



# «Thinking About Europe»

**Some Proposals to the Manifesto 2009 collected from  
Portuguese Socialists**

(An initiative of PES Activists Portugal with the support of the International Secretariat of the Partido Socialista and the Portuguese Socialists Delegation in the European Parliament)

Regarding the Manifesto 2009 consultation process, the PES Activists Portugal, with the direct support from the International Secretariat of the «Partido Socialista» and the Portuguese Socialists Delegation in the European Parliament, organized four conferences («New Social Europe», «Europe and the World», «Democracy and Diversity» and «Save Our Planet») and challenged the party militants, independents and different institutions to contribute to Manifesto 2009 project. The response was higher than our expectations; as we received concrete and written proposals from grassroots militants and independents; from Members of Government, MEP's or MP's; from members of the Youth Organization and the Women Organization; from the Internet, from our sessions and from different PES Activists members.

We divided our proposals according the four suggested themes, presented in a simple way, as we believe that the Manifesto 2009 should be of direct understanding and easily readable, leaving for the final redactors the necessary contextualization.

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## **NEW SOCIAL EUROPE**

The European Social Model is a unique political construction, with worldwide admiration. This Social Model today is in jeopardy, due to several reasons and a new solution is needed, if we want to solve the idea of the welfare state. A solution that will push us, Europeans, towards the future, and not a conservative approach that wants everything to stay the same. The world has changed in the last 50 years, and the Welfare State system should naturally adapt to the new economic, demographic and political variables.

We need, therefore, to provide a two-folded approach:

- 1. Internal politics renewing the European economical and social model, adapting it to nowadays political reality.**
- 2. External politics in influencing other countries to adopt new and better social patterns (like China, India).**

The external features will be presented in the «Europe and the World» section. The New Social Europe challenges are attached to the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment and can be divided in two dimensions: [1] one regarding the welfare system preoccupations and [2] another one dedicated to the people's problems. These dimensions should necessarily cohabit and work together for the greater good that is to bring a better quality of life to all the people living in Europe.

Europe must strive to maintain the social protection which it is famous for. One of the core values of the EU is indeed the social benefits of its citizens, that must be protected by new legislation such as the derived from flexi-security. Economical development should be side-by-side with social development. In this respect, social inclusion must become one of the main challenges for Europe, taking into consideration the rapid automatic exclusion that the citizens are subjected under the new world economic order.

In this framework, the European Member States should work in order to **achieve full employment and social cohesion. We want a full inclusive society for all, women, men, senior workers, migrants and youngsters.**

Discrimination against women is still a reality, often leading to pay gaps, the maintenance of the so-called glass ceilings and higher female unemployment rates, just to mention a few examples.

We have to endorse the necessary ideas and **build a political agenda** that enforces the social dimension of the European project. We can't be apart from the idea of

redistribution and of the social justice, of a model with equilibrated development and environmentally sustained, oriented for ecologic principles, for technologic creation and innovation, for the undertake and private initiative generating the collective wealthy and of the social well being.

- We need to **stance our positions regarding the regulations in the work market**, always bearing in mind the multi-dimension of sustainability (we need to find a way where a balanced regulation – based on social dialogue and strong legislation - could be enforced. Then we could accommodate the questions of competitiveness and social cohesion in an agile framework, economic and work friendly).
- We need to insist in the **battle for a European minimum wage** as a protection mechanism and to appeal to people (we need to have the same struggle against poverty and exclusion, especially when concerning the children and our youth).
- We need to enforce **social and environmental responsibility from companies and public authorities**, all above are actions that show us that Social Europe is a joint project for all European society members.
- We need to **find balanced solutions regarding the active aging and the reform of pensions systems**; (we need to find solutions that will assure the financial sustainability of the Social Welfare systems but that also support the economical and social equilibrium).
- We need to **support active ageing with intergenerational professional support** (it is important to spent more attention to the needs of our elderly, namely the ones regarding their health condition and their intellectual occupation).
- We need to attach more importance to Rheumatic Diseases in the new Community strategy on health; and given their high social and economic costs, we need to encourage Member States to establish and promote the implementation of national plans to fight Rheumatic Diseases and develop an European strategy on Rheumatic Diseases and draw up a Council recommendation on the early diagnosis and treatment of Rheumatic Diseases
- We need to **fight the discrimination in the workplace**.
- We need to **conciliate family life with working live**; with an equal participation of men and women both in the workplace and in family life and a good access to quality services and equipment for our children.

- We need to **adopt new and creative measures to support families and promote birth** with the development of policies that allow people to become old in a dignifying and active frameset, and we need to include all kind of families in our political proposals.
- We need to **reinforce the fiscal benefits to families with more than one child and the concession of state-aid to three months long pregnant women;** parental leaves should encourage a balanced share of responsibilities, for instance, by including an additional period that can only be used if both parents take leave (in alternate periods)
- We need to continue the **reinforcement of social equipments**, such as kindergartens.
- We need to continue to **support education programs**, in all its forms (Lifetime learning, language skills, the fight against school drop, special scholarships in order to promote meritocracy).
- We should **enforce a «European School Agenda 21»** were the civic participation would be enforced by the involvement of the educational community, the local authorities and the civil society in a global project that intends to develop projects of sustainable local development, with strong ecological and social preoccupation.
- We need to encourage **Self Employment and Microcredit**.
- We need to promote **special benefits to the acquisition of the first house by the younger generations**, flexibility which allows working more than one job or study and work at the same time and pension funds investments.

## **DEMOCRACY AND DIVERSITY**

One of Europe's biggest challenges is the one regarding the democratic process within the European institutions and the relation between them and the European Citizens; and the last referendum results in Ireland (June 2008) comes in support to this idea.

It is now clear that a divorce exists between the European bureaucratic organization and the grassroots citizens that don't feel Europe in their daily lives, who don't vote in European Elections, who don't get involved in European affairs. This is a decisive question, as the European project intends to achieve a strong and innovative interaction between newly created Institutions, National States and their Individuals (here as both national and European citizens).

The European Project must be a democratic one. It should enforce the primacy of law, and should be humanist, pluralist, multicultural, internationalist, solidary and progressist. This project should be built on the idea of liberty, political participation. The matrix of socialists is the Republican Idea, the Laicism approach and the Reformist and decentralized attitude and those factors should be potentiated and taken to the practice in all of the platforms of the politic activity.

Together with the democratic dimension should come Diversity, as it represents plurality, respect and the achievements of a strong and proud society. This dimension is the base stone of European integration, as it gathers the best in European society: our ability to see in our diversity our biggest unity.

Regarding the democratic problem, we think that the PES should:

- Propose a European Referendum, simultaneously in all the European countries. The date should be the same as the next European election (10-13 June 2009) and the result should be European and not a sum of national results.
- Present a candidate for the European Commission Presidency, chosen by all the PES national parties.
- Create a European Campaign Caravan (this campaign should be lead by the PES candidate for the European Commission Presidency and by several MEP candidates from all the European countries. This caravan should have a political rally in all the

countries holding elections (let's say in their capital cities), where they should be joined by the local candidates).

- Encourage a more intense political miscegenation between the PES parties (we should assist to more and more «European candidates» in the national ballots).
- Propose some changes in the European Electoral Law (we propose a creation of a European Electoral Level that complementary to the national elections. This European Electoral Level will elect 95 MEP by closed list with candidates from all 27 EU countries. The mandate distribution will be proportional using the d'Hont distribution method, and a 10% threshold will be enforced. ) The 95 MEP will come from a 15% reduction of the national MEP's.
- Promote the self-criticism and renovate, recreate and feed our democratic model with energy.
- Involve the new social reality, namely those that result of the mobility and of the new migratory flows (it is good that we have present the images repeated over and over again in television, of ships coming from Albania and arriving in Italy plenty of people, or the fragile embarkation coming from Africa plenty of people starving and exhausted).
- PES should also propose to reinforce the relations between national parliaments and the European parliament, through stylized channels such as COSAC, as well as new ones; and guarantee the views of regions and localities are fully taken into account in the European decision-making process, through the strengthening of the role of the Committee of the Regions as the political body representing the political level of governance closest to European citizens,

Regarding the Diversity dimension, the Portuguese Socialists generally support the claims of Rainbow Rose, in particular their claims to:

- Monitor the implementation of EU directives relative to discrimination issues within the member States and candidate countries and their commitment to obligations agreed to in EU Treaties (the PES should also urge the Commission to institute proceedings against member States in the event of violations of their obligations).
- Renew the efforts to achieve the completion of the anti-discrimination legislative package based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty, and ask the Commission to propose a

new directive prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in all sectors.

- Ensure that the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, created in Vienna, includes explicitly in its work programme the observation of homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory legislation and practices in the Member States and the Candidate countries, and develops comparative studies on the most advanced legal frameworks in the Member States.
- Reiterate its invitation, shared by the European Parliament in its resolution of 26 April 2007, to all member States to propose legislation to overcome the discrimination experienced by same-sex couples and LGBT families, and to the Commission to make proposals to ensure that the mutual recognition principle is applied in this field also, in order to ensure the freedom of movement for all persons in the EU without discrimination.
- Call for a worldwide decriminalisation of homosexuality and transgenderism. They should be actors of the reflection on how European and national foreign policy can include the promotion of human rights, including LGBT fundamental rights.

Finally, PES must ask for increase powers to the European Parliament and support full integration of new citizens.

## **EUROPE AND THE WORLD**

- To redesign the European Union's trade policy strategy towards third countries, mainly in a more strong and clear position in that matter, to avoid and fight "social and environment dumping" and to empower the importations standards, based in the European blueprint;
- to respect the promises EU leaders made with regards to development aid and pursue the aid effectiveness agenda, with the MDGs at the core of its development policy;
- To establish a clear distinction between the different methods of use and production of biocarburants. To differentiate the ones that lead to an abusive utilization of lands initially designed for agriculture productions from the ones that use abandoned/degraded agricultural lands or lands which didn't have a previous utilization;
- To develop cooperation, in the course of the inclusion of more regions worldwide, in order to go deeper in the research and control of the future energetic scenarios in the EU and in the World;
- To fight drastic strategic mistakes, and the effect of those mistakes, in the military/foreign policy of the Bush Administration, gaining more autonomy from the US, possibly, developing a more sophisticated cooperation with a Democratic Administration, in order to promote a greater and broader dialogue with the South;
- To support the development of renewable energies in the South;
- To enlarge, internationally, the philosophy behind programs such as Erasmus and Socrates to Asia, Africa and Latin America;
- To promote and explain the importance of the Social Services of General Interest and the coordination of Social Security Schemes to the European Social Model;
- To support the efficiency of Public Services, promoting their universal availability, quality and accessibility;
- To promote Trade unions support and training, all over the world, mainly in the Southern countries;
- To strength the dialogue and the cooperation between national parliaments; mainly with the Southern countries;

- To support projects and training in a perspective of regional development, in the fight against social inequality and in the promotion of sustainable development, all over the world, especially in the countries of the South.
- Europe can be a world leader in many aspects, such as in climate change, social protection, as the biggest world donor for third world countries and as the main economical partner of the main economical powers of the world. For that, special attention should be given for the geographical location of the outermost regions and Associated Countries and Territories spread out in the world. These territories due to its geopolitical situation can provide for better access to foreign markets, cultural and scientific partnerships. EU presence in this regions must be reinforced and the EU should be the intermediate in the relations between this territories and the countries which they have borders with.
- In its relations with third countries, the EU should actively promote democratisation, respect for human rights and good governance. In this context, the EU should foster accountability through the empowerment of NGOs and civil societies;
- In its relations with third countries ruled by non-democratic regimes, the EU should ensure that aid is not provided through governments but rather through civil society
- The EU should actively support the development of a European defense industry. Member States should increase their efforts to acquire the necessary civilian and military means and resources to allow the EU to become a reliable and effective actor in global crisis management, namely in preventing genocide and crimes against humanity by defending the letter and spirit of the UN Charter and the principle of the "responsibility to protect". Member States should pool existing military capabilities, jointly develop and procure new ones and their respective armed forces should specialize in what they do best. The European Defence Agency should be empowered to lead the process of further developing and implementing a vision for a common European defence. The European Union should acquire a permanent operational headquarters in Brussels, in order to efficiently plan and implement military ESDP/CSDP missions.
- Europe should stimulate the development of models similar to the European Social Welfare Model in all countries of the World, in particular on our primary trade partners in the Third World (e.g. China).

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- The EU should consider imposing increased tariffs to the industrial products that come from countries where workers are exploited according to EU standards.

## **SAVE OUR WORLD**

PES should propose a «New Green Agenda», one that (1) can mobilize the People to civic and political activities, (2) that can bring the big and medium companies towards the new green efficiency level (with a green attitude business is more competitive), and (3) that can bring entire communities (at local and / or regional level) together.

- PES should reinforce that the nuclear option must not be taken in account as one of the outcomes of the EU climate efforts; its costs and risks are still not clearly controlled (treatment of nuclear waste in particular).

PES should support proposals that intend to:

- Clarify environmental conditions for the construction of dams (environmental cost/benefit analysis), given the importance of hydraulic sources of energy, namely in combination with wind in the context of the reinforcement of renewable sources.
- Clarify the sustainability criteria of biofuel production (negative serious worldwide political, trade and development consequences are arising from contradictory statements and EU positions).
- Clarify the definition of environmental goods (particularly relevant for eventual tax and tariff special treatment, namely in international WTO negotiations) reinforcing the need to include in the concept the conditions for their production.
- Clarify the role of international cooperation and development aid, specifically in what concerns water management and forests (e.g. sustainable management and supply).
- Support and propose international agreements on cross border water management; the Portuguese/Spanish agreement signed in 1997 in Albufeira on sustainable shared management of international rivers may be a relevant model for reinforced international cooperation, and has been seen as such, namely by the United Nations.
- In the revised EU Emissions Trading Scheme, clarify the rules of "auctioning" and monitor the (direct and indirect) impact of the forecasted increased price of carbon (and electricity) on social welfare (particularly of the most vulnerable in society), and on EU based activities subject to international competition, particularly small and medium enterprises.

In international climate negotiations, the EU Commission must give priority to sectoral quantified target compromises, in order to avoid carbon leakage impacts as well as serious competitive and employment consequences on EU based activities. In the absence of such quantifiable compromises, sectoral benchmarks and free allowances should be adopted for EU based emission sources included in the ETS.

The EU must be the world promoter of the fight against climate change, but by doing that it shouldn't undermine the potential development of the outermost regions, which natural disadvantages are expressed in the article 299 n°2 of the Treaty, such as it does by making no exception for these regions in what concern the inclusion of aviation in the application of the Directive 2003/87.

- PES proposals should stimulate and encourage that such international sectoral agreements shall include emerging economies (no reason for any special exemption clause in relation to massive new investment e.g. in steel production in China).
- PES proposals should pay particular attention in the definition of criteria and application of the structural funds, to the role of EU cities in combating climate change (e.g. priority to environmental re-qualification of social housing, public sustainable transport, etc.)
- Apart from industry, the target of 20% (or 30%) must be reflected in all the EU based policies and recommendations affecting public transport, public buildings, and cities.
- The recognition of the role of R&D must originate adequate funding and policies at the EU level, with a special emphasis on its impact on real convergence objectives across the different EU regions and countries. A compensatory measure should be granted for these regions: more efforts in the investment in renewable energies for energy autonomy that would compensate the exclusion of the flights from and to the outermost regions from the European carbon trading scheme.
- PES should propose to decentralize energy production and distribution promoting democracy in their utilization and reducing general environmental impacts.
- PES should support micro-generation strategy, with legal incentives to micro photovoltaic and eolic (wind) energy; and fiscal incentives to Solar Hot Water installations in buildings

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- PES should support a common Energy policy and propose a High Rank Officer to manage it.
- PES should support proposals that aim to a better use of public transports instead of private automobile.
- PES should support a wide plan to bring the European youth in different ages to a «New Green Agenda».