



Our Vision for Progressive Societies in the 21st Century **Framework document adopted by the PES Presidency on 29th April 2010**

*“We must renew social democracy from the bottom up to face today’s challenges and meet citizens’ expectations. **Our aim is to develop a new vision for Progressive Societies in the 21st century, with solidarity at its heart.** [...] Therefore, the PES will undertake a deep and wide ranging reflection and coordinated activities and campaigns [...] in the course of the next two years.” (“A new way forward, a stronger PES”, adopted by the 8th PES Congress, 7th – 8th December 2009)*

At the Prague Congress, the PES member parties and organizations clearly stated that the PES should not only be a platform for them to discuss European policies, but also the place where they come together to formulate the political vision, strategies and policies for progressives across Europe in the next years.

In the past years, despite the financial and economic crisis and calls from citizens for change, our social-democratic parties have failed to convince the voters that we can constitute a credible alternative to the dominant neo-liberal & conservative model. We have lost more elections than we have one and, despite obvious national explanations to these setbacks, common reasons are clearly identifiable.

A new world has emerged, shaped by globalization, which has changed the scope and parameters of action of States and of the European Union. Public action needs to be redefined, at all levels of governance. Furthermore, we are facing a global set of crises, which social-democratic politics must be shaped to cope with: financial crisis, economic crisis, social crisis, climate and environmental crisis, crisis of representation and trust in politics, etc. We need to redefine, even sometimes reinvent, the necessary governance tools and mechanisms to ensure that social and environmental justice are guaranteed in today’s globalized world.

Only a fundamental re-evaluation of our vision of social democracy can allow us to regain power in Europe, a re-evaluation defining strategies and policy proposals that face today’s challenges and meet citizens’ expectations; a re-evaluation enabling us to redraw the lines of the magic sustainable development triangle formed by economic growth, social welfare and environmental protection; a re-evaluation based on our core values but better addressing today’s global challenges.

This is why the PES will engage a process of renewal of our progressive project, around the definition of our vision for Progressive Societies in the 21st century. Indeed, many of our member parties have launched similar processes of reflection and redefinition of their project. But all our parties are facing same common problems, implied by the globalization of politics, which is why we need to have such a reflection at a European level, to come up with a comprehensive response to the challenges of social-democracy, allowing coherence at all levels of governance: local, regional, national and European.



The failure of the neo-liberal capitalist system has been established by the recent financial and economic crisis. Europe's conservative forces would like to hide the failure of the system and get back to "business as usual". We will take the lead in showing that an alternative model exists.

1. Objectives of our process

The objectives of this process are to elaborate:

- **a PES declaration of principles**, expressing our core values and principles,
- **a PES fundamental program** expressing our renewed social-democratic vision.

2. Issues for the debate

In order to organise our discussion, we have identified six areas of discussion. These are not about concrete policy making but about the definition of our fundamental vision for Progressive societies in the 21st century. They do not exclude debate on other issues and do not prejudge the structure of the final report.

A – Economy and jobs: a new progressive macroeconomic model

The challenges

The world economy is more globalized and multipolar than ever, with emerging economies creating new competitive pressures. The demographic trends, including ageing, birth rates, immigration and employment rates, are not ensuring the sustainability of our labour markets and social protection systems. An unprecedented financial and economic crisis has unveiled a financial system which is driven by short-termism, speculative and irresponsible behaviour of financial actors, rather than by the needs of the real economy, in terms of investment, growth and jobs. This crisis has displayed the flaws of an economic model that has been increasingly rewarding capital while leaving labour aside, to the expense of the internal demand and social cohesion. The outcome of both this structural trend and the crisis is a completely new macroeconomic outlook, combining sluggish growth and major imbalances in public finances with rising unemployment, poverty and social inequalities.

Questions to be discussed

- How can we develop a new progressive macroeconomic model, delivering smart, green and inclusive growth?
- What is the role of public authorities on national and EU level ? How can we regain the regulation power that national states have lost with the globalisation of the economy ? What role for the EU in this process ? How can we strengthen economic governance on EU level and use macroeconomic policy instruments to foster growth and job creation, as well as protecting the single currency? How can we ensure appropriate financial regulation ?
- Redistribution of wealth has developed in history along the level of economic exchanges. From tribal or regional, tax and welfare systems have mainly been organised since the 19th century in the framework of the nation-state. What kind of policies and solidarity mechanisms, including fiscal instruments, do we need on EU and national levels to redistribute wealth? How can we invent new fiscal tools at European and global level ? What is the future for a Financial Transaction tax ? Environmental taxes ?
- How can active labour market policies be used and/or developed in order to establish an entry strategy into the labour market, and create a more adaptable workforce? How can we ensure the contribution of the full knowledge and skill potential of all groups in society, women and men, as well as young people, elderly and migrants? How can we improve the quality of education and training in order to increase employment in a globalized world? How do we most effectively tackle youth unemployment? How can we increase women's participation on the labour market, diversifying their participation in all sectors and enhancing their position in top-functions?



- How can we green existing jobs and creating new and qualitative green jobs, while developing the means for a socially fair transition towards them? What tools are available to ensure that the private sector participates actively in this process of greening the economy and creating sustainable employment?
- How can we ensure that Europe's industries play a central and dynamic role in transforming our economies and developing our regions?
- With more open borders, how do we ensure the integrity of the different social models in the EU Member States, promoting cooperation rather than competition among states, particularly in the fiscal and social field? How to better organise labour relations and collective bargaining?

B - Social progress: more inclusive and fair societies

The Challenges

Our welfare states are fundamental in enabling citizens to participate in society and the labour market, to provide freedom, equality and solidarity, and to protect people from the harshest effects of the financial and economic crisis. But there are now far higher pressures, resulting from mass unemployment and an ageing population, in a context of tighter financial resources. The risk of permanent social divisions and inequalities has grown due to the crisis. Especially young people are concerned by the negative developments on the labour market and rising debt levels, risking losing an entire generation in a vicious circle of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Moreover, discrimination and gender inequalities continue to have deeply negative consequences for the economy, social justice and democracy. European solidarity is essential to prevent these divisions from rising. The fight against inequalities and discrimination in all its forms is our collective responsibility. We must reshape Europe's welfare states to meet these challenges – providing adequately financed high social standards and protection in the long term – based on proactive European cooperation.

Questions to be discussed

- How can we ensure equality and, at the same time, individual freedom? How can we ensure citizens' rights and freedoms on the market?
- How do we promote strong, fair and effective welfare systems in a globalized world? What are the roles of the national state and EU in terms of pensions, health care, education and other forms of social security? Which reforms are needed? How to ensure sustainable and just pension systems?
- How do we guarantee equal access, quality, affordability, local autonomy and transparency in public services, and ensure their integrity in relation to EU competition rules? How can we revalue the health-care sector – an ever growing and important sector for our society? How can we strengthen social services and strengthen their role in providing employment and support to all citizens?
- How can we promote and safeguard decent work, including working time, health and safety standards, and working and family life balance for both women and men?
- How can we most effectively combat poverty and social exclusion?
- What is the role of the national state and the EU in decreasing the number of working poor, guaranteeing workers a decent minimum wage and ensuring decent minimum income? How can we integrate those in our societies the furthest away or excluded from the labour market?
- How do we most effectively tackle youth unemployment and social exclusion of less advantaged youth? How can we promote a more inclusive and active ageing approach on the labour market?
- How can we increase women's participation in financial, economic and political decision-making bodies at all level of governance? How can we close the gender pay gap and ensure women's economic independence? How can we safeguard equal treatment and non-discrimination, for all, in society and the labour market?
- How can we promote a just integration policy, based on rights, duties and mutual respect?



C – Environmental sustainability: fighting climate change, the degradation of our environment and promoting clean energy

The Challenges

Climate change is a reality, proven beyond any scientific doubt, and is accelerating at an alarming pace. The number of weather related natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, has increased rapidly over the last ten years, particularly in more vulnerable developing countries. Furthermore, biodiversity is in decline, major ecosystems are placed under increasing pressure, and energy consumption is increasing while prices for finite fossil fuel reserves keep rising sharply. The world is on course for a dangerous rise in global temperature and biodiversity loss – which will irreversibly damage our planet and put humankind at risk.

Climate change, environmental degradation such as biodiversity loss and pollution as well as energy insecurity requires a major shift in our patterns of production, consumption and mobility. A transformation towards a carbon free economy is as inevitable as it is a major opportunity for green growth. Through adequately fitted policies and investments, new sustainable jobs will be created, Europe's competitiveness will increase and sustainable growth will be generated while the quality of life of our citizens will rise. The EU must remain a front runner in the international climate negotiations, and should continue striving for a fair, ambitious and legally binding international agreement within the UNFCCC framework, to ensure that the global temperature increase will not exceed 2°C.

Questions to be discussed

- How can we promote new sustainable patterns of consumption, production and mobility? Which instruments and mechanisms can be used to support the transition towards a carbon free economy while ensuring a fair transition?
- Beyond 2020, what should be the aim of our climate and energy policies? Which policies and measures are needed to increase our energy independence and promote the production and use of renewable energies and energy-efficiency? How should Europe's energy mix look like in 2050?
- How do we ensure climate justice, i.e. providing sufficient financing and support, including technological transfer, to developing countries in their fight against climate change?
- How can we restore confidence in the UNFCCC negotiations and avoid the opening of an alternative negotiation track?
- Which further legislation and actions are needed to preserve nature and improve the quality of our environment again, for example by stopping biodiversity loss and decreasing pollution?

D - Global progress: world economic order

The Challenges

The unprecedented global financial, economic, environmental and social crisis and the speculative behaviour of financial actors reveal a deep flaw in the organization of the world economy. The neo-liberal ideology purported by the conservatives and liberals remains hegemonic and prevents the creation of a fair and just global economic structure. At the same time, effective measures affecting the economy have to be taken to combat climate change. A reorganization of the world economy towards an alternative to the Washington consensus has to be promoted. A new trade model on a "Global New Deal" of green growth, regulation, solidarity and fairness has to be advanced. The economy has to respect public goods and promote public services and welfare. These principles have to be deeply instilled in the structures and decision making processes of the G20, the UN, IFIs, the WTO and environmental organizations taking the interests of the least developed countries (LDCs) into account together with a reform of these international institutions and structures.

Questions to be discussed

- How can Europe develop a fair trade model that integrates the promotion of decent work and binding environmental clauses?
- How can we achieve a general paradigm shift in the world economy towards long-termism, regulation, true fairness and solidarity?
- How can we assist in the modernization of the world economy towards a carbon free economy, based on reducing resources use and the consumption of more renewable energy? What shifts in industrial policy are needed to achieve this?
- What transformation processes are needed for Europe to take a lead in creating an alternative to the Washington consensus?
- How can the EU build alliances in the structures of the G20, with the emerging economies and the least developed countries?
- How can poverty be eradicated and the implementation of the MDGs and effective and fair development policies be ensured?
- How can we assist the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in promoting fairness and tackling climate change?
- How can international organizations and international financial institutions be reformed to promote these goals?
- How can we promote international financial regulation including the FTT?
- What can be done to mitigate economic and climate change related migration and displacement in the LDC? I believe a question on the role and the relation of WTO and ILO would be interesting in this chapter.

E - Global justice: world political order

The challenges

The safeguard of human rights and peace as well as the promotion of democracy remain essential for a stable, peaceful and just world. However, the international community has difficulty to collectively act on the basis of these common and universal values. The international challenges of conflict, human rights abuse, political oppression and terrorism persist. In the meantime, individual state interests at the European and international level persevere. Whereas the European Union is committed to these values, it lacks the capacity to promote them. The EU has no single voice in international institutions and the related efforts to build capacities for peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and civil society empowerment under the regimes of the CSDP and CSFP experience delays. A comprehensive strategy based on these common values is needed to ensure concerted action of the EU and increased multilateralism in the geopolitical arena. An alliance of civilizations for peace, democratization and human rights has to remain a common priority.

Questions to be discussed:

- What should EU policy vis-à-vis Enlargement and its neighbours be?
- How can we create a broader European and international common strategy for determined action based on common values, the promotion of democracy, adherence to human rights standards and conflict prevention?
- What is needed to give Europe a single voice in international organizations and on the global stage?
- What role should the competences of the High Representative play in promoting this agenda and which function should the EEAS have?
- What can be done to improve EU capacity building?
- How can international institutions be strengthened and decoupled from narrow national interests to effectively implement common value based strategies?



- Which is the best way to build multilateral coalitions between political parties, civil society to promote democracy and face down current challenges and threats?
- How can the international organizations be reformed to promote this agenda?
- What is needed to further advance international justice and transitional justice in the framework of international law and the ICJ and ICC?
- What is the future of the United Nations System, especially in light of the failure to find an unanimous agreement on reducing carbon emissions during the Copenhagen UNFCCC conference?

F – Active citizenship: Democracy 3.0

The Challenges

Turnout for elections is scarily decreasing, at all levels. The interest in politics is extremely low, and more worrying, so is the trust in politics and in politicians. The politicians are more and more seen as an elite who has lost the sense of reality, when people do not feel that their vote matters any longer. People do not feel that voting for a party or another would make a real difference. Moreover, the discourse about the ‘democratic deficit’ not only of EU institutions, but also of many national institutions, is not helping. People feel far away from where the decisions are made. All parties and all politicians are concerned by those issues; but given the social-democratic tradition; we have a specific responsibility in empowering people, to make them able to fully exercise their citizens’ rights.

Questions to be discussed

- How can we increase the interest of citizens in politics? How can we achieve better transparency and accountability of all institutions ?
- How can we ensure a better participation of all groups in society, such as workers, women, youth and migrants?
- How can new tools for participation in European decision making be better used, such as the European Citizens’ Initiative?
- How to use modern communication tools to reach out to our voters?
- What can be done to better involve non Party members in our work? How can we open our Parties to non Party members? What should be our links to trade-unions and NGOs?

These issues will also be discussed in the Network on modernisation of politics



3. Organising the debate

The PES will undertake a deep and wide-ranging reflection with our member parties, our parliamentary groups in the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions, PES Women, ECOSY, PES activists as well as PES observer organizations and stakeholders, in the course of the next two years. The debate will be undertaken by a threefold process: a political leadership process, an expertise process, and a grass-root activist process.

Our reflexion will be developed at the following levels:

- A core group of Leaders will lead the process, identify the main challenges and define the way forward. They will meet 4 or 5 times a year. This core group will be composed of George Papandreou, Werner Faymann, José Luis Zapatero, Borut Pahor, Mona Sahlin, Martine Aubry and Sigmar Gabriel, together with the Chair of the S&D group in the European Parliament Martin Schulz, as decided at the PES Prime Ministers and Leaders meeting on March 25th 2010. The core group will be chaired by PES President Poul Nyrup Rasmussen.
- The reflexion will be prepared and deepened by an expert group composed of representatives of PES member parties and organisations in charge of similar reflection processes. The expert group will be chaired by Maria Joao Rodrigues.
- The work conducted by the S&D group on the 'Future of social-democracy', by the PES group in the CoR, by FEPS through its 'Next Left' project and by the PES networks will fuel the debate.
- Decentralized debates will be organized by each party in each country, in close links with national initiatives.
- Web-debates will take place to receive input from our activists.

4. Calendar for the debate

- 1st meeting of the core group will take place in June 2010. It will identify the themes and indicate follow-up for each topic (debate in core group, in expert group, in thematic network, request for research from FEPS ...).
- Core group will meet in September and November 2010 and 3 times between January and July 2011.
- Expert group will meet before meetings of the core group
- Debates in other fora will take place from September 2010 and July 2011, including at the 2010 Council
- A 1st draft of the Declaration of principles will be circulated to parties in July 2011 for amendments and adoption by the Council in December 2011.
- A 1st draft of the Fundamental program will be circulated to parties early 2012 for adoption by the Congress in June 2012.

