



**Speech by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen
DS Congress
21st April 2007, Florence**

Caro compagni e amici!
Tre messaggi: unità, unità, unità!

Congratulations to Piero Fassino, without you we could not be doing this, we could not have had unità! We could not have a strong socialist party. I want to congratulate you.

Massimo D'Alema – did I tell you about my nightmare? I was waking up in the middle of the night, sweating, nervous and suddenly I saw another Foreign Minister for Italy – Fini, maybe? A nightmare! Promise me one thing, all of you. Never let me have that nightmare again.

Dear friends,

I can say to all of you in the process of reunification, a new democratic party in Italy is absolutely fundamental for Europe.

Dear friends,

You are living a historical moment. What you are doing now is the most important political decision you have taken since the Second World War. I support you. I know your feelings. I know you love your party, voi “Democratici di Sinistra”. The values we have in the European Party of Socialists, in the European socialist parties, will be the same values that you will have in the new Party.

But I want also to welcome the leaders and members of the Margherita. I think you are both taking an important and progressive decision and I have a message for you. I have no doubt that you belong and that your place is within the Party of European Socialists.

Can I remind you of one simple experience? When I was Prime Minister in my own country, I was Prime Minister of a centre left government and we governed for nine years. I am sure the Democratic Party will govern for much more than nine years. That's why you must do it! We see many, many modern, centre left parties in Europe and they all belong to the PES. Within the PES we have diversity: parties from the North, South, East, and West. I think that diversity makes us strong, but what is most important is our values: we have strong common values. I was leading the change in our statutes in the Party in Portugal so we are ready now to welcome the democratic party of Italy to the PES.

I know that Romano Prodi, Francesco Rutelli, Piero Fassino, Massimo D'Alema, Walter Veltroni have a place in a common Italian democratic party with common values and again I say what you're doing now is a fundamental, new historical development.

I want to tell you that politics is a question of choices. In Europe for the moment, there are only two important relevant parties: you have ours, the Party of European Socialists and you have the right wing, the EPP. I hope that we can have these two choices and that we can avoid confusion.



Today the PES is strong because we keep together, because we are able to take government but we need more governments of ours to regain momentum in Europe.

I believe that progressive democrats must have one voice to serve ordinary people. I believe that a united Democratic Party in Italy together with us will make us the only progressive European Party.

Let me tell you two days ago I came back from the United States.

I have been developing a new cooperation with the US Democrats. I agreed with Howard Dean that the new double majority of the Democrats in the US Senate and House of Representatives makes it important to develop a very strong, progressive trans-atlantic partnership between the US Democrats and the PES. When this united Democratic Party will be created in Italy, and when it joins the PES, it will have a strong, new cooperation with the US democrats. This is the strong future we have ahead.

You are not alone in building a new party. You will see a parallel with Poland. In Poland, they have a right wing populist government and the centre-left is split into four parties. But if we succeed here, it will be a huge encouragement to the Polish centre-left. If they succeed in Poland, there will soon be a new government there. It's not only important for Italy for you to do this, but it's important for the whole of Europe, to ensure the right-wing is kept out of government.

The PES is diverse but it is also strong and united. We have decided to create a New Social Europe: "Per una nuova Europa sociale". This is our roadmap for Europe and I am sure that every member of the new Democratic Party will say yes to these ten principles. I will tell you about five of them now:

First principle: rights and duties for all, not only for the workers but also for the bankers. I think we can say yes.

Second principle: as the Minister of Labour said: jobs, jobs, jobs. Full employment. I think we can all say yes.

Third principle: investing in people: educazione, educazione, educazione. I think we can all say yes.

Fourth principle: società inclusiva. We will not leave anyone behind. We will ensure that every Italian from Sicily to the North of Italy will have new chances, new jobs. I think we can all unite upon that.

The very fifth important principle can be summed up in two Italian words: amore, bambino. If you combine them: it means universal childcare.

So you see we have principles that unite us. Together with our youth – and I welcome all the young people here today, it's important that you are here - we can take each other by the hand and create this New Europe together.

I would just like to finish by saying: we're going to do this together. There will be a lot of difficulties on the way but we will not be in any doubt. We are going to do this together. And we are going to unite "Una forza grande come il futuro". Grazie a tutti!

