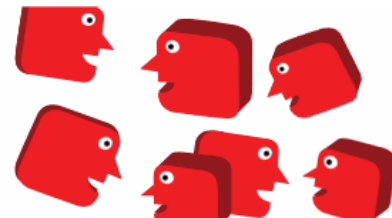




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manifesto2009 barometer: European democracy and diversity

The first months of debating European democracy and diversity have really brought up a lot of priorities and proposals for the PES to consider:

Fighting discrimination

First of all, fighting discrimination is a very important topic, including the promotion of minority, women and LGBT rights and of equal opportunities for all, and the fight against fascism, racism, anti-Semitism and [islamophobia](#). Regulations already exist at the EU and national levels, but [Rainbow Rose](#) points out the need to enforce these regulations. The [example of the Spanish socialist party](#), PSOE, was put forward as a best practice to be followed by PES member parties on gender issues – the PES itself is already committed to 40 percent representation of each gender, and has over 42 percent women MEPs.

More democracy, please

The EU democratic deficit is also a recurrent theme. There is an agreement on the need to ensure more participatory democracy and reinforce the European Parliament, in order to [reconnect the EU and its citizens](#). For instance, the PES could insist on the creation of a [website for petitions](#) to facilitate the right of initiative of the citizens provided for in the [Lisbon Treaty](#). Many other ideas were put forward, such as the organisation of [EU-wide consultative referenda](#). But we should also push for reform of existing democratic institutions, as demonstrated by the recent crisis at the European Parliament on alleged misuses of MEP expenses. The PES could here, as recommended by [Thomas](#), introduce transparency for MEPs expenses in its manifesto, as well as a pledge for a common status for MEP assistants.

We need a red alternative to neoliberalism

Participants agreed on the need to raise awareness among citizens on EU affairs and therefore increase their “Europe-consciousness” and build a true European citizenship. For this, the PES needs to have strong proposals for the [youth](#), including courses on Europe and facilitating student exchanges. In a comment [Colin](#) proposes to insist that broadcasts should not be restricted to national boundaries, to facilitate language learning and cultural exchange. The PES



should also raise awareness among citizens on useful EU policies, such as the European emergency number 112. The need to [politicize](#) was also a concern: we need to ensure that political debates have a centre-left component and focus on social and human rights. This means that socialists have to engage in all issues, including, as [Mochinho](#) notes, on justice and home affairs: we need to avoid that such topics are left to right-wingers, and to shift the focus on civil liberties and on socialist responses. The need to create a progressive alternative to liberal politics, including a specific political discourse, was also discussed. A lot of discussions took place around the question of a [PES think tank](#). Indeed, there are many people having progressive ideas for a better world, which need to be collected and given some thought.

Connecting the PES to citizens

Last but not least, many ideas were brought up to increase citizen interest and participation in European politics, but also more specifically in the PES consultation, to ensure that the programme and actions of socialist parties are connected to their electorate, [especially those who are usually excluded from civil and public life](#). [Thanos](#) proposed that citizens be allowed to directly become members of the PES without being members of a national party. The need to strengthen the PES and to develop a [public identity prior to the elections](#) was also at the center of the debates. Unity is crucial here. The PES and its member parties should use common branding and do common campaigning: use PES and national logos, talk explicitly about the PES, forwarding PES messages and campaigns, etc. The importance of using [internet as a campaigning tool](#) was also underlined, but [Pattheact](#) noted that the PES should also invest in classical campaign tools: campaigning and grassroots activism. [Mariope](#) affirmed that building a stronger PES would also help ensure the protection of social rights and decent work worldwide.

What do you think – does this sum up the debate on European democracy and diversity? Let us know in a comment. The Yourspace team looks forward to continuing the debate!