

TOGETHER STATEMENTS

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A Message from
the S&D Group,
the **#EuropeTogether**
Family and European
Citizens



TOGETHER

A new direction for a progressive Europe
Stand up for our future!

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FOREWORD



Dear friends,

For some time now, it has been clear that we need radical change in Europe.

We started on a journey back in 2016, on the back of a challenging blow for Europe. How did we get to a point where the majority of citizens in one country voted not just against the EU, but to leave the EU? The status quo is clearly no longer an option.

With our Europe Together initiative we have had time to reflect, but more importantly, we have had time to listen. We are listening to everyday people from all over Europe. The messages that people have given, online and in person, are encouraging, supportive, forward-looking and, occasionally, critical. But we need to be critical if we are to get better. We need to listen to people, talk to them about how we can make a difference, and take them with us on the journey towards change.

An important part of the Europe Together platform is our declarations. This is where we unite the progressive family and send a strong message by adopting a Statement. This is also where you come in. You have contributed your ideas on the way forward, and you have influenced the direction we are taking. Whether it is on strengthening the Social Model, tax justice, sustainable living or defending democracy, we have had a great response from people all over Europe who wanted to have their say. With these declarations, we will take your message to our political family to promote your ideas at the heart of the European elections.

The Europe Together journey does not stop here. We can only achieve the change we need, if we continue to unite the progressive family with a movement led by everyday people. Now more than ever, the progressive voices need to be heard, not just in capital cities from politicians, but from everyone, in all villages and towns, wherever they are in Europe. We are going to build on the movement we have started. We are going to keep listening, keep talking with people, keep taking on new ideas and keep fighting for the progressive change Europe needs.

Together we can.

In comradeship,

Udo

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

OUR JOINT BATTLE

#EuropeTogether

The Europe Together initiative was launched in 2016 just after the Brexit referendum when we saw Europe was at a crossroads. We needed to do more to have constant conversations and direct dialogue with citizens. Ever since, the Europe Together platform has been growing through regional and local events and online. With the Europe Together initiative, we connect with people and move beyond Brussels to reach out to citizens in different towns and cities throughout Europe.

Participation is a two-way street. We inform people about our key priorities and achievements, and, more importantly, we listen to their ideas. This series of interactive debates on cornerstone issues, bring together local politicians, our MEPs and leading thinkers, academics, activists, young people and NGOs to discuss and debate how best to tackle the challenges ahead.

We have covered a lot of ground on the Europe Together journey so far, from Brussels to Prague, Rome to Gothenburg, Carcassonne to Krakow and Vienna to Valencia, we have a positive reaction and we have learnt a lot about what people want and need from Europe. We are reaching out to people of all ages and from all walks of life. With our Go Local events, where smaller groups of people can have even more of a say, we have been able to speak to even more people, such as in Voru near the Estonian border with Russia, Chemnitz in Germany and Košice in Slovakia. Throughout our 34 Go Local events and counting, we have managed to listen to more than 15 national points of view to add to our Together statements.

We focus on the issues that matter to people. We are talking about democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights. We are discussing ways to build a new sustainable economic and social model for a progressive Europe and sharing ideas on how to eradicate poverty and inequalities. We are looking at ways to promote a decent vision for asylum and immigration policy, building a fair digital economy and supporting a strong Europe as a leading global actor.

The events go along with an online platform (www.europe-together.eu) so that everyone has the chance to have their views heard on whatever issue is important to them. We adopt Together statements as a collection of ideas for our progressive family. As a way of getting more young people involved, we have Together Ambassadors who are people with a passion for a progressive future for Europe. This is our way of involving those who might not already be politically active and building up a network across Europe.

On social media, you can find out about everything we are doing by using #EuropeTogether and you can follow our events live when they are web-streamed.

The Together journey continues with your ideas. Get involved. Have your voice heard.

#EuropeTogether we can!



A FAIRER EUROPE

The Challenge

For too long the interests of the super-rich and big corporations have dominated. Faced with falling living standards, growing job insecurity, and shrinking public services, people across Europe are under increasing strain. Europe is a rich continent, but that does not mean much when many people do not benefit from this wealth.

These are not just words: The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion stands at an incredible 23.5% of the EU population, including 25 million children. Child poverty means going to school on an empty stomach, feeling stressed because parents cannot pay the rent and spending the winter months in cold homes.

While the rich get richer, the number of workers with fixed-term and part-time contracts, often involuntary, has increased over the past 15 years. Labour rights have been curtailed and uncertainty has increased through new forms of employment, precarious work agreements and employment contracts where the number of working hours is not specified. For many, there is very limited social protection and little or no prospect of advancement in the labour market. In these instances, work does not provide people with either security or fulfilment.

Our Message

We need a strong and unwavering commitment at EU, national and local level to change these injustices. Fairness means a happier, healthier, and more successful population. Nobody should be left behind. Europe must look after its workers, children, youth, and most vulnerable people. We have to join forces for a future where every child in Europe has equal opportunities to grow and prosper. We need to do more to create a society where all people can thrive regardless of ethnic background and free of all forms of discrimination. We need to work harder to improve the daily lives of the many against the greed of the few.

We must build a fairer Europe where everybody is guaranteed security at work, to be decently paid for the work we do, and to live our lives with the dignity we all deserve. Together, we can shape a Europe that is inclusive, open, honest, sustainable and that works for the many and not just for the privileged few.

Together, we stand for:

- **Fair working conditions for all!**

There must be decent working conditions in all forms of employment and wages that grow in line with productivity gains, enabling workers to meet their needs and those of their families. Every worker in the EU should receive a living wage that not only provides for the mere necessities of basic food, shelter and clothing, but that is enough to cover healthcare, education and transport. There must be high levels of social protection and adequate health and safety in the workplace. We must ensure dignity at work.

- **Better protection of labour and social rights**

Better protection of labour and social rights in The European Pillar for Social Rights is essential. Concrete measures to eradicate social dumping must be taken before the end of the current term of the European Parliament. Social security must be guaranteed for all Europeans, wherever they choose to work. The European Treaties should be upgraded to include a Social Protocol to ensure that fundamental rights take precedence over economic freedoms.

- **Fighting Inequality**

Rising income and wealth inequalities have no place in a sustainable Europe. A European sustainable development strategy must encompass a broad-ranging strategy to reduce inequalities in income and wealth within and among countries, and develop a European-wide initiative for the eradication of poverty by 2030.

- **Closing the gender gap**

By assuring equal treatment and non-discrimination throughout our Union, we can ensure the gender gap is a thing of the past.

- **European Child Guarantee**

We need urgent and decisive action to fight child poverty. We need to make sure Europe provides suitable protection for children and adequate support for families. We must invest in early childhood education and care as well as ensuring high-quality and affordable educational opportunities. Every child at risk of poverty must have access to free health care, free childcare, decent housing, and adequate nutrition. We need to **establish a European Child Guarantee**, which ensures that every child has access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing, and proper nutrition.

We are determined to deliver a fairer and more compassionate society, where **the many can grow and prosper together!**



STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL MODEL

The Challenge

A right-wing dominated EU has focused for too long on the interests of the elite, the super-rich and the big corporations. This has put the European project at risk. Europeans are struggling with decreasing living standards, declining purchasing power and the rise of precarious work, and are suffering hardships created by austerity policies. Together, we can shape a Europe that is inclusive, open, just, and sustainable and that works for the many and not just for the few.

Our Message

A decisive change and transformation in political will, direction and policy are urgent. We, the progressives, are committed to make this change happen. Europe must have a heart that looks after its workers, its children, its youth, its elderly, the most vulnerable ones and all those who lack opportunities in life. Dignity and living wages for workers, quality education and a future for the youth, equal treatment for women and men, the protection of children, quality care and a decent retirement for the elderly, opportunities for those discriminated and inclusivity for those excluded. These must be the priorities of the European project.

The S&D Group strongly demands a concrete social agenda to strengthen the European Social Model.

• Concrete Legislation

We reiterate our call for a Social Protocol to be annexed to the Treaties to ensure that fundamental social rights take precedence over economic freedoms. The European Pillar of Social Rights has created the momentum for this to happen and we cannot afford to miss this chance. But we need to make sure that the Pillar is translated into concrete legislative instruments and economic, fiscal, and investment measures that reduce inequalities and ensure a fair distribution of wealth and profits.

• Fair Wages

The deterioration of the quality of jobs all over Europe is unsustainable. Living wages, social protection, job security, occupational health and safety, as well as an adequate balance between work and private life must be ensured for all workers. In this context, we insist in our call for a directive on decent working conditions in all forms of employment and for wages that enable workers to meet their needs and those of their families.

• Strong Trade Unions

A solid social Union will emerge only with the existence of strong trade unions, the participation of employees in company matters and a strengthening of collective agreements, as well as a dialogue with the actors of the social economy. The quality of social dialogue must be boosted at all levels and action is needed to ensure the respect and the promotion of unionisation and collective bargaining across the EU.



We must ensure the respect and the promotion of collective bargaining so that it reaches as many workers as possible across our Union.

• High Quality Welfare & Social Investment

High quality welfare systems and public services as well as social investments are extremely important if Europe wants to remain both fair and competitive. A social protection floor for all European citizens must be established. Universal access to public, solidarity-based pension systems, quality health care systems, and minimum income schemes must also be granted to all.

• Fundamental Rights

We are strongly committed to fighting all forms of discrimination and to defending fundamental rights for everyone. We need to close the gaps that affect women on employment and pay.



- **Fair working conditions in a digital age**

Fair, socially sustainable work and real employee participation in shaping working conditions are more important than ever in digital platforms and in any other sector. Workers must have democratic influence over the governance of work. The benefits of digitalisation must be shared broadly and equitably and workers in the digital sector must enjoy the same rights and working conditions as those in other sectors. The EU must ensure that platform businesses comply with national and European legislation, clarify the employment status of platform-based workers and protect their working conditions as well as their right to organise and negotiate collective agreements.

- **Guaranteed Free Movement**

The right to a free movement of citizens and workers is a core European value and a fundamental right of European citizens. It is also a pillar of the success of the Union's single market. We are firmly committed to fight discrimination and the exploitation of workers as well as social dumping, such those who are posted. The principle of equal treatment for both intra-EU mobile workers and third-country nationals is fundamental in order to ensure both the non-discrimination and the integration of migrant workers, as well as fair competition.

- **Decent Working Conditions**


Assure decent working conditions in all forms of employment, guaranteeing every worker access to a core set of labour and social rights, which follow the principle of equal pay for equal work.

- **Work-Life Balance**

We must ensure the reconciliation of personal and work life.

- **Ensuring sustainable financing of social policies**

- Provide public support for developing sectors with important employment potential.
- Broaden the financial base of welfare systems by shifting towards new sources of tax revenue.
- Establish quality benchmarks for national unemployment insurance schemes.
- Enable the public employment service to have adequate capacity for direct contact with business.



Europe must have a heart
that looks after its workers,
its children, its youth, its elderly,
the most vulnerable ones
and all those who lack
opportunities in life.



STRENGTHENING COHESION

The Challenge

The decrease in investment by 15% in the EU since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2007 and the increase of the gap between the poorest and richest regions in Europe are untenable. Europe needs a credible and ambitious investment agenda which creates sustainable growth, quality jobs and drives an ambitious environmental policy. Launching such an investment agenda would be unthinkable without a robust and strengthened EU Cohesion policy. Cohesion policy, is the main EU investment policy and is the most significant expression of solidarity between EU countries.

Our Message

Think outside the box! Prepare for the future!

Cohesion policy must be part of a co-ordinated global stimulus programme aimed at strengthening the ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution in Europe. We need to better use a new range of technologies that are fusing the physical, digital, and biological worlds as well as to modernise EU's ageing infrastructure. We need to set ambitious targets for the digital and ecological transition, to tackle climate change and in the field of research and innovation.

Place Human Capital First!

The future cohesion policy needs a focus on quality education, training and vocational training in order to fight youth unemployment, promote gender balance as well as social inclusion, to combat poverty and to make the work force resilient to negative consequences of globalisation.

More Funds for Cohesion Policy!

A stronger cohesion policy obviously requires it maintaining its share of the EU budget, based mainly on own resources and respecting the principles of transparency and accountability. An EU budget which amounts only to a fiftieth of the national budgets will not provide EU-wide answers to the global challenges related to climate change, migration or globalisation. We reiterate our demand for a Golden Rule according to which co-financing provided by local and regional authorities in the context of the EU Cohesion Policy is excluded from the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact.

Evaluate the Quality of Progress, not just the "Numbers"!

As indicated by the Social Progress Index, which measures the extent to which countries provide for social and environmental needs, regions with the highest GDP per capita are not by default the top performers in terms of social progress, and some of them have now highly weakened territories for which the European cohesion objective would make sense. We therefore stress the need to include this Index as a GDP-complementing measure in the shaping of the new generation of European Structural and Investment Funds. Demographic, social, environmental, and geographical disparities should be taken into account for eligibility criteria at regional and sub-regional

levels, in particular in relation to the European Pillar of Social Rights currently under development and the implementation of the COP 21 agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A Participative Cohesion Policy!

Helping to give stakeholders a voice in decisions that concern them directly, the "partnership principle" lies at the heart of the EU's Cohesion Policy. This principle must be reinforced at all stages of planning and implementation of cohesion policy with regions, cities, communities, social partners, chambers of commerce, and associations.

"No borders" within our Union!

Cohesion Policy should dedicate a substantially increased share of its envelope to European Territorial Cooperation, i.e. cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, as it encourages solidarity between EU regions, neighbours and facilitates the exchange of best practices.

Serve the Public Interest, not Private Profits!

Cohesion Policy is based on regional strategies aimed at increasing economic, social, and territorial cohesion and thereby ensuring the balanced and harmonious development of the EU as a whole. It supports investment through "patient capital" as part of a long-term approach to fund basic needs. Such an approach does not fit the logic of making quick profits as in private finance. Thus, grants must remain the main policy tool of the cohesion policy.

Do Away with Red Tape!

The complexity of cohesion policy management, and the need for further simplification, are the main challenges ahead of us. Applying for EU funds should be easy, particularly in order to avoid smaller entities, such as SMEs, associations and small municipalities, being deterred from applying.



SUSTAINABLE LIVING

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The Challenge

Today, our economic system disregards the planet and human health and creates social inequalities. Therefore, our economy must radically change. Socialists and Democrats place this radical change of our economic system at the heart of their political engagement. A cleaner environment, healthier food or quality jobs cannot become a privilege for those who can afford it. There can be no sustainable economy if it benefits some, while excluding others.

Poverty, homelessness, unemployment and energy management are the issues to be tackled throughout Europe by adopting solutions at the local, regional and national levels.

Our Message

Sustainability must become a central driver of new equality and cohesion across our societies and within them. The future of the European Union itself will depend on its ability to embrace this radical change. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 provide a policy framework for a more sustainable futures. This is why we call for a thorough and visionary European sustainable development strategy for the years to come, based on innovation, transformative investments, strong social rights and convergence and the eradication of social and ecological dumping.

With enhanced involvement of cities, progress in the fight against climate change, environment pollution, loss of natural resources and social injustice will be enormous. Poverty, homelessness, unemployment and energy management have to be top priorities. Cities throughout Europe need concrete plans to adapt to climate change.

Therefore we will:

- **Promote and defend policies which enable the European Union to successfully decouple economic development from greenhouse gas emissions**

We need to undergo a profound transition towards a more sustainable, zero-carbon economy based on renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency. For the EU to remain within its carbon budget, plans for any additional coal-fired generating capacity must be shelved. All currently operating coal plants as well as nuclear power plants must go off grid by a fixed end date.

- **Call for doubling the total available financial resources for investment in economic change over the coming years**

A fully fledged European sustainable investment strategy building on the European Fund for Strategic Investment, a sufficiently funded European budget and stronger national public investments via a more flexible "investment clause" for sustainable investments in the Growth and Stability Pact, must collectively achieve this objective.

- **Continue our fight to protect our citizens from pollution and harmful chemicals while protecting the rich biodiversity of our countries**

When dealing with our citizens' health we will work hard to ensure that stricter rules are enforced to reduce exposure to air pollutants, especially for the most vulnerable groups in our society.

- **Stimulate the move towards a circular economy**

We will strive for an economy which re-uses materials and has positive effects on the path to a zero-carbon economy, both lowering the energy consumption of industry and creating new sustainable, qualified jobs in industries that reuse, recycle or up-value discarded products and resources.

- **Introduce clean urban transport to ensure sustainable mobility for all**

Reducing transport needs by promoting proximity and mixed-uses schemes, prioritising non-motorised 'walkable', 'cyclable' cities, supporting affordable and efficient public transport accessible for all, notably for deprived neighbourhoods, we need Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) quotas for car manufacturers with the aim of phasing out new CO₂-emitting cars by 2035.

- **Equip city councils with the necessary tools for a real say in EU policy making**

Cities play a pivotal role in making sure we achieve our international sustainability commitments that all our governments have pledged themselves to. That is why urban knowledge should be more systematically included in the design, implementation, and review of EU policies. In addition, European cities should work together and share their experiences with cities from all over the world.



- **To maximise the full potential of the Urban Agenda and find solutions to common European challenges and objectives**

Although the EU's Urban Agenda was welcomed by European mayors, it has not yet lived up to its full potential. The Urban Agenda should be de-bureaucratised. The agenda should be more transparent on how the input provided by local officials is included and clear goals for cooperation should be defined. Moreover, the EU and the Member States should do more to facilitate inter-city cooperation and partnerships that pave the way to sustainable economic and social initiatives. This can be done by creating or adapting legal frameworks that remove obstacles created by national borders. Furthermore, EU policy analysis should take the realities of city life and growing inequalities into account in order to develop better targeted European policy approaches.

- **To use ports as vectors for an efficient and ambitious European green economy**

Ports occupy a unique place in global supply chains, offering unexplored opportunities to influence the sustainability of these supply chains. Imports of fossil fuels and raw materials by sea could be gradually replaced by renewable sources and land-based secondary materials from the "urban mine". Depleted oil and gas fields near European shores could be used for the storage of harmful industrial CO₂-emissions. Waste heat from energy intensive port industries has to be harvested in industrial ecosystems and used as a heating source for nearby cities via district

heating. As multimodal nodes, ports are perfectly suited to bundle and shift goods towards clean and energy efficient modes of transport. The EU should support the role ports have to play in the transition to a fair, climate neutral and circular economy. A revised Alternative Fuels Infrastructure directive should foster the decarbonisation of transport via the supply of alternative fuels and shore-side electricity. An EU wide road-charging scheme has to internalise the environmental and congestion costs of the hinterland freight transport, stimulating innovative logistics and a sustainable modal shift. The ETS-innovation fund needs to support investments in energy cascades (valorising waste heat) and the transport, utilisation and storage of CO₂.

- **To create a diverse, desegregated urban environment**

As cities deal with the transition to a sustainable economy and city environment, it is important that costs and benefits are distributed fairly between their inhabitants. Planning the city of the future should go hand in hand with envisioning better, healthier, more equal, and workable living spaces. In an urban context characterised by super-diversity no one should be left behind. We are committed to connect and reconnect city inhabitants separated by different social backgrounds, or due to their different ages, genders, abilities, incomes, migration histories or religion. Sustainable housing, education, jobs, transport, public services, tourism are essential to our vision of Europe's future.



We call for a thorough and visionary European sustainable development strategy for the years to come, based on innovation, transformative investments, strong social rights and convergence and the eradication of social and ecological dumping.



PRESERVING OUR PLANET



The Challenge

The abuse of natural resources, driven by short term profits and the selfish interests of the few, ruins the quality of our land and the well-being of our people. We know that climate change, if not properly mitigated, will increase inequalities making the already poor even poorer, and the rich still richer. **Together, we can avoid it,** through fair rules for all. Our children, and our children's children cannot be put at risk for the greed of a few.

Our economy should be at the service of those who follow this generation. We need to put people at the centre of economic transformation so that profits are not channelled to the few but shared with the many. We need an economy that promotes more resource efficient technologies, creating better quality employment. Instead of economies that need to grow, no matter what, we need economies that make us thrive.

Our Message

• **Transforming Societies within Planetary Boundaries!**

Disrespecting the limits of our planet is not an option, as going beyond certain thresholds or tipping points will lead to sudden and irreversible damage to our planet. Nature has no borders. Transforming our economy to preserve our planet is the responsibility of all nations.

The transformation required to really achieve sustainable forms of production and consumption must be shaped in such ways that they provide new powerful sources for real and tangible social progress. It must encompass a whole range of areas, including energy, transport, industry, health and job creation. In addition, we need to achieve sustainable agriculture with a decent level of income for farmers while making food safe, healthy, and affordable for all.

We must create a society that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We keep defending a European society of inclusion based on the principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, diversity, and social justice. It is essential that no one is left behind in this transformation.

• **Smart Cities, Sustainable Cities!**

By 2030, cities around the world will be responsible for 74% of greenhouse gas emissions. We must not only be ambitious but also visionary. We must prioritise an economy in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible as well as foster environmental education and choose a radical and effective energy transition. We must reinvent our cities, finding new ways for our fellow citizens to make way for cultural, economic, social, and societal innovation. In this respect, we must use technological innovation to enhance the quality of our daily lives.

We need to continue to fight contamination, choose clean energy and favour electric modes of transportation, car-pooling and cycling. We need even stronger commitment towards finding the real solutions to achieve universal shared progress for the good of the people. Thus, we need to collect best practices on ecological transformation across Europe, using in-depth local and regional knowledge.

• **Investment for Transformation!**

A more equitable and sustainable society requires the commitment and the financial support of all: the European institutions, but also our nations, our regions, and our cities. We, from both the public and the private sector, should promote investments in clean energy and respectful production and consumption, and avoid, limit, and punish dirty emissions. In addition, we need to better define long-term intelligent coordination between different stakeholders and better design and manage these investments.



TAX JUSTICE

The Challenge

Large multinationals are making record profits while wages are stagnating. While workers still feel the effect of the financial crisis and are still footing the bill for bankers, large corporations make more profit whilst paying ever fewer taxes. It is, therefore, high time to re-adjust the balance and create a system which is fair and just for all and not just for the few.

Our Message

It is good for all of us in Europe that companies, big and small, do business here and make decent profits and we should protect their freedom. However, the tricks and manoeuvres made public through LuxLeaks or the Paradise Papers are not part of this freedom. We all pay for the roads and the networks companies use to sell their goods. It is only reasonable to insist that companies that make money also contribute their fair share of providing for the well-being of our children. That's why we advocate four simple rules with regard to corporate taxation:



- **Pay where you make profit**

Cheating is immoral - and cheating is what companies do when they make money by doing business with our citizens here whilst paying taxes in a tax haven far away because it's cheaper.

- **Cheating has to be punished**

Fiscal fraud costs every European citizen 2,000 EUR per year. Tax evading countries and practices should be discouraged.

- **Equal rules for all**

Respect for national decisions and the principle of fair competition need to be balanced with common rules across Europe. We need a single set of rules to close loopholes and to ensure a level playing field between multinational companies and small local businesses.

- **Everyone pays their fair share**

Minimum effective taxation on all profits is needed to stop the race to the bottom and ensure that companies contribute to society.

We are fighting hard against greed and injustice and for a fair and sustainable European Union. We are fighting for a Europe in which all of us are protected, in which we take care of one another and act responsibly. A Union where we proudly respect the rules and reject cheating, and where we rise up and stand united when our founding values are betrayed. Let's fight the race to the bottom for profit taxation together. Let's make sure that if you and I pay taxes, so do large multinationals and the wealthy.



MORE INVESTMENT FOR THE CITIZENS:

THE EUROPEAN BUDGET AT THEIR SERVICE

The Challenge

The EU budget costs a single cup of coffee per day per person. This means limited resources for addressing everyday problems for people. In order to give everyday families, the future they deserve, we must make sure that our promises are backed with sufficient levels of funding. We must be able to channel enough money to make a difference in creating more jobs, investing in our infrastructure

and fighting inequality. With a budget based on national contributions, we see every time there is a financial framework to negotiate that the EU budget is talked about in terms of winners and losers. We need to think more about EU resources on the basis of solidarity and needs, rather than creditors and debtors.

Our Message

The EU budget, a concern for everyone! We should:

- Reaffirm the will of the S&D and its sister parties to achieve an ambitious and higher EU budget in the next Multiannual Financial Framework
- Make the S&D family work together on the future of the EU and its funding
- Bring the EU budget closer to citizens

An EU budget based on genuine own resources!

- Prioritise EU own resources as the primary revenue stream instead of the national contribution by Member States.
- Give incentives instead of sanctions and exclude contributions to the EU Budget from the deficit calculations under the Stability and Growth pact. Member States need to be encouraged and not deterred to invest in the European project.
- Put an end to all rebates and abandon the national “juste retour” logic.

New EU own resources need EU taxation!

We should:

- Insist that the implementation of new EU own resources remain the only option to adequately finance the Multiannual Financial Framework.

- Create a new own resources system with the introduction of new genuine own resources and an increase of the own resources share to at least 50% of the EU budget to provide fairer and more stable EU finances.
- Establish new own resources to feed the EU budget through for example a Financial Transaction Tax, an EU tax on multinational corporations based on a Common corporate Tax Base or a carbon EU tax.

A future Multiannual Financial Framework post-2020 with an adequate level of financing!

- Break the 1% of the EU's Gross National Income (GNI) ceiling for expenditure of the EU budget and significantly increase it even over 1.23% of the EU's Gross National Income (GNI).
- Ensure that additional political priorities shall be linked with additional financial means and not be financed to the detriment of existing policies.
- Promote the S&D sixth scenario for the future of the EU to be included in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.



A SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL ECONOMY

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The Challenge

New technologies and the internet are constantly transforming our world. The speed of this transformation is phenomenally affecting the political, social and economic aspects of our lives. Europe should create strong foundations for a properly functioning digital society, and it should take the lead in digital revolution and digital technologies. A number of digital policies have already been launched and implemented. Still, much more needs to be done as too frequently Europe has arrived too late.

New technologies should aim to benefit all citizens and should contribute to tackle the transformation of the labour market, social inequalities and discrimination, create new quality jobs, and promote openness, transparency, sustainability and accountability within our societies.

Our Message

We are committed to building a European Digital Union for growth, a better future, new quality jobs, and new forms of solidarity. A sustainable digital economy should:

• **Manage Digital Transformation**

To cope with demographic challenges and the impact of a growing digital economy, we must develop new ways to guarantee workers' rights and representation, decent working conditions, fair competition, and social protection in the "fourth industrial revolution".

- Organise the portability of workers' rights as they move around in the European digital labour market.
 - Extend collective agreements to individuals engaged in new digital forms of work.
 - Mitigate the risk of brain drain by investing in measures supporting circular migration, and ensuring mobility is not the result of inadequate employment opportunities or social protections.
 - Invest in active ageing and enable people reaching pensionable age to have the option to continue working while being able to draw partially on their pension if they work less than full-time.
- Support and inspire people to develop digital businesses, e-services, and e-commerce that provide 'digital solutions' for people and society in Europe and globally.
 - Create quality jobs for all, with a special emphasis on young people and women, and invest in quality jobs in digital public services.
 - Invest and develop platforms in digital skills and literacy, creativity, innovation, and a good working environment.
 - Support young entrepreneurs to help them deal with risk, get access to funding and scale-up European SMEs.
 - Develop digital infrastructure and promote universal access to an open, borderless internet.
 - Ensure fair rules on remuneration for all in the digital economy: young people, journalists, creators and innovators, so that they can enjoy a fair living income.
- Develop new, inclusive technologies for a data-driven economy, while promoting privacy by design to ensure that open data flows and big-data applications will respect personal privacy.
 - Reduce the impact of the digital economy on social-protection systems and prevent inequalities.
 - Develop and organise new ways to guarantee workers' rights and workers' representation, decent working conditions, fair competition, and social protection for all.
 - Ensure universal access to training and retraining in digital skills, in order to create the conditions for an active and equal participation in the digital single market for all citizens – young and old, rural and urban, well-off and poor. Support school curricula and teacher training in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), digital skills and coding.
 - Clarify the employment status of platform workers and guarantee that this does not create new forms of social dumping.
 - Allow citizens to have the choice to 'switch off' – support those who do not wish to embrace the digital revolution.
 - Promote digital citizenship including e-democracy and digital civic education at local, national and European levels.
 - Incentivise all citizens, including those people living with disabilities, unemployed and migrant populations, to take advantage of the digital society.
 - Ensure that social media providers and users respect fundamental values including the rule of law.
 - Guarantee the portability of legally acquired content when downloading abroad and roam-like-at-home when travelling.



PROUD, RESILIENT DEMOCRACIES AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

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The Challenge

The European Union was founded on the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. These values are the foundation of our free, tolerant and just European society. Many of the freedoms and rights that we enjoy today were gained through hard fought battles. Democracy is at the very heart of the European project. However, increasingly we hear reports about restrictions on media freedom, new laws being put in place that violate constitutional principles or growing threats to the rights of minorities.

This shows that democratic backsliding is a reality in many EU countries.

European citizens are becoming increasingly anxious as they see the rise of populist authoritarianism that is sweeping aside dissent and that cares little about an open and liberal democratic society. Our society is based on three pillars: democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. These three pillars hold the European project in place. They work together and in parallel.

The path away from democracy is seldom paved with blatant violations of the rule of law, but rather by borderline actions that systematically erode and undermine legality and the rule of law. Recent examples of this democratic decline follow this counter-intuitive logic.

In Hungary, the Fidesz Government led by Viktor Orbán used a large parliamentary majority to make it extremely difficult for the courts to keep its powers in check. Most courts function independently, but his government has created a new court to deal specifically with election-related issues, the right to public protest and cases of corruption. Furthermore, electoral boundaries have been re-drawn in favour of the ruling party; the government has also used public money to fund public information campaigns that carry the ruling party's electoral messages. Incumbent officials have been removed to make way for Fidesz loyalists, who have facilitated the rise of what Orbán calls “illiberal” or “non-liberal” democracy.

“Illiberalism” is an ideological stance that rejects the need for independent institutions, which supporters believe are acting as a watchdog on the government. The concept of allowing legitimate disagreement in the public sphere is dismissed. In this illiberal environment, citizens are able to protest, publish articles, or make critical remarks on social media without risking violent reprisals. However, such activities will expose them to intimidation, nasty attacks by government-aligned media, or even discrimination in the job market.

The vision of the illiberal norm is one where countries barricade themselves away from the world, which in turn becomes an excuse for intolerance, exclusion and dangerous populism. This generates deep mistrust of the European institutions, boosting a distorted narrative where Europe is the scapegoat for all possible evils.

Another startling example of democratic decline can be found in Poland. Since coming to power, the Law and Justice party has systematically undermined checks and balances, and the proper functioning of independent institutions that are central to any genuine democracy. The parliament has adopted laws obstructing the work of the Constitutional Court, enabling political interference in the appointment and dismissal of judges. The authorities have also curbed media freedom and limited freedom of assembly, and have tried to silence the voices of NGOs.

While the European model of democracy is based on compromise, nationalism and extremism are based on polarisation. The winner-takes-it-all mentality says: we are right and you are wrong. Therefore, you have no right to speak out. They are determined to undermine the open democratic fabric of our European society, and to treat political rivals as enemies of the people, rather than party-political opponents. An open democracy presupposes that when one side wins an election, it shows respect for those who have lost. In a democracy, the minority - or opposition, is as essential to the proper functioning of that democracy, as is the majority - or ruling party. Regrettably, this notion is being challenged in an increasing number of member states.

Our Message

Democracy is at the very core of the European project, and the democratic challenge we face must be at the centre of our actions. We need to take firm, decisive steps. We cannot succumb to silence and a sense of powerlessness. By voting by an overwhelming majority to censure the Hungarian Government for eroding democracy and failing to uphold fundamental European Union values, the European Parliament has shown that it is not afraid. Every European citizen has the right to live in a functioning democracy, and we will always fight to protect it! Together we must:

- Stand firmly behind a **strong European democracy**. We must fight relentlessly against any government's attempts to take-over its judicial system and override its democratic procedures. We must equally fight against governments that show disdain for independent institutions and seek to fuse the ruling party with the state.
- Be ready **to act when the rule of law is under threat**. We must always protect media freedom and the separation of powers, and we must rebuke without compromise any attacks on our independent civil society in whatever shape or form.
- **Develop and implement tough sanctions**, which are designed to act as a deterrent when governments attempt to make "reforms" which run counter to the rule of law. We need to find new ways to defend our democracy. One way would be to link compliance with the rule of law and budgetary sanctions.
- Relentlessly defend **human rights** and strengthen **protection of minorities throughout the Union**.
- **Ensure support for academics to be able to work without restriction and protect Civil Society Organisations** which bravely continue to fight for fair European societies.

We need more democracy not less!

Every European citizen
has the right to live
in a functioning democracy,
and we will always fight
to protect it!



DEFENDING THE COPENHAGEN CRITERIA

The Challenge

The enemies of pluralism and decency are trying to move away from our solid European model of democracy one-step at the time. We will not allow that! Protecting the integrity of our democracy is our daily concern, and we do that by acting.

While our democracy is based on compromise, nationalism and extremism are based on polarisation. The winner-takes-it-all mentality says: we are right and you are wrong. Therefore, you have no right to speak. Populists are determined to undermine the open democratic fabric of our European society. By claiming to be the only true representatives of the people, they treat political rivals as enemies of the people, rather than party-political opponents. We will never tolerate this!

In Poland, for instance, the Law and Justice party has systematically undermined checks and balances, and the proper functioning of independent institutions. The authorities have curbed media freedom turning public media into a crude party propaganda organ. Another startling example of democratic decline can be found in Hungary, where the Fidesz Government of Viktor Orbán used a large parliamentary majority to make it extremely difficult for the courts to keep its powers in check. Electoral boundaries have been re-drawn in favour of the ruling party and Incumbent officials have been removed to make way for Fidesz loyalists, who have facilitated the rise of what Orbán calls “illiberal” democracy and what we can only call “partial democracy”.

Under “partial democracy”, countries barricade themselves from the world, which, in turn becomes an excuse for intolerance, exclusion and dangerous nationalistic populism. This generates deep mistrust of the European institutions, boosting a distorted narrative where Europe is the scapegoat for, all possible evils.

This year, we celebrate 25 years since the establishment of the Copenhagen criteria. The Copenhagen criteria marked a milestone in European history as they set out the essential conditions that all countries must satisfy before becoming a member state of our Union. Essentially, they require stable institutions that can unequivocally guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. The values found in the Copenhagen criteria form the very foundation of our free, tolerant and just European society.

At the same time, as the Copenhagen criteria continue to provide the framework, guidance and inspiration for the EU’s enlargement policy, people are being confronted with a worldwide wave of anti-democratic backlash. For instance, under President Trump, US democratic principles have reached their lowest support in decades. Not only does Mr Trump continue to attack, circumvent and ridicule the free press but he also appears completely indifferent to democracy’s global fate.

The main elements of this messaging align closely with the playbook of authoritarian strongmen who are gaining ground globally.

Our Message

We progressives are very proud of our democracies! Democracies that show respect for those who have lost in fair elections. In a real democracy, the minority – or opposition, is just as essential to the proper functioning of that democracy, as the majority – or ruling party. We, the progressives, will not tolerate right-wing populists transforming democracy from an instrument of inclusion into one of exclusion.

To guard our democracies, we must take decisive steps. We will not succumb to silence and a sense of business-as-usual. The European Parliament has shown that it is not afraid, by voting by an overwhelming majority to censure the Hungarian government for eroding democracy and failing to uphold fundamental European Union values. Every European citizen has the right to live in a functioning democracy, and we will always fight to protect it. Real functioning democracies can never work just partially!

By working every day for more just, equal and free societies through the policies we promote, locally, nationally and in the European Union.

The Copenhagen criteria lay the foundation for an open, free and united European Union. The entire EU legal order is premised on countries being full democracies. In other words, our European communities are based on three fundamental pillars: democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. These three pillars hold our European project in place. They work together and in parallel.

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are among humanity's the biggest achievements. With us in Europe, they have been the foundation on which we have built strong welfare states. We build our social and inclusive societies on these values. Those open societies that others now try to tear down.

Together we must:

- **ensure** that the **Copenhagen criteria continue to be the bedrock of European democracy for all** member states to uphold,
- **stand firmly behind a strong European democracy.** We must fight relentlessly against any government's attempts to take-over its judicial system and override its democratic procedures. We must equally fight against governments that threaten independent institutions and seek to fuse the ruling party with the state,

- be ready **to act when the rule of law is under threat.** We must always protect media freedom and the separation of powers, and we must rebuke without compromise any attacks on our independent civil society in whatever shape,
- **develop and implement tough sanctions,** to deter from governments attempting to make “reforms” which run counter to the rule of law. We need to find new ways to defend our democracy. One way would be to link compliance with the rule of law and budgetary sanctions, making sure that any sanctions hit those who are responsible.
- relentlessly **defend human rights** and strengthen the **protection of political, religious, sexual and other minorities throughout the Union,**
- **ensure support for academics to allow them to work without restriction, and protect Civil Society Organizations** who bravely continue to fight for fair European societies.

Now, a quarter of a century after the Copenhagen criteria were established we need them more than ever. Together we fight for more democracy, not less!



A STRONG EUROPE NEEDS STRONG COMMON INSTITUTIONS AND A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY

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The Challenge

With all the formidable challenges that confront us, none is more daunting than that of active participation in a common solution. Moving outside Facebook's personalised news-feed of self-confirmation and a willingness to consider views and beliefs outside our own may be difficult, but it is vital to transformative positive change.

Whether we like it or not, the manner in which we respond together to the global challenges will determine our fate. In this respect, we have to fight tirelessly to reduce the existing barriers to increase participation in our democratic life.

It is not enough for voting to be easy; people have to want to take part. For people to want to participate in the political process, they must be convinced that their participation actually does matter —it must have a tangible impact on policy decisions and improve people's well-being.

If we want an EU capable of transforming our societies, it needs to have real capacity to deliver for the common good and it must function in an open and transparent way. Democracy and sovereignty at European level should enrich democracy and sovereignty at national level.

For us, this is a key moment to shape a new positive future, to work for unity, cohesion and transformation, against divisions and new walls, fighting against nationalism and populism. Too often Europe-wide elections have been reduced to nothing more than the sum of multiple national campaigns. European voter turnout has seen a substantial decrease since the first European elections in 1979. European democracy deserves much better. Many crises have shaken our Union over the last few years, including mounting Euroscepticism, growing populism, the austerity crisis, migration challenges, terrorist threats, as well as the insecurities resulting from Brexit. However there seems to be a growing realisation that working together is indispensable, in order to tackle Europe's common challenges. But there is still a long way to go to persuade citizens that Europe is working for them. We need to do better!

Every citizen has the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. In the run-up to the European elections of 2019, we need to improve the democratic legitimacy of the EU. Firstly, we need to ensure that the principle of the Spitzenkandidaten and that the election

of the President of the European Commission is nominated as a lead candidate by one of the European political parties, will be repeated. This process strengthens the EU's democratic dimension and contributes to transparency in the decision-making process, since people get a choice of candidates prior to the European elections. We also support the idea of having pan-European lists of candidates in the European elections. We need to examine ways to introduce these lists, which could use at least some of the seats left vacant when the UK leaves the EU. We need to reinforce the democratic and transnational dimension of the European elections and the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process. Indeed, the 2019 European Parliament elections will be transformative for European democracy.

60 years after the Rome Treaties, the European Union needs to assert itself as a powerful democratic entity delivering peace, freedom, security, sustainable development, and prosperity for all its citizens. For us, this is a key moment to shape a new positive future for our Union, to work for unity, cohesion and openness, against divisions and new walls, fighting against neoliberalism, nationalism, and populism.

Our Message

The S&D Groups demands a democratic agenda to strengthen the democratic participation of our citizens.

We support the principle of the Spitzenkandidaten process as it fosters the political awareness of European citizens and reinforces the political legitimacy of both the Parliament and the Commission, by connecting their respective elections more directly to the choice of the voters. In this respect, we also support the proposal of electing a number of Members of the new European Parliament through **pan-European lists of candidates**, put forth by the various European political parties, led by the candidates for the Presidency of the European Commission. **The Spitzenkandidaten-process should rely to the largest extent possible on participative procedures within the national parties such as primaries. This should be done in cooperation with national parties.** European events

surrounding these primaries can have a strong impact on the legitimacy and credibility of the European project. Therefore, national, as well as regional and local media involvement, especially television networks, is a must!

Progressive national and European leaders should seize the opportunity of the European elections to present a European agenda which clearly differentiates them from the other political forces. This will help regain trust and present **citizens with clear choices for the future of the European project**. Consequently, European elections should occupy an important place on the agenda of progressive leaders, being an opportunity to **reconnect citizens to the European project**.

We must do better in connecting with people so that, in return, people would **want to participate**. They must truly feel that the EU is there for them. They must truly feel political ownership of the European project.



It is not enough for voting to be easy; people have to want to take part. For people to want to participate in the political process, they must be convinced that their participation actually does matter —it must have a **tangible impact on policy decisions** and improve people's lives across Europe. To achieve this, we must make extensive use of the **opportunities offered by social media**. We need to find ways to shape our progressive narrative so that it makes Europe personally relevant to all of us. We need to engage with citizens on how to deliver better and more empowering reforms that will increase trust in our Union.

A European Union for shared and sustainable prosperity!

We must ensure that everyone has decent living and working conditions, proper social protection and opportunities to improve their lives. Europe's labour and social standards need to be updated and enhanced to match the challenges of the 21st century. We need a new growth model with a strong European Pillar of Social Rights, poverty reduction programmes and a true European Youth Plan capable of providing every young person with jobs, skills, digital literacy, equal treatment and more opportunities for developing new enterprises and creative ideas. Young Europeans must also be empowered in the decision making process at all levels.

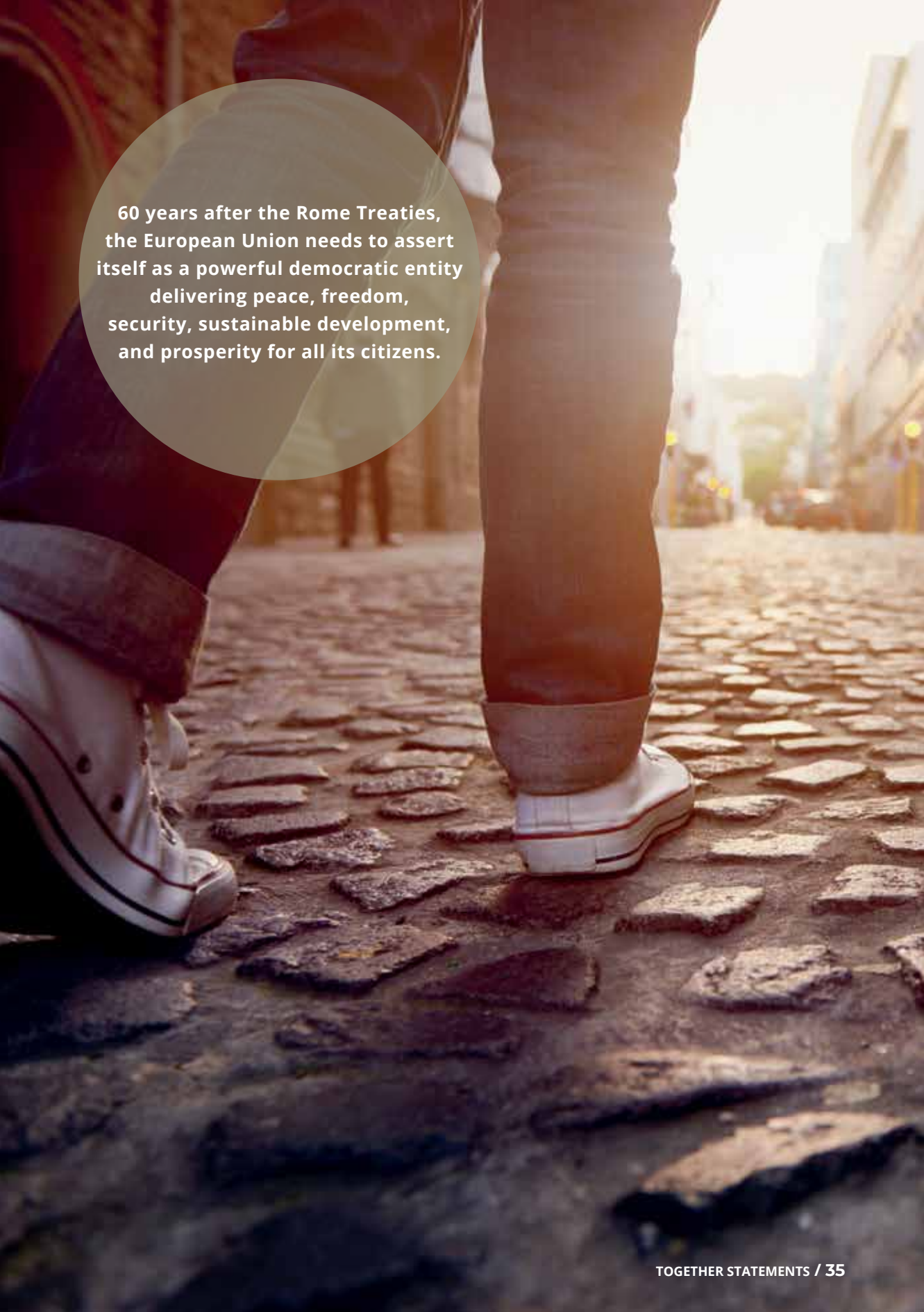
We need to stimulate the economy with a powerful European investment strategy focused on sustainable development, new technologies, better jobs, and stronger economic and social convergence upward. This requires a Community budget with proper own resources to ensure the right financing of the European Union priorities as well as a Eurozone budget. We also need tough measures to tackle tax evasion and avoidance as well as to fight social dumping.

A European Union for strong democracy!

We reaffirm our strong commitment to basic European values. The respect for human rights, freedom, democracy, the rule of law are the fundamental principles on which our Union is based and we want a European Union that can uphold these principles and promote them beyond its borders. We stand for an open and tolerant Europe, based on equality between all people regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. Full equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of European society. If we want a European Union capable of tackling the challenges of the 21st century, it needs to have real capacity to deliver common good and it must function in an open and transparent way. Democracy and sovereignty at European level should enrich democracy and sovereignty at national level. This requires education on Europe, sharing our common cultural identity, ensuring pluralism of the media, informing citizens about their rights. European citizens must be empowered to make their democratic choices, including on European priorities and on the President of the European Commission.

A European Union for security and protection of fundamental rights!

We need to find better, durable solutions on migration and asylum. We need more solidarity and better integration. This means building up a truly European Asylum System where human rights are respected and responsibilities are shared among all member states. Refugees must find protection and all necessary support for their good integration in society. At the same time, we need to secure Europe's external border and support peace and development in neighbouring countries.



60 years after the Rome Treaties, the European Union needs to assert itself as a powerful democratic entity delivering peace, freedom, security, sustainable development, and prosperity for all its citizens.



A PROGRESSIVE VISION FOR MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

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The Challenge

In today's globalised and interdependent world no state can effectively manage migration alone. The need for more international cooperation and international agreements on managing migration is greater than ever.

Migration has become a key political issue for the European Union, following a large number of arrivals over the last few years. We have been deeply affected by the fate of children, women and men who are risking their lives to reach Europe, and have called repeatedly for a holistic approach to migration to counter populist and right wing scaremongering and their denials of the value of human life and dignity.

Our Message

We strongly support the ongoing negotiations for a global agreement on refugees and a global agreement for safe, orderly and regular migration (so-called Global Compacts). Genuine cooperation and true solidarity not only between EU countries, but also between wealthy and developing nations, and countries of origin, transit and destination is key to managing migration. Multilateral measures are urgently needed to manage the unprecedented numbers of migrants on the move worldwide. Migration should be an act of hope, not despair.

Together, we stand for:

The EU as a global leader on migration

We insist that the EU should lead and shape negotiations for a global regime on migration and all member states should contribute to this effort. Our Union must put all its weight behind the ongoing UN negotiations to achieve global agreements on refugees and on safe, orderly and regular migration. Any agreement should be people centred, involve all levels of governance and should not only provide for long-term, sustainable and comprehensive solutions, for the benefit of all parties involved, but also build on the principle of partnership and strengthened cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination.

We deplore that the Trump administration has pulled the United States out of the United Nations' ambitious plan to create a more humane and comprehensive global strategy on migration. The Trump strategy of simply building walls and walking away from constructive international efforts to deal with the real issues on migration does not provide solutions. We will cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants regardless of migration status, of refugees and of displaced persons.

Accurate and reliable data should be the basis of all policy-making on migration. We should therefore not tolerate fake and/or speculative assertions that fuel false and harmful populist narratives. The picture is not black or white. Rather than playing on fears or exaggerating problems, we need to identify those problems systematically, and look for practical solutions. The majority of migrants live and work legally, making a positive contribution to both their home and host countries.

An EU promoting human-rights and a fair share of responsibility

We insist that all countries take their own share of responsibility for the protection of refugees and that migrants, independent of their legal status, have their human rights respected. We call for special attention to people in vulnerable situations as well as to women, children and the elderly.

We remain critical of the way some EU countries have responded so far to the refugee crisis. In this respect, we urge all EU countries to honour their commitments both in terms of relocation and resettlement. Showing solidarity is key in gaining credibility in international negotiations and in convincing other countries to live up to their responsibilities.

We need to make sure that refugees are offered the opportunity to work and contribute to the development of their hosted societies. Nearly half of all migrants are women and girls. It is of paramount importance that not only the EU, but UN Member States themselves, promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a central element of the global migration agreement. Women must be fully involved at all levels and their voices listened to. We must include women's needs and realities in the design of policies and solutions for refugee crises in order to make them more sustainable and effective.

The EU must in the strongest terms possible advocate clear commitments on specific pressing issues, such as avoiding that people risk their lives in the desert or at sea, improving the actions concerning missing migrants, ensuring humane conditions in reception camps, calling for the end of child detention, strongly supporting family reunification or addressing specific measures on statelessness. These commitments must be included in the global agreements on refugees and migration.

Eradicate discrimination and create equal conditions for all!

The contribution of migrant entrepreneurial activities in Europe has been increasing over the last decade. Migrants contribute to economic growth and employment. If the “creativity and innovation capacity” of migrant entrepreneurs are to be reinforced, specific measures must be taken at EU, Member State and local level. We need to eradicate discrimination and create equal conditions for all so that everyone in our communities can contribute to inclusive growth and quality jobs. At a challenging time marked by the rise of far-right parties, hate crime and hate speech, we must stand strong and committed to defending fundamental rights for everyone.

Saving lives is our first priority

The unfolding human tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea requires urgent solutions to deal with the large numbers of people seeking asylum in the European Union in a manner that is humane, managed and sustainable. Europe needs a common European Asylum System, which means the end of the Dublin Regulation. The overhaul of the Dublin rules should create a permanent and binding centralised solidarity mechanism, based on relocation between Member States. In parallel, we must offer to those who may be entitled to international protection an alternative safe and lawful means of access to the Union’s asylum system. A hotspot approach is not and cannot be the only EU response to the arrival of large numbers of refugees in Europe. We cannot avoid our share of responsibility by obliging third countries of transit to keep all those who would seek asylum in the EU. Relocation, resettlement, and measures addressing the root causes of irregular migration for a long-term and sustainable solution are critical.

Partnerships for development to address the root causes in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit.

Irregular migration is a global phenomenon requiring a coordinated international response and the EU must take a human-rights-based lead in shaping it. We support a strong partnership between Europe and Africa and the efforts in the United Nations to tackle the root causes of migration in terms of improving the economic and social situation, strengthening democracy and the rule of law, and providing education and employment opportunities in countries of origin.


We must improve development cooperation, conflict resolution, and stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic growth to ensure that people have a real chance of a better life in their homeland.

More focus on the integration of refugees and migrants. We need more than just a plan for irregular migration.

We believe in a diverse and multicultural Europe, which respects the fundamental rights and dignity of migrants and preserves social cohesion. We must be constantly seeking to improve the living conditions of migrants achieving decent employment, equal pay and social coverage for equal work, and integration measures at an EU and national levels – especially to guarantee education and inclusion for the children of migrants. The EU also needs a more positive and harmonised approach to legal migration, attracting qualified professionals and offering genuine legal alternatives to those seeking a better future in Europe. We must also stand up and fight against the negative perception of migration that has become a powerful tool in the hands of populist and far right forces in Europe. A well-managed migration system is an asset for the sustainable economic and social growth of our continent, and could even help in safeguarding the welfare state in several EU Member States.

Ensuring adequate financing. In order for the EU to achieve the above policy objectives, the EU budget is one of the best tools for responsibility sharing within the Union and boosting sustainable development in the EU neighbourhood.

We need to establish an EU Search and Rescue Fund to save lives in the Mediterranean. We call for increased financial support to support Member States with reintegration activities.

A close-up photograph of a person wrapped in a thick, grey, textured blanket. They are wearing a blue hooded jacket with a white geometric pattern. The person's eyes are closed, and their face is partially visible. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting it is raining. A semi-transparent blue circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

We need genuine cooperation and true solidarity not only between EU countries, but also between wealthy and developing nations, and countries of origin, transit and destination is key to managing migration.



EUROPE, STRONG IN THE WORLD:

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THE BEATING HEART OF SOLIDARITY AND INTEGRITY

The Challenge

In today's world, there is very little that happens in isolation without affecting others beyond national borders. The world is more interconnected and interdependent than ever. A natural disaster in a country on the other side of the world affects us in Europe. A civil war in another continent influences our political climate here.

There are some global players undermining the multilateral principles of the international system. Nationalism is gaining strength.

Where values like fairness, human rights and freedoms have been traditionally promoted globally, there are risks that the international platforms to achieve this are being weakened.

There are also international actors using the world stage to spread fear and prejudice and taking steps to reverse not only social progress but democracy itself. We have to do what we can to promote solidarity and integrity throughout the world, working Together for a better world in the process.



Our Message

At a time when some global players are undermining the multilateral principles of the international system and nationalistic tendencies are gaining strength, Europe must act as a champion of international cooperation. We need to continue standing up for peace, human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals and the fight against climate change. Our external policies and trade policy must be based on these values and goals, and focus even more on labour standards, social fairness, tax justice and environmental protection. European action is critical to reshape globalisation.

The European Union can thrive in the decades ahead, as long as we Europeans stay together and work together for better European solutions to cope with all our common challenges. We do not need a Europe à la carte. We the people are stronger than the forces of division or fear. Member states can only be strong if Europe is strong. We need to return to the path of social justice and shared prosperity. This is Europe's progressive choice.

Europe has always been the global reference point for social justice and equity. The place where everybody - including the richest and most privileged - contributes

their fair share for the welfare of all people. We are passionate advocates of this principle.

We must work towards an effective alignment of European Union development co-operation with the fight against climate change in order to build resilience and reduce the vulnerability of local populations and improve their capacity to prevent and reduce the risks from disasters.

The time has come for higher expectations and ambitions, for common goals pursued together, for stronger political actions to address our common sustainable future.

Increased Self Sufficiency

Europe must become more self-sufficient in terms of external and internal security. Europe needs to act more coherently on defence and security, with greater autonomy in defence capabilities and more integration in areas such as common management of operations, procurement, and cybersecurity. We also need to develop greater cooperation between national police forces and have better information sharing to fight terrorism more effectively. However, a feeling



of security depends also on general living conditions, respect of citizens' rights and an environment of tolerance instead of radicalisation. We must do more to strengthen Europeans' socio-economic security.

The EU as a united and influential voice

At a time when the European project is being questioned and new challenges abound, from the violations of the European security order to terrorism and violence plaguing North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Europe itself, the EU has to become an ever more united and influential actor on the world stage to keep its citizens safe, preserve its interests, and uphold its values.

Striving for strategic autonomy

This is necessary for the EU to promote its values, principles and interests. The most appropriate framework to achieving these is the rules-based global order and effective multilateralism. Foreign and security policies of the EU require deepening the trans-Atlantic bond and sustainable dialogue with other key international actors;

Strengthening defence capacities

The EU is most effective in achieving its foreign and security policy goals when it combines soft and hard power. European defence should reflect the security concerns of all the EU Member States. It should be advanced by enhanced efficiency in Member States' spending, through common capabilities development and enhanced civil-military synergies in the conduct of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions.

Fostering effective approach to conflict resolution

The EU must engage in a practical and principled way in peacebuilding, concentrating its efforts on conflict resolution in surrounding unstable regions to the east and south.

Aligning EU trade policies with Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement


The EU should assume a leadership role to promote fair, regulated global trade in the interest of all people, through for example a legislative proposal on mandatory due diligence on global value chains in order to provide transparency and traceability, counter unfair trading practices, and uphold labour and environmental rights.

Dialogue-oriented processes with the involvement of the civil society

This is key to ensuring the participation of trade unions and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in order to ensure labour and social standards are incorporated in the sustainability chapter.

Closer collaboration with the ILO and OECD

The EU should pursue deep dialogue with these organisations with the aim of developing a global approach to improving social and labour standards in developing countries.



Europe must act as a champion
of international cooperation.
We need to continue standing up
for peace, human rights,
the Sustainable Development Goals
and the fight against
climate change.



A PARTNERSHIP OF TRUST BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE EU

The Challenge

Without addressing the root causes of forced migration such as conflicts, poverty, underdevelopment and devastating effects of climate change, people will put their very lives at risk in search of a life of dignity and peace.

Despite two decades of economic growth, Africa is facing security challenges and regional instability. It is confronting increased social inequalities and poverty, corruption, lack of good governance, fundamental freedoms, and quality education, as well as wide-spread environmental degradation. This has led to a growing number of migrants and refugees coming from Africa to Europe.

We need more efficient cooperation between the EU and African countries of origin and transit in order to overcome the current challenges of migration management. And the EU must take resolute steps to enact a Marshall Plan with Africa that can address the root causes of migration and deliver tangible improvements in Africa.

We must work together with African partners towards an effective use of development cooperation, conflict resolution, and stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic growths to give opportunities to Africans in their countries of origin.

Migration must be safe and legal, migrants and refugees must have their dignity and fundamental rights respected and the fight against human traffickers must be stepped up.

The far-right and populist forces are building walls and spread hate and division. We stand for equal and fair partnerships between the EU and

Africa through win-win approaches, and support the efforts of the African partners, which host the overwhelming majority of African migrants and refugees, to better manage migration flows, also internally. We are extending our hand in cooperation to civil society and everyone who is ready to join us in this joint effort.

Our Message

Investing in young people

The demographic boom in Africa will be an opportunity for the continent rather than a challenge, if we support investment in education -in particular the access for girls to primary school-, vocational training and entrepreneurship.

Sustainable investments

We need a strong EU External Investment Plan for Africa (EIP) with the aim of improving economic and social development and achieving the SDGs on the African continent. But rather than underpin multinationals which are already champions of tax evasion, or the ones which prey on mineral and natural resources, the EIP must provide support to SMEs, microfinance and job creation programmes, especially for young people and women.

Leave no-one behind

Development assistance must be targeted where the need is greatest, and focus on the Least Developed Countries. Root causes of humanitarian crises must be addressed, such as conflict and food insecurity. We remain strongly committed to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Commission must publish an SDG implementation plan for the EU's contribution to achieving the goals, with particular attention to the impact of climate change on most vulnerable people and countries.

Strengthen democracy and human rights

Human rights remain central to our partnership with Africa. We urge the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission to use all available tools to maintain serious human rights dialogues. We will seek innovative mechanisms to give support and visibility

to those risking their lives in Africa for the defence of human rights. We reiterate our belief that independent NGOs and media are a pre-requisite of a functioning democracy.

A holistic approach to our partnership

We need to ensure we implement Policy Coherence for Development across our agricultural, trade and investment policies, from the Common Agricultural Policy to binding due diligence requirements for EU companies. The security development nexus remains important for addressing conflict, but poverty-alleviation must remain the primary goal of development assistance. We will never accept aid conditionality linked to migration policy.

Gender equality

Without the emancipation of women there is no viability for sustainable development, nor full democracy, nor good governance. Gender equality must be mainstreamed in all EU policies, initiatives and investments towards Africa.

The #EuropeTogether Journey





www.europe-together.eu

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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