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SOCIALISTS &
DEMOCRATS

FAIRNESS
SUSTAINABILITY
RESPECT



PES COUNCIL
2021
RESOLUTION

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A PROGRESSIVE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Today, Europe's task is to create a sustainable, fair, socio-economic model, a green transition and democratic renewal. These must promote social justice, equality and strong welfare states, putting citizens at the heart of Europe. For the last 20 years, citizens and societies have been confronted with multiple transformations and crises. Right now, we are in the middle of a profound digital revolution and on the verge of potentially catastrophic climate events, as we were once again reminded this summer. Our societies are also confronted with a strong democratic change. Social and gender inequalities persist; young people feel deprived of a promise of a better future, while democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the global rules-based multilateral order are being challenged.

The EU must answer all of these with determination. As members of the Party of European Socialists, we are the political family that can lead European societies through these fundamental transitions. This conviction stems from the fact that we have delivered concrete results that improve the lives of European citizens based on our fundamental principles of social progress and equality. Our family played a crucial role in delivering Next Generation EU, the historic recovery plan to face the COVID-19 pandemic. We succeeded in responding with solidarity by creating European recovery bonds and rejecting the old conservative-liberal mantra of austerity that did so much damage in the aftermath of the financial crisis that started in 2008. We cannot afford to go back to austerity in these times of monumental change and needs. We are proud of the hard work of our governments, our Commissioners, our S&D Group in the European Parliament, parliamentarians and regional and local politicians, and of our parties in fighting for the wellbeing of our citizens. We will make sure that our vision and values for positive and progressive change are brought to the ongoing Conference on the Future of Europe.

We are fighting for a post COVID-19 world that is more inclusive and equal, more prosperous and more humane, and more sustainable.

We are setting the foundation for a future that is more just, that embraces the Green Deal, the European Pillar of Social Rights and that provides a fair digital transition that benefits everyone.

Our political family has concrete proposals for a future of social rights, decent wages, pensions and gender equality, that addresses territorial inequalities. A future of wellbeing that leaves no one behind, and in which the younger and older generations are supported and empowered. A future based on a new sustainable model of industry. A future that tackles global challenges and injustices with determination and solidarity. A future without discrimination, where democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms are reinvigorated and protected.

A woman with long dark hair is shown in profile, smelling a pink flower. She is wearing a patterned scarf and a dark jacket. The background is a field of similar flowers, slightly out of focus. The overall tone is peaceful and natural.

BUILDING A SOCIALLY JUST AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

A socially just and environmentally sustainable future.

All progressive forces must join efforts to build a strong social Europe and develop a society that is fairer and more sustainable. Globalisation and digitalisation are changing the world of work. That is why we want to provide new policies that put us on a new development path towards a just transition. We cannot merely aim for the creation of wealth and resources, but we must also ensure their fair distribution, supporting people and regions who will be affected by the transitions.

Yesterday we built the welfare states; today we are updating and strengthening them, making sure that they remain a foundation of our societies, protecting everyone in good times as well as in bad.

The EU has responded decisively to limit the social and economic impact of the health crisis. It has put forward many financial resources to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic, giving Member States the flexibility to react quickly and manage to keep companies afloat. However, many small businesses are still struggling to make their way out of this crisis. The Porto Summit and the Porto Declaration, the Social Action Plan, the temporary suspension of the Stability and Growth Pact, SURE, the Recovery and Just Transition Funds are all important steps. The EU must act more forcefully to urgently tackle the problem of inequality that so greatly damages our societies. This must be done with more investment, measures for quality jobs, decent wages and pensions, and strong collective bargaining for all. We will continue to work for a central role for social dialogue and trade unions, and the involvement of civil society in decision making and in public life. We welcome the very important steps that have been made to ensure a more transparent and fair global tax system.

Europe needs:

- Measures to ensure decent wages and pensions and improve incomes (universal access to efficient minimum income schemes and social protection developed at member states level) and citizens quality of life.
- A European agenda for quality jobs for all, including banning of zero-hour contracts and the creation of millions of well-paying quality jobs, including for medium- and low-skilled workers.
- Full protection of workers' rights and privacy, for all workers, including digital platform workers, teleworkers, and migrant workers.
- Fair and adequate minimum wages that protect all workers while strengthening collective bargaining and fully respecting national specificities and competences.
- A reform the European Semester to support the Treaty objective of citizens' wellbeing
- To maximise the use of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, ensuring a progressive implementation of the

national recovery plans in partnership with local and regional authorities, with a major public investment push to relaunch the economy, foster upward social convergence and boost innovation, bridge the investment gap in social infrastructure and welfare systems, and prepare for a socially and ecologically sustainable green transition. The Recovery and Resilience Facility is the basis for long-term support to public investment towards upward social, environmental and economic convergence and sustainability

- A transformation of the Stability and Growth Pact into a real sustainability pact to bring it in line with the realities of the 21st century and the SDGs, and ensure it maintains the investment drive to rebuild a better Europe.
- Fair taxation policy, eradicating tax fraud, improving the fight against tax avoidance and tax evasion, and curbing aggressive tax planning, and moving towards qualified majority voting in these specific tax matters.

The EU needs an ambitious implementation of the OECD agreement on a global minimum tax rate. This revenue should support strong welfare states and sustainable budgets, to answer to the needs of citizens, and support the ecological transition. This is a matter of justice.



- To fully address concerns of financial crime, notably laundering and the financing of terrorism, by closing the legal loopholes in EU legislation and creating a European Anti-Money Laundering Authority.
- To reaffirm, through a Social Progress Protocol, that there should be a balance in primary law between economic freedoms and competition rules on the one hand and fundamental social rights on the other hand, and that the latter should take precedence in case of conflict.
- Continue to develop own resources to support the EU Budget and Next Generation EU, thus ensuring that national contributions do not increase. Favour policies that do not put a burden on middle and lower-income households, but rather on large corporations and high polluters in order to combat climate change and other major challenges
- To tackle demographic changes and rural depopulation through territorial cohesion, equal opportunities, and sustainable development.
- Sustainable agriculture, ensuring an affordable, safe and good quality food supply, must serve as a basis for more equal territorial development for rural areas.
- To ensure quality public services and universal access to services of general interest.

The economic model of the future must protect our planet, environment, biodiversity and people, especially the most vulnerable who are suffering the most from the consequences of the climate crisis.

Due to the ongoing climate and environmental emergency, the cost of climate inaction is far greater than the cost of climate action and will be terrible for future generations.

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European Green Deal.

That is why we must invest in the green transition, create green jobs and develop a sustainable economic model, which puts people and the planet first. We need to demonstrate that green ambitions, economic reason and social justice are not opposites – rather, they depend on one another. The latest IPCC report makes it once again clear that the EU needs to act immediately to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. The European Green Deal sets out a path for becoming climate neutral by 2050 and its implementation is a priority. It is there to ensure that the transformation towards climate neutrality also protects and supports those who will be affected the most. It is a transformation towards a more equal society, with a new model of urban and regional development, and with new jobs and better employment in the cleaner industries of the future.

Europe needs:

- The implementation of the European Green Deal, the Climate Law, and the Fit for 55 package, with a strong Social Climate Fund to accelerate the decarbonisation of Europe by 2050 by investing more in renewable and clean energy sources, energy efficiency, and guaranteed affordable energy
- For the Green Deal and the European Pillar of Social Rights to be implemented in an integrated manner
- A transition that leads towards the realisation of our climate ambitions and that is also socially fair and just with an increased financial solidarity, e.g. through the Just Transition Fund to target poverty and inequalities linked to the climate crisis.
- A transition that will create new decent and good quality jobs in both existing and new sectors of the economy.
- Access to affordable energy for all citizens, fighting energy poverty and tackling the rise of energy prices.
- To take the opportunity to lead in the green transition by ensuring sufficient public and private investment, thus improving economic growth prospects and establishing European leadership in the fight against climate change.
- Significant public investment in energy-efficient renovation and construction to tackle the housing crisis.
- An inclusive and green European Industrial Strategy, enabling investments in low or net-zero CO2 technologies, investments in green businesses with special attention to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups, investing in and driving regions lagging behind via a just transition process.
- A new vision for clean mobility that improves the liveability of both cities and rural areas where citizens take advantage of public space, and interurban links that connect regions
- Global climate leadership, promoting international solidarity and cooperation and protect biodiversity with a strong role in the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in 2022.
- Clear corporate accountability, transparency, due diligence, civil liability, duty of care and reporting obligations for companies to uphold social and human rights, as well as sustainability and ambitious environmental standards at global level.

Health, care and wellbeing.

PES promotes the concept of wellbeing society, ensuring citizens' rights to health and care, decent, age-adapted housing and the fight against homelessness, quality jobs, security, equality, and all the other elements that make up one's quality of life while at the same time improving the natural environment and the use of resources in a sustainable manner.

The pandemic demonstrated the need for a strong Health Union and improved European cooperation.

We must address inequalities in health and truly deliver universal access across all member states. Public healthcare services are a pillar of the EU social model, and without them many citizens could not get the help they needed. The right to health represents a fundamental value of our society, and we will continue to defend free or affordable healthcare available to all. In the context of ageing societies, Europe should guarantee decent living conditions for older people. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are an integral part of our vision.

Europe needs:

- Citizens with universal and effective access to affordable healthcare.
- The EU to conclude the negotiations on the Health Union, and strengthen cooperation between Member States to raise standards, provide new treatments and heighten pandemic preparedness for a healthier future for Europe.
- Tighter environmental legislation to tackle some of the long-term, underlying causes of ill-health.
- Every person in the EU to have universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including safe and legal abortion care.



Education and intergenerational solidarity.

While the elderly have been the main direct victims of the pandemic, young people have suffered heavily from its social and economic impact, and we have repeatedly called for them to be at the centre of the recovery. Education and training are indispensable to building cohesive and inclusive societies in which citizens can flourish, develop common understandings of our common challenges and acquire the tools to tackle them.

This is why we support greater investment in public education, including informal and non-formal learning, vocational training, lifelong learning, access to culture and mobility for all learners, as well as active labour market policies that provide young people with quality jobs.

**Education and training should be a right at all ages,
through lifelong learning.**

Europe needs:

- Increased funding for all branches of the education system, to provide better teacher training, smaller class sizes and equal access to digital tools.
- Skills-based compensation systems in companies that access public funds for upskilling workers, in agreement with workers' representatives.
- A Child Union, with the full implementation of the European Child Guarantee, working towards the eradication of child poverty through free effective access to early childhood education and care, healthcare, adequate nutrition and decent housing for vulnerable children.
- The European Youth Guarantee as a permanent component of the EU's social action with a strong focus on quality and sustainability of offers.
- Age-friendly policies and intergenerational solidarity to combat inequalities must be at the core of the green and digital transitions.
- Specific attention to be paid to the elderly to guarantee their rights, support their inclusion in community life and provide them with easy access to public services, adequate housing, affordable home care and elderly care.
- Investment in up- and re-skilling of women to achieve gender-equal green and digital transitions.





DEFENDING A UNION OF DEMOCRACY AND RIGHTS

Strong and inclusive democracy.

An inclusive, participatory democracy with accountable institutions is the foundation of our Union. We will defend it against political movements that take aim at democracies, freedoms and fundamental rights. We denounce the deterioration of the rule of law in some Member States, whose governments are led by populist movements and ultra-conservative governments that undermine progress and the sustainable development of our societies. We will continue protecting and upholding inclusive societies open to diversity, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, human rights, and democracy, including workplace democracy. We will defend democracy against attacks on journalists and media freedom. We will defend the rights of women, of LGBTI communities, and of all minorities, and defend them from any kind of discrimination. The full application of the rule of law conditionality is a must. When it comes to security, the EU must take efficient measures to protect citizens from organized crimes, terrorism and all forms of radicalisation.

Democratic societies must give a real voice to all citizens not only during election time, but by permanently empowering them through meaningful consultations and mechanisms such as participatory budgets.

Democracy takes shape at all levels of government, from the local and regional, to the national and EU levels, with the full involvement of trade unions and of civil society organisations. The Conference on the Future of Europe represents a strong exercise of European democracy and as progressives we are determined to make sure that every voice is heard. We also see a need for improved and simplified community methods, a strong role for the European Commission and the European Parliament and more qualified majority voting (QMV) within the different Council formations.

Europe needs:

- To enhance European democracy against the current challenges by promoting active engagement in democracy at all levels – from local to European.
- Bottom-up inclusive public debates such as the Conference on the Future of Europe, with a real impact on policymaking.
- To guarantee journalists' rights, and protection against abusive lawsuits, media freedom and pluralism through effective legislation.
- To use and develop instruments such as the Annual Report on the Rule of Law situation across the European Union and the EU report on gender equality, so that the findings can be translated into binding recommendations.
- To counter populism in political communication, enhance cooperation against disinformation, promote greater transparency in paid political advertising and political campaigns.
- To support the new Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, to build resilient societies, based on social progress, inclusivity and shared prosperity for all.
- To promote the respect and protection of human dignity, human rights, freedom, and equality, including through full application of the rule of law conditionality.
- To keep historical memory alive to strengthen our democracy.
- To fight racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and sexism. Fight all forms of discrimination, whether based on disability, religion, age or any other basis, including through the horizontal Anti-Discrimination Directive.
- To fight the stigmatisation of LGBTI people and promote and protect the rights of all individuals and of rainbow families across the EU.
- To lead the fight to prevent organized crime, including human trafficking and terrorism, with strengthened police cooperation.

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Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union and of our progressive family.

Europe must be a feminist continent where women's rights are fully guaranteed and protected, but also where institutions and actors are ready to advance progressive ideas for gender equality.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening decades of progress. While women have been on the frontlines of the response, they have also been disproportionately affected by the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. We are seeing a worrying backlash from conservative forces in Europe, who are trying to curtail women's fundamental rights and freedoms, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Thanks to our efforts the EU has never been better equipped to progress on gender equality and strengthen women's rights. The provisions of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 should now be accelerated and implemented.

Europe needs:

- To eradicate all forms of gender-based violence, with a bold European directive on combating gender violence, the full ratification of the Istanbul Convention, and the enlargement of the definition of EU crimes to include those based on gender and sex identity
- A gender-sensitive recovery towards a feminist economy, including gender budgeting at all levels of governance, and gender mainstreaming of all policies
- To promote women's economic independence by closing the gender employment, pay and pension gaps, for example through initiatives on pay transparency measures, effective implementation of work-live-balance policies, fair distribution of paid and unpaid work including care responsibilities, and through fair taxation schemes which do not perpetuate gender inequalities
- Gender equality at all levels of political and economic decision-making and representation, by also moving ahead on the Women on Boards Directive.
- To safeguard and promote women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the right and access to comprehensive sexuality and relationships education, to affordable contraception and universal access to safe and legal abortion.

Towards a digital world

As we make the leap towards a new digital world, we must update the 2030 Digital Compass and turn it into a veritable digital strategy that supports an environmentally and socially sustainable transition. Such a transition will require massive investments in interoperable public infrastructure in health, education and mobility.

At the same time, we must make sure that multinationals and large information and communications technology (ICT) companies contribute their fair share, pay taxes where they should and are properly regulated to counter the current monopolistic control by a few giants who abuse their dominant position. We will defend the rights to privacy, data protection, and digital civil rights for everyone. The digital transformation that we want is one that enhances democracy, equality, transparency, accessibility, digital cohesion and quality public spaces online. We must support measures that promote ICT literacy and critical thinking. We must secure universal access to digital services, but also to non-digital alternatives for essential sectors.



Europe needs:

- To support Member States in providing digital skills in education and training as well as critical thinking courses in school. Promote inclusive digital education in the whole Union; support older people in acquiring digital skills and enable them to find their way autonomously in a digital world.
- To promote gender equality in ICT and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and employment, to make sure that women are equally represented in the digitized societies of the future.
- To ensure that everyone can benefit from new high-capacity networks with affordable and accessible connectivity for all citizens across the European Union, with the provision of free internet access in municipalities by setting up Wi-Fi public areas.
- To ensure non-digital alternatives to online public services with a particular focus on the elderly.
- Data and privacy protection measures. Seriously invest in the enforcement and governance mechanisms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and upcoming rules for large ICT firms and the data economy (Digital Services Act, Digital Markets Act, Data Governance Act, AI legal framework).
- Strict regulation on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace is essential in order to protect workers fundamental rights and health and safety.
- Measures on teleworking and on the right to disconnect so that workers' rights are respected, their health and mental health protected and good work-life balance in the digital age can be achieved for women and men.
- To accelerate the digital transformation of our public services, with the aim of combining technology with human capacity and relationships.
- To engage the responsibility and accountability of social media platforms.
- Transparency in algorithms for social media platforms and accountability for promoting harmful content.
- Massive investments in ethical and human-centred AI and microchips.
- To protect and support SMEs against the monopolistic behaviour of ICT multinationals and to ensure that the latter also pay their fair share in taxes.
- To make the most of the Next Generation EU funds for the transition, by setting social and sustainable criteria for public procurement, and making strategic use of procurement to support European digital autonomy.
- To carry out ambitious pan-European projects to provide interoperable public digital infrastructure.

Solidarity, shared responsibility & inclusive and resilient societies

Europe has a long history of migration and asylum, both within and outside our continent, both as receiving and as sending countries. Throughout history and in every continent, countless people have had to flee wars, persecution, and dictatorships, in search of the protection they deserved.

We will continue to uphold our legal and moral obligation to provide asylum and will make sure that everyone is treated with dignity and solidarity

by means of an effective system of protection of refugees and efficiently managed EU common asylum & migration policy based on effective solidarity and the respect of human rights and humanitarian laws.

Our continent is enriched by the various migrations that took place over the ages. We must move away from a stigmatising narrative on asylum and migration, to a respectful and transparent one that underlines the positive impact on our societies, and also addresses the various challenges. It should be part of a global approach that answers to the need for safety and security for all, effective inclusion policies, and the fight against human trafficking. What Europe needs now is a well-managed system that supports Member States, especially the ones that carry the highest responsibility.

A system with solidarity, shared responsibility and with effective, safe and legal migration pathways to break the human trafficking business, save lives and foster better inclusion. It is therefore necessary to promote changes, strengthening and adopting the Pact on Asylum and Migration, and to fully implement the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion proposed by Commissioner Johansson.



Europe needs:

- To respect the basic principles of the Schengen area in line with European and national competences and obligations. In an EU that aspires to become an area without internal frontiers, Schengen must remain an area without internal border controls, with strict limits on when they may be introduced.

- To reform the Dublin asylum system, establishing a system where an asylum claim has a truly European dimension.

Europe needs concrete implementation of the new Action Plan for the Integration and Inclusion with direct funding to local and regional authorities, which are those responsible for the integration of migrants.

Europe needs to move forwards and improve the proposed Pact on Asylum and Migration in a progressive manner with a rights-, solidarity- and responsibility-based approach

to alleviate pressures on regions at the EU's external borders.

- To create a mechanism to monitor and ensure the respect of human rights accountability at borders in an objective and independent manner.

- To strengthen cooperation with countries of origin and transit to prevent life-threatening journeys and irregular crossings including the fight against human smuggling and trafficking, fully implementing the Anti-Trafficking Directive.

- The moral and legal obligations on Search & Rescue and disembarkation to save lives must be upheld and properly funded. At the same time, we must establish a more coordinated and properly funded EU approach, based on solidarity and responsibility sharing, coupled with measures to tackle smuggling and to prevent that people risk their lives in the first place



A FAIR GLOBAL SYSTEM

A strengthened multilateralism for a fair, sustainable, and green world.

In an increasingly interconnected, interdependent, but also fragmented world, the EU and its Member States must be united and speak with one voice.

The EU must strive to achieve strategic autonomy in all critical areas to defend and promote its values and interests, while forging strong partnerships to revive the rules-based multilateral order.

Working closely with our partners, to promote multilateralism and solidarity, and support universal values such as democracy, peace and stability, fighting inequality and poverty, the rule of law, human rights, and gender equality must be central to our international action.

We must work with our international partners to address global injustice and challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, developing a green

growth economy and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. We want fairer and sustainable trade and investment agreements and instruments which respect human rights, our social and environmental standards, tackle forced labour, promote corporate due diligence and accountability, establish ethical principles in the context of a future human centric and trustworthy artificial intelligence and foster greater supply chain sustainability and transparency.

We will promote constructive transatlantic relations with President Biden's administration. We must support Africa and Latin America through a strengthened and sustainable partnership on equal footing with shared ownership of responsibility focusing on people's needs: democracy, good governance, human development and improved climate action to support green, digital and sustainable investments. We call for a reformed and more equitable international debt architecture. We defend a clear strategy towards China, cooperating on common interests, staying firm on human rights, and defending our core values and interests.

Europe needs:

A stronger European common foreign and security policy.

- To strengthen multilateralism by forging a new social contract and a new global deal following the Common Agenda proposed by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres
- To lead the drive for international development and the fulfilment of the SDGs, including support to middle-income countries
- To strengthen the external aspects of the Green Deal to help our partners, particularly developing countries, in their transition to a green and sustainable economy.
- To support the enlargement process to the Western Balkans without delay, for Europe's own credibility, stability and peace.
- To promote a close, fair and equal cooperation with third countries, and in particular Africa, guided by mutual interest, shared responsibility, respect for people's fundamental and human rights and the improvement of living standards in our partner countries.
- To strengthen our partnership with Latin America, including on trade, sustainability, democracy and human rights
- The EU to be a mediating power in an increasingly confrontational world.
- To develop an ambitious, audible and visible Common Foreign and Security Policy, with greater coherence improved decision-processes to be able to better coordinate Member States and act as one.
- To strengthen our Common Security and Defence Policy and provide it with the necessary means for the EU to be a global actor for peace.
- To develop a common strategy against hybrid and cyber threats, with a coordinated EU Defence Policy, based on the realization that there can be no sustainable nor progressive development without peace and common security.
- To guarantee universal access to COVID-19 vaccines, by leading international vaccine solidarity through donations to COVAX, bilateral vaccine-sharing, and by fostering a constructive role in the debate on a temporary TRIPS waiver for vaccine patents.
- To maintain its position as the world's leading donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and encourage Member States to honour their commitment of providing 0.7% of their GNI in ODA.
- To invest in a forward-looking European Space Policy.



PREPARING EUROPE'S FUTURE TOGETHER

In the second half of this European term, we will use the positive momentum for change that we created, to deliver a truly green and social agenda as a response to the COVID-19 crisis, and as the foundation of a better future for all. We see the urgency to accelerate the transformation of Europe with all its rich potential, innovation and creativity.

The unity of our socialist, social-democratic and pro-

gressive movement, with political parties rooted in our societies and in Europe, will make it possible to defend our common goals: make Europe a continent of well-being, a continent that tackles climate change and is in line with the digital revolutions, a continent of welfare states, social equality, gender equality, freedom of sexual orientation and gender expression, democracy and fundamental rights.

**These are the principles and the objectives
that our political family will continue to fight for!**

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