PES
SOCIALISTS & DEMOCRATS

PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS
LISBON, 7-8 DECEMBER 2018

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EQUAL SOCIETIES:

For a stronger democracy in Europe

Our belief in democracy has always been the driver for our political action. It has been our core motivation in our fight for universal suffrage. It has been our incentive as we strive for modern political systems that can fully represent, include and protect citizens. It has been the foundation on which we have been building Europe. **Today, as democracy finds itself under attack, we want to reaffirm our commitment to protect our model of democracy.**

We are determined to defend and enhance democracy at national and European levels.

Our core European values are under attack on multiple fronts. We are witnessing the rise of extremist movements in all parts of Europe and on all fringes of the political spectrum, with ideologies that promote intolerance, deny people's fundamental rights, disrespect minorities and polarise our societies. At the same time, we have witnessed several cases of foreign intrusion in electoral processes, aimed at destabilising Europe and undermining our democracy.

The world we live in is one full of uncertainties. The pace of changes makes people feel that the ongoing global, technological, societal and cultural transformations are beyond their control. They see inequalities growing, politics fragmenting and real power accumulating in the hands of a few. They no longer see themselves as empowered sovereigns, nor do they believe that democratically elected institutions possess the power to control the course of events on their behalf or in their favour. It is people's fears, disapproval and anger that provokes them to vote for radical, populist, anti-systemic, sexist and increasingly anti-democratic parties. Against this background **we want to offer citizens of Europe a viable progressive choice with an agenda that will make democracy on all levels – local, national, European and global – work for them again. We believe that a strong, united, democratic and social European Union will enable European citizens to reclaim sovereignty, to tame under-regulated financial markets, to improve social justice and to defend human rights in the EU on the world stage. United as Europeans, we can shape the world of tomorrow.**

As the Party of European Socialists, we place ourselves at the forefront of the battle for a more democratic Europe. We fight for:

1. a European Union that remains a Community based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. We will support national and pan-European actions aimed at preventing Member States from turning to authoritarian rule, including the use of Article 7 and financial measures, and the establishment of an EU mechanism for democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, defending the values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union. We will also fight all forms of corruption, nepotism and cronyism.

2. a European Union that defends citizens against those who violate the rule of law and call it democratisation. We declare our active support for civil society fighting for democratic rules in countries

ruled by various "Eurosceptics" who want to demolish European Project. The EU should be able to apply sanctions against those who violate our common values.

3. a European Union with legislation at all levels and in all policy fields that promotes equality and embeds mechanisms to fight discrimination, hate crime and hate speech effectively, and the initiation of a broad coalition of stakeholders to ensure this happens. Further actions should be undertaken to update existing laws, making them instrumental in combatting new inequalities.

4. a European Union that removes barriers that hinder women's full and equal participation in private, professional and public life. Women's fundamental rights are non-negotiable, and the PES will fight conservative forces around Europe that instrumentalise women's rights for the purpose of oppressing and marginalising women. Pushing women back into traditional roles is a cost to our democracy and to society as a whole.

5. a European Union that acts based on the conviction that democracy as a principle is transversal, cutting across all socio-economic, environmental and cultural dimensions. This means ensuring that the implementation of all policies, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the response to the migration situation in Europe, uphold and promote democracy in their core objectives.

6. education in Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights. We recall the right to education conferred in international law and aim to deliver this through non-formal education and a hands-on approach, empowering learners and developing attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights and democracy in Europe. Furthermore, we stand united against any attempt to instrumentalise formal education to promote divisive ideologies.

7. a European Union that is committed to the civil rights of minorities. We stand for LGBTI rights, full recognition of migrants, freedom of religion, the rights of ethnic minorities, the full participation of people with disabilities in society and any policies that aim to end any form of discrimination, including discrimination based on a combination of these characteristics. We believe a European fund should be created to support civil society organisations that are protecting minorities and vulnerable groups within a Member State. We are fully committed to encouraging representation of minority groups in our party structures and standing for their rights, as a sign of promoting inclusive democracy. A viable basis for the future of our society can only be created if democracy successfully represents all citizens.

8. the participation of citizens and civil society in decision-making processes and innovative forms of deliberative democracy. We encourage transparent decision-making processes from a multidimensional point of view, encompassing EU institutions, NGOs, Trade Unions and civil society organisations. We must ensure stakeholders and NGOs have adequate funding in order to carry out their work. It is only through this that we can address the rise of Euroscepticism, populism and extreme far-right political movements.

9. a European Union that stands for the emancipation and empowerment of all citizens against the current conservative backlash. This involves a need for a binding EU Gender Equality Strategy and calls for an equivalent strategy reaffirming the EU's commitment to stand for the rights of LGBTI people and to defend social progress.

10. an enhanced dialogue between the European institutions, trade unions and civil society. The tradition of civic consultations by the European Commission and hearings by the European Parliament should be reviewed and accelerated, harnessing the creativity and energy of representatives in the non-governmental sector. More European organisational support should be offered to all such organisations, which mobilise so many for diverse causes.

11. a European Union that engages young citizens. We want to bridge the intergenerational divide that is growing in society. We will work to ensure that the EU fully implements its new Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and that there are means available to support young citizens in their work, engage them in youth, pupil and student organisations, and aid them in their desire to volunteer. This is necessary to ensure equal opportunities for young people of any gender to develop their talents, use their creativity, and freely choose a path to a fulfilling future.

12. better ethical standards in our politics through improving the quality of politics and political debate. Recent experience in Europe and elsewhere has shown more clearly than ever that hate speech in political campaigning leads to real hate crime. We thus commit to take a firm stance to actively prevent, sanction and eliminate hateful and divisive rhetoric within our parties and offices. We will battle any internal or external discourse of exclusion and hatred, alongside condemning xenophobia, racism and sexism, and anti-gender ideologies, and defending freedom of religion.

13. a pluralistic, credible, transparent and non-partisan public media landscape. We want to ensure people have access to impartial, trustworthy news sources. Moreover, we encourage education in media literacy to empower citizens to make informed and independent democratic decisions.

14. a European Union equipped to boost its role as a democratic community in the era of digitalization. E-democracy should become a tool to make our political systems more transparent, more inclusive, more open and more accessible for all generations. As an enabler of civic dialogue, the internet must be kept secure from any manipulation. Governments should step up their efforts to better protect citizens against discrimination, bullying, abuse, hate-speech and other crimes in the digital space and should offer protection for whistle blowers who alert us to breaches of privacy. Educating children in the use of digital space, protecting their privacy, and the principles and workings of our democratic system is crucial in this regard.

European Culture Cheques for citizens to express themselves. We want to encourage citizens to use Culture Cheques to present their proposals for democracy and their ideas on Europe.

15. a fully-fledged transnational parliamentary democracy. We will take action to make European democracy more participatory, inclusive and sustainable, and bring the institutions closer to citizens. We have already been paving the way by establishing the institution of a PES Common Candidate as a symbol of our belief in the need for the politicisation of Europe. This is an opening, which could in the future be followed by the establishment of transnational lists in the European Parliament elections. We believe that there is more to be done in seeking reforms that will bring more transparency, responsiveness and accountability to the European institutions and decision-making processes. We will ensure the integrity of democratic and electoral processes, fostering legislation for gender-balanced lists (through quotas) for the European Elections, and we will encourage that heads of lists are equally shared between women and men. This will contribute towards a more equal representation of women and men in the European Parliament as well as the equal appointment of women and men to different positions in this institution. Moreover, to ensure equal representation of both sexes in the next European Commission, the PES calls on all Member States to put forward both a woman and a man as their Commissioner candidate.

These are our commitments *For a Stronger Democracy in Europe*. In order to uphold and exceed them, we need to continue reforming ourselves. Learning from the two extensive reforms that were concluded in 2001 and 2007, the PES will take the time after the European elections to reflect on how to further consolidate and adapt its role as the most forward looking and progressive of the European parties. This process will look into making the PES:

❖ an even more politically effective party, which pursues a progressive European project by bringing together political stakeholders of local, regional, national, European and global levels

❖ an even more accessible party, where the deliberative process matters, and the drafting of any major policy starts from a discussion that is open to voices of all the Progressives willing to contribute

❖ an even more participatory party, where being a member and being a PES activist matters

❖ an even more representative party, where gender equality and intergenerational solidarity are transversally binding principles, and where the PES LGBTI Roadmap is fully implemented

❖ an even more empowering party, where existing efforts that focus on political education and training are accelerated

❖ an even more connected party, which has a space for dialogue, culture and creativity

Respecting Equal Human Rights for LGBTIQ people

Although Europe has come a long way in recognising and protecting LGBTI rights, there is still a long way to go in ensuring LGBTI people are treated equally in society. From childhood, LGBTI people are often victims of hate speech, hate crime, discrimination, humiliation, violence and other forms of oppression. They are prevented from fully enjoying their basic human rights simply because of who they are and whom they love.

Current EU rules do not attach the same importance to fighting discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics as they attach to fighting discrimination based on race and gender. As a result, they turn a blind eye to numerous problems LGBTI people face in their daily lives, including being bullied at school, getting fired from the workplace due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and being refused service in public and private spaces.

The state of LGBTI rights differs in various countries. This is a reflection of different historical, cultural and political backgrounds. But these can never justify delaying the full respect of human rights for everyone. We will spare no effort to achieve this.

The PES is the only European political party that has adopted an LGBTI Roadmap. Together with our LGBTI network Rainbow Rose, we call for EU policies that guarantee equal rights and the full protection of LGBTI people, including:

❖ **Strengthening the fight against hatred and intolerance** through EU-wide hate crime legislation.

❖ **Promoting sensitive education** and specific programmes on gender and LGBTIQ equality and respect.

❖ Ensuring strong legal protection for LGBTI asylum seekers in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and strengthening implementation by properly training asylum authority personnel regarding the rights of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

❖ **Ensuring that freedom of movement for families is also fully guaranteed** for LGBTI people and their families by fully enforcing the freedom of movement directive.

❖ Promoting awareness-raising and visibility of LGBTI people in the EU and standing in solidarity with LGBTI people enjoying their freedom of speech and expression.

❖ **Prohibiting unnecessary invasive medical procedures on intersex children**.

❖ Fighting against domestic violence faced by LGBTI people through **setting a minimum applicable standard of non-discrimination across the EU, which can be done** by ratifying the **Istanbul Convention** and encouraging Member States to implement it fully in their national laws.

❖ **Allowing for quick, accessible and transparent legal gender recognition procedures** without medical or psychiatric consent and based on the persons' self-determination and without age limits.

PES and Rainbow Rose will continue to facilitate an open dialogue with LGBTI civil society and its PES member parties. We will not allow LGBTI people to become a tool in polarising populist discourse. We will continue to strongly condemn hate speech and speech that sets communities against one another.

All PES member parties are committed to supporting LGBTI groups within their structures. For a more diverse Europe, where individuals can freely express their identities without the fear of persecution, the rights of LGBTI people must be protected. As Progressives, we are united in this belief.

As the Party of European Socialists, we are fighting for equal societies. In this resolution we have focused particularly on our priorities for a stronger democracy in Europe. It goes hand-in-hand with seven other resolutions for this PES Congress, that reaffirm our commitment and plan for a social Europe, progressive economy, empowering youth, a healthy environment and modern industries, true gender equality, a fair world, and progressive asylum and migration policies.

Austria SPÖ

Belgium PS

Belgium SPA

Bulgaria BSP

Croatia SDP

Cyprus EDEK

Czech Republic CSSD

Denmark SD

Estonia SDE

Finland SDP

France PS

Germany SPD

Greece PASOK

Hungary MSZP

Ireland Labour

Italy PD

Italy PSI

Latvia Saskana

Lithuania LSDP

Luxembourg LSAP

Malta Labour

Netherlands PvdA

N.Ireland SDLP

Norway LP

Poland UP

Poland SLD

Portugal PS

Romania PSD

Slovakia SMER

Slovenia SD

Spain PSOE

Sweden SAP

UK Labour

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