PES
SOCIALISTS & DEMOCRATS

PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS
LISBON, 7-8 DECEMBER 2018

FAIR
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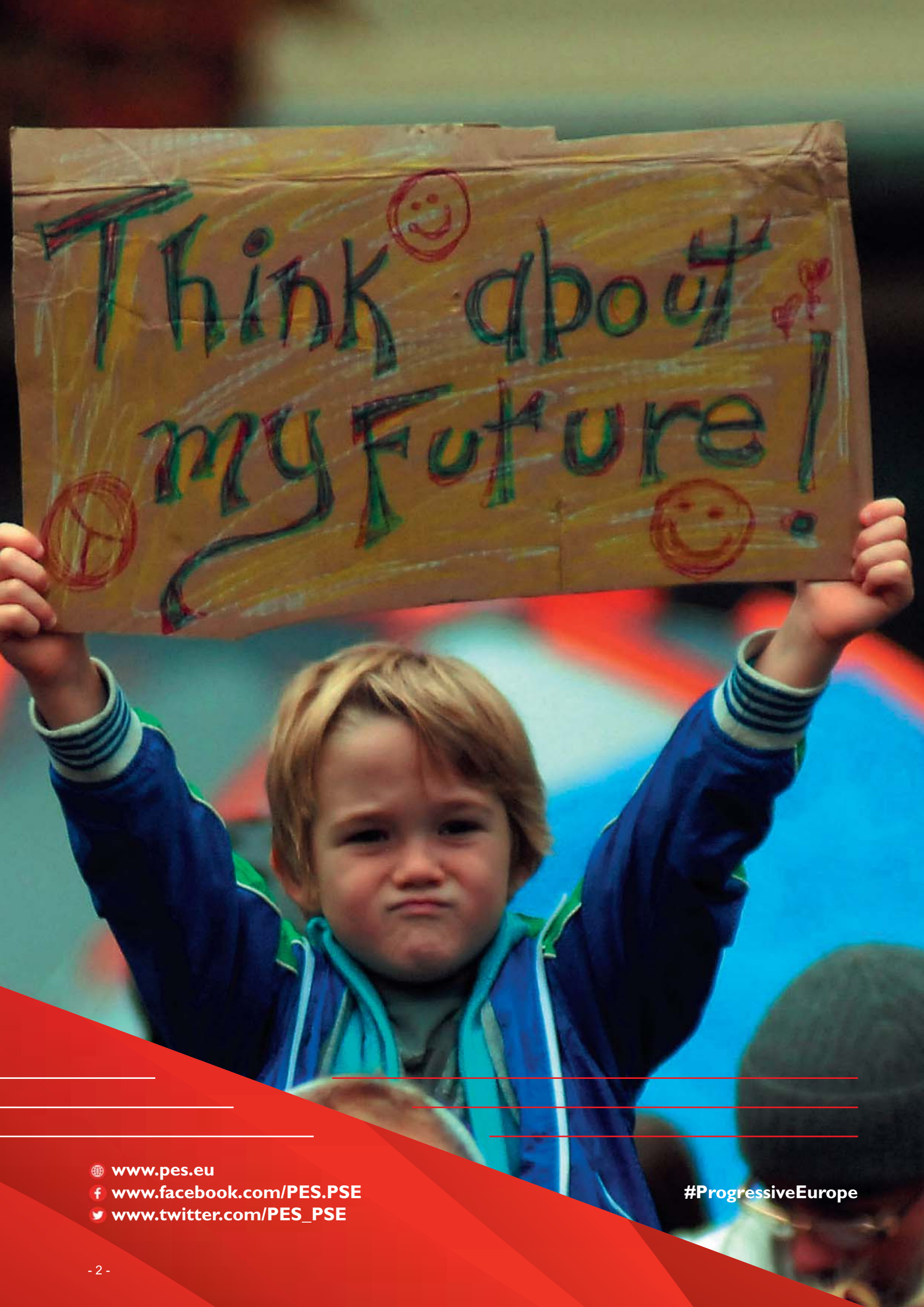
The Progressive Europe We Want

RESOLUTIONS



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EQUAL SOCIETIES:
Empowering youth

The new generation of Europeans is growing up in an ever more globalized world. The youth of today faces a very different challenge to any generation before as the pace of change is faster than ever before and the prospects of a bright future are far less certain. **Children and young people live in a society that is still recovering from the 2008 economic recession**, that is shaped by the primacy of market forces, by the digital revolution, by deep-transitional change, by tremendous access to information, and by new ways to interact at work in their private lives, most importantly in politics. All these societal challenges open a wealth of possibilities for the progressive family to showcase our political project as worthy for the younger generations to invest in. **We want to create a better future, with a better quality of life, a better-protected environment, and more possibilities for the democratic participation of young people.** But if these societal and economic developments, are not accompanied by strong and public policies, they may call into question the equity of the social contract and pose risks and challenges for the younger generation.

A progressive, fair, egalitarian and prosperous society is not only one that is built upon a principle of intergenerational solidarity, and the protection and empowerment of its youth, but also **one that recognises young people as a fundamental part of our economies**.

To give young Europeans the opportunities they need and are entitled to a better future, we must continue and reinforce progressive action in youth policies.

This is why we launched the European Youth Plan, a major initiative to accompany young people from pre-school age until the job market. It starts from early childhood with the fight for the basic rights of every child in Europe to be protected and goes on with measures to guarantee smooth school to work, and work to work transitions, and access to quality jobs, education, training, sport and culture for young people. These measures aim not only at reducing inequalities between our youth, but also to address the generation gap that resulted from the financial crisis. **This is about giving a quality life to all young people in Europe today. It is also about laying the foundations for better and fairer societies of tomorrow.** Young people need to be respected, valued, encouraged and supported in fulfilling their potential and aspirations. In this process, their voices are key in making our societies more democratic, prosperous, fair and equal.

1. For us, investing in children and youth is the best solution. We want a Europe that provides **quality jobs** and **opportunities**, enhances access to quality **education** and **health** services for their mental and physical wellbeing, makes **lifelong learning** a reality, facilitates **mobility** and volunteering and promotes the **active participation** of young people in decision-making. **Everyone must enjoy decent working conditions and be paid fairly for the work they do.** The question of quality employment remains one of the most important priorities for young Europeans[1]. To reach our goals of full youth employment and reducing social exclusion, we consider it fundamental that the **Youth Guarantee continues to provide long-term, quality, sustainable solutions for young people**. **The PES family campaigned for the creation of this programme, which guarantees a job offer, further education, apprenticeship or traineeship to young**

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/82294

Europeans within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. Our political family will continue the fight to increase funding of this successful scheme, which has so far helped over 9 million young people across the EU. **We call for the scheme to be made permanent and to strengthen national implementations.** So that more young people can benefit, we want to raise the age limit to 30 years old, and to make this instrument a permanent tool in the fight against youth unemployment while increasing coverage of the most vulnerable groups such as young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and young migrants. At the same time,

we must ensure that the offers received are of the best quality, relevance and sustainability, with adequate remuneration and working conditions.

The party of European Socialists demands that a decent standard of living is guaranteed for all young people. Unemployment, sickness or any other reason should not bring the youth below the poverty line. We call for internships to be decently paid and not represent the majority of the workforce of the company or administration concerned. Moreover, trainees and interns should have the same rights recognised as people employed under a short-term contract and the traineeships and internships should be taken into account in the calculation of pension rights.

Unfortunately, inequality in opportunities starts at a very young age. Because opportunities in later life are to a large extent determined by one's childhood, we believe

Europe has the duty to support children.

It is unacceptable that more than 25% of children are at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the EU. This is why we want a European Child Guarantee to ensure that children's rights to free and high-quality healthcare and education and training, quality childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition are put into practice all over Europe.

2. As social democrats, we believe that education is a fundamental right and must be guaranteed. Ensuring access to quality education for everyone is one of the best ways to make our societies more equal and inclusive. In order to give equal opportunities for each young person to develop their abilities, **we need greater investment in education, including informal and non-formal learning,** vocational skills, lifelong learning, culture, student mobility, research and knowledge. Building open, sustainable, participatory societies is something that starts with an education that empowers young people to be active citizens. Because education plays the double role of developing our societies and shaping the personal future of our young citizens, we will continue our

fight to make education and training accessible to everyone

This includes the promotion of gender equality through education. Therefore public, secular, high-quality education, starting from the earliest age, should be **guaranteed for free for every child, adolescent and adult in Europe**. Trends to privatise education cannot be a viable option for inclusive education nor be funded by public money. **To achieve true social justice, we cannot allow financial means, social situation, ethnic or religious background, disabilities or other forms**

of discrimination to determine the type of education a child or young person receives. Additionally, gender cannot be such a factor. We must counteract gender stereotyping from an early age through the educational promotion of gender equality and ensure that young women and men can aspire to and have equal educational and career opportunities.

Inequality in our societies has a direct impact on access to higher-level studies and students' mobility opportunities. There are many cases of young people who do not have the means to finish their studies, attend universities or travel abroad to study. To solve this problem, **our European Youth Plan calls for increasing financing, access and scope of the successful Erasmus+ programme** to a larger number of university students, high school students and students in vocational training. Our aim is to

open the Erasmus programme for students from all levels of education

In parallel, we are pushing for the recognition, validation and accreditation at European level of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal education as well as of school studies abroad. We need to support education and development of young people beyond formal education systems including volunteering.

3. Access to culture, as a fundamental right of all citizens as mentioned in the Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is an essential element in every person's development, and in the promotion of social cohesion, youth engagement and democratic citizenship. **Enhancing young people's involvement in this field is not a luxury** and can be done by supporting extra-curricular activities or by improving access to and involvement in cultural events. To this end, it is necessary to pursue the European Youth Plan proposal to **create European Culture Cheques** which would give young people a voucher of a certain value to create or participate in cultural activities. Furthermore, young people's active **participation in sports must be encouraged**, as this contributes to the development of young people's social relationships and their physical well-being. It comes **together with their right to live in a clean**

and healthy environment, alongside enjoying **equal access to quality public healthcare**. **Mental well-being** has to be preserved and young people must be supported in case of bullying at school and cyberbullying as well as facing stress at school, in training, on the labour market and in their personal lives.

It is of great importance to improve the **participation of children and young people** in community life and in its educational, cultural, political and economic aspects.

We must ensure an inclusive process that does not allow for discrimination on the grounds of young people's sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

This can be done by **improving a structured dialogue with young people**, ensuring that children and young people are involved when forming policies that concern them so that they can become main stakeholders; funding the creation of youth facilities; or developing civic education and other programmes to promote active citizenship in the formal education system. We must support and widen participation of young people from all countries, regions and social backgrounds in initiatives such as the European Solidarity Corps. To further inspire youth participation and representation in political forums and allow them a direct say in the decision-making process, **we support ways to increase the number of young people active in political and public life, with a strong focus on women's participation**. The proposed position of the **EU Youth Coordinator must be backed with real powers** ensuring that youth policies are mainstreamed in all EU policies.

Youth participation is also fundamental when it comes to voting. Data from the last European elections demonstrates a sharp decrease in the turnout of young people, though this does not mean that the younger generations is not willing to engage. On top of that, the gap between the participation of the oldest generation and the youngest one is widening. We need to address this issue by working to **increase the turnout and democratic involvement of young voters**. This is why **we want more young candidates in electable positions on parties' electoral lists.** We also want to encourage the organisation of civil and political debates in schools and other discussion platforms in order to promote media and digital literacy, allowing young people to develop critical thinking skills and enabling them to protect themselves against fake news.

We want to make youth policies a true priority for Europe. Our political family, together with the full participation of social partners, civil society and youth organisations, will spare no effort to deliver **concrete action so that young people become key actors fighting for greater democratic participation and equitable economic and social progress for all.**

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

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