order to make it more accessible and less burdensome. We also fought to make it open to young people aged 16 and over.

Large parts of our European laws need to be updated and adapted to the digital era. Our Group took the lead in the revision of the Copyright Directive. We fought for an approach that fairly balanced the many interests at stake: consumers, authors and performers, European culture, freedom of speech on the web and European competitiveness in the digital era. The rapid development of robotics opens up new perspectives to our economies and citizens, but it also raises a number of questions as to its potential impact on the labour market, and what it means for taxation and for our social systems. Our Group anticipated these risks, and has called on the Commission to come up with a legislative proposal that would adequately address these aspects. We will maintain political pressure in this regard.

"Better integration into our societies, our education systems and our labour markets should be at the top of the agenda, rather than obsessive security policies."



Mercedes Bresso, S&D Vice President



PROMOTING PROGRESSIVE EUROPEAN VALUES

in the world



Jeppe Koffod, S&D Vice President

We firmly believe in the important role the EP plays in inter-parliamentary diplomacy, and we congratulate the EU's active presence on the international stage, led by the High Representative. We have spearheaded many initiatives with Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, with a view to promoting stability, security and non-proliferation in the Middle East. We are also committed to the Western Balkans, and to constructive dialogue with members of the Russian Duma. We have also been working closely with our neighbours in the South, with the aim of guaranteeing stability, consolidating democracy, and furthering social and economic development. We are committed to combatting terrorism and to the effective management of both the refugee crisis and the migration process in Northern Africa.

"We called on the EU to advocate for a strong link between trade considerations and social and environmental concerns."

For some years now, we have been active in developing a more meaningful EU partnership with Africa. We have organised 'Africa' weeks where partners who share the same progressive values and vision come together to discuss numerous issues: how to strengthen democracy, human rights and good governance; how to develop sustainable economies, advance human development, empower African women and young people, and how to expand fair trade and promote sustainable development and climate action.

The Israeli - Palestinian conflict and the Middle East peace process remain key issues on our international agenda. Here again we have used parliamentary diplomacy to strengthen the European Union's political role, and to build bridges with our sister parties on both sides. We are very committed to supporting civil society initiatives for peace based on cooperation between the Israelis and Palestinians. In the European Parliament, we were instrumental in building progressive majorities that defended the principles of peace, mutual respect, democracy and human rights. We also campaigned against the expulsion of Bedouin communities from the occupied Palestinian territories.

We remain staunch defenders of human rights. We led the European Parliament debates that demanded an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia for its flagrant breach of international humanitarian law in Yemen. We had repeatedly voiced our concerns about developments in Turkey, which led to the European Parliament formally suspending accession talks. We have consistently supported the International Criminal Court, and the international criminal justice system. We have always held the EP's Sakharov Prize in high esteem, as it is an important means of honouring and paying tribute to the courage shown, and sacrifices made by defenders of human rights around the world. In this regard, we are extremely proud that we were successful in our support for Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege, both of whom received the Sakharov Prize, and have gone on to receive the Nobel Peace Prize as well.

In the field of defence and security, we supported a balanced multilateralism and fully backed EU - NATO cooperation. We focused on the new threats posed by cyberspace, and the need for the EU to protect itself against disinformation and cyber-attacks. We also took a firm stance against "killer robots".

In this globalised world, we have been consistently committed to an alternative model for trade policy, where external trade would be a vector of European standards and values, rather than the Trojan horse of social and environmental dumping and ethically questionable practices. We called on the EU to advocate for a strong link between trade considerations and social and environmental concerns within the WTO. During the revision of the Trade Defence Instrument, we succeeded in securing stronger provisions related to anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures, along with the appropriate safeguards for social and environmental standards, and a more important role for the European Parliament and trade unions in this process. We also insisted on more transparency in the negotiation of trade agreements.

The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement was a good example of how we ensured that EU standards would not be lowered, in particular regarding labour rights, the environment, agriculture, and in key manufacturing sectors as well. Due to our insistence, we also managed to get rid of the dubious Investor State Dispute Settlement system, securing instead a fair and transparent public system. This was a clear political victory for our Group, where we showed the Commission that trade agreements should not have any potential negative consequences for our economic, social and environmental model. They must also be negotiated in a much more transparent way.

In the context of an EU - US relationship jeopardised by an unconventional and confrontational US Presidency, we advocate for the conditional relaunch of trade negotiations with the removal of the illegal US tariffs on steel and aluminium as a prerequisite. We still oppose

the idea of a “light” Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and would only be prepared to accept a comprehensive and balanced trade deal that benefitted both sides of the Atlantic, while fully meeting our conditions.

As regards China, we voiced concerns about the risks of unfair practices and dumping as a result of its new status as a market economy. We were afraid that many of the existing anti-dumping and anti-subsidy rules imposed so far would be abolished. We therefore succeeded in securing stringent guarantees and provisions to protect our economies against this giant that still has a state-controlled economy.

We consider Latin America as an excellent partner that shares many of our values. We continue to strengthen our trade relations with this part of the world, by including robust anti-corruption provisions in our various trade agreements.

The measures adopted by the EU to fight the trade in conflict minerals was a major success for our Group. Too many natural resources are traded regardless of their origin and the consequences. It fuels conflicts, and gives rise to forced labour and sexual violence. We succeeded in transforming the weak Commission proposal that supported voluntary-based action into a binding law that forces companies to act in a transparent way, so that consumers know if the products they buy have been ethically sourced. More generally, we insisted that a clause referring to respect for human rights be included as a prerequisite for trade agreements, and when granting developing countries preferential trade access to the EU market. We also closely followed the proper implementation of the United Nations guiding principles on business and human rights, and we continue to support an international legally binding instrument in this respect.

Development policy is an important area that deserves more than ever our undivided attention. We were instrumental in defining an ambitious EU agenda in this regard. The new European and inter-institutional consensus on development confirms important key principles, such as the fight against poverty and inequality, the need to address the roots of migration, and the advancement of sustainable and inclusive development objectives. We achieved the proper implementation of these principles in the European Fund for Sustainable Development, mobilising further investments for Africa and neighbouring countries.

We fought for the full inclusion of gender equality mainstreaming in the EU’s external action policy, and managed to defeat all attempts by reactionary forces in this Parliament to exclude sexual and reproductive rights and health from its scope. For us, access to education for all remains at the heart of development policy. We succeeded in drawing attention to the need for humanitarian education in conflict or natural disaster areas, thanks to our EDUCA campaign, and we secured increased funding as well.

Relations with the ACP and Africa in particular are a priority for our Group. In this regard, we are taking the lead in the preparation of the post-Cotonou ACP - EU partnership. Here again we insist on building a shared commitment to democracy, human rights, good governance, a real parliamentary process, and the comprehensive involvement of civil society.

Following the tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh, we put pressure on the Commission to urgently bring forward an EU law to lay down standards for the responsible management of the garment industry.



Enrique Guerrero Salom, President of the Global Progressive Forum

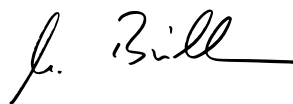


Victor Boştinaru, S&D Vice-President

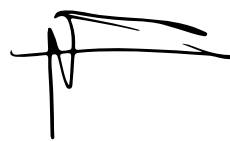
THE WAY FORWARD

These are just some of our many achievements in the European Parliament to date. It is now time to look forward to the many challenges ahead. We all know that the European project is at a crossroads. We all know that our values of social justice, solidarity, peace and democracy are at stake. The S&D Group has adopted a Battle Plan to fight the 2019 European elections. It calls for a radical change in Europe. It is based on furthering a sustainable model of development, and putting a new social contract at the very heart of Europe. It aims to combine social fairness and the preservation of our planet for the current generations, and the generations to come. We must now get ready to proudly and fiercely fight for what matters, and defend this project.

The S&D Group's work is supported by a secretariat of almost 300 people from all 28 EU member states. These deeply motivated, politically committed and highly-skilled professionals are at the service of the members of the S&D Group. They ensure the continuity of our work from one mandate to another. Their role is to advise the members in the political decision-making process, and to implement the decisions taken by the S&D Group's bodies.



Udo Bullmann
S&D Group Leader



Javier Moreno Sánchez
S&D Group Secretary General

ABOUT THE S&D GROUP

The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (the S&D Group) is the second largest political group in the European Parliament with 187 members from all 28 EU Member States.

We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness. We campaign for social justice, jobs and growth, consumer rights, sustainable development, financial market reforms and human rights, to create a stronger and more democratic Europe, and a better future for all citizens.



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Secretary General, S&D Group in
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