



PES Council Resolution #Progressive Europe/Renewal

Adopted by the PES Council in Lisbon on 1 December 2017

The future of the European Union will be shaped by a sequence of key decisions over the next year. We, socialists and social-democrats, need to lead the progressive forces with a clear vision and roadmap to meet the challenges ahead with stronger European solutions addressing citizens' concerns such as working and living conditions, social inequalities, climate change and security. The conservative and neo-liberal forces have pushed the EU to the brink of decline and fragmentation, feeding in new populist, xenophobic and nationalist forces claiming that to protect people we need to go back to national borders and self-centred solutions.

The differences between the left and the right on the future of Europe are greater than ever. This is why progressive parties must work together. It has worked in the past and today it works in Portugal.

This is why we are happy to be hosted in Lisbon by the Government of Prime Minister Costa for this Council of the Party of European Socialists that comes at a critical time for Europe and our political family.

Our continent is in a time of deep uncertainty and increasing polarisation, with a political scene that is becoming highly fragmented. Citizens have been striving for a better quality of life and more protections, in terms of safety, jobs, or social rights. We have always defended and promoted these objectives. The PES has been at the forefront of the battle to translate these into tangible actions in Europe. In the past, our political family has been the one that has fought to bring market forces under control and organised efficient welfare states. We are proud of this fight and have to keep it up in our cities, regions, countries, and in Europe. Our values of progress, freedom, equality, social justice and solidarity are the foundations of our engagement, and the guarantee of a better future for all. In recent years, we the Socialists have fought against the devastating effects of liberal austerity policies. However, the social effects of the crisis have awakened nationalisms that threaten not only social progress, but also the very existence of the European project. We want to put an end to the rise of populism, nationalism, and extremism in our countries by addressing their root causes.

We are here today to reaffirm that the debate on the future of Europe is fundamental, and that we stand ready to play a central role. To respond to the current challenges of our continent with a long-term perspective, we have opened an important reflection in the PES High Level Working Group on the future of Europe. It is key for our political family to embrace our traditional values and achievements, and apply them to the world of today and tomorrow for the well-being of European citizens. A progressive European Union is an absolute necessity to ensure strong protection for all in a globalised world. We want the EU as an ally for its citizens and its Member States. As PES, together with our Prime Ministers and leaders, our parliamentarians, our mayors and local representatives, our partners from civil society and trade union, we want a progressive renewal for Europe that brings:

1. Jobs and strong social protection for all

For us this means first and foremost that everyone in Europe must benefit from decent wages and decent working conditions and enjoy a decent work-life balance, including the right to switch-off.

Europe has to therefore provide the definition of common rules for decent working conditions and health and safety at work, with proper contracts and real access to social protection in all forms of employment. Much needs to be done to bridge the differences between North and South, East and West and to harmonise working conditions across the EU in order to promote better social standards. Our paramount aim is to foster economic, social and territorial cohesion by relaunching a true social and economic convergence.

We want to propose a Solidarity Pact for Europe. To improve the lives of citizens, and to boost our economies, it is essential to achieve faster wage increases. For everyone to enjoy a decent standard of living, we will set the objective of minimum wages above the poverty level through law or collective bargaining all across Europe firmly in the EU's economic governance. We want to force all companies to meet their obligations towards their workers and contribute their fair share to society, and prevent all forms of social and tax dumping, whether of geographic, digital, or other origin. We want to ban zero-hour contracts in our continent. We want the effective implementation of fair rules for workers' mobility, with the support of a European Labour Authority with real powers of control and enforcement. This must respect national practices and the role of social partners in each of the Member States. We remain committed to our European Youth Plan. The European Youth Guarantee must be extended and strengthened with additional funds from 2020 onwards, in order to ensure its homogenous implementation throughout all Member States as well as equal opportunities for all young people. Our plan is to give every young person in Europe access to education and an extended Erasmus programme which doesn't exclude anyone because of their economic background or resources, and access to culture with European Culture Cheques, as our family was the first to propose. Our plan promotes a European Child Guarantee to ensure that every child has universal access to quality healthcare, childcare, education, decent housing and adequate nutrition.

We want to bring also affordable healthcare for all, quality education and life-long learning. It means following up on the proclamation of the Pillar of Social Rights, at the Gothenburg Social Summit hosted by the Swedish government led by the SAP, by delivering a comprehensive Social Action Plan, giving the pillar the means to achieve its ambitions. Digitalisation challenges us to rethink the future of labour protection, the future of work and the future of education. We want to fight for equality in the digital sphere, especially through net neutrality. It means guaranteeing strong trade unions with powerful collective agreements as a key pillar of our societies. It means promoting high-quality public services that ensure effective access to social housing, public health, timely access to affordable, preventive and curative healthcare of good quality and essential services. Because everyone should be protected against the hazards of life, strong safety nets that guarantee income security and health protection to all must be provided.

2. Fair economic development and prosperity for all

This requires that we build economies that are sustainable, promote equality, and bring stability and prosperity to all. This is why we have long been fighting to reverse the neoliberal approach of cutting expenditure and dismantling social rights under the pretext that these are necessary to create growth. We have to turn austerity onto its head and make clear that "trickle-down theory" simply does not work because it only brings prosperity to the few, while impoverishing the many, and damaging the viability of our welfare states and threatening its very own future. Our project means investing for a better quality of life for all. It means prioritising economic growth, employment and investment both public and private. It means that European Law must ensure that neither basic economic freedoms nor competition rules take precedence over fundamental social rights, which must be enshrined as fundamental values in the EU Treaties. It means that the prosperity stemming from globalisation and trade must be shared more equally. It means a more efficient, inclusive and democratic EMU and Eurozone that promote solidarity.

For too long, European fiscal rules have been interpreted in a restrictive way, hampering the ability of countries to invest and grow, and undermining social rights. These fiscal rules are no longer fit for the needs of our societies. They need to be revised to promote and encourage fiscal flexibility and stronger investment in sustainable development. We need a simpler and more transparent application in order to secure the sustainability, predictability and equal treatment of budgets along with the prosperity of our societies

We must also toughen the rules on tax evasion and fraud. The “Paradise Papers” published by the ICIJ, are yet another reminder of the urgency of our calls to close tax loopholes, and to fight tax fraud, tax evasion, and tax havens. We cannot accept for the European space to be abused by legal entities and companies, digital or not, which avoid paying their due. Tax transparency is key. Every year 1 trillion euros is lost due to tax fraud and tax evasion. Every euro that is owed and not paid is a euro that is stolen from the worker, the unemployed, the sick. Profits should be taxed where they are created. This is why we support the coordination of tax policies with the establishment of a common consolidated corporate tax base, including the taxation of the Digital Giants, the so-called GAFA Tax (Google/Amazon/Facebook/Apple). To close the net completely we must also create a multilateral tax agreement for the automatic exchange of tax related information, imposing a reporting obligation on all financial institutions, trusts and foundations in the EU, and their ultimate beneficial ownership. We must intensify public country by country reporting; develop stronger sanctions for banks, legal entities and individuals that assist in tax fraud or evasion; establish a black list of tax havens, a list of non-cooperative jurisdictions; and offer whistle-blowers full protection. We also support the implementation of the Financial Transaction Tax so that the financial sector contributes its fair share to society.

The PES is asking to give the European Union the means to protect its citizens from financial and economic crises. We will complete the Banking Union to ensure that people’s savings are safe in the banks. We will put in place greater financial guarantees - that will allow the Union to safeguard our banks and economies in case of financial shocks.

Eurozone countries must promote more solidarity measures and mechanisms, and a Eurozone budget that will drive economic and social targets simultaneously for upward convergence. These steps must tend towards the transformation of the European Stability Mechanism in a European Monetary Fund (EMF) that will serve the double purpose of promoting stability as well as solidarity, based on growth-friendly and socially sensitive policies, and that must follow the community method.

The PES is aiming to set up full democratic accountability and responsibility in European economic decision-making and in the functioning of the Eurozone. All these changes and their legislative processes must fully involve the European Parliament as the only directly elected European institution by giving it co-decision powers. The role of national parliaments should also be strengthened to assume ownership of reforms. The Eurogroup in particular can no longer be left as an informal institution without parliamentary oversight. It must be given a permanent President, a European Finance Minister, double hatted as member of the European Commission, fully accountable to the European Parliament.

We are fighting inequalities between and within regions. We insist that cohesion and convergence policy is a key pillar of the European project. As such, it must remain as a priority in terms of financial means in the next MFF beyond 2020, which means it must be provided with at least the same share in the budget it has currently. It must remain a policy that benefits all countries and regions of the EU, richer and poorer, whilst prioritising the regions and people that are most in need. To be able to continue with an effective cohesion and convergence policy, and more generally efficient European policies, it is vital that the EU is provided with an increased budget that matches the level of its ambition. The setting of the EU budget is not a technical exercise, but a clear setting of political priorities. To promote better budgetary stability and coherence in the long-term, we need to reduce

the share of Member State contributions to the EU budget, to be replaced and strengthened with direct financial sources (so-called “own resources”).

3. Vibrant democracies, with full gender equality, and free of discrimination

The PES will continue its fight to build societies that are diverse, open, and free of discrimination, where diversity is respected and welcomed, and where rights and duties are the same for all. We believe in strong cooperation between people, regions and countries, and are alarmed by the resurgence of nationalist and separatist tendencies in Europe. Europe needs more solidarity, not more borders. We will also fight for societies in which the personal data of every European citizen is protected, with digital giants strictly scrutinised. This means strengthening European democracy, which is a core principle for our political family. We want to reinforce citizens’ participative decision-making processes at all levels. We must increase our engagement with our citizens and civil society, and strengthen the mechanisms that protect the rule of law. This is even more important in times where the rule of law is undermined, where citizens’ disenchantment with politics is growing, where disinformation and fake news are a reality, and where respect for citizens’ fundamental rights and freedoms is under threat. We remain committed to giving the European Parliament and national parliaments a fundamental role in all policy-making and in addressing breaches of the rule of law.

The PES will work with all its members to make the 2019 European elections a success. We remain committed to run with our own common candidate (“Spitzenkandidat”), that was first put forward before the 2014 European elections by our political family, to the post of President of the European Commission, to be selected internally in an open, transparent, and participatory process. The Spitzenkandidat from the political family that is able to form a majority coalition in the European Parliament should become the next President of the European Commission based on a joint political roadmap. To further strengthen the European dimension of these elections, we want to examine ways to introduce pan-European electoral lists, which could be based, at least in parts, on the seats left vacant by the 73 UK MEPs after Brexit. To make European citizenship a reality, we want to give the ability for EU citizens to vote where they live at all elections (regional, and national levels). Furthermore, we want to build new alliances with progressive and green forces on issues we share a common vision on.

In today’s society gender discrimination is unacceptable. It is necessary to promote a Gender Equality Strategy for the EU to which all EU institutions, and Member States must commit. This means fighting to reduce the gender pay gap by 2 percentage points each year, with effective mechanisms such as Pay Gap Audits, in respect with national collective bargaining practices. It also means elaborating a comprehensive EU strategy to end the gender pension gap, currently standing at around 40% in the EU. It means putting pressure on all countries, in the EU and beyond, to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention to fight gender-based violence, which still affects one in three women in the world.

It means calling for a more ambitious work-life balance package with policies that ensure balanced and flexible maternity, paternity, parental and carers’ leave arrangements as well as affordable, high quality and accommodating care services for children and dependents (e.g. elderly care). This is the only way we can truly promote and secure equal rights for women’s access and contribution to the labour market, and for fathers’ equal participation in family life. It means the relentless promotion of sexual health and reproductive rights, including the access to safe and legal abortion for all women throughout the EU.

It means putting an end once and for all to the scourge of sexual harassment and gender violence, which kills thousands of women every year all over the world. We advocate zero tolerance of abusers, and preventive public policies with enough resources to fight this problem as well as to protect the victims. To achieve these objectives, gender mainstreaming is more than crucial. Every step in the policy-making process needs to consider gender representation and to reflect gender

responsive contents. Fighting women and girls' sexual trafficking and ending this lucrative market must be a European priority.

Moreover, fighting for the recognition of full and equal rights to LGBTI people in all aspects of economic, social, and private life is a priority for us. This means building a Europe where equality and non-discrimination are backed by the adoption of full equality legislation in all areas of life, and for gender identity to be explicitly covered in all relevant EU instruments. This also means EU-wide hate crime legislation, equal treatment when applying the principle of freedom of movement for LGBTI families and full respect of the fundamental right to marry and to found a family.

4. Green, safe and cohesive societies

Our political family must be the champion of a just energy transition and protect Europeans' right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment. Global warming, and all its consequences threaten the wellbeing and ways of living of millions of people in Europe and worldwide. Despite the overall consensus about the threat of climate change, extreme-right and the majority of right wing parties are blocking any measures to make progress on this subject. For socialists and progressives, there is only one way: Europe has to be greener and more sustainable. The Paris Agreement, achieved thanks to the leadership of the previous socialist government in France, is our guideline to fight climate change and we are well aware that much more needs to be done at EU, national, regional and local level to reach the Paris targets of keeping global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius. In line with the 21 Progressive Proposals for COP 21, which we commonly agreed on October 21st 2015 in Paris, we reiterate our call for the introduction of a European system of carbon taxation that sets a price on carbon of more than 50 € per tonne by 2020 and 100 € per tonne by 2030. We want the EU to set a formal and binding target to fully and fairly decarbonise its economy by the middle of this century, with a clear strategy on the economic, social and environmental transformations needed, including a Just Transition Fund for the regions most in need. With the right framework, this enormous challenge can also be the source of many new, quality jobs and business opportunities in the green economy. Investing in clean energy deployment and energy efficiency measures is crucial for creating a sustainable future. In a just transition we will make climate action an agenda for social justice and the modernisation of our industrial base.

At another level, Europe is facing new threats that were thought to be disappearing. Radicalism and extremism are responsible for terrorist attacks in different cities of our continent. These threats are real, and can best be tackled by stepping up the cooperation between Member States and EU law enforcement agencies, as well as with our international partners. Among the various initiatives towards a more integrated European approach, the PES agrees to initiate the reflection on the establishing of a European Bureau of Intelligence and Investigation with the authority to investigate and prosecute terrorism-related offences and transnational crimes.

The PES highlights that these efforts must go hand-in-hand with the defence of fundamental freedoms and rights, which are also preconditions for true, lasting, and fair security. Coercive measures are necessary, but they are only one side of the equation, and must be complemented with efficient programmes and policies aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation, and at strengthening integration and social inclusion, through education and social cohesion policies.

5. A Europe that projects a shared vision and common action in the world

The EU is faced with multiple challenges that affect global stability and that can only be tackled with a long-term and holistic external action policy. The enlargement process represents a strategic investment in peace, democracy, prosperity, security and stability in Europe which implies that EU must continue to support the European perspective of candidate countries and promote positive social and economic reforms in order to enhance the resilience of the region and, thus, ensure the

security of Europe itself. The EU has to take greater responsibility for its security and defence, in the name of both better protection of its citizens and interests and greater influence in the world, by realising its great potential in tackling global challenges and shaping global norms in a progressive direction. This includes taking responsibility for the developments in the EU's neighbourhood as we are seeing the impact of wars, conflicts, poor governance, poverty and climate change outside the EU. The main challenge for the European Union is in Africa and in the Mediterranean area. It is in the relation with Africa that it will be decided what will be the future of our Continent: not only immigration but also development, trade, energy. This is why the PES is supporting what has been proposed by the Italian government, led by progressive forces, known as "migration compact". Cooperation, development, security, and migration governance will depend on the capability of the European Union and its Member States to have a global approach to these challenges. Refugees and asylum seekers are calling for help. Despite some failures to answer properly these challenges, Member States must improve their answers and show solidarity with each other, with those countries that host the largest number of refugees and with the asylum seekers themselves, and a sound, functioning and solidarity-based reform of the Dublin system. It is essential to have a European strategy that tackles the root causes of migration with strong development partnerships and the promotion of universal human rights and international law, particularly with countries in the African continent and the Middle East. This strategy must enable migration flows to be channelled in a controlled manner through effective border controls as well as through the establishment of new and safer legal channels for migrants and refugees. We insist in particular on the full protection of unaccompanied minors. We recognise the unique challenges faced by LGBTI refugees and asylum seekers and want to see steps taken to address these in the refugee and asylum policies of the EU, Member States and other European countries. It is also important to include a clear gender dimension because of heightened risks of gender-based violence, as well as providing psychological assistance to refugees. Europe must live up to its international obligations to provide asylum, promote well-managed migration and work for inclusive societies through effective integration policies.

The EU needs to have a strong and clear role in the global order, with specific aims, innovative tools and new allies that go beyond the traditional ones. Member States need to increase their financial contribution to the European defence projects. This should not be at the expense of others, such as youth budget, cohesion policy and employment. This is why we also strongly back the European Union Global Strategy presented by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security and support the development of a European defence policy, with an ambitious and inclusive Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the reinforcement of the European headquarters, and the strengthening of our defence. We will continue to promote peace, democracy, human rights, regional cooperation, the rule of law, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change in Europe and worldwide. We believe that multilateralism is the best way to secure fair global governance. We are convinced that our future is linked to the future of the rest of the world, particularly through our renewed partnership with Africa and the Middle East aimed at supporting fair social development in this rapidly changing continent, as well as considering Latin America as a key partner and strategic ally in order to face the common global challenges. Trade is an important instrument to promote our economy and our values. This is why we want to ensure that the EU values, social and environmental standards and principles shape globalisation and why we believe that human rights and social justice must be at the heart of all EU external policies including the trade policy. Free trade has historically played an important role in creating growth and prosperity at the European continent and is an important part in the EU-cooperation. Today, trade agreements between Europe and third countries must ensure growth and welfare between the trading partners, while increasing consumer protection, labour and environment standards. Trade agreements must be more transparent and accountable in order to evaluate their real impact on the economy, the environment and standards of life. Negotiations should be open to democratic consultation of trade

unions and civil society, in order to ensure the necessary changes are introduced to address existing concerns (public services, social and environmental standards, investment protection). Socialists and democrats should trigger the launch for a fair and progressive agenda for trade agreements at global level.

6. Renewing our policies and our social democratic family

As social democrats, socialists and progressives we achieved important progress for greater equality, economic innovation and for democracy in Europe and in the EU Member States in the past years. We want to build on these successes with progressive policies in the interest of the people. Wherever we bear political responsibility – in the EU, in the EU Member States, the regions our municipalities – we are committed to this goal. In some EU Member States, however, our social democratic family had to accept a number of painful electoral losses as of late that make it impossible to simply continue on the same path. Building on our values, our proven cooperation in the Party of European Socialists and on the political successes we already achieved, we are committed to work for a progressive renewal of our policies and our social democratic family.

To achieve this, we need to address key issues of the future in a more fundamental way than it is possible in the political day-by-day. Apart from the future of the EU itself this concerns in particular the question of how technological progress (especially through digitalization) can be turned into social progress, of how in times of rapid transformation societal cohesion and democracy can be strengthened and of how we can give a humane and realistic response to the challenges of asylum and migration. In order to stimulate the debate along the lines of these topics and questions, a PES High Level Group on Renewal is to be established.

Besides this programmatic debate, we will also continue to structurally strengthen the PES as a place for our political cooperation – at the level of heads of state and ministers, of PES member parties and organisations, through the partnership with the S&D group and FEPS as well as through the exchange and the inclusion of PES activists and members of our parties. In particular, we set ourselves the aim of developing the PES into the most progressive digital European party by strengthening the interlinking and the exchange via social media or by creating new forms of digital participation in political debates. We also ask the PES Presidency to start a debate about the possibilities of introducing double-memberships in the PES and the PES member parties.

The PES Presidency is tasked with initiating this process of renewal of our policies and our social democratic family in close coordination with the PES member parties and organisations and involving PES activists, party members as well as our partners in society. The aim of this process is to develop first suggestions and conclusions until the next PES Congress in the coming year.

Together we can deliver on our progressive vision for a brighter European future. A future that combines social progress, economic development and environmental sustainability, as defined in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. A future driven by solidarity and social justice, a future where our societies will be fair and sustainable, a future where our children will grow up in a healthy environment, a future where our societies will be respectful of citizens' rights and free of discriminations based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, or any other form.

As members of the Party of European Socialists, we stand ready to renew EU policy and deliver on these priorities. As socialists and social democrats we are ready to make our ideals a reality for all!