AUSE
Associazione Universitaria di Studi Europei

Enhancing Representative Democracy and Political Participation Towards 2014 European Parliament Elections

The European Political Parties’ Manifestos
1989-2014

25th Anniversary
AUSE AND JEAN MONNET
PROGRAMME

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Enhancing Representative Democracy and Political Participation
Towards 2014 European Parliament Elections

This publication collects the Programs and Manifestos that will be presented to the general public by European Political Parties on occasion of the EP 2014 Elections. The sources of the Documents are the European Parliament Official Internet Site and the Parties Official Web Sites. The Parties’ Manifestos have been presented in accordance to the list presented on the European Parliament’s 2014 Elections Website. The brochure wishes to provide to the Public an overview of the policy issues that will be addressed at EU level by political families, giving evidence to priorities that will be addressed, and how the 2014 electoral campaign will be shaped and steered.

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The European Parliament’s Press Kit
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Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu
Overview of Parliament and the 2014 elections

[29-11-2013 - 11:00]

The 2014 European elections: this time it's different

The European elections of 22-25 May 2014 give voters the chance to influence the future political course of the European Union when they elect the 751 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to represent their interests for the next five years.

When is election day?

Each member state has its own electoral laws and each one decides on what day its citizens will go to the polls during the four-day election period from 22 to 25 May 2014. British voters will turn out on 22 May to elect their 73 MEPs. Irish voters will choose their 11 MEPs between 22 and 25 May (exact date to be decided by Irish Government). The results from all 28 states will be announced on the evening of Sunday 25 May.

How many MEPs will be elected?

There have been 766 Members of the European Parliament since Croatia joined the EU in July 2013 but this number is being scaled down at the 2014 elections to 751 and will stay at that level in future. These MEPs will represent over 500 million citizens in 28 member states. The seats are allocated among the various states, by the EU treaties, on the basis of 'degressive proportionality', meaning countries with larger populations have more seats than smaller ones but the latter have more seats than strict proportionality would imply.

Why are these elections different?

As the European Union seeks to pull through the economic crisis and EU leaders reflect on what direction to take in future, these are the most important European elections to date.

They not only allow voters to pass judgment on EU leaders’ efforts to tackle the eurozone crisis and to express their views on plans for closer economic and political integration; they are also the first elections since the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 gave the European Parliament a number of important new powers.

One major new development introduced by the Treaty is that, when the EU member states nominate the next president of the European Commission to succeed José Manuel Barroso in autumn 2014, they will - for the first time - have to take account of the European election results. The new Parliament must endorse this candidate: it 'elects' the Commission president, in the words of the Treaty. This means voters now have a clear say in who takes over at the helm of EU government.

Of the 13 European political parties, five have nominated a candidate to succeed the current Commission President. The EPP has nominated Jean-Claude Juncker, former Luxembourg prime minister and former Eurogroup president, the PES candidate is Martin Schulz, current president of the European Parliament, the Liberals and Democrats have opted for Guy Verhofstadt, former Belgian prime minister and current Liberal group leader in the EP, the Greens have nominated a duo of current MEPs, French José Bové and German Ska Keller, while the European Left have put
forward Alexis Tsipras, leader of the Greek SYRIZA party.

The new political majority that emerges from the elections will also shape European legislation over the next five years in areas from the single market to civil liberties. The Parliament - the only directly elected EU institution - is now a linchpin of the European decision-making system and has an equal say with national governments on nearly all EU laws.

**What is the Parliament’s role? What powers does it have?**

The outcome of the 2014 elections to the European Parliament will for the first time in the EU's history determine who leads the European Commission, the EU's executive body. Candidates for the remaining Commission portfolios will also have to pass a tough parliamentary vetting process before they can take office.

Once the composition of the Commission is settled, MEPs will turn to their main parliamentary duties: the framing of laws affecting the everyday lives of Europe's citizens plus the setting of the annual EU budget, powers which it shares with the Council of Ministers (the 28 EU national governments) in something like a bi-cameral system. The Parliament also has powers of scrutiny or oversight over the other EU institutions: it monitors how they work and how they spend the taxpayer's money. Last but not least, Parliament acts as a sounding board for the public's concerns and can thrust fresh issues onto the European political agenda.

Here is an overview of Parliament's responsibilities and powers.

1. **Procedure for appointment of the European Commission**

   This will be the first time the EU member states are required to take account of the results of the European elections before choosing a nominee for President of the Commission. The procedure will be as follows:

   - taking into account the European elections, the heads of state or government of the member states put forward a candidate for Commission President;
   - the candidate presents his/her political guidelines (in effect a manifesto) to the Parliament;
   - the candidate must be approved by an absolute majority of MEPs (376 out of 751); if approved, he/she is deemed 'elected' by the Parliament; if he/she is not approved, the member states must put forward a new candidate;
   - the President-elect and EU national governments together agree a list of candidates for the other Commission portfolios (one from each country);
   - the candidates undergo confirmation hearings at Parliament (these hearings are not formalities: Parliament has in the past rejected nominees it considered unsuitable);
   - the President and the other Commissioners, as a body, are then subject to a single vote of approval by Parliament, requiring a simple majority (a majority of votes cast);
   - if approved by Parliament, the new Commission is formally appointed by the EU heads of state/government.

2. **Legislative powers**

   MEPs are the EU's lawmakers: without their input and approval, most EU laws cannot come into being. With the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, Parliament gained real power over the final important policy areas - notably agriculture and civil liberties - in which it had previously only had a consultative role.

   The main types of legislative power are as follows.

   - **Ordinary legislative procedure:** Also known as 'co-decision', this is the main EU legislative procedure, used to draft and adopt nearly all European laws (in around 70 to 80 policy areas). It gives Parliament the power to accept, reject or amend draft legislation on the single market, environment, consumer protection, civil liberties, agriculture, transport, research and other areas. During this term, for example, MEPs have used their legislative muscle to insist on stronger data protection rules, caps on bankers' bonuses and greater democratic scrutiny of the EU's fledgling economic governance system.
• **Consultation:** On some types of legislation (e.g. tax, competition, new eurozone members) Parliament gives only an advisory opinion. However, the number of policy areas governed by this procedure has shrunk considerably, with most legislation now coming under co-decision.

• **Consent:** If the EU is planning to take in new member states or conclude agreements with non-EU countries, Parliament's seal of approval is needed, although the EP cannot amend individual details of such accords. In the current term, MEPs have rejected the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) and refused to allow bank data transfers to the USA via the SWIFT network.

• **Right of initiative:** Parliament can ask the Commission to propose new legislation and often does so after examining the Commission’s annual work programme.

3. **Budgetary powers**

The European Union's long-term spending budget has to be approved by national governments and MEPs, then each year the two sides decide together how the annual budget will be spent. Policies such as agriculture, regional development, energy, transport, the environment, development aid and scientific research all receive EU funding.

Parliament is also responsible for checking later if the taxpayer's money has been used as intended and for signing off the accounts if it is satisfied. On numerous occasions it has demanded more stringent controls and in 1999 it forced the entire Commission out of office for budgetary mismanagement.

4. **Democratic control and supervisory powers**

A basic function of any parliament is the scrutiny or oversight of other branches of power, to ensure democratic accountability. The European Parliament performs this task in a number of ways.

**Nomination powers**

In addition to its key role in the election of the Commission, Parliament holds hearings of the President and members of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank and of nominees for the Court of Auditors.

**Parliamentary scrutiny of the ECB**

To ensure the accountability of European monetary policy, the President of the European Central Bank reports to the EP Economics Committee every three months and also presents the bank’s annual report to Parliament.

In its new capacity as the EU bank supervisor, the ECB will be subject to strong parliamentary oversight by MEPs, who will also be empowered to approve the top echelons of the supervisory body.

**Parliamentary inquiries**

Parliament has the power to set up a temporary committee, either to investigate an issue of public interest (a recent case was the committee on organised crime, corruption and money-laundering) or to look into alleged breaches or maladministration of Community law.

**Parliamentary questions**

To hold the other EU institutions to account, MEPs can ask oral and written questions. By this means the Commission and Council are regularly forced to answer queries, supply detailed information or take part in a debate in Parliament on specific policy issues.

5. **Foreign policy and human rights**

The High Representative for the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP) is accountable to Parliament, which has a right to be informed and consulted about the policy and can also use its budgetary powers to shape its scale and scope.
Parliament's consent is needed for any enlargement of the EU and for the conclusion of trade and other international agreements with non-EU states. MEPs also devote considerable energy to human rights issues and the promotion of democratic values around the world, the award of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought being the annual highlight of Parliament's work in this area.

6. Petitions

The EP takes the lead in promoting transparency, openness and public access in the sometimes labyrinthine Brussels world. Every European citizen has the right to petition MEPs about environmental problems, disputes with customs authorities, transfers of pension rights and other matters, provided they fall within the European Union's remit. The public can also turn to the European Ombudsman - an independent figure appointed by Parliament - who has the power to investigate accusations of maladministration or abuse of power by an EU institution.

LINKS

Parliament's powers and procedures

Organisation and work of Parliament

Political groups: the driving force of the EP

Debate, controversy and conflict are the lifeblood of any democratically elected body. The European Parliament - made up of politicians with sometimes sharply differing views - is no exception.

To harness this wide range of opinion and nationalities into a workable system, MEPs have always operated through transnational 'political groups', each made up of members from different countries but with similar political convictions. Cooperating closely with Members from other countries who broadly share their political views is the most effective way for MEPs to achieve their goals at European level.

There are currently seven groups in the EP, ranging across the political spectrum and representing over 160 national parties.

The groups are of central importance in the work of Parliament. They are the key players in building voting majorities on legislation, the budget and other issues. They set the parliamentary agenda and play the decisive role in choosing Parliament's President and other leading office-holders.

Under Parliament's rules, members of a group must share a 'political affinity' and must include a minimum of 25 Members from at least one quarter of member states (i.e. currently at least seven). Non-aligned MEPs - those who do not wish or are unable to join a group - sit separately.

A culture of compromise ... and a balance of power

Never in Parliament's history has a single group held an overall majority of Members. So, in order to pass EU legislation and approve the budget, the groups must forge a workable majority through negotiation and compromise. Give-and-take among the groups is thus essential, although the larger the group, the more clout it has.

Group discipline in the EP is less strict than in some national parliaments: members of the same group sometimes vote on different (often national or regional) lines. However, as in national parliaments, the commonest political divides are left-right in nature. It is on European election day that voters will decide the balance of power between the groups.

Most of the current groups in the EP are affiliated to a pan-European political party and these parties are expected to put forward candidates for the post of Commission President.
The work of an MEP

Once the votes have been counted and MEPs are elected, what will their daily routine be and what influence can they have on politics in Brussels and Strasbourg?

To advance their voters’ interests, the majority of MEPs will join a 'political group' to make common cause with MEPs from other EU states with a similar political outlook.

MEPs will also sit on a parliamentary committee, devoting their time and energy to scrutinising legislation. There are 20 standing committees in Parliament, each specialising in its own policy area. These bodies are the legislative powerhouses of the EP, where key negotiations are handled, the fiercest political arguments played out and the necessary deals often cut, although final decisions are taken by the full Parliament of 751 Members.

In addition, MEPs can be members of interparliamentary delegations, whose role is to nurture contacts with the parliaments of non-EU countries.

Office holders of the Parliament

The President of Parliament, elected from among the 751 Members for a two and a half year stint, represents it to the outside world, chairs plenary sessions and oversees all of Parliament's work. Fourteen Vice-Presidents share this workload.

A committee or delegation chair guides the proceedings of that body. A coordinator is the leading representative of his or her political group in a committee, while a rapporteur is an MEP chosen to pilot a specific resolution or piece of legislation through Parliament.

Parliament's governing bodies

Responsibility for Parliament's internal management lies with different bodies: political decisions are taken by the Conference of Presidents, made up of Parliament’s President and the political group leaders; financial, organisational and administrative matters are dealt with by the Bureau, composed of the President and the Vice-Presidents; administrative and financial concerns of Members are the responsibility of the College of Quaestors (a body of five MEPs elected by the House).

LINKS

Organisation and work of Parliament

Electoral law

The elections to the European Parliament are still, to a large extent, organised according to national legislations and traditions. There are common EU rules which lay down that the elections must be by direct universal suffrage as well as free and confidential. Members of the European Parliament must be elected in the member states on the basis of proportional representation. But it is up to each member state whether it uses an open or closed list system.

Where voting is based on an open list system, voters can indicate a preference for one or more candidates on the list. This is done in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. When voting with a closed list system, the political parties establish the order of candidates and the voters only cast their vote for a party. This is done in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK (except Northern Ireland). Meanwhile in Ireland and Malta, as well as in Northern Ireland, the Single Transferable Vote system is used.

Each member state may establish constituencies for elections to the European Parliament or subdivide its electoral area in a different manner. Most member states have chosen to consider the whole country as one constituency. Belgium, France, Ireland and the UK have several
constituencies or electoral areas. In Germany, Italy and Poland votes are cast in separate constituencies too, but the election results are determined at national level.

The election period is determined at EU level but the exact polling date and opening hours for polling stations vary according to the national electoral laws.

Voting is compulsory in Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg.

There are differences among member states as to the minimum age for voting and the minimum age for standing for election. In several member states you can both vote and stand for election at the age of 18 (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden). But in Austria you can vote at the age of 16 and stand for election at 18, while in Italy you must be 18 and 25 respectively.

In some countries, such as France and the UK, pre-registration on an electoral roll is required. In many other countries this is done automatically.

EU citizens living in a EU country other than their country of origin are entitled to vote and stand in European elections in their country of residence but the national electoral law may lay down specific procedures on how to do this. Usually they are also entitled to choose instead to vote in their country of origin (for example, by post or at the embassy) but this also depends on the national electoral law. Commonwealth citizens, for example Canadians and Australians, whose names appear on the electoral roll in the UK are also entitled to vote. There are several examples of elected Members in the current Parliament who have stood for election in a country other than their country of origin.

According to EU regulations, there are several positions incompatible with being a Member of the European Parliament. An MEP cannot be a member of a national government or national parliament, nor an active official of the European institutions. Some countries lay down further incompatibilities.

The European Parliament: electoral procedures (EP fact sheet)


Some facts on previous European elections

Some facts on previous European elections

The first direct elections to the European Parliament were held in 1979. Previously, from 1958 to 1974, MEPs were appointed by the national parliaments of the member states, with all Members holding a dual mandate.

The Decision and Act on European elections by direct universal suffrage were signed in Brussels on 20 September 1976. After ratification by all the member states, the first elections took place on 7 and 10 June 1979 and 410 Members were elected. Since then another six elections have taken place.

Elections are always held in new member states when they join the EU, to allow them to elect their own representatives to the European Parliament even in mid-term. This happened with Greece in 1981, Portugal and Spain in 1987, Sweden in 1995, Austria and Finland in 1996, and Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. Elections were held in Croatia in April 2013 to enable that country’s MEPs to take their seats when it joined the EU on 1 July 2013.

Past elections and turnout figures

The turnout in European elections since 1979 has varied significantly from one member state to another. While low in many cases, the figures are not dissimilar to those for local elections in many
European countries. There has been a downward trend over the years but this is in line with a general decline in voting figures throughout the western democracies in recent decades.

LINKS
Parliament in the past
Results of the 2009 elections
Turnout figures 1979-2009
European People's Party

The EPP is Europe’s centre-right political family. It strives for a Europe of values close to the people and based on democracy, transparency and responsibility, as well as prosperity through the promotion of a social market economy.

As the political heirs of the EU’s founding fathers, the EPP includes 74 parties from 39 countries. It has the largest Group in the European Parliament and most heads of state and government of any political family in the European Council, as well as members in the Commission.

On 6-7 March in Dublin, the EPP will launch its EU-wide campaign for the 2014 elections.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

European People’s Party
http://www.epp.eu/
WHY VOTE FOR THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE’S PARTY?
HERE ARE OUR COMMITMENTS

WE NEED TO LEARN TO BE PROUD OF EUROPE AGAIN, FOR EUROPE HAS PROVEN TO THE WORLD THAT EUROPEANS ARE CAPABLE OF GREAT THINGS WHEN THEY ARE UNITED.

The European People’s Party is the political family that has shaped Europe. Members of our political family have been the founding fathers of this great unifying project, contributing to the fall of Communism and welcoming new countries. Over time, the EPP has become Europe’s largest political family, uniting parties of the centre-right across the continent.

We believe that the European Union can solve the economic crisis that has affected all levels of society. The European Union is the solution to the crisis, not the cause. We want the European economy to create new growth and jobs. Young people – like all European citizens – must be able to look to their future with confidence again. We want to live in freedom and dignity. We do not want to incur debt, which our children will be forced to pay back.

In 2011 and 2012, we kept the Euro area together and laid the foundation for recovery. Now we are setting the agenda for economic reform, growth-friendly budget consolidation and job creation in the Member States.

Finding solutions to crises means making tough choices. During the crisis the EPP proved itself as the party of responsible government. While others talked, we acted. Our policies stemmed the crisis. The spend-now-and-pay-later policies of our competitors caused the crisis in the first place, and increase the risk of another crisis down the line.

We want people to live in a safe and stable world, in freedom and with dignity. To achieve this, we have to make the right choices now, and renew our sense of solidarity. We want all Europeans to take pride in where we have come from, and where we are going. Europe has risen from the ashes many times before, and will do so again.

WHERE DO WE COME FROM, AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

EPP believes that the euro is a reliable currency that assures political stability and makes us more competitive internationally.

EPP will reform financial markets so that all banks in the EU follow the same rules, and, globally, will seek a better regulatory framework for financial markets.

OUR COMMITMENT

OUR COMMITMENT
EPP supports a European Union that tackles the big issues together, leaving the smaller issues to the capable responsibility of individual countries.

EPP believes in building a more open, more responsive, more democratic Europe.

The people of the European Union value individual freedoms, and democratic rights. Europeans need to work together to build on these shared values. We already travel, work, buy and sell across borders. We believe working together strengthens us.

Those political parties that call for separation and division will weaken their countries, economies, and relations with others. We can only tackle many challenges together and not in isolation. Either we become stronger together, or weaker apart. However, we do not want a centralised Europe that deals with every detail of people’s lives.

We want Europe to be bigger on big things and smaller on small things. We want to focus on what really needs to be done better, together. The European Union as a community of values must defend our common values and interests in the world, whilst respecting the diversity and different traditions of Member States.

Our combined strength is in the more than 500 million people who make up the largest economy in the world – our EU. Our potential to be a global leader in new industries is vast. To remain a strong and competitive player globally, create jobs and ensure continued wealth, reforms are necessary. Sustainable and targeted investment is the key. Creating the right conditions for new and sustainable growth and jobs is our primary political objective for the next five years.

We need structural reforms, so that Europe attracts the private investment that creates growth and jobs. Socialist parties choose the wrong approach to economic reforms. They believe growth comes from irresponsible spending, or redistributing other people’s money. Our policies create healthy economic structures which attract private investment, create growth and jobs.
The cornerstone of EPP policy is the idea of the Social Market Economy. This precept aims to balance the principles of freedom and solidarity. We understand that the advantages of a free market must serve the common good, so that social cohesion is achieved. Simply put, the economy should serve the people, and not the other way around!

We strive for sustainable growth based on a competitive and innovative economy, while respecting the environment. We are determined to combat climate change through more efficient use of energy and investment in renewable energy while preserving Europe’s industrial base through affordable energy prices. It is our responsibility to leave our world safer and cleaner for future generations, and it stimulates innovation and a need for skills in these sectors.

Free movement of people within the European Union is one of our greatest achievements together, and we are committed to ensuring it remains so. Why? So that any European can travel, work, and live in any other country in the EU, while retaining the same rights as in their own country.

Pan-European movement of qualified people helps businesses to recruit those they seek, and in some countries is the only solution to skills and labour shortages. However, we are against social fraud - social benefits for EU citizens should only be available if they have worked in the country where they live.

While having abolished internal borders, Schengen states have also tightened controls at their common external borders to protect the security of those living and traveling within the Union. EU Member States need to cooperate closely on border management to ensure internal security is maintained. Our common border agency Frontex must be reinforced.

The EU must effectively cooperate with third countries’ border security authorities to prevent crime from migrating too. At the same time, victims of political and religious persecution need genuine protection; Integration policies for migrants have to be developed and strengthened. Integration is a two-way street which involves both rights and responsibilities.
The fight against organised crime, especially corruption and money laundering, is a top priority for us. Organised crime undermines the rule of law, fundamental rights, good governance and deprives governments of important revenues.

We believe that transparent politics is vital for the future of democracy. We are committed to improving transparency and strengthening the rule of law.

We believe that privacy is a fundamental, inalienable human right. It was the EPP that drove the reform of data protection rules. These rules reinforce privacy for citizens as well as increase consumer trust online.

This also helps to establish a Single Market in digital services, which is central to the creation of new digital jobs.

EPP will lead the fight against terrorism and crime.

EPP will boost Europe’s Foreign, Security and Defence capacities – enhancing its ability to act in the world.

In a time of increasing global concerns such as international terrorism, weapons proliferation, failed states, climate change, natural disasters and mass migration, the EU must reaffirm its values in the eyes of the world and do everything in its power to defend and promote them. Therefore, the EU must strengthen and increase the efficiency of its foreign policy. We gain strength through united action.

The enlargement of the European Union is one of its success stories, because we can share the benefits of freedom, democracy, peace, stability and the rule of law throughout our continent.

For the future, though, it has to be clear that in order to become a member of the European Union not only the fulfillment of political and economic criteria must be safeguarded but the EU’s capacity to act must remain intact.
I Our immediate neighbourhood is a source of new opportunities, as well as challenges and potential threats. A much longer-term approach must be developed for the relations with our eastern neighbours. The EU must remain committed to supporting fragile democracies in Eastern Europe.

For the Southern Mediterranean countries, the EU should develop a vision and propose new strategies. Only the promise of shared prosperity can gain support of the wider public in the region.

Proposal 10

The EU must maintain and develop a strong transatlantic partnership, combining a free and fair market built on common values and mutual trust. Together, the EU and the US can take the lead in developing strategies to address global threats and challenges.

A transatlantic free market will contribute to trade revenues and increased growth, creating more jobs and prosperity for European citizens.

Proposal 11

The EU should reform its development policy to improve effectiveness, accountability and sustainability. This revised policy must be based on the principles of the Social Market Economy.

Human rights, the fight against poverty, and providing education must be central factors in our development policy.

Proposal 12

EPP welcomes the trade negotiations with the US, as long as the agreement protects Europe's high standards, and that important elements of our European identity are safeguarded.

The EU wants a development policy that is effective, accountable, aimed at reducing poverty, and is based on the principles of the Social Market Economy.
ALL OUR COMMITMENTS

CREATING A BETTER EUROPE FOR ALL CITIZENS
• EPP supports a European Union that tackles the big issues together, leaving the smaller issues to the capable responsibility of individual countries.
• EPP believes in building a more open, more responsive, more democratic Europe.

FROM REFORM TO GROWTH
• EPP will create conditions that favour small and medium-sized businesses, family firms, start-ups and entrepreneurs, including R&D funding, private investment, and more accessible lending.
• EPP invests in education, research and technology, leading to innovation, new ideas, a competitive economy rooted in knowledge and new digital services.

BUILDING A SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY TO COMBINE FREEDOM AND SOLIDARITY
• EPP will balance the principles of freedom and solidarity.
• EPP will champion an EU energy market, and invest in low carbon technologies.

MOVEMENT OF EUROPEANS WITHIN EUROPE
• EPP sees mobility as an absolute right that benefits people, businesses and the economy: Freeing our citizens to work at home and abroad.

CONTROLLING IMMIGRATION INTO EUROPE TO ENSURE INTERNAL SECURITY
• EPP demands greater cooperation between EU countries on border management, to show solidarity with countries that are on the front line of migration flows.

FIGHTING ORGANISED CRIME
• EPP will lead the fight against terrorism and crime.

ENSURING DATA PROTECTION AS A HUMAN RIGHT
• EPP vows to reinforce citizens’ privacy rights, protecting personal data.

PROMOTING PEACE AND STABILITY IN A GLOBALISED WORLD
• EPP will boost Europe’s Foreign, Security and Defence capacities – enhancing its ability to act in the world.

BEING MORE PRUDENT ABOUT EU ENLARGEMENT
• EPP favours judicious enlargement, while retaining the identity of the EU, and taking the EU’s capacity to integrate into consideration.

SPREADING DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN OUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURHOOD
• EPP will work to create a prosperous, democratic and stable neighbourhood.

BUILDING A TRUSTFUL TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP
• EPP welcomes the trade negotiations with the US, as long as the agreement protects Europe’s high standards, and that important elements of our European identity are safeguarded.

MAKING OUR DEVELOPMENT POLICY MORE EFFECTIVE
• EPP wants a development policy that is effective, accountable, aimed at reducing poverty, and is based on the principles of the Social Market Economy.

WHERE DO WE COME FROM, AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?
• EPP believes that the euro is a reliable currency that assures political stability and makes us more competitive internationally.
• EPP will reform financial markets so that all banks in the EU follow the same rules, and, globally, will seek a better regulatory framework for financial markets.

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EPP Action Programme 2014 - 2019
INTRODUCTION

The way we want to live

We want a bright future for Europe and its citizens. We are determined to lead Europe out of the crisis. We want our economies to return to job-rich growth. Young people should look to their future with confidence. All of our people must enjoy the permanent sense of security Europe is able to provide, in all aspects of their lives. We want to live in freedom and dignity. We do not want to incur debt which our children will be forced to pay back. That is why we can only spend money and use the resources we have.

Our planet, our freedom, our resources: If we want them to last, we have to treat them with care. If we want our children and future generations to live in a healthy world, in freedom and happiness, we have to make the right decisions today. We have to place a new emphasis on solidarity. We need balanced public finances, modernise our economies, invest in knowledge and innovation and strengthen European economic governance. Some of this depends on us as individuals, but it also depends on the way we organise ourselves: in our communities, regions, nation states and in the European Union. Many national and regional laws derive from European legislation. Our daily lives and our futures are influenced by the decisions taken in the European Parliament.

The outcome of the next European elections in May this year will determine the direction of EU policy on a range of important issues, which in turn will have a significant impact on the lives of over 500 million European citizens.

These elections must be viewed as an opportunity for a truly European debate on European issues, an opportunity to consider our long term future. The successful European project has reached a critical juncture. The European Union is the solution to the crisis, not the cause.

That is why it is so important to make the right choice in the 2014 European elections. The European People’s Party will make your vote count.

Community of values

The European Union is a community of values and a community of law. It is founded on Europe’s rich culture and long history which have helped our political family to develop its central values and principles: freedom, responsibility, justice, security, respect for the dignity
of human life in every stage of its existence, solidarity which forms the basis of social cohesion, cultural and linguistic diversity and subsidiarity, which ensures that political decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizens. We stand for equality between women and men, family, the separation of powers, democracy and the rule of law. The EPP Platform, adopted in 2012, reflects our values, priorities and main policies.

The freedom of religion, including the right to convert or to hold no religion, is a fundamental human right. We recognise the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian roots of our civilisation and the Enlightenment as sources of inspiration.

The European Union we need
The financial and economic crisis has affected all Europeans. It was caused by a diverse range of factors, including excessive public and private debt, a lack of competitiveness in certain Member States, flawed regulation of financial markets and insufficient integration in the Euro area. For many citizens, this has led to very difficult challenges, which we must strive to overcome together.

The European People’s Party has always been the driving force of European integration. It has contributed to the fall of Communism, welcomed new Member States and championed an ever closer union. Over time, it has become Europe’s largest political family and today, its member parties are in government in a majority of EU countries. In this crisis, the EPP is the party of responsible government.

Others speak of social justice and rights, but say nothing of how these can be advanced and safeguarded. We are the ones that stand for genuine, substantial and long lasting growth facilitated by a clear vision and strategy for the future, step-by-step reforms of the economy while preserving social cohesion, which encourage businesses to invest and people to be able to enjoy and to study, work and consume based on a higher, healthy and sustainable standard of living. We oppose the short-sighted actions proposed by the socialists, such as recklessly printing money. We seek long-term, sustainable answers and we reject the false ‘solutions’ offered by the populists.

In 2009 and 2010, EPP parties in governments reacted quickly and decisively in order to pull Europe back from the brink of disaster. In 2011 and 2012, we kept the Euro area together. We have set the agenda for economic reform and growth-friendly fiscal consolidation in the
Member States. Now, we are considering the fundamental changes which are needed to reform the EU itself, so that it will be in a position to face the challenges ahead with confidence and secure a bright future for our citizens. The preservation and sustainability of the euro area is also of crucial importance to countries that do not use the euro as their currency.

It is time to re-affirm the values of the Social Market Economy. It requires balancing the principles of freedom and solidarity, along with the need for free markets and the common good.

**Europe and its citizens**

First and foremost, in order to better serve the interests of all Europeans, we need a stronger European Union. Sharing the same currency in the euro area requires closer coordination on national budgetary and economic strategies. A strong EU is also key to creating a successful security policy, protecting our citizens at home and our interests around the world. Above all, a strong EU is the best answer to the challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, the EU must become a genuine Political Union.

The European Union involves all of us. We need to preserve and be proud of our diversity, traditions and cultural heritage. Respect for diversity has always been an essential element of Europe’s success. Not every political problem should be solved on the European level. We need less regulation, and instead a new emphasis on implementation and control. Parliaments and governments in our regions and nations remain vital to our future. If more responsibility is to be shifted from the Member States to the EU in some fields, the EU also needs to become more transparent and democratic. There is no future for the Union without the involvement of its people. The Union itself has to be within the citizen’s reach, comprehensible and simple. National parliaments must become more pro-active and involved in European decision-making within the framework of national constitutions. We are aware that unity within states is essential for the EU.

For the first time, the European Parliament will elect the President of the European Commission after the European Council, the institution composed of heads of state and government, has proposed who this should be. This proposal will take into account the result of the European elections and will follow consultations with the European Parliament.
This will ensure that citizens will, for the first time, directly influence who will become the president of the executive body of the European Union through their votes, just as is the case for national governments.

In order to shape the future it is essential to remember the past. Exactly one hundred years ago, the lights went out all over Europe. The year 1914 marked the beginning of the most devastating war Europe had ever experienced, claiming many millions of lives, and destroying the future of a whole generation. 75 years ago, the world was set alight again. Today, such catastrophes seem unthinkable in Europe. That is the case because we have been sharing strength, political power, wealth and knowledge over the decades of closer European integration. Replacing the rule of the powerful with the rule of law through common institutions and democratic procedures by fostering the community method, which has allowed us to ensure that the strong are just and the weak are secure. These are achievements that belong to all of us, and we should not allow ourselves to forget them. We are proud that the EU received the Peace Nobel Prize in 2012.

Europe has been in crisis for more than five years. Many people, especially the young, do not foresee a positive future. Euroscepticism is growing. But there are reasons for optimism. This is not the first crisis we will overcome. If we act together and take the right decisions today Europe can emerge from the crisis stronger and more prosperous than before.

**Our idea of a better Europe**

Europe has come a long way. The European People’s Party has contributed more to the development of the European Union than any other political force. The founding fathers of a united Europe were Christian Democrats. Over the last 50 years, the men and women of the European People’s Party have been at the forefront of improving and successively expanding the Union, as well as introducing the Euro. All this enabled us to live in peace, security and increasing prosperity over five decades. While others have talked, we have acted.

We want a better Europe. The European Union must become stronger, simpler and more democratic. These aims in no way contradict each other. In fact, they actually reinforce one another. In order to make progress in this regard, it is imperative that the EU institutions work better together and come closer to the citizens. A lot can be achieved within the existing legal framework.
**A stronger Union:** No country can face the challenges of the 21st century alone. Either we become stronger together, or weaker in isolation. This is true for foreign and defence policy, climate protection and energy policy and, perhaps most of all, for fiscal, economic and social policy. Therefore, on strategic matters, our member states must enhance their cooperation and act together. They must also develop means to render their decision making mechanisms more efficient. For the Council, this means allowing more decisions to be made by qualified majority in the fields of foreign policy and justice and home affairs. The Council should be reformed into one central formation that takes all legislative decisions prepared by the different Councils of Ministers. This may lead to less regulation and legislation in the future.

The European Commission will maintain the principle of one commissioner per country. If we manage to reduce the number of Commission portfolios, the committee structure of the European Parliament should match the Commission portfolios. The Parliament will have to monitor those portfolios much more closely.

**Streamlined institutions, simpler procedures:** The EU must become more active on those strategic topics that are best dealt with on the EU level, and devote less energy to those which are better dealt with on the national, regional or local level. It has to be bigger on the big things and smaller on the small things. This is in tune with our political family’s emphasis on subsidiarity: to address every problem as closely as possible to the citizens. The Commission should act as a gatekeeper to prevent overregulation and centralisation. It should move to reduce the number of legislative proposals.

**More democracy:** In future, it must be clearer that the citizens control how EU institutions function, rather than EU institutions controlling the lives of the citizens. That means that elections to the European Parliament must become, more clearly than before, contests between clear political alternatives, and between the leaders representing those alternatives. Elections to the European Parliament must become de facto elections for the position of President of the Commission. Once the voters have made their choice, the EU institutions must assume political responsibility for their decision before the people.
FROM REFORM TO GROWTH AND JOBS

The European Union is the largest economy in the world. We possess a wealth of economic and cultural resources and have a responsibility to utilise them in order to maintain economic and political leadership.

While Europe is presented with great opportunities, it also faces some great challenges. There is every reason for optimism in this new global landscape, but it also requires a willingness to adapt, change, reform and innovate. We can exit the crisis with our European values intact and strengthened. To remain a strong and competitive international player, with the ability to create jobs and ensure the wealth of our people, we need to carry out reforms on the one hand and make sustainable and targeted investments on the other.

Creating the right conditions for sustainable growth and job creation in Europe is the key political objective of the EPP for the next five years. To achieve this, we have to make our economies stronger and our industries more competitive and resilient. We want to provide a better future with new opportunities for all European citizens, especially the young. We are committed to achieving this by putting into practice the principles of the Social Market Economy, in which competitiveness and entrepreneurial freedom are combined with social justice and sustainability. We believe the Social Market Economy is the best model to allow every individual to reach his or her full potential while advancing solidarity and the common good. This also means that politicians have a responsibility to set appropriate rules to govern and regulate markets.

Economic reforms for more employment

Reforms are necessary today to ensure the right conditions exist to create new jobs and guarantee the sustainability of our social security systems. As several countries in Europe have shown, an early implementation of reforms to build modern, innovative and competitive economies paves the way to create dynamic economies and new jobs. Reforms can restore much-needed fiscal credibility and provide the basis for growth and job creation.

Now is the time for reforms which will allow for the creation of new jobs and sustainable growth. If reforms are delayed, so is growth; if growth is delayed, our social security model, one of the main pillars of the European model of the Social Market Economy, is jeopardized.
These reforms should include improvements in the health sector, pension systems, labour markets and education systems. Social dialogue is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of comprehensive and fair reforms.

Progress towards achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy targets of an increased employment rate and reducing poverty is currently unsatisfactory. Therefore, the Europe 2020 process should be strengthened.

As the economy has to serve human development, market oriented reforms at both national and European level aimed at improving Europe’s economic performance and completing the Internal Market are essential for fostering competitiveness and attracting private investment and strengthening our economy. The level of private investment in the EU has fallen by 350 billion Euro per year since the start of the crisis. Creating the right conditions to get the investment in the EU back to and above pre-crisis levels will be one of the most important challenges in the years to come. Structural reforms are pivotal to improving the conditions for investment, attracting private capital and creating the right conditions for growth in Europe. They are also necessary to deal with future structural challenges such as the demographic changes that Europe can expect to face in the coming years. Competitiveness, a focus on education and a new industrial and entrepreneurial spirit are pre-conditions for prosperity, whereby healthy, competitive economies attract investors and create high-quality jobs in Europe. The internal market should be enhanced by encouraging economies to facilitate more labour flexibility and mobility. To become a knowledge-based society we have to improve coordination between our education systems and work places, enhance the links between education and industry, implement dual educational systems where feasible and recognise the value of non-formal education. We also have to stimulate entrepreneurship through reducing bureaucracy and reforming taxation systems. This will lead to growth without additional public spending.

High levels of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, is a danger for social cohesion and for European integration. It undermines the goal of sustainable development, growth and competitiveness, as it deprives the EU of valuable know-how, innovation opportunities and human resources. Labour markets need to be reformed in order to allow
for a greater number of people to have a decent job. Jobless growth is not an option for Europe.

- We will promote inclusive and active employment policies. We want innovative education systems and better qualifications for our citizens as well as modern, life-long learning training systems in order to provide access to high-quality jobs which match the needs of new production models.
- Labour market mobility should be encouraged to allow all citizens to benefit from the largest market in the world. All remaining barriers that limit labour mobility across all EU Member States must be removed while respecting social standards at national level and striving for upward social convergence between EU Member States. As language skills are often a key barrier to labour mobility within Europe, policies to reinforce language training in education or on the job should be a priority.
- We want better European coordination for the provision of relevant and accessible training and job searching facilities for unemployed people to allow them to benefit from labour mobility in Europe.
- We will evaluate the viability of implementing successful national measures against youth unemployment, such as dual vocational education, opportunities for flexible employment, traineeships and apprenticeships to see how they can be applied by other EU Member States.
- We support a mobility programme for young entrepreneurs, based on the model of the Erasmus programme. 10,000 exchanges per year could be organised through this programme which would facilitate a new generation of entrepreneurs to realise the benefits of the Internal Market.
- We support measures to promote entrepreneurship at EU and Member State level, such as encouraging Member States to integrate entrepreneurial education in school curricula and strengthening the entrepreneurship elements within the youth guarantee to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment amongst youths.
- We aim to increase the employment of women, not only to give practical expression to the value we place on promoting equality between women and men, but also to contribute to general economic and social development.
- We encourage the implementation of proactive measures that specifically target the full inclusion of young women into the labour market. These type of measures need to
be backed by a strong political will to reconcile work with family life, promote the
diversification of careers in order to tackle labour market segregation and to foster
female entrepreneurship in particular.

- We need an integrated strategy for the inclusion of older workers in the labour
market.

The unacceptably high youth unemployment rate in some EU Member States requires
decisive action, at both European and national levels, as well as targeted measures, such as
the creation of incentives for enterprises and companies to recruit young people. We
support the efforts of the Member States at national level, which have to be combined with
the tools and financial resources available at European level, to reduce youth unemployment
and encourage entrepreneurship. EPP supports EU programmes especially in the field of
research and innovation, which aim to provide young people with access to high quality jobs,
training or apprenticeships after their graduation. We will promote the speedy
implementation of these programmes at national level.

We must achieve progress in the fight against poverty and social exclusion which affects
millions of Europeans and threatens the vindication of citizen’s human rights. Child poverty,
in-work poverty and poverty among the elderly particularly warrant our attention. Fair
wages are an important tool to prevent these forms of poverty. We support country-specific
minimum wage levels implemented according to national labour laws.

We regard active ageing as an important factor in improving quality of life. Active ageing
should be promoted as part of a wider reform of pension systems to ensure they are
adequate and sustainable and do not jeopardise the stability of public finances.

Effective child care, education and health systems, together with the provision of care for
the elderly and people with disabilities and the integration of marginalised communities are
crucial for the well-being of Europe’s citizens, for the inclusiveness of our societies. These
are also important factors to ensure labour markets function properly and to address future
demographic challenges. Another important question that needs to be asked is how best to
increase the number of women participating in the labour force and in decision-making
positions. Increasing the rate of employment will enable the EU to grow stronger, and allow
more citizens to contribute to the common good.
We promote the restructuring of the public sector in order to deliver high quality public services in a transparent, accountable, effective and efficient manner whilst ensuring that administrative burdens are minimised.

We also support the continued fight against corruption. Structural reforms will release vital resources that should be reallocated to create jobs and growth. Citizens and businesses need streamlined, integrated services that do not waste time and money. E-government, digitalisation of the public sector and e-learning are crucial in this sense.

In order to respond to the demographic challenges and to make pension systems sustainable, adequate and safe, more people will have to work for longer. This will have to be achieved by raising the actual retirement age and disincentivising early retirement. Reinforcing intergenerational solidarity is needed in all areas of society.

**More public spending is not the answer**

There will be no way out of the crisis without budget consolidation, and there will be no budget consolidation without the reforms necessary to promote sustainable growth. Countries that have made timely reforms are much better positioned than countries which postponed structural reforms. Postponing reforms has led to higher unemployment, lower private investment and unsustainable debt. Investing in unreformed economies never generates sustainable growth. Fiscal consolidation and the regulation of financial markets are necessary conditions for preventing future crises.

Given current high debt levels, additional irresponsible public spending, as proposed by other political parties, will inevitably lead to an economic and social disaster. The link between declining competitiveness, irresponsible spending, poorly regulated banks, unemployment, high debt levels, and insecure welfare and social security systems is clear.

The EPP does not believe that a further exacerbation of debt and deficit levels is the right way to exit from the crisis and create growth in Europe. While recent experience has shown that more government spending is not the answer, it also has become evident that EU Member States which took determined steps to reshape their public finances have seen strong economic growth in the last couple of years. The EPP has a clear preference for trimming unproductive expenditures over increasing rates of taxation. The decline in
competitiveness and productivity is one of the leading causes of the crisis in Europe. Our economies can only compete in a globalised world if they are strong and capable of adapting.

- We stand for fiscal consolidation implemented in a growth-friendly manner. We need to strike the right balance between fiscal consolidation and growth-enhancing policies, which support the real economy and help to create new, stable jobs, in order to tackle high unemployment rates and protect social cohesion.
- We stand for sustainable growth based on a competitive and innovative economy. Through structural reforms we will create healthy, competitive economic structures which attract private investment, create growth and increase employment.
- We reject taking on more debt today, because it will harm everyone tomorrow. We are committed to implementing all of the measures already agreed at European level that will improve economic governance, reduce debt and strengthen our economies.

**Smart investments are a solution**

Public investment should, first and foremost, focus on growth-generating areas, such as education, research and innovation. To meet this aim, the public sector should foster cooperation with the private sector. Developing the European economy into a worldwide, competitive, knowledge economy is one of the most important challenges for the European Union in the years to come. Knowledge is central to economic growth and job creation and we must, therefore, create the best conditions for developing a knowledge-based society without leaving people behind. Research and innovation, especially higher education institutions and centers of excellence, are key elements in this respect. High-quality education - as well as increased mobility for students and researchers - are crucial for improving the competitiveness of the European economy. Public funding for research and development (R&D) will trigger private investment in research, innovation and infrastructure and make Europe a global hub for the world’s best researchers. If Europe is to capitalise on increased R&D investment, we must ensure that new ideas are translated into real products and services on the market.

- We support initiatives at European level aimed at re-launching our economy by stepping up targeted investment, developing EU networks in the fields of energy,
transport and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), in particular through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).

- We urgently need to enhance the role of the European Investment Bank (EIB) to facilitate easier access to capital, especially for our Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

**Measures for a strong Euro**

The Euro is more than just a currency. It is a great unifying project and indispensable for Europe’s future. The Euro not only strengthens the economy and make us more competitive internationally, but also creates political stability by facilitating internal coherence and common policies towards the outside world. The Euro is more than just a currency. It is a great unifying project and indispensable for Europe’s future.

The crisis has shown that we need profound economic reforms at national level, while reshaping economic governance on the European level.

- We need strong governance to protect the stability of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).
- The Euro, as our common currency, is based on the principle of price stability in order to provide the Single Market with a reliable currency and help us to maximise the benefits of being the biggest economy in the world.
- A monetary union needs budgetary and fiscal rules which have to be respected. The European Commission shall make full use of their powers to make sure that EU countries reform and respect already agreed rules to reduce debt and deficits. The Commission needs effective tools to safeguard compliance of those Member States that do not fulfill the EU's economic governance obligations.
- The monetary Union also needs the tools and means to stabilize the economy. The Banking Union is an important step. Further coordination of fiscal and budgetary policies should be considered.

The implementation of these sanctions needs to be improved. This is one of the key lessons from the crisis.
Membership in an Economic and Monetary Union has great advantages for participating countries, but it must go hand in hand with responsibility and solidarity. As long as each country fulfils its responsibility, all can benefit from it. We need to restore confidence in the Euro area as a whole and in certain Member States in particular. We must therefore preserve the cohesion of the Union. We all benefit from the common currency and the Single Market. We need to stand together, especially in challenging times and help those countries in difficulty; they in turn need to reform in order to avoid new crises. We acknowledge the immense efforts and sacrifices made by people, companies and governments since the beginning of the crisis. The EU must support their efforts to modernise their economies and create new jobs.

The economic developments and decisions made in the Euro area have a fundamental impact on EU countries, even those that do not use the Euro as a currency.

- We invite all EU Member States to enhance their coordination of economic policies, because we want to avoid strains within the Single Market. Improving economic governance will help prepare non-Euro members to join the Euro area in the future.
- The long-term political goal of the EPP is that the EU and the Euro area should eventually converge. All EU members that fulfil the criteria of accession to the Euro area shall be given the chance to join and reap the benefits of the common currency.

**Healthy banks to drive investment**

The crisis has shown that irresponsible risk taking can jeopardise the stability of the whole economy. Banks should participate in sustainable developments. Irresponsible risks taken for short-term personal and shareholder benefits, as well as moral hazard, need to be legally controlled. Excessive bonuses are unacceptable. The new rules on banker’s bonuses need to be implemented by Member States without delay. The financial sector is crucial to driving investment in the real economy, stimulating entrepreneurship and economic development. Regaining citizens’ confidence in the financial sector is essential for the functioning of our economies. Banks need to focus primarily on their main function, which is serving the real economy, stimulating entrepreneurship and economic development.

The creation of a banking union is essential to the survival and prosperity of the Euro area. We must ensure that the vicious link between sovereign debt and bank debt is finally
broken. A healthy Banking Union is essential to achieve this. To ensure a stable EU banking sector the completion of the Banking Union is of paramount importance. This involves implementing the single rule book, i.e. bank capital rules, the recovery and resolution framework, a rule for national deposit guarantees schemes, a common effective supervision mechanism, and a single resolution mechanism for systemic banks. We support a common banking supervisory system by the ECB for all systemic and transboundary working major banks. For smaller banks such a strict supervisory system is not necessary. This is key to creating a better banking system in Europe. On the global level, we Europeans have to work together to achieve a regulatory framework for the financial markets in order to ensure that there will be no supervisory ‘black holes’ which endanger the stability of the world economy once again.

**Developing a Digital Agenda for growth and jobs**

Europe's Digital Agenda for 2020 adopted a number of targets, including: broadband uptake and access, e-commerce, digital inclusion, cross-border public services e-learning and research and innovation. The EPP has been, and will continue to be, at the forefront of the development of the Digital Agenda. More specifically, the EPP is committed to promoting investment in the deployment of a next generation broadband network and to reaping the benefits of new mobile services by further enhancing mobile spectrum allocation efficiency. A stable and predictable regulatory environment must be guaranteed.

Lastly, the EPP is committed to enhancing research and development efforts in ICT as well as creating the best possible environment for the uptake of promising new technological developments with the potential to impact positively on Europe's competitiveness, such as cloud computing. A business framework needs to be established to bring back to Europe development and production competences in the area of information and security technologies, thus reducing dependencies on third countries. In this regard the EPP believes that Europe's Cloud Strategy is crucial to the completion of the Digital Single Market. Cloud computing will also have a huge impact on Europe’s competitiveness in view of the completion of the single market.
Strengthening Europe's industrial base and competitiveness

A strong, dynamic and innovative industrial base is essential for economic growth and prosperity. The real economy, our SMEs, plus an innovative and creative industrial sector, are central to our economic recovery. The EPP endorses the target of boosting industry as a proportion of the EU’s GDP to 20% by 2020 with a view to making Europe an attractive place of production and investment. Industry means production and production creates sustainable jobs. If industry is to have a sustainable future in Europe, it needs to retain and develop its innovative capacity. This requires the EU and its Member States to be serious about realising its objective of spending 3% of the GDP on research.

The EPP renews its commitment to setting a common industrial policy based on a real convergence of economic and social norms. The pillar of any common industrial policy is research and innovation. We encourage the launch of European tenders to develop new innovative technologies and set common research programmes between top universities and research organisations.

A new Energy and Climate Change policy towards a competitive and green European economy

The aim of our energy policy is to safeguard the supply of energy to Europe at affordable prices and in an environment friendly manner. The rapidly increasing global demand for energy, as well as the growing energy price gap between Europe and the US, and the challenge of tackling climate change, necessitates moving away from our dependence on fossil fuels. We must create opportunities for European businesses to develop new sustainable technologies which can provide new jobs, decrease our dependence on energy imports and help to develop further a credible European policy to fight climate change. In this context, the EPP wants the European Union to be the frontrunner in carbon-free and low-carbon technologies as well as in the clean-tech sector.

We would also like to establish a common energy policy by creating a real European electricity system through the convergence of transport networks and creating coordinated markets of capacities at the European level in order to share the costs, guarantee supply security, avoid power failures in peak times, notably during the winter, and generate investment for renewable energy sources.
We are convinced that a courageous and rapid move towards the most modern and efficient sustainable technologies will benefit not only our climate and provide the basis for a global solution to climate change, but that it will also be beneficial for the economy as it will make us less dependent on fossil fuel imports. This is an important investment, which will benefit all of our citizens and future generations. The European Union must remain the world leader in this area. Furthermore, Europe must engage all relevant international partners in order to advance towards setting tangible global climate change commitments, a pre-condition for succeeding in combating climate change.

Binding, but realistic, EU level targets for 2030 could be proposed for those policy areas where they provide a proven added-value in terms of investor certainty, as well as cost-effectiveness. We should develop a more integrated, cost-effective EU mechanism to support renewable energy technologies which are not yet competitive. European climate and energy policies must also safeguard the protection of industrial sectors facing fierce international competition.

The objective of putting the EU economy back on the growth track can only be achieved if energy prices are competitive and supplies are sustainable and secure. Today, energy prices are substantially higher in Europe than in the US and other international competitors, which burdens EU industries with a severe competitive disadvantage and represents an increasing burden for SMEs and private households. In that sense the EPP is fully committed to diversifying our energy sources and to the completion of the internal energy market. True competition will help bring down energy prices. No region or Member State should remain isolated from European networks after 2015.

Europe's energy dependence is one of the biggest challenges for the competitiveness of our economies. We need a common approach and public support to reduce this dependency, as well as a clear common approach to preserving and exploiting energy resources within the European Union, reducing energy consumption and investing in research on low-energy technologies and renewable energy. Significant investment in new and intelligent energy infrastructure is needed to secure the uninterrupted supply of energy at affordable prices. Such investments are vital for jobs and sustainable growth and will help enhance competitiveness.
**Fighting tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance**

Tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance undermine citizen’s trust in public administration. These practices are unethical and unfair to those who work hard and contribute their fair share of taxes in order for society to function properly, as it steals resources from the financing of education, public health and welfare. It distorts a level playing field, creates an uncompetitive environment for companies and undermines the efforts of countries seeking to restore sound public finances. Tackling tax evasion, addressing bank secrecy and fighting money laundering are crucial components of a functioning democracy.

Tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance are, to a large extent, a cross-border problem. They therefore demand a cross-border solution. We will fight for the establishment of a common definition of EU tax havens and decisive action against them. Other new measures are required, including improving methods used to identify taxpayers involved in cross border tax evasion operations, strengthening rules on mutual assistance and enhancing the coordination of tax systems in the EU. These measures should also include the establishment of a common consolidated corporate tax base. The EU shall also push for higher standards of transparency in international fora, such as the G20. Existing bilateral agreements between any EU country and third countries, or overseas jurisdictions, shall apply equally to all EU countries in order to ensure a level playing field.

**Reforming the Single Market to make it a real engine for growth**

Providing for the free movement of persons, capital, goods and services across the European Union is a key policy to stimulate economic growth without further increasing public debt. We must act with urgency, both at the Member States and European levels, to remove the remaining barriers that hinder market access and competition while respecting core labour standards and social rights. It is of utmost importance to ensure that the Single Market laws are implemented and enforced correctly by the Member States so that citizens and businesses can truly benefit from the Single Market. The reform of the EU’s Single Market is the best way for Europe to increase the level of competitiveness and return to growth and attain high levels of employment. The implementation of the Services Directive is therefore an urgent priority.
Creating a Digital Single Market is crucial, since it can be a driver for competitiveness and economic growth, providing jobs for highly qualified workers while at the same time presenting consumers with a wider choice of goods at competitive prices. By breaking down barriers for European companies and entrepreneurs, the digital economy can act as a spearhead for creating jobs and achieving a competitive Single Market. By linking the digital agenda with the development of e-commerce and new services such as e-health, e-trade, e-banking and e-learning, improving digital infrastructure is pivotal in opening up the Single Market.

The digital economy has become a reality and has many advantages for citizens all over Europe. Sustainable and strategic investment in key enabling technologies is a driving force to foster the technological and economic competitiveness of Europe. These technologies enable the development of those goods and services that can become part of everyday life in the future. We want to support these technologies by providing funding opportunities to make Europe an attractive business environment for these industries and to incentivise cooperation between research institutions, industry and SMEs.

By advancing a truly trans-European transportation network we can facilitate the movement of both people and goods. The EU should take steps to remove bottlenecks, especially in the form of administrative and technological barriers in order to create a modern, efficient and sustainable European transportation infrastructure.

**Strengthening SMEs**

SMEs are the backbone of the European economy and play a fundamental role in our efforts to create new jobs. All efforts should continue to restore liquidity to the economy and facilitate financing of investment, particularly with respect to SMEs. We recall that all EU Member States must respect the agreed principle of the Small Business Act which stipulates that it should only take three days to start a new company in the EU. Rules should be simplified, red tape should be cut and SMEs should be given real opportunities to grow by commercialising their products and services freely across the Union’s Single Market and beyond. That is why we encourage the finalisation of the Common European Sales Law project, which has the potential to significantly benefit consumers by encouraging more cross-border sales, particularly by SME’s.
We need to create the right conditions for SMEs, enabling them to reach their full potential. Proper market access and affordable intellectual property rights for both SME's and larger companies will increase incentives for profitable innovation. We should ensure that the EU remains fiscally competitive for entrepreneurs and innovators. We will fight for more accessible R&D funding and better market access for SMEs through ensuring that public tenders are allocated in such ways as to foster innovation. Through the reform of the banking sector in Europe, we want to ensure that viable European SMEs have access to affordable credit, irrespective of the country of their establishment. The ECB and the EIB must have an active role and adopt measures in order to facilitate access to credit under reasonable conditions for companies, especially SMEs. Most SMEs are family businesses and there is a specific focus on them in the Small Business Act. Support should be provided on an equal basis to family businesses and to start-ups.

**Ensuring a high level of consumer protection**

Consumers are at the heart of the Single Market and must be empowered to make use of their rights and be allowed to make decisions freely. Consumer protection must be reinforced, especially in the context of the development of the digital market, taking into account cross-cutting issues such as data protection, online advertising and unfair commercial practices. In order to ensure an effective and efficient enforcement of their rights, consumers must have access to redress mechanisms.

**Investing in European regions: European solidarity for higher growth and competitiveness**

Economic, social and territorial cohesion enables all Member States, as well as regional and local authorities (including the cities), to make the best use of investment opportunities, according to their own needs, to enhance theircompetitiveness. Cohesion policy is also the instrument to implement the common goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. Reformed cohesion policy, focusing on innovation, SMEs, renewable energy and energy efficiency allows for strategic public investment in all Member States and is therefore not only an instrument which promotes solidarity, but also enhances competitiveness, ensures energy security and creates jobs and growth all over Europe. Efficiency and productivity need to be the key drivers of cohesion policy. Every Euro spent from the EU budget should bring added value to the projects it supports and to the communities in which the money is spent. EU
funding should be used to make the best possible impact on improving competitiveness and creating jobs in Europe.

**Demographic challenges and harmonisation of work and family**

Longer life expectancy presents both a challenge and an opportunity at the same time. These changes will affect pension systems, health care systems, housing, assistance for the elderly, security, mobility, urban planning, transportation and tourism. Seniors have to be involved in the formulation and implementation of the policies adopted to cope with these changes and to prevent discrimination, abuse or poverty.

The social and economic implications of longer life expectancy are numerous. The impact on social security systems is crucial. We have to defend it in the interests of respect and intergenerational solidarity. Concerning health policies, we have to develop a strategy centered on the concept of "healthy ageing" which promotes lifelong healthier lifestyles.

Strong families are also a precondition for positive demographic developments. The EPP recognises the family as irreplaceable and as the core institution where love, charity, sympathy and human solidarity are cherished and instilled, thereby uniting different generations. While clearly honouring the importance of the family for raising children, the EPP advocates that pro-family policies should also focus on instruments which have proven their positive impact on the demographic trends, such as support for the family in the first years after the birth of children. The EPP re-affirms its support for promoting the human right to education and to parental freedom of educational choice.

**Blue Growth: maritime policies as a source of growth and prosperity**

The Sea is a source of prosperity and growth potential for the whole of Europe. This is why the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy, must seek to provide a more coherent approach to maritime issues, with increased coordination between different policy areas that include growth, environment, shipping, fishing, sea zones, continental shelf, exclusive economic zones, and fishing zones. In these policy areas there are sectors of the maritime economy with high growth potential, where the EU should focus its attention on. This includes traditional industries, such as marine tourism and fisheries, and sea energy exploration as well as emerging economic sectors such as renewable energy sources, aquaculture and marine biotechnologies.
**Safeguarding food and water security**

The world’s population is increasing at a rate of 80 million per year. It is expected to reach eight billion people by 2025. This places ever greater demands on food security, especially in the developing world. Europe therefore needs a strong, efficient and sustainable agricultural sector. To ensure the future of European farming, we need a balanced and sustainable common agricultural policy that embraces different farming techniques, with a special focus on young farmers and the growing demand for local, seasonal and organic products. We also need to develop services in rural areas in order to avoid a rural exodus, especially of young people. Europe must also support fishing and aquaculture professionals with a common policy to promote sustainable and competitive fisheries. If we want to meet the demands of a globalised world while protecting Europe’s citizens we must: a) ensure the production of high-quality products in the EU, taking into account the demands of farmers and consumers; b) ensure competitiveness at local/regional, European and global level; c) contribute to the global food balance, and by doing so, contribute to world food stocks, energy security and climate protection. To achieve these goals it is necessary to ensure that young people are given the opportunity to find jobs in fishing and farming in order to promote a dynamic, innovative and competitive European agriculture and fishery sector.

Water security is one of the main global challenges of the 21st century. During the next decade, tensions and conflicts over access to water are likely to become more frequent and could endanger stability and security in many parts of the world. Demographic and climate developments further complicate this situation. We have to work harder and faster to enhance partnerships, promote cooperation on shared waters and propose sustainable solutions to water security challenges.

**Sustaining food safety**

EU citizens are more and more demanding and concerned about the quality, safety and origins of their food. The EPP pays special attention to the traceability of food products, placing an obligation on producers to provide information so that the consumer can decide for themselves whether or not to purchase the product. Information and education are essential to enabling our citizens to make informed choices. We underline that EU citizens have the right to: high-quality food, especially when it comes to hygiene and safety;
transparency and traceability in the food chain; clear, precise and informative food labelling; traditional and regional specialities and cuisines.

**Education**

The EPP attaches high importance to the role of high-quality education in ensuring that the EU achieves its goal of becoming the most competitive, dynamic knowledge-based society in the world. Europe needs to focus on digital illiteracy and to build stronger links between education, new technologies and innovation. The EPP reiterates the importance of lifelong-learning programmes and of EU backed measures to provide people of all ages with fair access to high quality learning opportunities. The EU has to stay on top of up-to-date developments in education to provide youths with employment opportunities. New technologies like online education and the creation of a framework to recognise degrees from digital universities can provide the answer. The EPP stresses the importance of the new multiannual programme 2013-2020 with regard to education, youth and citizenship. Actions and measures taken in these programmes should respond to the needs of the European citizens and be based on an adequate and efficient budgetary framework.

The EPP believes that national minorities need legal safeguards to preserve and protect their language, culture and identity. The European Union should develop a legislative framework for the protection of persons and communities belonging to national minorities. Furthermore the EU should encourage that best practices are shared between member states.

**Providing a future to young people**

The EPP is committed to young Europeans, just as young Europeans are committed to the European project. We believe in the ability of young Europeans to create, to grow, and to prosper. The best educated generation in the world deserves more and can achieve more. With hard work, with commitment and responsibility, the youth of Europe can strengthen our Union.

We are the political force that invited young people to participate in the decision making process, therefore we welcome the proposals of young Europeans from all over Europe:
• To have a complete internal higher education market by achieving: Full recognition of qualifications across Europe; a European framework for education standards; greater cooperation in research and increased mobility of students and lecturers beyond the existing mobility programmes; automatic recognition of degrees in all EU member states; a universal graduate diploma in the EU, which would allow full freedom of movement of students across the EU.

• To introduce EU education in schools across Europe in order to prepare the next generation for future challenges and to nurture to a European approach towards sustainable development.

• To launch an annual EU Job Fair week in higher education institutions across the EU.

• To launch an EU-sponsored network for young entrepreneurs in order to facilitate an exchange of experience, ideas and to foster transborder joint projects and investment.

• To focus R&D and innovation investment on boosting the economy and job creation.

• To harmonise the procedures of establishing a company in all the EU Member States.

• To launch an official EU network for collaboration between SMEs, large companies and educational institutions.

• To support the full implementation of the Points of Single Contact for start-ups, introduced by the European Commission and to further develop the EURES jobs site.

United, we can make sure that young people look at the future with optimism, hope and confidence.

**Voluntary services**

Volunteering is a major tool for nurturing civil society and strengthening solidarity – one of the core values of the EU – as well as an essential component in supporting community development programmes. It plays a crucial role in improving social cohesion, shaping society and providing people with new competences and skills.
Cross-border volunteering in particular gives young European citizens opportunities for intercultural enrichment. The EPP supports more EU funding for volunteering and highlights its social dimension as an expression of European citizenship as well as the health, education and humanitarian benefits it provides.
SECURITY FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS

Security for citizens in Europe is a key priority for us. While assuring the free movement of persons within the European Union, we have to do the utmost to prevent criminal acts such as terrorist attacks, cyber-attacks, organised crime, fraud and corruption. We have to fight criminal acts as well as their causes. We have to fight new criminal threats that have emerged in areas such as intellectual property, individual privacy and personal integrity.

Open borders, immigration and integration

The Schengen Area, which benefits 650 million travelers annually, is one of the greatest achievements of the EU. However, it is a process which has yet to be completed. The management of the Schengen agreements must place more emphasis on political responsibility sanctioning defaulting Member States and Frontex’s resources should be reinforced. The internal mobility of qualified workers can contribute to tackling labour shortage in a number of member states. Whilst having abolished internal borders, Schengen states have also tightened controls at their common external borders to ensure the security of those living and travelling within the Union. EU Member States need to cooperate closely on border management to ensure internal security is maintained. External borders are prone to irregular migration, human trafficking, illicit arms and drugs circulation, as well as international terrorism. Frontex must be reinforced. The EU must also effectively cooperate with third countries’ border security authorities to prevent crime from spilling over. The EPP underlines the importance of addressing root causes of migration flows by enhancing cooperation with the countries of origin and transit, including through appropriate EU development support and an effective repatriation policy. At the same time, victims of political and religious persecution must receive genuine protection.

EPP believes that when dealing with illegal migration, we must:

- Link financial assistance to third countries with their progress on fighting illegal migration and cooperating on issues such as asylum, readmission and returns.
- Promote extra cooperation and synergies of Coast Guard Services.

The EPP supports a common migration policy, which also reflects needs in our labour markets. Some of our Member States face a shortage of qualified labour that is not
completely met from within the European Union. Even in some Member States with higher unemployment, shortages of qualified labour do occur.

- The EU must remain competitive on the global labour market, which is why we need more skilled people in the EU.
- We need enhanced cooperation between governments, civil society and the private sector.
- We must develop a method to recognise diplomas and professional qualifications of non-EU migrants.
- Integration policies for migrants into our communities have to be developed and strengthened. Integration is a two-way road which involves both rights and responsibilities.

**A European asylum system**

The right of asylum for people fleeing their country of origin for fear of persecution has to be respected and protected. Europe, with its political and economic stability, has a responsibility to show solidarity and provide safety for people in need. This must be carried out under conditions that are just, humanitarian and in accordance with the rule of law. The Common European Asylum System and the establishment of the European Asylum Support Office provides for standards to qualify for asylum, minimum standards for reception facilities for asylum seekers and the establishment of Eurodac for the comparison of fingerprints in all Member States. This is the foundation of shared responsibility and solidarity in this area between Member States. Now action is necessary for it to be fully implemented:

- We underline our clear commitment to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the obligations of International law, including the Geneva Convention. As Member States work closer together to implement a common asylum system, legal opportunities for individuals to immigrate to Europe must develop;
- We have to improve the implementation of the Common Asylum System and enhance practical cooperation between Member States;
• We must show solidarity with third countries in troubled regions that carry the largest responsibility for displaced persons. We need to continue to provide support to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR);
• We must tackle the abuse of asylum systems;
• We need to exchange best practices between Member States;
• The EU has to build partnerships with countries of origin and transit and help them to develop their own asylum systems.

**Return and visa policy**

We need to develop the necessary preconditions for an effective and humane system for return. The EU’s policy to facilitate visa-free travel must not compromise our common efforts to tackle illegal immigration.

• We need to develop and implement voluntary readmission programs, the effective organisation of returns as well as increased cooperation with competent authorities in countries of origin and transit.
• A sustainable asylum policy requires tackling the root causes of forced migration and displacement. Therefore the EU has a strong role to play in reducing food insecurity, addressing the consequences of climate change in fragile developing countries and regions and strengthening democracy and the respect for human rights. This responsibility rests first and foremost with the individual Member States. Member States should allocate adequate resources and implement necessary measures to make sure that return decisions actually lead to the return of persons to their countries of origin. Cooperation at EU level has to be strengthened to allow for this.

**Fighting organised crime and corruption**

The prevention of and fight against serious and organised crime, especially corruption and money laundering, are top priorities as they undermine the rule of law, fundamental rights, good governance and deprive governments of important revenues. These crimes harm the public and private sectors, decrease the confidence of the population, threaten democracy, damage the legal economy and distort the EU’s internal market.

Moreover, recent cases of alleged corruption involving EU politicians undermine the credibility of EU institutions. We have to put an end to corrupt and non-transparent
practices. The fight against corruption should not be abused for political purposes and the guarantee of a fair trial and presumption of innocence are fundamental human rights which need to be respected. We believe that transparent politics is vital for the future of democracy and we are committed to improving transparency and strengthening the rule of law.

We need to safeguard the regular economy and ensure our citizens’ security.

- The EPP supports targeting and seizing criminal assets from criminal organisations that operate across national borders.
- Law enforcement and judicial cooperation between Member States and with third countries has to be promoted. We need to find common legislative standards and operational tools to effectively combat crime.
- Actions at national and European level have to extend from crime prevention to law enforcement, as preventing organised crime requires a multidisciplinary approach.
- Enterprises should be excluded from participation in any public contract throughout the EU if they have been found to have participated in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other serious crime.
- The EPP calls for swift implementation of all necessary reforms, including the adoption of lustration legislation, which will ensure consistent enforcement of the rule of law and democratic principles in all post-communist countries where the decomposition of totalitarian residues failed.
- We need extradition agreements with third countries and mutual legal assistance agreements, as they are key to fighting organised crime at a global level.
- Trafficking in human beings is the slavery of our time. It is a serious crime and a tragic violation of human rights. We acknowledge the gender-specific aspect of human trafficking. Figures show that women and girls are the main victims of trafficking. Working towards the elimination of trafficking in human beings cannot be achieved without strong cooperation across the EU and beyond. At EU level, the focus must be on criminal law provisions, the prosecution of offenders, victims' support, victims' rights in criminal proceedings and establishing partnerships, in particular with civil society.

An ethical environment must be cultivated.
Better police, judicial and customs cooperation
Police, judicial and customs cooperation is intended to ensure a greater level of security for EU citizens. The European Arrest Warrant has been one of the most successful tools in the fight against crime and in enhancing judicial cooperation. We must assure Europe's citizens that the effective disruption of criminal networks is brought about by the efficient coordination of investigations. Mutual trust between judicial administrations is a priority. Moving closer to a genuine European area of civil law by improving the regulatory environment and effectiveness of justice systems across the EU has always been a priority for the EPP.

- Particular attention has to be given to the full recognition of evidence, sentences and confiscation orders in all Member States.
- The EPP is in favour of a European Investigation Order as it addresses difficulties in obtaining information and evidence in cross-border cases.
- We need to ensure a high level of support and protection for victims of crime regardless of where in the Union they fall victim to the crime.
- The EPP welcomes the creation of effective instruments and measures to control the flow of EU money whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

Strengthening privacy through data protection
The EPP believes that privacy is a fundamental, inalienable human right. The progress that has been achieved over the last 20 years shows that the digital age has come to affect the economy, security strategies, communications, state responsibilities as well as all branches of everyday life.

- The reform of data protection rules, which was driven by the EPP, serves to reinforce privacy for citizens as well as increase consumer confidence online, which provides a welcome boost to the Digital Single Market.
- This set of rules will achieve greater harmonisation in the single market. However, it is essential that the new rules strike the right balance between protecting personal data and ensuring the free flow of data in the EU digital single market, which is a necessary condition to benefit from the innovation potential of the digital economy.
The new regulation must not impose excessive administrative burdens and costs on businesses, which would have a detrimental impact on innovation.

- Privacy laws must not be designed to infringe upon free speech and freedom of the press.

**Cyber security - our European society becomes more vulnerable to attacks**

Recent large-scale attacks against governments, information systems, industry, banks and business, as well as individuals, emphasise the need for action to prevent and adequately react to dangerous attacks.

The use of cyberspace for criminal activities or espionage is subject to rapidly evolving technological developments. The resilience of networks and cyber security systems depends on an adequate level of preparedness.

- We need to have equally innovative and flexible responses, ranging from support for cross border cyber investigations and the training of police, to legislative measures.
- Cooperation and the exchange of expertise and information among the Member States and between the public and the private sectors has to be increased.
- We need to strengthen the education of the wider public regarding the challenges on cyber space and the rapid technological changes we face, which again will contribute to increased cyber security.

**The creation of a common civilian task force**

It is possible to provide for a common civilian task force: it would be more effective in ensuring that humanitarian crises are managed in a coordinated way and would symbolise in the eyes of European citizens, as well as worldwide, Europe’s ability to be united and give expression to a common hope: solidarity amongst nations.
PEACE AND STABILITY IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

Acting together to promote our values and interests
Europe has, more than any other continent, shaped the world in which we live. But today, it is one of many players and power centres around a globe on which people, capital and ideas travel faster and more frequently than ever before. In this world, the European Union needs to represent the interests of its citizens, and at the same time strive to achieve the best for humankind. In a time when we are increasingly threatened by global concerns, such as international terrorism, weapons proliferation, failed states, climate change, natural disasters and mass migration, the EU must reaffirm its values in the eyes of the world and do everything in its power to defend and promote them. In today’s globalised world, nation states acting alone will not be capable to defend our values and interests.

From a single message to common action
The EU must strengthen and increase the efficiency of the European External Action Service as its most important foreign policy instrument. The European Parliament’s scrutiny of the Common Foreign and Defence Policy should be expanded in order to increase democratic accountability. Only with a strong European Foreign and Security Policy will we be able to promote our values and interests in a rapidly changing world. Stronger leadership at the head of the EEAS will contribute to enhancing cooperation between the EU and the Member States, increasing the joint responsibility of the EU foreign policy among the Member States, which will in turn facilitate the creation of a common European message.

Strengthening the EU’s presence in its immediate neighbourhood
Our immediate neighbourhood is a source of challenges, new opportunities and potential threats that we will not be able to tackle and overcome without a consistent EU presence in these countries and a clear objective to develop closer relations with them irrespective of whether or not a country is a potential EU member state. The enlargement of the European Union is also one of its success stories because it allowed the EU to spread freedom, democracy, peace, stability and the rule of law throughout our continent. With the last enlargement rounds, the EU has managed to embrace most parts of the continent. In the future, it has to be clear that becoming a member of the European Union requires not only the fulfillment of political and economic criteria but also the capacity of the EU to integrate
must be taken into account. The identity and the capacity of the EU to act have to remain intact.

**Breathing new life into our relations with the Western Balkan countries**

Barely twenty years ago, the Balkans were a place of suffering war and bloodshed. Therefore, the EU must continue to give a high priority to peace, stability and reconciliation in this region. Progress has been made: Croatia became the 28th EU Member State last year; membership negotiations have started with Montenegro and they will soon begin with Serbia, following the landmark EU-facilitated agreement between Belgrade and Pristina.

However, in some countries, Albania, FYROM and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU presence must be more effective and its policy more focused on facilitating political dialogue and consensus building, which are often undermined by inter-ethnic tensions and mistrust between communities. These divisions represent a threat to long-term political stability. The prospect of EU accession negotiations provides leverage which may be used to foster political, economic and societal reforms and to restrain nationalist tendencies in the Western Balkans. Regional cooperation and a full commitment to the good relations with neighbours are essential elements of achieving these objectives.

**Re-launching the Eastern Partnership**

Designed as a measure to support eastern democracies, the EaP (Eastern Partnership) is based on a community of values and principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. Although the EaP countries have committed themselves to these values, differences are emerging within the group of EaP countries due to them pursuing different objectives and failing to commit fully to closer relations with the EU.

Moreover, these EaP countries are under constant pressure from Russia, which is attempting to undermine seriously the EaP in order to restore its influence over former Soviet countries through the establishment of a Customs Union and Eurasian Union.

The EU must remain committed to supporting fragile eastern democracies:
• The EU has to develop a new set of incentives and strengthen the content of the Eastern Partnership while offering a clear prospect of further integration to these EaP countries willing to commit themselves to the EU, and act accordingly.

• The EU must become more involved in seeking a resolution for the protracted conflicts in the EaP countries (Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, South-Ossetia and Abkhazia), which are the cause of long-term political instability and prevent the implementation of crucial democratic reforms.

• The EaP parliamentary body – the Euronest assembly – must overcome the limitations, which are caused by its structure and the frequency of its meetings as well as by more nationally oriented discussions than ideologically inspired ones. In that sense, the establishment of clear political groups within Euronest and an increased visibility of its meetings will reinforce the feeling of co-ownership from the EaP side and make the commitments adopted more binding.

• The EU needs to develop a much longer term approach to its strategy on eastern relations. That also means placing a stronger emphasis on the development of civil society assisting younger generations through targeted programmes, and introducing a more liberal visa policy.

**Offering a new vision for the Mediterranean**

Both sides of the Mediterranean share a common destiny. The region offers tremendous opportunities, but also presents many challenges. Therefore it merits special attention.

The EU must have a concrete vision for this region and propose new strategies for Southern Mediterranean countries. This strategy may include launching proposals for the Union for the Mediterranean and determining how to overcome the limits of the bureaucratic, technical and vague approach of the current European Neighbourhood Policy for the South.

The EU was not able to anticipate the Arab uprisings, but must actively support democratic developments in the region. Only the promise of shared prosperity can rally the support of the wider public in the region. The objective of creating a prosperous, democratic and stable neighbourhood must remain the key priority of the EU in all of its interactions with countries in the Southern Mediterranean.
The Middle East Peace Process must also be a priority of the EU’s southern policy. The EU must be more active and more visible in the search for a peaceful settlement by contributing to the implementation of a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.

The recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly in Syria and in Egypt, underline the importance of Cyprus as a European pillar of stability in the region. In light of the important oil and gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus also plays a central role in bolstering EU’s energy security. These developments underline the need for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question based on UN Security Council resolutions and on the principles on which the European Union is founded. Therefore, Turkey should take all necessary steps, including the withdrawal of troops, to avoid any kind of threat or action against a Member State or source of friction or actions, which could damage good neighbourly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes: implementing the Ankara Protocol, handing over Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants, respecting the sovereign rights of EU Member States to explore and exploit their natural resources in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

**A leading role for Europe in a fast changing globalized world**

In the context of global competition and international threats, and at a time when America is placing a greater emphasis on other regions of the world, Europe has become more responsible than at any time since the Second World War for its own prosperity and security. Therefore, it must be more active in promoting and protecting the interests of Europeans. The EU will only be able to do this through engaging in strategic partnerships and by developing a new European security strategy.

**A strong EU-US partnership**

The EU must maintain and develop a strong transatlantic partnership with a free and fair market built on common values. Together, the EU and the US can assume global leadership in developing strategies to address global threats and challenges. A Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) should be the first step towards a transatlantic free market, which should evolve to include also Latin American countries in the future.

The TTIP will contribute to increased growth, which will create more jobs and prosperity. It will also act to strengthen the geopolitical standing of the transatlantic community.
However, the negotiations on the TTIP must take into account the importance of safeguarding important elements of the EU’s identity and protect high standards.

**Defending free trade and open markets**

Europe represents 10.6% of the global population and 30.4% of global GDP. Other regions of the world will continue to gain influence and power.

Open markets are a prerequisite for ensuring competitiveness and the development of European companies as global leaders. Free trade and access to global markets are important catalysts for job creation and growth and are decisive factors in enabling European companies to become global leaders. The free trade agenda needs new momentum in the form of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, including the completion of the Doha Round. Human and labour rights, as well as environmental standards, must be included in all trade agreements with our partners.

Therefore, the EU’s trade policy should be based on balancing open markets with the need for fair competition, fair and equitable trade agreements and sustainable development. Barriers to trade should be eliminated, and standards harmonised. We must resist populist temptations for more protectionism as it would endanger prosperity, both in Europe and around the world. Improved market access for EU companies must be guaranteed in each of the different trade negotiations currently underway.

Latin America stands out as a region which shares many values and interests, history and, increasingly, economic ties with the EU. A number of Latin American countries are strategic partners of the EU, sharing common objectives on issues such as climate change, security, global governance, economic issues, development, education, the fight against poverty and inequality. The EU should continue encouraging and assisting the processes of regional integration and cooperation. Moreover, the EU should enhance its economic and political engagement with Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Central America and try to give a renewed impetus to a balanced and ambitious association agreement with MERCOSUR so that new growth and jobs can be created on both sides.

China is an important economic partner and one of the greatest emerging powers in the world. The recently launched trade talks aimed at creating an investment agreement with China will create major opportunities for Europeans businesses. Although limited in its
scope, this paves the way for new scenarios in our trade relations with emerging powers. At the same time, the EU has to set high health, social and environmental standards and be extremely vigilant in its relations with China, particularly in relation to human rights.

**Constructive relations with Russia**

With regard to Russia, the EU's biggest neighbouring country in the east, it is important to develop close relations in order to cooperate on issues of common interest such as stability beyond the EU's eastern border, energy security and international affairs. Likewise, our relations are defined by economic inter-dependence, increasing cross-border traffic and largely shared cultural roots. Therefore, an open and practical dialogue should be conducted with Russia in relation to a range of important issues.

- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms should continue to figure prominently on the agenda.
- We want Russia to develop into a modern country, politically and economically. We also wish to support its balanced integration into the European and international economy.
- The depth and width of EU’s relations with Russia very much depends on Russia’s willingness to fulfil its international obligations to maintain democratic standards and the rule of law, but also on its economic obligations under WTO trade rules.
- We strive for a new partnership agreement between the European Union and Russia, an intensification of the cooperation between the respective civil societies, a survey of visa regulations in the light of the development of EU-Russia relations - especially for business people, scientists and students - and an intensification of the cooperation on matters affecting the Baltic Sea as well as closer cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy.
- With regard to concerns relating to the EU's Eastern Partnership countries, we call for Russia to cooperate with the European Union. Having stable and successful neighbouring countries is in the interest of both the EU and Russia.
Promoting human rights and fighting poverty in the developing world

The EU should reform and improve its development policy in order to increase its effectiveness and accountability. This new policy must be based on the principles of subsidiarity and social market economy. The private sector and civil society should become fully recognised as partners in development alongside governments.

Human rights and the fight against poverty are central factors in development policy. The EU and the Member States should deepen their coordination in planning, monitoring and evaluating development projects. The strengthening of accountability and transparency in government institutions is indispensable to the rule of law and to the creation of prosperity in developing countries. This can be best achieved by empowering civil society and assisting in institution building. Particular attention must be paid to education, since education builds the foundations for sustainable and inclusive growth. Property ownership, SMEs and the private sector in general should be supported. Democracy and human rights are the foundation blocks for development and good governance.

The EU must promote, defend and protect women's and children’s rights, especially in conflict or post conflict zones and countries. The EU must fight violence against women and girls and tackle high maternal mortality. The EU needs to transmit its expertise by sharing best practices and by empowering women. Collaboration with NGOs that promote the autonomy of women in the poorest countries needs to be reinforced, for the sake of the development of these countries.

In the years to come, global food security, access to food and stable food prices are a challenge for both developed and less developed countries. Because of the growth of the world population, the demand for food will increase dramatically, whilst rapid urbanisation and climate change will diminish supplies. These imbalances will pose a threat of renewed famine, but they will also offer an opportunity for increased employment and income in the rural areas of the world. Therefore development policies should promote rural development and agricultural production. At the same time the Common Agricultural Policies of the EU should also be reformed in the light of possible new scarcities without resorting to protectionism or dumping.
Poverty is not only a matter of income, but also, more fundamentally, a matter of being able to live a life in dignity and enjoy basic human rights and freedoms. The EU Member States and the EU should stick to their promises as laid down in the Millennium Declaration and spend at least 0.7% of GDP on development aid in order to fight global poverty. The EU should also contribute to an ambitious follow-up of the current Millennium Development Goals programme.

**A more effective European defence policy**

We need a fresh start for a European defence policy that is deserving of the name. Europe is faced with old threats and new risks in a quickly changing strategic environment. Our American allies are clearly telling us that we must assume the responsibility to take care of our own security in the EU’s neighbourhood. And Member States are continuing to make uncoordinated cuts in defence spending while hesitating to use the potential of the Lisbon Treaty to make serious progress in establishing a common defence strategy.

- In the next five years, the EU must undertake much more serious efforts to pool and share its Member States’ defence capabilities.
- In the short term, it should carry out a review of national capabilities and urgently develop better ways to link civilian and military structures and personnel.
- In the medium term, the EU needs to set up a strategic military and civilian headquarters. It should launch a White Book on Security and Defence which defines our interests and sets out security priorities and objectives. This will help to provide more and better fitted civilian and military personnel in the service of missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy.
- In the long term, there should be regular formal Council meetings on European defence, a solid European industrial basis for defence and technology, and standby forces under EU command.

All this will help to make the EU a regional security provider and at the same time a strong European pillar of the North Atlantic Alliance.

The participation of the EU in international crisis prevention, the support of democracy worldwide, the fight against terrorism and working to resolve international conflicts must be central elements of a future European Foreign Policy. Common Security and Defence Policy
should be based on convincing diplomacy, a sound economic base and adequate armed forces. This entails the creation of new tools, such as the establishment of a permanent operational civilian and military headquarters for better coordination, planning and conduct of operations, as well as better equipment procurement through the European Defence Agency. It also requires that the EU at once expresses the political will to take advantage of the full range of existing structures, notably the Battle Groups.

The only way to achieve this is by developing European military capabilities through cost-effective solutions by pooling and sharing resources. In other words, a more competitive and efficient EU defence and security sector is needed.

The EU Member States, which are willing to cooperate closely, must make full use of the Lisbon Treaty provision in creating the Permanent Structured Cooperation, in which not all Member States have to participate. Moreover, the defence market must be integrated into the Single Market.
Party of European Socialists

The Party of European Socialists (PES) brings together 53 Socialist, Social Democratic and Labour Parties of the European Union and neighboring countries. The PES European Parliament election campaign will put people at its core and reflect the PES commitment to the common values of democracy, equality, solidarity and social justice. In the run-up to the European elections, the PES will spearhead a ‘common candidate’ campaign to give people a say in who the next European Commission President should be. The PES will provide information and contacts to its member parties and will draft a simple ten point manifesto to ‘frame’ the election.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

Party of European Socialists
http://www.pes.eu/
Towards a new Europe

PES MANIFESTO

Adopted by the PES Election Congress in Rome on 1 March 2014
European Parliament elections
22 - 25 May 2014
www.pes.eu
We strongly believe that the European Union must change. This May, in the European Parliament elections, your vote will give us the opportunity to deliver the EU that you deserve. A Europe that progresses, a Europe that protects, a Europe that performs. Our political family of parties across 28 countries will dedicate themselves to fighting for a secure future for you. The right wing has created a Europe of fear and austerity. During 5 years of an EU conservative majority, we have fought for a strong, socially just and democratic Europe. But now it is time to lead from the front. To do that we need your support, your help, your vote.

Our programme for the next 5 years of the European Union will bring back job creation, a productive economy, a sense of community and respect for people. We want to put you as a citizen and as a voter back in charge and bring back hope to Europe’s youth. This May for the first time you will have a say in who runs Europe. Your vote will decide who the next President of the European Commission is. To change the right-wing majority in the European Union, the only vote that counts is a vote for European Socialists, Social-Democrats, Labour, Democrats and progressives.

Towards a new Europe - PES MANIFESTO
Adopted by the PES Election Congress in Rome on 1 March 2014
A Union that progresses

01 It is time to put jobs first

This is our first and main priority: Europeans, women and men, must have a decent job that allows a good quality of life. Yet there is the legacy of the economic policies of the last five years, in stark figures: nearly 27 million Europeans who want to work cannot find a job, including nearly a quarter of our young people. 120 million in Europe are at or under the poverty threshold. Creating jobs for young people is a challenge which will define us, for this generation and the next, and will remain a key priority for us as part of our long-term commitment to full employment. Central to our job strategy is the full implementation of our Youth Guarantee plan. To make it successful, we will substantially increase its budget and extend it to everyone under the age of 30. To create jobs, we will introduce an ambitious European Industrial policy and will support our Social Economy and our Small and Medium Enterprises. We will promote innovative green technologies and improve the performance of our economies. We want to put an end to social dumping, by ending the practice of exploiting workers and precarious contracts that harm many Europeans. We want to promote social justice. We will insist on strong rules to guarantee equal pay for equal work, the protection of workers’ rights and quality jobs, on reinforcing trade unions’ rights, social dialogue and anti-discrimination legislation, improving the protection of workers posted in a different country by revising the Posting of Workers Directive, and promoting better cooperation at European level on labour inspections. We will introduce decent minimum wages across Europe, established either by law or through collective bargaining. The jobs we create must allow all our citizens to participate in the economy as proud equals. All trade agreements, including the one currently under negotiation with the United States, must be bound to the protection of people’s human and social rights, decent work, environmental standards, culture as well as corporate social responsibility and fair trade.

02 It is time to relaunch the economy

Austerity-only policy has harmed our economies and punished those least responsible for causing the crisis. To create jobs and relaunch the economy, we will prioritize innovation, research, training and a smart reindustrialization policy, so that amazing breakthroughs discovered in European laboratories and universities can be translated into more jobs for workers in Europe. Our solution is room for manoeuvre for investments through national budgets that expand rather than shrink our economy. While the crisis has demonstrated that the Euro can act as an effective buffer, the last 5 years have shown that the European Economic and Monetary Union’s construction is still incomplete. It has shown the importance of mutualising responsibility and rights within the Eurozone. We will bring down deficits in a sustainable and fair way and manage public debt in Europe with new instruments. We want to put in place a real coordination of the economic and fiscal policies in the Eurozone that understands the social effects of those decisions on your community. The European Parliament and national Parliaments must keep their sovereignity and be fully involved in the exercise of democratic control over these policies. The legacy of the Troikas in this regard is a clear failure. After the end of the Troika missions, another model within the framework of the EU Treaties should be established, which has to be democratic, socially responsible and credible. We will be tough guardians of public money, enhancing the quality of public spending, cutting out waste and directing expenditure to get the best value for Europe’s people. The fight against tax fraud, tax evasion (which represents about €1 trillion every year) and tax competition are key priorities for a just tax system. Halving tax evasion by 2020, and cracking down on tax havens are our key priorities. We will also promote tax rules that ensure transparency and prevent tax dodging.

03 Putting the financial sector at the service of the citizens and the real economy

Europeans had to pay for the mistakes and irresponsibility of an unregulated financial sector. The rescue of banks has cost €1.6 trillion of taxpayers’ money. Over 5 years, the finance sector has said that it has learned from its mistakes. We will make sure that never again will
Towards a new Europe - PES MANIFESTO
Adopted by the PES Election Congress in Rome on 1 March 2014

05 A Union that protects
The principle of equality must be the foundation of a European Union.
We need a binding commitment to end the gender pay and pension gap.
We will safeguard the rights and well-being of children, and ensure that no one is denied a job or position because of the colour of their skin, sexual orientation, age, gender, disability, political opinion or any form of discrimination.

06 A Union of diversity
For a Europe that respects everybody's rights and obligations.
We will fight for a Europe that leaves no one behind.
"We will fight for a Europe that leaves no one behind."

04 Towards a Social Europe
The right to work and the right to a decent income are fundamental human rights. A decent income, the quality of work and the opportunities it offers are crucial to the well-being of individuals and societies. To ensure these rights, the principles of equality and of non-discrimination must be at the heart of all European policies. We believe in the effective and fair redistribution of wealth and opportunities. Being a European citizen is a right. We will continue our efforts to build a robust Banking Union that is designed to protect European citizens and to give equal and fair access to credit in Europe.

03 A Union of equality and women’s rights
We are committed to building a genuinely United Europe.
We will fight for a Europe that respects everybody’s rights and obligations.
We will build a Union of equality, of diversity, of women’s rights and of men’s rights.
We will fight for a Europe that respects the principle of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.
We will fight for a Union of women’s rights and of men’s rights.
We will be relentless in our fight against racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and intolerance.
We will stand for the values of equality and of non-discrimination and promote that women and men must equally share time and share roles, both in the public and in the private realms.

02 A Union of banks gamble with citizens lives.
Instead we must actively put in place the framework that will make the financial sector work for the real economy and contribute its fair share to society.
Regulation will force banks to serve your communities instead of stripping them.
In order to level the playing field, we will further regulate the banking sector, curb financial speculation and implement adequate firewalls between commercial and investment banking.
We will cap bankers’ bonuses and we will speed up the introduction of the Financial Transaction Tax that we have been supporting for years as a fair contribution of the financial sector to society.
We will insist on the creation of an independent and public European credit rating agency.
We will continue our efforts to build a robust Banking Union that is designed to protect European citizens and to give equal and fair access to credit in Europe.

"We will fight for a Europe that leaves no one behind."
For the first time in EU history, you will have a direct say to designate the President of the European Commission. We are proud to lead this real step towards a more democratic Europe, and to have paved the way that other political parties now also follow.

The European Union is a political union which ensures the equality of its citizens, and the equality of its states. European citizens, civil society, and social actors must have full democratic participation and control in European Union decisions. We will promote a prominent role for the European Parliament that has legislative, budgetary and control powers, as the EU institution representing its citizens. Decisions must be taken at the most appropriate level, be it local, regional, national or European, in the interest of European citizens. All policies must be efficient, respect democratic values, fight corruption and serve citizens in an open and transparent way. We will put in place effective European responses to breaches of fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law.

European citizens deserve to live a safe and healthy life. We want stronger rules that give consumers power. We will protect European right to enjoy safe food, safe products and a safe living environment. We recognize the strategic role of agriculture and fisheries for our societies, and want to promote a sustainable and thriving rural development. The EU must adapt to new challenges, especially the digital agenda and guarantee broad access to the internet.

We need solid EU legislation on the protection of citizens’ personal data and access to information. Striking the right balance between privacy, freedom, and security is vital. The EU should guarantee citizens’ right to security by promoting cooperation in the fight against organised and crossborder crime.

The EU must regain global leadership on the protection of nature and natural resources and the fight against pollution and climate change. This requires both close cooperation with our global partners and leading by example. We will support clean technology and environmentally friendly production. As we approach the 2020 deadline, we will therefore support further binding targets on the reduction of carbon emissions, the increased use of renewable energy and improved energy efficiency. We will promote the implementation of Project Bonds to finance good investments in the green economy, renewable energy and technology. Production, consumption and mobility patterns must change and the use of recycling must improve. This way we will reduce pressure on scarce natural resources and help citizens to reduce their energy bills and their ecological footprint. We will fight energy poverty and will guarantee minimum access to energy for everyone.

For the first time in EU history, you will have a direct say to designate the President of the European Commission.
Together, we will change Europe. With these 10 projects we, Socialists, Social Democrats, Labour, Democrats and Progressives, will change Europe over the next 5 years. We count on your vote and we will act tirelessly on your behalf.

Promoting Europe’s influence in the world

The European Union must carry the universal principles of democracy, peace and respect for human rights, including women’s and children’s rights. In a globalised and changing world, with conflicts and growing inequalities, Europe must be a global player. We must build strong alliances to respond to common challenges. We want Europe to have a strong voice and the proper tools to lead in promoting peace, democracy, and shared prosperity throughout the world. Europe combines defence, development, trade and diplomacy efforts to maximize the positive effects in its foreign policy. The EU must be an effective agent of peace abroad and an efficient promoter of defence cooperation. We must support the people struggling for democracy, social justice, non-discrimination and freedom against any form of occupation anywhere in the world. We will support the Eastern Partnership as an important instrument to bring countries closer to the EU and will promote strong relations with the Mediterranean region. We must maintain support for European enlargement. Fundamental rights and European values must continue to be respected unequivocally in any future accession. We must fight global imbalances and poverty by promoting policy coherence for development and making the Millennium Development Goals and the UN post-2015 agenda a success.
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party is the party for liberal democrat values in Europe. With more than 55 liberal member parties across the continent, it is translating the principle of freedom into politics, economics and all other areas of society. Founded in 1976 before the first European elections, it was established as the first true transnational political party in 1993. The ALDE Party provides an increasingly vital link between citizens and the EU institutions, and continues to grow in size and significance.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
http://www.aldeparty.eu/
In 2014, we will have the opportunity to shape the future of Europe at a crucial time in the history of our continent. In this election, the choice you make can weaken Europe or make it stronger.

European Liberals are committed to building a stronger Europe to defend our common interests and values. We want a Europe with authority on the world stage. We want a Europe that boosts the economy and creates jobs. We want a Europe that is more transparent and accountable. A Europe that protects the safety and security of its citizens. A Europe of tolerance and equality, with strong civil rights and liberties. A Europe based on genuine democracy and the will of its citizens. A Europe that takes the lead in fighting climate change. A Europe that works for us all.

Liberals want a Europe which inspires trust, not fear; promotes prosperity and unity, not division.

Civil liberties and freedom are the foundations of a liberal Europe and explain the attraction of the European model for the world. Civil liberties are the very foundations of our wealth and we need to defend them when they are threatened. We want a Europe that respects and encourages individual choices and keeps its promise that everyone has the opportunity to improve their own life.
Our priority is to better address the serious economic challenges we face throughout Europe. The recession and record unemployment, including youth unemployment, threaten the long-term future of our communities. A stable and prosperous Europe needs to be built on better policies. We believe in a Europe that is answerable to you and works for you.

European Liberals have a strong track record of making Europe more accountable, more transparent and more effective.

We will continue to pursue strategies and take action that will lead us out of the current crisis and will create long-term growth. We believe in competition, removing obstacles to trade and effective regulation of the market. We will continue to fight protectionism and government interference where they undermine job growth and hinder prosperity at regional, national and EU level.

Creating jobs and opportunities

Liberal policies have proven to create jobs and improve peoples’ lives. We can do more with your support.

We believe in the power and success of the European single market, which has created millions of jobs. We will prioritise the completion and expansion of the single market, not least in services, identify and create new opportunities for economic growth and greater innovation, and boost the EU’s competitiveness.

Eliminating excessive national rules and regulations as well as border controls, and ensuring free movement of workers, have helped businesses to be stronger and more competitive. However, much more can and should be done to complete the single market and simplify doing business in Europe.

We will reinforce the single market in energy, the digital market, financial services, transport and healthcare sectors, while further facilitating the free movement of services and workers.

✔️ We will work for an EU-US free trade agreement that could boost the European economy by over 100 billion euros annually. We will also strive for free trade agreements with other major economic regions.

✔️ Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) drive prosperity in Europe. We will facilitate the creation of more jobs through easier access to finance, simpler rules for investment funds to support new, innovative businesses across Europe, and opportunities for young entrepreneurs.
The EU must become a leader in start-ups and in new innovative technology companies.

The digital economy is vital to jobs. We will work to create a modern economy that simplifies life through more e-services, and stimulates e-commerce by improving faster internet access, guaranteeing an open internet, fighting for net neutrality and creating a genuine single market in telecommunications, including the phasing out of mobile phone voice and data roaming charges by 2016, and unjustified prices for calling or texting across borders.

We support the establishment of favourable financial and taxation frameworks to encourage the setting up of new businesses. Investment must be welcomed in Europe.

We believe that the greatest social and economic crisis now facing Europe is unemployment, especially among young people. These European elections must be about identifying opportunities through employment, education and training and this is the top priority for those elected as ALDE Members of the European Parliament.

Apprenticeship diplomas and university diplomas must be freely recognised across borders. Dual training, university and enterprise across borders must be strengthened.

We support the notion of a 'fifth freedom': the free movement of knowledge – including greater mobility for students, academics and researchers – between member states, so as to encourage inventions and discovery.

Transitioning into sustainable development through a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy with a stronger emphasis on renewable energy will create new jobs and make us less reliant on energy imports.

We will work for a functioning emission trading system to reduce CO2 emissions, and will work to strengthen it as a driver for innovation and energy-efficient solutions. An effective and well-functioning carbon market is a key tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions cost-effectively. This includes investment in a pan-European electricity grid and building even more upon renewable energy sources. We will promote a long-term and stable policy framework to promote energy and resource efficiency. This must include member states and the European Union working together to increase energy efficiency, decarbonise energy generation, develop carbon capture and storage technology, promote recycling, reuse and efficiency in the use of natural resources, and phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, including those for fossil fuel production and consumption.

We will support the shift of EU support under structural and cohesion funds towards research and investment into future oriented sectors such as the renewable energy sources sector.
In the process of creating these new jobs, we will also ensure environmental and ecological sustainability for future generations.

**Setting new priorities**

We need to rethink the whole budget process. We believe in a larger strategic objective to determine how our money is best spent. We call for an extensive reform of the financial system of the Union, both revenues and expenditure, ensuring that no countries contribute disproportionately.

Budget decisions should take into consideration how best to increase the number of jobs and improve people’s lives and the welfare of our communities. The budget must be growth-oriented. We need to focus on innovation, research and development and support better education. Liberals are committed to making better use of your money by continuing to cut administrative budgets and lead the fight for a single seat for the European Parliament.

The original goal of improving people’s lives has been overshadowed by bureaucratic bookkeeping. Wasteful subsidies must be abolished.

🌟 We will work towards a real and fundamental shift in the next EU budget so that you will benefit more. EU money must be spent on creating jobs and not to subsidise income.

🌟 We want to reduce and simplify EU rules so that they are easier to apply and enforce in order to avoid waste and error.

🌟 Member states should provide declarations that EU money is not only spent legally but also provides added value.

🌟 EU structural funds must be directed towards job creation, particularly for youth, and greater innovation.

🌟 EU funds should also be directed towards research, which adds value and gives tools to researchers, PhD students and universities.

🌟 Access to funds intended to improve people’s lives must be time-limited, with entitlement lost if goals are not met within a specified period.

🌟 We will work for a sustainable economy that respects the natural environment.

Over 40 billion euros are spent on agricultural subsidies every year. Agricultural subsidies in other countries distort the level playing field for European farmers. We want an international reduction of support and a further modernisation of the Common Agricultural Policy towards efficiency and more market orientation.
As Liberals we support a continuous CAP reform. However, we stress that the general rules prohibiting state aid to national industries, companies and products should also apply to the Common Agricultural Policy, thus preventing a renationalisation of agricultural subsidies. We aim to ensure a more transparent and less bureaucratic CAP implementation. EU money must be spent on creating jobs and maintaining food security and safety in all member states.

We support agricultural policy that is balanced between all three pillars of sustainability: economic, environmental and social. This will help farmers to produce more with less.

- We will make sure that family farmers and people in rural areas who preserve the landscape and encourage environmentally-friendly tourism benefit fairly from the Common Agricultural Policy.
- We will shift EU support from agricultural subsidies to modern and environmentally-friendly agricultural technologies to maintain food production and sustainable livestock farming while helping local communities.
- We support investment in research, modern technologies and their translation into practice in all sectors of agriculture, fisheries and rural development.

European Liberals have led the reform of the common fisheries policy, notably to end discards and to decentralise decision-making.

**Restoring stable finances**

Just as European citizens are expected to balance their household budgets and live within their means, we must ensure healthy public finances. We want a Union in which the criteria of the Stability Pact are adhered to by both the Union and its member states. The currency union can only be sustained if solidarity is combined with solid fiscal responsibility.

Fiscal solidarity depends on fiscal discipline which avoids moral hazard and does not reduce economic incentives for sound public finance.

Agreeing to these principles is not enough. We will continue to lead efforts to hold accountable those who flout the rules.

- We will work for the rapid implementation of a banking union in the Eurozone with a common legal basis for supervision and resolution of banks.
- We will establish a common mechanism to wind down insolvent banks in order to avoid costs for the taxpayer.
- We will create better control mechanisms and more automatic sanctions when the stability and growth pact is broken.
We want both Eurozone and non-Eurozone countries to remain fully involved in the Union’s decision-making on economic issues of common concern, as our economic futures are inextricably bound together.

While we are committed to the principle of tax competition, we are convinced that we need to do more to fight tax avoidance and evasion.

**Stronger in the world and safer at home**

While some want to highlight and exploit our differences, we believe our shared values and unity allow us to defend our common interests in the world and individual rights at home. Our strength will help us create jobs and improve people’s lives both within Europe and beyond our borders.

- We will promote human rights and protect the vulnerable both within the EU and beyond our borders.
- For Liberals EU enlargement remains an essential instrument of common foreign and security policy.
- We will enhance EU cooperation and strengthen EU policy in the field of justice and home affairs, in particular to fight organised crime.
- While we welcome the new Common European Asylum System, we will further work to create legal and safe routes to the EU for asylum seekers through resettlement and humanitarian visas, in order to eliminate the market for human traffickers and prevent tragic deaths in the Mediterranean.
- We will also work for a Europe open to talents and ideas from people willing and able to contribute to job growth and prosperity on the one hand, and on the other hand enforce a system to prevent irregular migration.
- We will strive for a common cybersecurity policy, which will improve the ability of our member states to protect our privacy and economy.

Our ability to promote the rule of law and individual liberties effectively abroad depends on our ability to guarantee the same rights for those here at home.

- We will continue the fight for full protection of all human rights and we will remain at the forefront of fighting discrimination of any kind.
- We will work for the creation of a mechanism to monitor violations of fundamental rights and civil liberties in the EU and enforce sanctions, on the basis of objective criteria, free from political interference.
Europe should lead the world in data privacy. Access to the private data of European citizens should always be subject to proper judicial process.

In a globalised world, no EU country can tackle the threats and challenges we are facing today on its own. EU citizens expect the EU and its Member States to stand together, to act together and to play an effective role in global affairs.

The world is becoming ever more complex and unstable. Europe will need to depend more on its own military and security resources. A better pooling and sharing of those capabilities is needed to put them to much better use. This would allow faster responses to international crises, as the fight against piracy has successfully shown.

We work for much closer cooperation between the EU and NATO.

We will continue to support democratic and economic reforms in neighbouring countries. Healthier democracies on our borders ensure a safer European Union.

We strongly support the new emphasis on human rights in EU foreign policy.

We want to increase the influence of the EU in international affairs by establishing an additional European seat in the UN Security Council and other organisations, as well as by teaming up the Eurozone member states as a single constituency in the IMF.

We believe that the EU should further strengthen its crisis civilian management capabilities and use its experience to guarantee stability, the rule of law and principles of good governance.

**For an effective and transparent Europe**

The financial crisis has caused the EU to stretch the Treaty of Lisbon. Within the lifetime of the next European Parliament we will support the calling of a Convention to develop the Union further in a democratic direction. By improving accountability for European politicians, we believe they can deliver more effective and efficient results for you.

The EU and its institutions need more transparency and less bureaucracy. We will continue our efforts to simplify EU rules and make them less burdensome.

We advocate that decisions should be taken at the appropriate local and regional, national or EU level that serves citizens best and most directly.

With the Lisbon Treaty national parliaments have been included to a greater extent in policy negotiation. In order to strengthen the principles of subsidiarity even further, ALDE proposes an annual subsidiarity check, whereby the European Parliament assesses the Commission’s Work Programme to ensure that the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are being respected.
We want to make the European Commission more efficient by substantially reforming working methods at the College, and by reducing the areas of portfolios.

We support the ongoing restructuring of certain parts of the EU administration, such as the Committee of the Regions, in order to ensure that all parts contribute significantly to the decision-making process and the transparent, smooth and efficient running of the Union. We want to maintain the option of abolishing administrative structures which do not fulfil these criteria, such as the Economic and Social Committee.

We call for an audit of all existing EU agencies. Those that do not deliver significant added value should be abolished.

We recognise that differentiated integration does not pose a threat to the coherence of the EU as long as further integration remains open to other countries, allowing them to join if and when they choose.

The European Parliament should have one seat only.

We support a reinforcement of the democratic nature of the European Union, with a greater involvement of the European and national parliaments in decision-making, and with greater transparency of negotiations and voting within the Council.

The European Union needs to be stronger, simpler and more democratic.

We ask for your vote to help us achieve this.
Greens

The European Green Party is a political force that's clearly identifiable through our commitment to environmental responsibility, individual freedom, inclusive democracy, diversity, gender equality, global sustainable development and non-violence. Our members are made up of Green parties from European countries (although not necessarily from European Union member states). Our commitment to a more participatory Europe means that we are the first European Party to hold an open primary, the Green Primary, to select our leading candidates for a European election.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

European Green Party
http://campaign.europeangreens.eu/
CHANGE EUROPE, VOTE GREEN.

GREEN COMMON MANIFESTO
EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014
# COMMON MANIFESTO

Europe is now at the crossroads.

Crisis creates anxiety and anger – we want to build hope and security.

Your vote matters – let us fight for a European alternative.

It is your choice.

Europe needs a Green New Deal

Solidarity, solidarity and sustainability
Laying the foundations of a social Europe
Bringing the financial industry under control
Public finances: Fair and effective taxation
Rise: Renaissance of industry for a sustainable Europe

One planet, our home!

European climate and energy law
Sustainability is the key
Priority for Green transport
Protect health and safety
Food, not fuel
Better food, better lives
Greening agriculture
No to GMOs
More fish in the seas
Animal protection

Europe in the world

Human rights and poverty eradication
Domestic security policy
Working for peace
Fighting for fair asylum and immigration policies
Taking the lead on climate change
Pursuing a coherent enlargement and neighbourhood policy
For a fair trade policy

For a more vibrant democracy

Without gender equality there is no democracy
Citizens as European decision makers
Strengthen the role of parliaments
Fight corruption and fraud
More own resources for the EU budget
A digital bill of rights
Uphold the rule of law
A Green democratic reform of the EU

Members of the European Green Party

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In a common process representatives of the EGP’s member parties within the European Union worked on drafting the EGP’s common manifesto for the European elections. At the EGP’s Electoral Convention in Brussels on 22 February 2014 the present delegates from the EGP member parties adopted the 2014 Manifesto unanimously.
We want to invite you to participate in the European Parliament elections on 22nd–25th May 2014. And we want you to vote Green.

This year sees the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War and is 57 years since the Treaty of Rome marked the founding of what is now the European Union. European unification has freed the continent from centuries of antagonism and war. It has inspired the removal of dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. It has enabled the economic reconstruction of its member states in a spirit of social justice, and is making us a pioneer of environmental sustainability. Each enlargement has enriched our cultures, enabled us to recognise each other, making us all part of the same challenging project. There is no doubt about it that the building of the European Union has been an historic achievement.

DEAR EUROPEAN CITIZEN
We Greens believe that Europe is our common home and our future. Yet, that future is under threat. If the EU’s achievements are to be preserved and enhanced, now is the time for a fundamental political reorientation and for a democratic renewal of the European Union. To safeguard our common future we want to change Europe to strengthen it. That is why we stand for more solidarity, sustainability and justice. We give room for populism, nationalism or economic chauvinism. No region, no country, no part of Europe will remain or become prosperous on its own. In a globalised world, it is only by acting together that we stand a chance of meeting the daunting social, environmental, economic and security challenges ahead. We need fair economic cooperation that respects our ecological responsibilities. We need solidarity within and between our nations. We need a strong democracy. We must live our values, upholding freedom and liberties domestically and internationally.

Neo-liberal deregulation has created financial markets solely driven by short-term greed, resulting in the global financial crisis that is still with us today. The crisis has threatened or destroyed many social, democratic and economic achievements and as a consequence the conception of the European Union is now being challenged by a growing sense of frustration, fear, and even anger. The medicine of austerity that has been prescribed to countries in crisis for several years now has increased social division and injustice, jeopardised the well-being of many of our fellow citizens, undermined the capacity of our societies to prosper, and crucially, weakened democracy. Today, 40% of Europeans are at risk of poverty or social exclusion; 7 million are unemployed, including almost one million young Europeans. The most fragile end up paying the heaviest price for the crisis. It is not surprising that this injustice is breeding fear and anger across our continent. Whilst we share that anger, we want to turn it into hope. Our economic model is not sustainable. The environmental crisis persists. The continued failure to reach a global agreement at the climate conferences demonstrates how far we are from avoiding a catastrophic climate change. Short-termism and the narrow interests of lobbyists continue to prevail. Europe is essential for building the more sustainable, democratic and equal society we are calling for. Think of it: taming the forces of financial markets and of global corporations, effectively fighting tax fraud and evasion, transforming Europe’s energy supply to combat runaway climate change. These are all examples of urgent actions that are beyond the capabilities of even the largest of our member states. We need cooperation within the EU to deal effectively with these issues. The transformation we advocate must go hand in hand with a democratic re-foundation. We want a European Union that ponders a more direct and participative democracy. Executive bodies such as the European Commission and Central Bank must be held accountable for their actions. The EU must be an effective multi-level democracy, respecting subsidiarity and making its diversity one of its best assets.

We want you to join us in the fight for an economic, political and social transformation that will build future prosperity on the basis of sustainable development and a Green renaissance of our industry. With coherent and sustained policies, new investment and many Green jobs can be created, constituting good and decent work, equal pay, workers’ rights, increased economic mobility, regional development and better opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, organisations and businesses. We insist on a European energy policy which will mitigate climate change: Yes to renewables and energy efficiency; yes to phasing out nuclear and coal and no to shale gas. All this is part of our Green New Deal. We insist on a European energy policy which will mitigate climate change: Yes to renewables and energy efficiency; yes to phasing out nuclear and coal and no to shale gas. All this is part of our Green New Deal. Greens remain reliable advocates of environmental responsibility. Help us take a strong stance against those on the right or on the left and from theobbies who want to block progress. We demand more sustainable agricultural policies and have played a strong role in reforming the EU’s fisheries policy. We advocate for more transparency and corporate responsibility. We have consistently promoted consumer and citizens’ rights. Environmentalism is also a social responsibility. If the environment is destroyed, so is the basis of our economy and well-being. Greens mobilise under the banner of social justice against social exclusion, of sustainability against austerity. We want to live our lives as people for whom security and opportunity are not just tales from yesteryear. Here, without doubt, the EU must change direction! We want to fight against youth unemployment, against homelessness, against poverty and hopelessness. Where member states individually refuse or fail to deliver, we can overcome that together as European citizens. Let us build a social Europe.

We see individual emancipation, freedom and liberties for all as a very much higher threat. Think of private and state-organised mass surveillance or the infringement of human rights of minorities like immigrants, the LGBT+ community or the Roma. We must not tolerate discrimination based on any ground, such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other pretext. Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union. There is however a huge gap between the recognition of a right, what legal progress it achieves and its implementation. Greens support a dual approach for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment: gender main-streaming and clear and binding targets in order to achieve gender equality at all levels. We need a digital bill of rights to guarantee our inherited freedoms in the digital age. We helped defeat the ‘Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement’ (ACTA), that threatened our freedom. We defended the right to water against privatisation pressure. Such fights touch on Europe’s core values.

Greens want to revitalise European democracy which has been weakened by the strength of lobbies, by the narrow defence of their own interests by national governments, by the power given to technocrats without democratic oversight, and by the simplistic blame-game of populists. The European Parliament must be strengthened and given control over the policies which in the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank pursue within the so-called troika. Citizens must be better heard and have a more active say through direct democracy. The EU must act wherever a common voice is needed, whilst not taking decisions further away from citizens. This includes pushing back against excessive lobbying. We also want more gender democracy: more women in Europe’s institutions and in the boardrooms of EU companies. We should not shy away from sharing our sovereignty, where this is the only way of keeping it, as with the banking union, the financial transaction tax, and the struggle for tax justice and against tax evasion and tax havens. The EU should pursue a policy of good neighbourliness on our borders and abroad. This includes sharing culture, having joint education projects, and means keeping the door on enlargement open. We promote global justice, fair trade, the protection of human rights, civil conflict prevention and multilateral conflict solutions. Europe must be a fair haven for refugees, not a ‘Fortress Europe’. A Europe of global responsibility benefits the world and ourselves.
As the directly elected voice of European citizens, the European Parliament is the joint lawmaker, together with national governments, on topics that influence your daily lives from workplace safety to innovation and new jobs, from consumer protection to environmental policy, from food safety and animal protection to data privacy to gender equity. It also helps finance local and regional projects for sustainable development and social inclusion. Greens make a difference in the European Parliament. We want to continue this with greater strength. For this we need your support, your vote. Help change Europe, vote Green!
In the present crisis the European Union has not delivered on its promises to a great number of its citizens. And it has been everything but unified on how to change for the better. This is why Greens propose a new strategy.

We Europeans should combine our strengths, which is what sovereignty means, in order to shape our own future. Instead of socially deaf and environmentally blind austerity, we propose three coherent avenues to sustainability: fighting unemployment, poverty and all forms of social injustice; transforming our economies with innovation and eco-efficient solutions to tackle climate change and environmental degradation; re-regulating the financial industry so it serves the real economy. We call this a European Green New Deal.
We do not want the EU and its member states to rely on a level of debt that is excessive and burdens citizens and future generations. That includes bringing financial debt, be it public or private, back to sustainable levels and making sure it funds sustainable value-creating investments. This will require cases of restructuring public and private debt. Equally, we must address social debt: reduce unemployment, poverty and inequalities, improving health and education. This requires strong investment efforts. Last but not least, it requires addressing environmental debt: tackling climate change, the exhaustion of finite resources and the erosion of biodiversity. We need a living countryside, with sustainable agriculture and economically and socially vibrant rural areas as well as abundant fish stocks to support coastal communities.

By becoming world leaders in inventing and delivering solutions that make a good life possible for everyone while respecting the limits of our planet, we will find the key to a new economic dynamic for jobs and prosperity. We reject the so-called pact on competitiveness as this would entail wage cuts, the reduction of social welfare schemes and the privatization of public goods. Fiscal sustainability must go hand-in-hand with equally strong social and environmental sustainability. Stronger shoulders must carry more of the burden. Austerity as imposed in the recent economic crisis takes us in the opposite direction.

Europe must be built on a foundation of social justice and yet, for an increasing number of people, social hardship has become the reality. European Greens believe in policies that tackle growing levels of inequality and are adamant that there should be no second-class citizens in the EU. It is therefore essential that social impacts such as inequality and poverty are taken into account.

We oppose unemployment, particularly youth unemployment and old-age poverty. Retirement age and poverty are key elements of injustice. Political measures that promise relief, such as the European Youth Guarantee Scheme, will not be successful unless they are adequately funded and above all underpinned by a strong policy of job creation. Member states must continue to tackle child poverty through evidence-based preventative early intervention investment. The EU must put an end to social dumping, to zero-hour contracts, to low-pay jobs and to unfair internships. Greens advocate fair and gradually improving minimum social standards in Europe in accordance with national conditions and labour market models—particularly in terms of job quality and security, of wages, of public health, and of pensions. We want to move towards better portability of social benefits through the introduction of a European social card, with high and binding privacy standards, which streamlines administrative processes across countries and which makes a genuine European citizenship more concrete.

We want the European Central Bank (ECB) to include macroeconomic and financial stability among its policy objectives, including employment promotion. Moreover, to boost employment in Europe we need to work further to make the project of the single market fully operational, particularly in the area of free movement of workers and services.

We advocate the inclusion of a social progress clause in European law, which would emphasise the priority of building a social Europe. Social balance across Europe must address the threat of a brain-drain—especially of young people—away from crisis-stricken regions and the exploitation of migrant workers, while respecting the fundamental right to free movement. The Greens wish to see new instruments developed to mitigate larger differences in economic cycles, including unemployment rates. We promote the emancipation of women in society and in the economy. ‘Equal payment for equal work’ must be a standard all over the EU, as well as equal representation of women in company boards. Having a family or sharing care should not be obstacles to a successful career for either men or women. To counter age-discrimination, Greens oppose any age limits on access to public services and we stand for the implementation of reliable basic standards in the pension models of all member states. We consider that the rekindling of social Europe is closely related to a reinvigorated social dialogue where federations of employees and trade unions as sume their responsibilities. Cross-border collective agreements for European transnational companies should be promoted.

Five years after the outset of the financial crisis, our system remains dominated by banks that are too big or too interconnected to fail and therefore too dangerous. Bank bailouts have cost billions to European taxpayers; this should never happen again. We want to ensure a properly sized, diverse and resilient financial sector that serves society and helps mobilise sustainable investment in the real economy. We propose stringent rules for the separation of banking activities into those which are essential to society and those which are not. Greens have contributed strongly to ensuring that financial products and activities which produce no benefit for the real economy and have the potential to destabilise the financial system can be banned and taken off the European market. European authorities should make use of this possibility. Only financial products and activities which demonstrate benefits for society must be authorised.

Our initiatives have outlawed naked speculation on sovereign debt, curbed bankers’ bonus schemes, forced banks to disclose their activities in tax havens, and submitted the European Central Bank’s banking supervision to more democratic accountability. Greens are proud of achievements in this domain.

Now we need to build on these successes. We want to ensure consumers receive good, independent advice on all financial services. Financial services legislation must not support further concentration of market power to the detriment of small sustainable banks. We advocate a European Banking Union, combining a strong common oversight of our banks, a common authority and fund to reconstruct failing banks and a common system of insurance for deposits up to €100 000 or equivalent. EU institutions must also contribute to tackling financial short-termism that limits the level of sustainability ambition in strategic investment decisions.
At the moment, the tax burden weighs disproportionally on low and medium income earners and on small and medium enterprises, while an estimated €1 trillion annually escapes through evasion and fraud. Our goal is to restore tax justice and efficiency. We want to reduce the tax burden on labour and move towards taxing pollution and waste. We will do our utmost to enact a financial transaction tax despite powerful lobbies opposed to this plan. As we want large corporations and wealthy individuals to contribute their fair share, we advocate a more common European approach to corporate and wealth taxation, including minimum rates. Last but not least, we advocate a common offensive against tax evasion, tax fraud and tax havens, starting by putting an end to bank secrecy. On the expenditure side, Greens explicitly fight wasteful and ecologically harmful spending such as fossil fuel subsidies or nuclear programmes such as the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). Managing legacy public debt together, by setting up a debt redemption fund and gradually issuing common debt instruments (Eurobonds) under clearly defined and realistic common fiscal discipline rules, are key moves in order to ensure the sustainability of public finances. In order to revive economies in crisis and preserve the monetary union, we advocate an increase in the EU budget, primarily funded by own resources, and the creation of financial solidarity instruments aimed at helping to finance the economic recovery.

We want to transform our European economy into a global champion of energy and resource efficiency, based on less energy-intensive technologies and renewable energies and on improving the way we manage, use, re-use, recycle, substitute and value resources. We want resource-efficiency and eco-innovation to underpin policies and investment in all sectors of the economy. This Green offensive will create many new quality jobs for high-skilled as well as low-skilled workers in a variety of industries, and it will enhance working conditions and workers health. It will also enhance future economic resilience. Industry should not follow false leads like drilling for shale gas or converting food to fuel. Rather it should become a key partner in this innovation-oriented Green transformation by promoting eco-design rules, public procurement, state aid rules, private investment, small and medium sized enterprises and cooperatives, better funding for research, development and education, promotion of entrepreneurship, and in particular social entrepreneurship, good industrial relations, workplace democracy and fighting corporate vested interests. These must all be elements of our effort. We want to strengthen trade unions and the right of male and female workers to participate equally in decision-making processes. Trade policy should support a sustainable industrial renaissance in Europe and show respect and solidarity for our global partners. One project of particular relevance in this context will be creating a European Renewable Energy Community to help break our addiction to fossil fuels.
Climate change and biodiversity loss are two of the greatest threats to societies across the world. The ecological crisis has been overshadowed by the current economic crisis but the situation is becoming more and more acute, with the potential collapse of ecosystems putting our way of life at risk.

In August, we consumed more of the Earth's resources than can be renewed in a year. There is no longer any doubt about mankind's role in causing climate change and about the catastrophic consequences of inaction. The planet is close to a tipping point and, without a radical change in energy consumption and production patterns, damaging climate change can become irreversible.

However, there are solutions that will deliver massive environmental, economic, social and health benefits.
TRANSPORT

PRIORITY FOR GREEN

We want comprehensive EU climate and energy legislation consistent with our fair share of global efforts, built on legally binding emission targets and sanctions to ensure that climate goals will be met. This will create incentives towards sustainable economic transformation and averting dangerous climate change. The UN climate summit in Paris in 2015 (COP 21) must deliver a binding global agreement. The clock is ticking and the EU, together with member states, need to play a leading role in negotiations to secure binding commitments from all negotiating parties. This also means increasing its existing outdated greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2020 from 20% to 30% from their 1990 levels, and setting a target to further reduce these emissions by at least 55% from their 1990 levels by 2030 in order to reach a carbon-neutral society by 2050.

Nuclear power is expensive and risky, increases the danger of spreading of nuclear weapons and has no part to play in Europe’s energy mix. We will continue to say ‘Nuclear? No thanks!’ and renew our engagement to phase-out nuclear energy in Europe while making sure this does not increase carbon emissions. We must shut down the most risky power plants immediately, end direct and indirect subsidies and insist that existing operators bear full liability for the damage and fall-out from nuclear accidents.

Aviation and road transport are major sources of greenhouse gases, air pollution and noise. We want comprehensive EU climate and energy legislation consistent with our fair share of global efforts, built on legally binding emission targets and sanctions to ensure that climate goals will be met. This will create incentives towards sustainable economic transformation and averting dangerous climate change. The UN climate summit in Paris in 2015 (COP 21) must deliver a binding global agreement. The clock is ticking and the EU, together with member states, need to play a leading role in negotiations to secure binding commitments from all negotiating parties. This also means increasing its existing outdated greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2020 from 20% to 30% from their 1990 levels, and setting a target to further reduce these emissions by at least 55% from their 1990 levels by 2030 in order to reach a carbon-neutral society by 2050.

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Aviation and road transport are major sources of greenhouse gases, air pollution and noise. The current volume of fossil fuels used for the transport sector not only has a strongly negative impact on public health and the environment but also makes the EU dependent on energy imports and exposed to rising prices. We need to shift to safer and less environmentally-damaging modes like sustainable waterways, cycling, public-collective transport and rail. Special emphasis needs to be put on fair competition between different modes of transport. A European railway network should therefore close missing links on both regional and long-distance connections, in a way that urban and regional agglomerations can easily be reached. Existing cross-border rail connections must be prioritised over roads and aviation, especially for the movement of goods. Improving the energy efficiency of cars helps cut the fuel bills of European citizens especially for the movement of goods. Improving the energy efficiency of cars helps cut the fuel bills of European citizens especially for the movement of goods.
Together with Civil Society Organisations, Greens have successfully driven the environmental and public health agendas in the European Parliament, shaping for instance safety rules for chemicals, pesticides and biocides. We support measures to reduce air pollution which is a major cause of premature death. We are pushing hard for better controls of electronic and hazardous waste, drug and pesticide residues discharged into our water systems and the use of nanotechnology in cosmetics, medicines, food and biocides, as well as for reduced exposure to substances that negatively affect our hormonal system.

We will continue our campaign against the dangerous and damaging practice of shale gas extraction, and the extraction of other conventional fossil fuels. It is time to ban shale gas and therefore we call for an immediate ban on hydraulic fracturing (‘fracking’). Fracking contaminates our water supplies and our environment with chemicals used in fracturing fluids. Methane leakages during extraction of shale gas add to climate change. Moreover, the economic benefits have been grossly exaggerated, with production rates dropping rapidly after the first year of fracking, causing boom-and-bust economies in local communities. We will work to establish fracking-free regions throughout Europe, following the successful GMO-free model.

Fuel made from food crops is not a sustainable solution to the climate, energy and poverty crises. Feeding crops into cars, combined with financial speculation on essential food commodities, has forced up food prices, results in land grabbing and threatens the food security of millions in the developing world while driving a negative climate impact. In particular, biodiversity-rich tropical rainforests are being slashed and burned to make way for palm oil plantations intended for fuel and food ingredients.

The European Parliament now has equal responsibility for the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. It is time to make our food chain is malfunctioning. Industrial agriculture, based on pesticides, monocultures and an overuse of antibiotics, is thriving at the expense of our health, the environment and increased animal suffering. Recurring food scandals have made consumers justifiably insecure about what we are eating and where it comes from. The Greens want to promote sustainable, healthy, tasty, diverse and ethical food; not standardised, tasteless food designed simply to look good on supermarket shelves. This means encouraging local production chains, organic farming and fair trade products from developing countries. We have succeeded in fighting several misleading practices, and in improving country of origin and nano-ingredients labelling. We will continue to demand and improved transparency in food labelling. With Europe throwing away 90 million tons of food annually, we also want action to cut down on food waste. We have launched a food revolution, increasing public awareness, personal engagement and participative democracy; in determining and improving food policies throughout Europe.

The European Parliament now has a equal responsibility for the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. It is time to make our farming climate-smart, sustainable, fair, and ethically sound. We want resilient, biologically diverse, healthy and robust agro-ecosystems that not only adapt to climate change but mitigate it.

We want to see a system which allows for a much fairer distribution of public funds, including more support for small farmers, for organic farming, for conventional farmers who want to green their production methods, and for local production and sales, which brings farmers closer to consumers. Farmers deserve decent prices for the products and corporate buyers should not be allowed to drive down farm-gate prices below sustainable levels.

We need to increase soil fertility, drastically cut the inputs of pesticides and synthetic fertilisers, eliminate harmful export subsidies and move away from intensive industrial farming. We will continue our campaign for fair and unrestricted access to plant breeding material and against the patenting of seeds and plant material in EU rules on seeds and we will keep fighting against the corporate control of the seed industry which makes farmers reliant on seed designed specifically for use with chemical fertilisers and pesticides, instead of allowing them to save and breed their own seed and adapt their crops to changing local conditions.

Biodiversity loss and excessive pesticide use has meant habitat destruction and led to a massive decline in bee and other insect populations, which disturb the natural pollination of many plants and crops. If we want healthy local fruit and vegetables, we must give bees a chance.
We have been consistent in our opposition to genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) in food and farming and in our support for a GMO-free Europe. Greens will continue to lead the battle against these toxic techniques. This issue is worried about by the public more than any other. We are committed to limiting research on GMOs to impact assessments including gene flow and cross-contamination.

The Greens have played a lead role in pushing for a more sustainable Common Fisheries Policy. The policy of throwing unwanted fish back into the sea was a massive waste of food and income and will now be curtailed. Fish stocks will be better managed and the capacity of the fishing fleet better regulated. Consumers will now be able to see not only where their fish come from but also how they were caught. Much remains to be done to implement these reforms and to ensure that loopholes are not exploited. We will continue to fight for better controls over intensive fish farming, which is highly polluting and destructive for the environment.
The EU has often been a reluctant player in global politics, reacting more than acting, and facing many difficulties in defining common positions. We want the EU to establish a value-driven common foreign policy and to play an important international role, to address the structural causes of poverty, promoting global justice and solidarity, peace, and the defence of global common goods. In today’s context of shifting global power, rising global inequalities and questioning of the universality of human rights, passivity is however not an option.

We want the EU to have a common voice on foreign and security policy. We have had positive signs in this direction on the issue of Kosovo-Serbia, and of Iran. The EU should pursue strong and fair partnerships with countries of the global south, aiming at reducing inequalities within and between societies through development cooperation. The EU and its partners need to work together to find common answers to problems like climate change, nuclear proliferation and regional conflicts around the world, as well as the unacceptable pillage of natural resources in many countries, particularly in the global south. That cooperation will not be credible if it is not democratic, accountable, transparent, and based on universal principles.

We want the EU to support multilateral global governance, strengthening and reforming the role of the UN, the rule of law, and the responsibility to protect. We consider the adoption of the “Responsibility to Protect” concept by the UN as progress, but the EU needs to make its contribution to further refine and tighten the rules for its application. Priority must always be given to civilian conflict management. Over the last years energy security has become one of the main priorities of EU foreign policy. Over-reliance on gas and oil makes the EU corruptible and is playing into the hands of those autocrats that control Europe’s hydrocarbon supplies. We must cut off this dangerous and toxic link.
HUMAN RIGHTS AND POVERTY ERADICATION

Following Green pressure, an EU Special Representative for Human Rights was appointed to enhance the visibility of the European Union’s human rights policy. The EU institutions should mainstream human rights in their external policies, including trade. We must live up to our promises on human rights when we are asked to help with disaster relief. This includes a strong commitment to the basic humanitarian principles: humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. The EU must become more efficient, more vocal in the defence of the rule of law, freedom and human rights, including socio-economic and environmental rights within and outside its borders. In particular, the EU shall be at the forefront of setting up legally binding rules on Corporate Social Responsibility.

The EU and the member states must come to terms with their complicity in secret detention and extra-judicial killings, including full accountability for the human rights violations committed in the CIA rendition programme. The ‘war on terror’ must be formally ended. All member states should ratify the amendments to the International Criminal Court’s statutes, which would allow the prosecution of state leaders who start wars of aggression.

The EU has not done enough to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which highlight the fight against poverty, hunger, environmental destruction and exclusion of women. We must work to support the strong new sustainability goals set by the Rio+20 Conference, which merged the MDG review and the Sustainable Development Goals process into a single comprehensive framework and gave a new set of goals to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development after 2015. We urge member states to fulfil their commitments to spend 0.7% of GDP on development cooperation. Likewise, an overriding priority of the EU’s development agenda should be the fight against corruption, money laundering, tax havens, illicit flows of capital and harmful tax structures.

DOMESTIC SECURITY POLICY

There is a need to improve police and judicial cooperation, especially tackling terrorism, organised crime, including mafia associations, environmental and economic crime. In doing so the EU and its member states should however prevent the stigmatisation of migrants and minorities. Checks and balances need to be strengthened so that law enforcement and intelligence services stick to the necessary and proportionate action required of them to keep European citizens safe.

WORKING FOR PEACE

This year we are commemorating the centenary of the beginning of the First World War. The EU was created to ensure peace after devastating wars, replacing confrontation with cooperation. Greens want the EU to actively promote non-violence and a culture of dialogue, mediation, reconciliation and cooperation. The EU has played and can continue to play an important role in conflict prevention, civil conflict-resolution, disarmament, arms control, peace-building and peacekeeping. The EU should also strengthen its humanitarian role, for example when it comes to the deployment of temporary hospitals to help alleviating civilian suffering in situations like civil war. The concept of human security must be at the heart of the EU’s external action. We also believe that the EU should help the UN to be empowered with more efficient tools of de-escalation and—if needed—peace enforcement. It is now important to strengthen parliamentary control of EU military operations by giving the European Parliament a role in the decision-making.

Thanks to the Greens, a much larger part of the EU budget is to be spent on conflict prevention through the Instrument for Stability and Peace. We have also supported the idea of an EU Peace Corps and the creation of an EU Institute for Peace. We are opposed to financing military research from the EU budget, such as for the development of European drones, or for Europe being a nuclear warehouse. We will continue to fight for nuclear disarmament both globally and in Europe and for concrete steps towards a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone. Greens also want to ban weapons such as depleted uranium ammunition and white phosphorus. Investments by European banks, pension funds, insurance companies and others in companies which produce land-mines and cluster munitions have to be banned too. European trade in arms, including surveillance technology, in exporting insecurity to regions such as the Middle East and the Far East. Greens want to cut down on this trade and prevent arms exports that could be used against freedom movements and civil protests.

Extra-territorial targeted killings outside of an armed conflict by drones or other means have broken the barriers of the established rule of law. We want to see the EU engage with other UN members to achieve a worldwide ban on such acts as crimes under international humanitarian and human rights law, and to stop the use of fully automated lethal weapons systems.
The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that in 2013 there were almost 40,000,000 displaced persons in the world, of which almost half are refugees outside their own country. The UN indicates that 200,000 of these refugees urgently need to be resettled every year, but only half of them find a new home. More worryingly, only 4,300 are resettled in the European Union compared to 80,000 per year in the USA. Thousands of people die on Europe’s external borders every year, because of ever stricter controls and because the means of legal entry into the EU remain limited. The EU has a duty to ensure that these people can seek protection. We need more efforts to establish an asylum system worthy of its name. The European Border Agency, FRONTEX, is the wrong agent for that and member states are violating human rights in their border policies. We need greater efforts by the EU as well as by member states and more coordination for “rescues at sea” and we need legal and safe ways for entry, for example with humanitarian visas. We have to get rid of the current rules (the Dublin Regulation) that force refugees to apply for asylum only in the country where they first entered the EU. We should, in our foreign relations as well as our trade and development policies, address the issues which force people to migrate. Greens have been successful in the fight for the creation of an EU Joint Resettlement Program means as well as for funds for emergency resettlement of refugees facing a humanitarian crisis. EU member states must do everything they can to make full use of these funds and show solidarity, not only amongst each other but also with troubled neighbouring regions.

For many years the European Union has played a positive role in international climate negotiations, but recently, this role has dwindled. It is one of our prime Green foreign policy concerns to make Europe again a leading actor in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation. Climate change already causes damage and suffering all over the world. Many people have to leave their land and become climate refugees, because of desertification, soil erosion, heavy rainfall or rising sea levels. We want to see the concept of climate refugees incorporated into international law. The EU must therefore play a leading role on climate migration in international institutions and at home. It must enhance its support for climate mitigation and adaptation. Climate financing plays a key role for developing countries and Greens will hold the EU to its promises and its responsibility. Such financing must be new and additional to existing development aid. We advocate mainstreaming environment into development projects to promote an effective climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy.

Greens stick to the policy of EU enlargement. The EU should be open to new members, provided they fulfil the membership criteria. We support an EU Accession perspective for all the countries of the Western Balkans. Greens want to speed up fair and credible negotiations with Turkey. The European Union has to play a vital role in its immediate neighbourhood to strengthen the Eastern Partnership and specifically our engagement with countries like Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. This means the EU asserting itself as a principled and honest partner with our neighbours.

The EU should work with civil society, granting asylum and support to defenders of freedom and democracy and granting scholarships to the youth of our neighbouring countries. We want the EU to focus on the transformation of its neighbourhood in the Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe and to effectively support reform efforts in these countries. Moreover, the EU should strengthen its partnerships with other existing regional organisations from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In trade the EU is a global power. The European Parliament plays an important role in Europe’s trade relations, because it can veto trade agreements, as it did for ACTA. But we need more transparency during trade negotiations and effective cooperation between the European and national parliaments on these issues. Greens are in favour of a multilateral trade order, but trade should support, not hinder, the development of poorer countries and the transition to a green, social, equitable and democratic development model. This includes opening EU markets for less developed countries, substantial reform of the WTO to make it more development-friendly and subordinating trade rules to human rights, social and environmental rights. Trade must be fair and it should not undermine the EU’s social model.

Presently, many bilateral EU trade deals are being negotiated, in particular the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States. Greens contest the lack of transparency of these negotiations, where important democratic choices are on the agenda. Greens not only defend our environmental, health, agriculture and food, consumer and labour standards, public interests and data protection, but also the possibility of strengthening them to implement the Green New Deal. We oppose biotech and toxic financial products marketed in the US being automatically approved for the EU. We draw clear red lines against any weakening of EU legislation. We refuse, through the inclusion of international investor-state dispute settlement in trade agreements, to allow private companies to sue democratically elected governments in order to protect corporate interests against social or environmental reforms. We will mobilise against any trade agreement that does not honour these principles and therefore we oppose TTIP in its current form.
More democracy, not less, is the answer to the crisis. Structures such as the troika are fundamentally undemocratic. We believe that a shift towards more citizens’ participation, accountability and transparency is crucial to gain legitimacy for future European cooperation. This means that we Greens are working for increased transparency in the entire decision-making process from the Commission via other EU-institutions to member state governments. Even more importantly, we work for the right of citizens to determine the future of the Union by increasing their choices throughout the law-making process.
Without gender equality there is no democracy. Gender democracy means that women are part of the public life of our societies and take decisions, in institutions and in political parties. We support the Commission’s proposal on quotas and strongly backed the introduction by the Lisbon Treaty of legally binding quotas for women in corporate boardrooms. However, at the present pace it would take more than 20 years until 40% of all boardroom members of European companies are women. Therefore, we demand a quota to achieve this objective by 2020.

Gender democracy means that women can participate in the political life of our society. The Greens believe in the need for gender quotas in the European Parliament. By choosing the Members of the European Parliament, we want to strengthen the opportunities for EU citizens to influence decisions. We want to work for more participatory democracy and the rule of law, and also to strengthen the democratic rights of the EU’s citizens, including their rights to legal action in the EU’s Court of Justice. We will continue to support the Court of Auditors with stronger tools to control the way in which EU resources are spent and to act against corruption both within the EU institutions and in the case of serious problems within the member states.

The EU needs a stronger anti-corruption policy and more effective instruments against organised crime to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, and also to strengthen the fight against fraud of parliaments, citizens as European decision makers.

Citizens as European decision makers.

We want to strengthen the role of parliaments, in particular the European Parliament. By choosing the Members of the European Parliament, we want to strengthen the opportunities for EU citizens to influence decisions. We want to work for more participatory democracy and the rule of law, and also to strengthen the democratic rights of the EU’s citizens, including their rights to legal action in the EU’s Court of Justice. We will continue to support the Court of Auditors with stronger tools to control the way in which EU resources are spent and to act against corruption both within the EU institutions and in the case of serious problems within the member states.

The growing influence handed to the European Parliament by the Lisbon Treaty must be exercised responsibly and not be undermined by lobby interests. More transparency and accountability is needed in the Council of Ministers of the EU and in the legislations of the member states. National parliaments should also have more avenues of cooperation with the European Parliament. At all levels of governance, from the local to the regional, the national to the European, we call for strengthened interactions and synergies in order to better articulate European policies and their implementation within regional and territorial realities.

Fighting corruption and fraud.

By choosing the Members of the European Parliament, we want to strengthen the role of parliaments, in particular the European Parliament. By choosing the Members of the European Parliament, we want to strengthen the opportunities for EU citizens to influence decisions. We want to work for more participatory democracy and the rule of law, and also to strengthen the democratic rights of the EU’s citizens, including their rights to legal action in the EU’s Court of Justice. We will continue to support the Court of Auditors with stronger tools to control the way in which EU resources are spent and to act against corruption both within the EU institutions and in the case of serious problems within the member states.
Democracy is never finished or complete. Climate change and globalisation are two challenges that have to be met by the Greens in the European Parliament. We believe that the EU budget must be increased and must principally be based on a system of own resources, for instance a carbon and energy tax, to reduce the dependency on national contributions. Intergovernmental negotiations too often overlook the common interest as was the case in the 2013 budget negotiations which failed to come up with effective policies for fighting the crisis. Greens have been fighting a tough fight for greater accountability and transparency in budget-making. Here we are also suggesting more participation: citizens could be given the right to sign up for pilot project initiatives to be approved by the Budget Committee of the European Parliament.

The Greens in the European Parliament are at the forefront of the fight for digital rights. We helped stop the Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement (ACTA) and are fighting for strong protection of personal data, for the right to privacy and for strict net neutrality. Now it is time to defend and protect both European citizens and the Internet from pervasive corporate and governmental surveillance and to safeguard fundamental rights in the digital age. Personal data belongs to individual citizens, not to companies or governments. Privacy must be respected. The data retention law, which obliges telecom providers to store data about whom citizens communicate with, is a serious mistake and must be abolished. Governments have to abide by their own laws. Whilst national security is important, personal freedoms and liberties must not be overridden. Governments must ensure that national security agencies work for all citizens to secure freedom and liberty for everybody.

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Greens do not compromise on human rights. Phallicism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men must prevail. There is a great lack of women in EU institutions and in many member states too many people are being discriminated against under all kinds of excuses. Greens will push for effective anti-discrimination policies to overcome such injustice and are long-standing advocates of the extension of the anti-discrimination directives to become a fully-fledged Equalities Directive.

For our democracy to be upheld and recognised, we need to keep the integrity of the rule of law both at the EU and national level. The EU lacks tools for effective monitoring and sanctions when there are violations of our values in the member states. This is why Greens have been pioneers in demanding the creation of a Copenhagen Commission in accordance with the EU treaties and the European Convention on Human Rights to make sure that the democratic demands that are put upon can and should be used to candidature countries when applying for EU accession are not followed by backsliding into authoritarianism and by concessions a member state has joined the EU.

The impressive list of guarantees and protections from the Charter of Fundamental Rights should be realised in practice in our everyday life. Sexual and reproductive rights are essential elements of human dignity. We Greens defend the right of self-determination over our own bodies.

Democracy is never finished or complete. Climate change and globalisation are two challenges that have to be met by improved common decision-making. European Greens are convinced that the current EU institutional setting is not up to the problems the EU faces. The development of the Eurozone and the banking union means we need adequate democratic reforms which strengthen the legitimacy, transparency and efficiency of European decision-making in these areas too. Greens call for a reshaping of the competences among the different levels of governance in the EU. This means, for example, that the EU should have some competences concerning tax policy and social policy where the European Parliament would be co-legislator.

Our demands for more democracy, more transparency and more accountability at the EU level require clear changes in the functioning of the EU. The European Parliament should have the right to initiate legislation. Europe cannot just wait for the EU Heads of state and government to take limited initiatives that only lead to more technocratic control. A most simple example: the European Parliament wants to have a say about its seat and to stop the travelling circus between Brussels and Strasbourg. Greens share that demand, as do most European citizens. The European Parliament needs more legislative co-decision powers while national veto rights should be diminished. Some decisions must, on the other hand, be taken as close to the citizen as possible.

The mandate and responsibilities of European institutions representing the regional and local authorities and socio-economic actors and civil society should be strengthened. Therefore we want a new democratic convention, with strong parliamentary and civil society participation with fully transparent procedures, or a constituent assembly, to determine the future of European integration. European citizens should indeed be able to decide on the future of Europe—and have a final say through an EU-wide referendum.
The European Green Party (EGP) was the first political family to evolve from a federation to a party at the European level, in 2004. Our members are 45 national Green parties from across Europe – both within the EU and beyond – supporting each other to strengthen Green politics across the continent.

The European Green Party’s member parties (full members, associate members and candidate members) within the European Union as of March 2014:

Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists

The Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR) brings together parties from across Europe that believe in personal liberty, parliamentary democracy, national sovereignty, strong families, low taxes, sound money, free trade and the rule of law. We comprise Centre-Right parties from EU and non-EU countries, all of whom have equal status under our rules. We work alongside the ECR Group in the European Parliament, the New Direction think-tank, the European Young Conservatives and allied groups on Europe's other international assemblies. We work with allied parties on other continents and are full members of the International Democrats Union.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists
http://www.aecr.eu/
The AECR, at its Council Meeting in Brussels today, has unanimously adopted the Reykjavík Declaration.

*The Reykjavík Declaration*

- The Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR) brings together parties committed to individual liberty, national sovereignty, parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, private property, low taxes, sound money, free trade, open competition, and the devolution of power.

- AECR believes in a Europe of independent nations, working together for mutual gain while each retaining its identity and integrity.

- AECR is committed to the equality of all European democracies, whatever their size, and regardless of which international associations they join.

- AECR favours the exercise of power at the lowest practicable level – by the individual where possible, by local or national authorities in preference to supranational bodies.

- AECR understands that open societies rest upon the dignity and autonomy of the individual, who should be as free as possible from state coercion. The liberty of the individual includes freedom of religion and worship, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of movement and association, freedom of contract and employment, and freedom from oppressive, arbitrary or punitive taxation.

- AECR recognises the equality of all citizens before the law, regardless of ethnicity, sex or social class. It rejects all forms of extremism, authoritarianism and racism.

- AECR cherishes the important role of civil associations, families and other bodies that fill the space between the individual and the government.

- AECR acknowledges the unique democratic legitimacy of the nation-state.

- AECR is committed to the spread of free commerce and open competition, in Europe and globally.

- AECR supports the principles of the Prague Declaration of March 2009 and the work of the European Conservatives and Reformists in the European Parliament and allied groups on the other European assemblies.

http://www.aecr.eu/aecr-adopts-reykjavik-declaration/
ECR LEADERS' SUMMIT
Brussels, 20 March 2014

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Leaders of the ECR, meeting in Brussels for their second Summit, considered the need for substantial economic and political reform of the European Union. They discussed the crisis in Ukraine, energy policy, and the implications of developments in the euro-area for the wider EU.

The Leaders of the ECR were updated by Martin Callanan, Chairman of the ECR Group, and by Jan Zahradil, President of the Alliance of the ECR member parties, on progress in widening and deepening the work of the ECR. They looked forward to further expansion of both the Group and the Alliance, particularly in the context of the forthcoming European Parliamentary elections in May.

I. REFORM IN EUROPE

- We believe it is in the national interests of both its Member States and their neighbours that the European Union is a success but it currently faces enormous challenges which must be urgently addressed if it is not to fail.

- Economically, the steady loss of global competitiveness must be reversed and the euro area crisis must be overcome in order to re-establish growth and prosperity.

- Politically, the out of date centralising vision of some, that has damaged the European Union’s standing and legitimacy in the eyes of too many of our citizens, must be rejected in favour of new direction which has the support of public opinion.

- These objectives can only be achieved by a sustained commitment to substantial economic and political reform.

II. ECONOMIC REFORM: EUROPE'S GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

- We support a growth strategy that ensures that the right policy framework is in place to allow businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive, creating employment, generating wealth, and raising living standards. We believe this policy framework must ensure that both services and manufacturing sectors are able to thrive in Europe and we oppose policies which will result in the export of jobs, particularly in manufacturing, to other parts of the world because of high costs or over-regulation.

- We therefore stress the crucial importance of cutting red tape, and call for greater use of impact assessments of new regulatory proposals. We believe that by establishing a more business-friendly regulatory environment including support for innovation, lower jobs taxes, and labour market flexibility, we can also encourage re-shoring - bringing jobs back to Europe.

- The development of vibrant SMEs is vital to the economic future of Europe and so particular attention should be paid to ensure their efforts to take advantage of globalization are not hampered by excessive tax or regulatory burdens.
We believe that the single market must be developed further to fulfil its full potential, particularly in services and the digital economy.

We believe that there is great potential in developing closer trade and economic links throughout the Mediterranean area and that progress in this direction will help underpin the progress of the Arab Spring and relieve the pressure for emigration. European economic interests throughout the Maghreb and indeed throughout Africa need to be developed in the face of global economic competition.

III. POLITICAL REFORM: INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

We are committed to significant institutional reform of the European Union to ensure it focuses on the areas where it can deliver added value. We believe that this should involve changes to the treaties to improve the terms of membership for all its Member States.

We oppose the abuse of existing treaty arrangements to advance further European integration. The ECR will therefore not nominate an individual to stand as a candidate to be the next President of the European Commission as part of the campaign for the election of the next European Parliament as no such electoral procedure is envisaged in European law.

IV. EUROPE’S DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

In order to boost Europe’s global competitiveness a new strategy aimed at tackling the enormous demographic challenges that we face needs to be developed.

Dealing with this demographic challenge should therefore become a new policy priority for all European countries. A crucial element of such new initiatives must be more focus on supporting demographic renewal through improved support for families and especially children.

V. ENERGY POLICY

Recent events in Ukraine have shown that energy security is a core strategic interest for Member States of the European Union. Our long term goal should be real energy security for the Member States of the European Union as a whole. This would mean that EU Member States would no longer be vulnerable to external pressure. And this bold ambition – to make full use of our indigenous energy resources, to have a single integrated energy market across the whole EU, to have the maximum diversity of supply – would mean cheaper prices for consumers and make our industries more globally competitive. It is the right European project at the right time.

VI. THE EU BUDGET

We reaffirm our belief that the EU budget must be based upon the concept of European added value and guided by the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, value for money, and subsidiarity.

We reaffirm our commitment to achieving equal payments for farmers across the EU.

The cost of holding meetings of the European Parliament in more than one location cannot be justified and so we support the principle that the Parliament should have the right to decide on a single seat.

VII. EURO AREA CRISIS

The on-going euro area crisis has had a significant adverse impact on the whole European Union. To mitigate the economic and financial crisis and in response to structural shortcomings in the architecture of the economic and monetary union, it is essential that all members of the European Union and particularly members of the euro area pursue economic reform, re-establish sound public finances, safeguard financial stability, and improve economic governance as the basis for long-term recovery and a return to prosperity.
Whilst a limited strengthening of some aspects of the architecture of EMU may be necessary to ensure the single currency is able to return to stability, we consider that the European Union and EMU cannot be democratically sustainable without a decentralisation of powers. Progress towards further integration of the euro area must not infringe on the prerogatives of national parliaments of euro area members, especially whenever any transfer of sovereignty is envisaged, and should fully respect the wish of those non-members of the euro area that have an opt-out from future membership to retain their respective national currencies.

Given that the terms and conditions of membership of the euro area have changed so significantly since its creation and continue to evolve, the commitment to join the euro in the future - given by most European Union members who are not yet members of the euro area - should be reviewed as part of any future Treaty change.

VIII. INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

- **Ukraine**
  We support the people of Ukraine and their desire to choose their own future. We welcome the efforts of the new Ukrainian Government to re-establish democracy and the rule of law.

  We utterly condemn Russia's illegal violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The referendum in Crimea was illegal and illegitimate and so will not be recognised internationally. We call on Russia to uphold international law, to respect its agreements with Ukraine, and to begin a dialogue with the Ukrainian Government in order to re-establish peace and good relations in the region. Whilst hoping that the situation can be de-escalated quickly and that normal relations with Russia can be quickly re-established, we agree that additional measures will need to be taken progressively to ensure Ukraine's sovereignty is respected by Russia.

- **Eastern Partnership**
  We welcome the initialling of Association Agreements including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Georgia and Moldova during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius and we underline the importance of signing and implementing these agreements as soon as possible. We reaffirm our support for democratic opposition and human rights defenders active in Belarus.

- **Persecution of Christians**
  We reiterate our support and commitment to freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion or belief. We are alarmed by the rising number of cases of intolerance, repression and violence directed against Christian communities in many parts of the world particularly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. We call on all Member States and the European Union to work closely with the relevant national authorities to ensure the rights of Christian minorities are respected.

- **Middle East Peace Process**
  We welcome the resumption of peace talks between Israel and the Palestine Authority as we believe that direct negotiations between the two sides are the only way to secure long-term stability and political reform in the Middle East. We reiterate our support for a two-State solution, to be agreed and respected by the Israelis and the Palestinians, and based on 1967 borders with agreed land for peace swaps.

- **Arab Spring**
  With conflict in Syria and the on-going humanitarian crisis, continuing political unrest in Egypt, and the fragility of new governments in countries such as Libya, it is clear the early hopes of the Arab Spring are far from being realised. We believe that the Arab Spring represented the start a long process rather than an instant solution and so we reaffirm our support for the efforts of those governments which are committed to democratic political, social and economic reforms. We call on all parties in the Arab world to show the leadership and vision needed to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy within the rule of law.

- **Iran**
  The threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is one of the greatest dangers to the peace and security of the world. We therefore support the efforts of six major world powers to reach an agreement with Iran on its nuclear ambitions and welcome the recent international agreement as an important first step which must be fully implemented. In order to secure a comprehensive and final settlement that fully addresses the concerns of the international community, we believe that sanctions must in the meantime be enforced robustly.
IX. GLOBAL CRIME AND TERRORISM

- Crime is increasingly a cross-border phenomenon, with a global reach and organisation. We reaffirm our support for the fight against international terrorism and organised crime through the use of intergovernmental and EU cooperation, and agreements with our international partners.

- We are concerned about the growth of cybercrime and the linkage between online and offline criminal activities, such as child pornography. We support efforts to combat cybercrime, including the establishment of the European Cybercrime Centre, and by Member States increasing the security of information networks.

- We deplore the scourge of human trafficking. The European Union encompasses source, transit and destination countries and the open borders across much of the continent present law enforcement authorities with specific challenges. We re-affirm our support for efforts by lawmakers and public authorities to prioritise the fight against this heinous crime.
The Party of the European Left

The Party of the European Left unites democratic parties of the alternative and progressive Left on the European continent that strive for the consistent transformation of today's social relationships into a peaceful and socially just society on the basis of the diversity of our situations, our histories and our common values. Founded on the 9th May 2004 in Rome, the Party of the European Left (EL) consists of 26 member and 7 observer parties from all over Europe. We work alongside the political foundation Transform! Europe, social movements and trade-unions.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

The Party of the European Left
http://european-left.org/
Escaping from austerity, rebuilding Europe

It is a certainty that Europe is going through a deep crisis. The very great power left in the hands of financiers, the consequences of austerity policies and the setbacks to democracy endanger the very idea of a European "union".

Anger is high among the European peoples, and it is legitimate. The European treaties as they exist, based on the principles of competitiveness, competition, deregulation and liberalization, the role of the European Central Bank and the euro, at the exclusive service of the financial markets and the power of big capital do not allow social progress in Europe.

The financial crisis was the pretext for going further into ultraliberalism, for imposing barbaric austerity plans, social and democratic regressions. In country after country, we see the “Troika” landing, these experts of the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission. With the complicity of our governments, they lower our wages and pensions, slash public services, privatize and plunder everything. The result is rocketing unemployment and precariousness; life is becoming harder.

Today, the proposed transatlantic market with the United States and Canada, built by and for multinational companies is a new threat against work, quality standards, culture and democracy on our continent.

We are more and more numerous to feel the need to rebuild Europe. Letting Europe sink into the path of social and democratic regression would be criminal. But letting Europe break up to return to the war of nations and peoples, to fall back into nationalism and xenophobia would not be the solution either. We propose another way: that of a refoundation of Europe on a new basis. Our goal is to open up hope, a new ambition of cooperation and solidarity at a European level in the service of our peoples and the peoples of the world.

The programmatic platform presented today by the Party of the European Left seeks to trace the outline of a Europe refounded on a democratic, solidarity-based, social, ecological and peaceful basis. It is the result of a joint elaboration. We propose the big axes of transformation and the concrete steps to immediately improve the lives of Europeans.

Resisting austerity and putting social development at the centre of European policies, regaining power over finance and building democracy, increasing the rights of everyone: it is around these areas that we propose to all workers in Europe, to all citizens on the left, to trade unionists and social movements in Europe that struggle against austerity and capitalism, for democracy and peace, to unite our forces.

This platform is a starting point. We want to enrich it with meetings with the forces that, like us, are looking for a positive way out of the crisis. These forces are numerous, as was demonstrated by the signatures by more than 100 organizations in an "Altersummit" in Athens in June 2013, of a "Manifesto of the peoples", including many proposals similar to those we propose today. In our countries, platforms, programmes, the demands of associations, unions, networks and political activists of the left and ecologists prove it as well.

The European elections in May 2014 will be a crucial time for the future of the peoples. It is this hope, that of a new Europe that we will be the bearer of, against both the defenders of liberal Europe and the extreme right that rejects the idea of solidarity between peoples.

Pierre Laurent – EL President
Short version with main axes

1. - Resist austerity, for a new model of social development
   a) The debt is not a national problem. We need to find a European solidarity solution. The EL will organize a conference on the issue of restructuring of public debt
   b) Stop austerity plans in order to prevent human and humanitarian catastrophe.
   c) Relaunch economic activity to meet social needs while respecting the environment and fight against precariousness and unemployment, especially among young people and women. No to privatization
   d) The budgets must be turned towards solidarity, aid to individuals and countries in difficulty. They should aim to reduce social, regional and gender inequalities.
   e) Reform the Common Agricultural Policy

2. - A new model for ecological development
   a) Localising and converting industrial production in Europe, developing short production and consumption circuits in order to minimize the use of resources.
   b) Fighting against climate change by developing true renewable energies and energy savings, development of public transport. Fight against carbon emission market
   c) Ensuring food sovereignty by developing economical and ecological sustainable agriculture
   d) Protecting the sea and make a non-explorative use of marine resources
   e) Reject the privatization of natural resources and make public the resources, production and distribution of energy

3. - Give power to the people, for a citizens’ revolution
   A socially and environmentally sustainable, democratic and solidarity-based Europe cannot be built on the existing European Union Treaties. We need to rebuild Europe to win power for the people, workers and citizens.
   a) Regain power over finance
   b) Respect popular sovereignty
   c) Facilitate citizens’ involvement in EU decision-making
   d) Workers’ rights, trade union freedoms
   e) Ensure the independence of European countries towards the USA and NATO

4. - For a social Europe, for a Europe of rights
   Our goal is to guarantee the fundamental human rights of all Europeans, men and women, by universal access to these rights, through public services and social security systems, managed by the public. The fundamental rights of citizens are not dependent on the markets; they should not be left in the hands of private companies and financial markets. Their goal is human emancipation and not profits. Also, we think they should be at the heart of public investments by EU funds, state budgets, local authorities, contributions systems.
   a) Right to decent work, increase the wages
   b) Right to health care and health protection
   c) Universal right to public education
   d) Ensure access to common goods
   e) Right to social services, and care for disabled people
   f) Rights and freedoms
   g) LGBT rights
   h) Women's rights
   i) Migrants’ rights
   j) Right to culture.
   k) Rights of disabled people
   l) Old people's rights, rights to pensions
5. - For fair trade with the world. Refuse the big transatlantic market

a) Refuse the big transatlantic market. This market could organise the deregulation of society and loss of progress of European civilization. We want to unite all sectors and citizens threatened by the Treaty, in agriculture, industry, audiovisual broadcasting, in the world of work in general, the environment, culture. We demand a public campaign of information and a referendum about the transatlantic market in every country where it is possible. We want to immediately stop the negotiations on the treaty.
b) We will put means of inquiry and struggle in place against the spy networks. This is in order to preserve the independence of European states against the USA and NATO.
c) The EL demands the suspension of the Israel/EU Association Agreement as long as Israel violates international human rights.
d) The EL demands Mediterranean cooperation and agreements for the benefit of ordinary people. The Union for the Mediterranean, whose declared aim is to promote peace, stability and prosperity, has contributed to destabilizing the region.
e) Renegotiate the free trade agreements with Latin America and the Caribbean on bases that serve mutual interests and benefit the people.

6) For a Europe of peace

We defend peace and political dialogue against violence and military coercion. The EL is the choice of peace between persons but also between peoples and societies. We defend internationalism, contrary to imperialism, which creates divisions between countries and peoples in an artificial way; we want to unite against the neoliberal and capitalist crisis which victimizes a great number of people, workers and society.
a) Defend the values of peace
b) On the military treaties and their consequences for the EU
c) On armament policy
d) Act on the on-going conflicts, in order to pursue peace in the world
EL Programmatic Platform

1 - Resist austerity, for a new model of social development

a) On the debt issue
The starting point of our proposal is our confrontation with the core of the debt crisis in Europe: the neoliberal policy that minimizes the contribution of capital in financial needs, imposes austerity programs, leads to the termination of democracy and working rights and to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in a series of EU member-states. The European Central Bank (ECB), as an institution, aggravates this problem rather than solving it. Our proposals, therefore, do not concern only the countries of the South; instead they are designed within the framework of a European policy meant to tackle the debt issue, including reliable and definitive settlement.

- A European conference on the Eurozone debt crisis, for the implementation of a sustainable solution, based on the London Conference in 1953, which settled the debt of postwar Germany.
- We fight for the abolition of a large part of the public debt, the freezing of its repayment and the introduction of a "growth clause" for the remaining part of it. At the same time, we fight for a radical change of the role and the function of the ECB, so that it becomes a lender of last resort and offer loans directly to over-indebted member-states.
- At the same time, austerity programs must be terminated, because they lead to more unemployment and to deeper recession and, consequently, to the increase of public debts, because of the constant need for new loans. What Europe needs is public investment programs, to fund stable job creation and sustainable development projects, taking advantage of increased funds by the European Investment Bank.

These immediate measures that the EL proposes may not resolve the debt issue once and for all. They are the first steps for a viable solution to the debt crisis, which must be followed by fundamental changes in the economic and financial sphere, based on a radically different economic model that will serve social needs instead of capitalist interests.

b) Stop austerity plans to prevent human and humanitarian catastrophe.

c) Relaunch economic activity to meet social needs while respecting the environment and fight against precariousness and unemployment, especially among young people and women.
- We reject the Competitiveness Pact
- We propose the creation of a European public bank of social and solidarity-based development. In contrast to the European Stability Fund, it would distribute funding for projects on the basis of social and environmental criteria. Funded from the ECB, a share of the EU budget and the taxation of financial transactions and revenues, it would free public investment from the financial markets and would in this respect disarm speculators.
- Aim at the public and democratic control of the strategic sectors of the economy in Europe.
Relaunch and change industrial production in Europe for social and environmental reasons. It is necessary to produce as close as possible to the place of consumption in Europe.

- Produce better and in cooperation rather than by making economic war. We propose a critical evaluation of the way we produce today and to redefine our production targets. Taking into account the social usefulness of production, its environmental impact, and the way the decisions are taken within the enterprises.

- We propose European industrial plans for strategic industries and a European recovery plan.

- Relocate industrial production in Europe through the institution of European protection and social and environmental norms, against the pressure of capital and low-cost production on globalized markets. With for example: Concerted national taxes on the re-importation into Europe of relocated production. A “mileage” tax in order to decrease the preventable transport of goods.

**d) Budgets** must be turned towards solidarity, aid to individuals and countries in difficulty. They should aim to reduce social, regional and gender inequalities.

- We reject budgetary cuts in aid to poor people.
- We are fighting for a fair redistribution of wealth, a fair tax system in the member states and in Europe.
- We want the rich and the revenues of capital to contribute more.
- We propose a European tax on large fortunes in order to finance a European economic recovery plan.
- Taxation of financial transactions
- To fight against fiscal dumping, we are in favor of harmonisation of corporate taxation in Europe.
- We are in favor of banning the provision of public subsidies to companies that lay off while making profits.
- We propose to condition and adjust the allocation of public aid to companies, based on the creation of decent jobs and on social and environmental criteria.

**e) Ensure food sovereignty, reform the Common Agricultural Policy**

Europe must guarantee the sovereignty and food security of its people and enable farmers to live with dignity from their work. Agricultural Europe must initiate a development model that respects people and territories. We must undertake an ecological transition in agriculture.

- Establish an international protection clause when the lands, water (fishing) of a country are threatened by speculation and diversion of food production.
- Develop tools to regulate agricultural markets, buffer stocks and measures against speculation. A first step could be the creation of an international convention on the non-speciation of food products (a campaign where the NGOs have already put the banks on the back foot)
- Relegitimize taxes on imports and exports which destabilize local markets, in order to finance the relocatisation of production.
- Stop supporting the production and imports of biofuels, which threaten food production and destroy forest resources
- Implement the community preference and the suspension of bilateral free-trade agreements negotiated by the European Union (Mercosur).
- The affirmation of food sovereignty by the constitution of European security stocks.
- The introduction of economic tools regulating margins and practices of the agrifood giants and the big retailers.
- Faced with the climate risk, we propose that Europe establishes a tool of protection of living activities such as land, sea and forest (Mutual Insurance Calamities’ Scheme)

**For a new model of ecological development**

Our ambition is to situate environmental issues and the growth model in an economy based on an ecological framework. We also want to be active against global warming. To mitigate climate change, we must save energy, switch mainly to renewable energy supply, provide for an effective carbon tax and binding international agreements. Through ecological restructuring of the economy, reducing the arms race and limiting capitalist profit-making, which emphasizes unilaterally the quantitative growth, we can protect the natural environment in a manner that respects both employment and social justice.

a) **Localising and converting industrial production** in Europe, developing short production and consumption circuits in order to minimize the use of resources.

b) **Fighting against climate change** by developing true renewable energies and energy savings, development of public transport. Fight against carbon emission market

c) **protecting the sea** and make a non-explorative use of marine resources

d) **reject the privatization of natural resources** and make public the resources, production and distribution of energy

**2. - Give power to the people - for a citizen's revolution**

A socially and environmentally sustainable, democratic and solidary Europe cannot be built on the existing European Union Treaties. We need the rebuild Europe to gain the power to the people, workers and citizens

a) **Regain power over finance:**
- Democratic control of the ECB and re-orientation of bank credit. The ECB should use its power of monetary creation to fund projects that create decent jobs (in industry, research, new modes of production) and public services at national and European level.
- The European Central Bank will be allowed to directly lend money to estates at low (or null) rate without any political or economic conditionality. If the European Central Bank lends money to states directly, then speculation against public debt will stop immediately.
- In case recapitalization of banks is necessary, (it must be democratically controlled) these banks must be placed under democratic control through social ownership. This can lead to public banks subject to supervision by the state.
- Block capital movements between the EU and tax havens outside of the Union.
- Eradicate tax havens within the EU itself.
- We do not accept the neo-liberal criteria of the Economic and Monetary Union and demand that employment, social development and democracy should be given the priority.
- Public control of banks, creation of a public banking pole, separation of commercial and investment banks
- Fight against tax evasion
- End of banking secrecy, which protects big capital, and tax avoidance
- Promote the development of mutual funds and non-profit cooperatives

b) Respect popular sovereignty
- We demand the abolition of the TSCG and the «6 pack» and all similar measures.
- We will emancipate ourselves from Lisbon Treaty which leads to austerity and takes sovereignty away from the people. The Lisbon Treaty contains all previous treaties and concentrates in itself all the dead ends of contemporary capitalism. It demands free and fair competition at the expense of social rights won by the democratic workers’ struggles of the last century.
It promotes free trade at the expense of the environment and social justice. It maintains the authoritarian drift of the European Union by concentrating power in the hands of unelected institutions. It is necessary to overcome the Treaty of Lisbon so as to deal with the social emergency, fight the ecological disaster, solve the democratic crisis and rebuild another Europe.
- Authority must reside with elected assemblies on the national and European levels.
- Budgetary power must be given to the national parliaments. They should also be able to control and participate in EU decision-making.
- Strengthen the powers of the European Parliament and national parliaments against the European Commission. We question the monopoly of legislative initiative granted today to Brussels.
- The European institutions are subject to opaque and antidemocratic lobbies. Beyond an obligatory register, we will forbid all the lobbies and give their power back to the elected representatives.
- For a better representation of the European Parliament we want to generalize the proportional election system, on national lists, in countries where this is not the case.
- Gender parity should be a principle enshrined in the Treaties

c) Facilitate citizens’ involvement in EU decision-making
- We want to create real power of citizens’ involvement. This could start with a simplification of the procedure of the European Citizens’ Initiative which is today littered with obstacles, especially treaties which forbid it to serve human progress, and by real consideration of proposals from NGOs. This implies a questioning of the place reserved today for lobbying.
- We propose the organization of European public debates leading to the consultation of the people on major issues affecting them, with a referendum in as many countries as possible (with a referendum wherever the fundamental laws allow that). We ask that this proposal be applied immediately on the proposed transatlantic market.

d) Workers’ rights, trade union freedoms
- We want to give new powers to workers enabling them to act on the direction and organization of their work, to organize themselves within companies and at European Works Councils level, including European posted workers, who are often used by employers as instruments of dumping. For social control of the means of production.
- Encouragement of women’s participation and election of women in trade union bodies.
- Workers and their representatives in the management bodies of companies must have veto rights on speculative projects, on restructuration or relocation. In case the project fails, the right to a buyout by a co-operative or other self-managing means is crucial.
- We want tools allowing workers to fight against precariousness in their company. Rights of users must be enlarged, as well as access to the right to strike by private or public workers, including for political purposes.
- We stand for the restoration of collective agreements.
- We want to restore the framework for negotiation with trade unions and fight against the anti-union repression.

e) Ensure the independence of European countries towards the USA and NATO, refusal of the Swift program, Prism, etc.

3 - For a Europe of rights
Our goal is to guarantee fundamental human rights of all Europeans, men and women, by universal access to these rights, through public services and social security systems, managed by the public and/or in cooperation with associations and non-profit organizations. The fundamental rights of citizens are not dependent on the markets; they should not be left in the hands of private companies and financial markets. Their goal is human emancipation and not profits. Also, we think they should be at the heart of public investments by EU funds, state budgets, local authorities, contributions systems, etc.

a) Right to work, salaries
- Enough of competition between workers, which forces down wages and undermines rights! We want wage increases all over Europe, equality of wages between men and women and the creation of a European minimum wage enforced by law or through collective-agreements, to be introduced progressively, adapted to the cost of living in the different countries.
- We want to increase work security and educational training as fundamental principles of the right to work and of collective agreements in the countries of Europe. A leveling upwards of labour legislation could prevent social dumping.
- We are in favor of a reduction of work time without decrease in wages, progressively and taking into account the realities of the different countries, heading towards the 35 h week. This is also a means of combating unemployment.

b) The right to healthcare and health protection
- Fight against the growing inequalities in health issues and against exclusion and the imposition of individual forms of payment of services and treatments by ensuring universal access to health care.
- Fairness, integrity and the public character of national health systems. Re-appropriation of the management and the objectives of health services. Public resources should be destined for public health.
- Ensuring sexual and reproductive rights, such as the right to free contraception, free - not penalized - abortion and free child-bearings, through the public health system.
- We want to develop a new culture of health, on a human scale, in favour of prevention and health promotion and against the interests of the big bio-pharma-medical industry. Only public intervention can guarantee medical research that is independent of markets and the interests of firms.
- We aim for a public health policy, for the development of all the actions in the social determinants of health: work and conditions of work, housing for all, universal education, clean environment, sufficient and proper food, sufficient pensions and social rights.
- Block privatization and reestablish public health services freed from speculation and the markets.

c) Universal right to public education
- A free, secular school, completely financed by the state, which welcomes all children and which gives the citizens of tomorrow the means of mastering their future and participating in the collective decisions concerning their company, their country and the world.
- The development of inclusive measures in public schools to fight inequalities throughout Europe.
- The development of national public services of education, higher education and research so as to allow anyone to accede to long studies, free of charge, and to succeed in them.
- Education facing the challenge of new knowledge in a spirit of cooperation and of service to the community.
- To liberate education, higher education and research from financial pressure and the short-term needs of companies so that educational systems contribute to the free development of knowledge in the service of emancipation and progress.
- Compulsory schooling with the same duration in the whole European Union, which is necessary to raise the level of knowledge, culture, diplomas and qualifications for all young people, for the whole population.
- An education which is not limited to compulsory schooling and the training period, but which provides the possibility of continuing education for personal growth and for autonomy of thinking.
- Working conditions for teachers and school staff which make possible a positive atmosphere and, consequently, the quality of teaching.
- To ensure secularism, no public funds should finance private schools, private early childhood facilities or cultural associations.
- The public university must have sufficient public budgets to enable any qualified and willing person access to higher level training. Serving the community and society and not the needs of companies and capitalist markets. It should ensure human and humanitarian training alongside technical training, and not see students as instruments of "human resources" at the service of the markets.
- The purpose of education must be human emancipation.
- Students' income must be guaranteed.
- A true co-education based on non-sexist or male-centered values, challenging gender stereotypes.
- Elimination of early school dropout. Special measures against school dropout among girls related to premature and/or forced marriages.

d) Ensure access to common goods
Water and energy must be considered as common goods of humanity. Indeed, they are crucial to life. Nobody must be deprived of them.
- Right to water and energy, by publicly-run systems or public services.
- Free of cost first brackets and progress billings to limit waste.
e) The right to social services, and care for disabled people.
- Provision of structural funds to rescue people at risk of social exclusion.
- Priority to integration or social reintegration, including in the world of work, whenever this is possible.
- Right to public transport.
- Right to communication, to culture.
- Right to insurance/unemployment benefits.
- Right to professional training.

f) Rights and Freedoms
- Every citizen must be able to exercise their civil and democratic rights regardless of their origin, ethnicity, social status, gender, ideology. We defend individual freedoms. We will not tolerate any form of racism.
- Secularism: social secularism as a principle and opposition to any religious discrimination. No religion should affect gender equality.
- Protection of computer and online freedoms: rejection of ACTA
- Protect citizens against the illegal spying of the USA

g) LGBT
LGBT people are being targeted under the premise of conservative discourses about health, “normal” family, heteronormative and conservative models. In many countries in Europe, LGBT people are being physically persecuted, suffering from bullying in the workplace or school, denied medical treatments, with the complacency of the state authorities. We stand for equality of rights, prevention / sanctions against any kind of discrimination.

h) Women's rights
- Demand all social, economic and labour rights, as well as sexual and reproductive rights.
- Equal pay for women and men
- Elimination of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, sexual exploitation and forced prostitution. Endorsement of supporting social structures.
- Provide directives and policy measures aiming at real actual sharing of domestic and family responsibilities.
- Provide consultative status with the European institutions for women’s and feminist organizations.
- Right to abortion and free contraception - not penalized and free, included in public health care.
- A secular Europe, where equality between women and men is not related to religion.
- Work towards gender parity in the institutions of the European Union

i) Migrants’ Rights
- Abolition of the inhuman and ineffective Frontex program. Europe shall not be a fortress.
- Defense of the rights of migrant women, who are in a situation of extreme vulnerability.
- Struggle for legislation and educational measures to create awareness against the business of trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls.
j) Right to culture
- Culture shall not be a product of enterprises, pure entertainment without discernment.
- Access to culture has to be a universal right. For this, public investment and thus sufficient budgets are needed.
- Defence of European cultural diversity.
- Equal access for men and women to available time for cultural activities and leisure, which supposes equal gender distribution of housework and care work.
- Promotion of popular education, a real factor of emancipation of workers.
- Promotion of cultural products that challenge gender stereotypes. Defense of women against the commercialization of the female body.

k) Rights of disabled people
- Achieving accessibility of buildings
- Educational accompaniment.
- Professional integration.
- Replacement income equal to the minimum wage for people recognized unable to work
- Disabled people are disabled only because of a particular organization of society. Society must adapt and take into account the specificity of this part of the population.

l) Old people rights
The elderly suffer an infamous attack on their dignity and survival. Now that scientific advances are extending the possibility of life, hover over this layer of a triple vulnerable population pressure: lengthening of working hours, the reduction of pension levels, and the decrease of public health care aid and to the growing and inevitable personal dependence. This is where the capitalist logic of elimination leads the “non-productive” populations.
- Implementation of the European Declaration of rights concerning old people
- Guarantee the right to pension: No increase in the retirement age. We demand adequate pension provision and other social protection for all. Low pensions must be increased.
We are in favor of adequate social public pension systems and the phasing out of private pension funds.

4) For fair trade with the world. Refuse the big transatlantic market

a) Refuse the big transatlantic market. The big transatlantic market threatens social rights, small enterprises, product quality and European identity itself. Deregulation of society and loss of progress of European civilization. More generally, the EU agreements with other countries of the world threaten the rights of all. We want to unite all sectors and citizens threatened by the Treaty, in agriculture, industry, audiovisual broadcasting, in the world of work in general, the environment, culture.
- We demand a public campaign of information and a referendum about the transatlantic market in every country where it is possible.
- We will immediately stop the negotiations on the agreement. Especially since the USA have once again demonstrated their vision of “free and unfettered competition” and “partnership” while spying on states and European leaders.
b) We will put in place means of inquiry and struggle against the spy networks. So, in order to preserve the independence of European states against the USA and NATO, we will refuse and put an end to the Swift, Prism etc. programmes. Envisage means to apply sanctions against countries which use these practices in Europe.

c) The EL demands the suspension of the Israel/EU Association Agreement as long as Israel violates international human rights.

d) Renegotiate the free trade agreements with Latin America and the Caribbean on bases that serve mutual interests and benefit the people.

e) In the Mediterranean: reconsideration of Euromed.

5) For a Europe of peace
We defend peace and political dialogue against violence and military coercion. The EL is the choice of peace between persons but also between peoples and societies. We defend internationalism, contrary to imperialism, which creates divisions between countries and peoples in an artificial way; we want to unite against the neoliberal and capitalist crisis which victimizes a great number of persons, workers and the society.

a) The values of peace
- Defend the culture of equality, justice and solidarity. Introduce education for peace as a specific subject. The EL will organize events in different European countries in 2014 on the 100th anniversary of the First World War.
- Reform of the UN, transforming it into a democratic organ which guarantees world peace.
- The introduction of an International Tribunal for climate justice
- An ecological crime is a serious infringement to that common good which is the environment. The severity of such a crime is appreciated in the light of the endangering of the ecosystem and its consequences on human rights, and the proven responsibility of criminals. These crimes are crimes against humanity. They shall be punished.
- Support of participation in international organs of defense of peace, such as the WPC (World Peace council) and women's organizations and grass roots women's movements. Take preventive measures (including lessons and instructions to soldiers and officers) on violence against women, rape and trafficking in military conflicts. Judicial punishment for those who commit such crimes, according to international law.

b) On the military treaties and their consequences on the EU
- Review military, commercial and strategic treaties, in particular with the USA.
- Immediate exit of the EU and member states from NATO. Dismantling of NATO bases in Europe. Dissolution of NATO. Europe must not be militarized and connect with NATO through crisis management and rapid reaction forces.
- The EU will not participate in "preventive" wars, nor in "humanitarian" interventions without a UN resolution.
- The status of non-aligned countries must be respected.
c) On armament policy
- Act in favour of a reduction of armament expenses in all EU countries and in the whole world.
- Elaboration of a code of conduct connected to the selling of arms.
- Multilateral destruction of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, banning of explosive mines and chemical weapons.
- Promoting nuclear-free zones.

d) Act on the on-going conflicts, in order to pursue peace in the world
- The EU has to commit to the unification of Cyprus, demanding that Turkey respect international rights.
- The EU has to act for the recognition of the Kurdish people in Turkey and for the end of repression. For us this is a condition for an eventual entry of Turkey into the EU.
- Palestine: The EU has to recognize Palestine and work for the sovereign rights of the Palestinian people, revising its agreements with Israel. We are in favor of a free Palestinian state. We condemn the Israeli colonization of Palestinian territory and advocate a return to the borders of 1967. We demand the destruction of drones.
- The right to self-determination of the Sahraouian people has to be an objective for the EU. We want to nullify the favourable treaties between Morocco and the EU. The EU has to act for decolonization all around the world where people still suffer from this situation.
- The EL collaborates with the Platform for Peace in Colombia and will undertake an effort to explain that this peace is fundamental for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Abandon the Common Position on Cuba. Against the blockade.
- Promote relations between the EU and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas.

Proposals of Latin America Working Group
The EU policy towards the countries of Latin America is the extension of those implemented against the peoples of Europe, based on free and unfettered competition in the name of competitiveness. The EU proposes to countries in Latin America "free trade agreements" or "association agreements" in search of new markets, sources of energy and cheap labour. In the end, it is always a relation of domination that is offered to the peoples of this region.
The ELP proposes a new relationship, based on cooperation and complementarity between the peoples of the EU and America, a relationship that respects the choice of development strategies of countries governed by progressive forces. The ELP rejects bilateral investment treaties that punish countries which dispute the stranglehold of the transnationals over the wealth and economies of Latin America. The EU has much to offer to the peoples of Latin America with a real political cooperation which develops public services and provides transfers of technology. Political cooperation means working together for dialogue and action in favour of a new international order with a reformed and democratic UN, demilitarization of international relations and the creation of mechanisms for dialogue and conflict prevention. Human development, climate change, the promotion of peace and disarmament are also examples of terrains for political cooperation.
Trade relations must take into account the asymmetries between the two regions and should be designed as part of development agreements.
The EU should make clear its support for those fighting today in Colombia for a just and democratic peace. The "common position" adopted by the EU in 1996, which conditioned all cooperation with Cuba should be cancelled. Cuba is the only country in the world subjected by the EU to such treatment, which in fact reinforces the blockade, an anachronistic measure to which the island has been subjected for half a century.
Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy

MELD is committed to the principles of Democracy, Freedom and cooperation among sovereign States in an effort to impede the complete bureaucratisation of Europe. Our members are opposed to further European integration through treaties and policies that exacerbate the present democratic deficit and the centralist political structure of the EU.

We believe in:
• Freedom and cooperation among people of different States
• More democracy and respect of the People’s will
• Respecting Europe’s history, traditions and cultural values
• Respecting national differences and freedom of votes.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy
http://www.meldeuropa.com/
MELD is a European political alliance committed to the principles of Democracy, Freedom and cooperation among sovereign States in an effort to impede the complete bureaucratization of Europe.

Our members are opposed to further European integration through treaties and policies that exacerbate the present democratic deficit and the centralist political structure of the EU.

We believe that new treaties or any modification of existing treaties should be submitted to the peoples’ vote through free and fair national referenda.

MELD has 12 delegations with MEPs from the following national parties:
Austria: Ewald Stadler, Die Reformkonservativen – REKOS
The Netherlands: Daniël van der Stoep, Artikel 50
Bulgaria: Slavi Binev, Member of the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria
Belgium: Frank Vanhecke, independent
Denmark: Danish People’s Party (Dansk Folkeparti)
Finland: True Finns (Perussuomalaiset)
France: Movement for France (Mouvement pour la France)
Greece: Popular Orthodox Rally (Αμιγώς Ορθόδοξος Συναγερμός)
Italy: Lega Nord & Io amo l’Italia
Lithuania: Order and Justice (Tvarka ir teisingumas)
Poland: Solidarna Polska
Slovakia: Slovak National Party (Slovenská národná strana)
MELD subscribes to the following programme:

. Freedom and cooperation among people of different States: Committed to the principles of democracy, freedom and co-operation among Nation States, the party favours an open, transparent, democratic and accountable co-operation among sovereign European States and rejects the bureaucratisation of Europe and the creation of a single centralised European superstate.

. More democracy and respect of People’s will: Convinced that the legitimate level for democracy lies with the Nation States, their regions and parliaments, since there is no such thing as a single European people, the party opposes further European integration (treaties and policies) that would exacerbate the present democratic deficit and the centralist political structure of the EU. The party is of the opinion that any new treaties or any modification of existing treaties should be submitted to the peoples’ vote through free and fair national referenda in the Member States. The party does believe that the legitimacy of any power comes from the will of its Peoples and their right to be free and democratically ruled.

. Respect for Europe’s history, traditions and cultural values: The Peoples and Nations of Europe have the right to protect their borders and strengthen their own historical, traditional, religious and cultural values. The party rejects xenophobia, anti-Semitism and any other form of discrimination.

. Respect for national differences and interests: Freedom of votes: Agreeing to embody these principles, the party respects the freedom of its national delegations and Members to maintain their own views on different policy issues.

MELD is committed to:

- Campaign for a transparent and democratically controlled EU that is less centralised and more flexible, thus bringing it closer to the citizens
- Protect freedom of political expression and association
- Defend and strengthen fundamental democratic principles and accountable representation
European Democratic Party

The European Democratic Party gathers parties and representatives who wish for a more democratic, integrated European Union, closer to its citizens. Europe is facing an addition of crisis: economic, social, political... The peoples, racked with doubt and distrust, are turning away from the very idea of Europe. For those who share the European ideal, this is a tremendous challenge that needs a decisive strategy. This is why the European Democratic Party intends to rebuild the European project and to offer to the peoples new, audacious but credible solutions, with new perspective. This is the challenge we chose to overcome together.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

European Democratic Party
http://pde-edp.eu/
FROM CRISIS IN EUROPE TO RENEWED EUROPEAN HOPE
TIME FOR REBUILDING

Manifesto of the European Democratic Party

The idea of Europe, of which we are the defenders and champions, is weakened in the eyes of citizens and attacked by powerful political forces.

And yet as countries, nations, regions and citizens, the union of Europe is the only path forward to authentic freedom and genuine sovereignty. Without a structured, voluntary and democratized Europe, we would face changes in the world over which we would have no control.

So we must defend the European Union. But, to defend it, we need to change it.

We are conscious of the reasons for the current public dissatisfaction we are in a position to address them and overcome them. Since 2008, the economic and financial crisis which has affected countries of the European Union to varying degrees has given European citizens the impression that the European Union does not have any sustainable response. The succession of ineffective European Councils has destroyed the already shaky view of the people of a Europe that takes appropriate decisions.

Conversely, Europe must speak with one voice in order to face the challenges ahead. Solidarity is not only necessary in today's society, it is also essential for the European Union of tomorrow to bring prosperity to future generations.

Together, we can act; divided, we are totally powerless. And if we are powerless, we are weak and crushed.

We see a refounded European Union as a decisive asset for the peoples of Europe. Refounded, the EU will refocus on the essentials. Refounded, it will allow citizens to be actively engaged within its institutions.

The European choice is a choice of sovereignty

Europe was first created in order to put an end to two centuries of atrocious wars between close and neighbouring countries. It is on behalf of the millions who died in the twentieth century that the founders of Europe acted. And war has disappeared from our continent.

The founders set themselves the goal of prosperity and economic development of the continent by opening up borders. Three decades of growth have been the result of their action.

Thanks to Europe, the free movement of people and goods on the same continent and between countries with similar values was clearly a powerful development factor.

The fall of the Soviet system was largely caused by the contrast of the levels of development of the communist model and the free European model.

At the turn of the century, however, the turmoil of globalization gradually affected all Europe.
All our countries, small or medium-sized on the continental power scale, were faced with power imbalances: the economical power of multinational industrial networks, out of control growth of often invisible and hardly localisable financial powers, the emergence of political powers with populations in the hundreds of millions or billions of people, huge population mobility, the clash of cultural or politico-religious models; all this raised the question of sovereignty in the hearts of the people.

**The question of sovereignty is the ultimate political issue:** it is the right of people to be in charge of their own destiny, to improve their future through their own free choice, to change what appears to be a fatality of History.

We maintain that it is misleading the peoples of Europe to make them believe that they can exercise this sovereignty in this new world order in individual countries on their own.

In order to have some influence in the changing world it is necessary to pool resources and share decisions so as to create a common sovereignty.

None of the crucial issues of the future could otherwise be effectively addressed. No fair and appropriate regulation of financial markets, no insurance against speculative storms, no credible management of energy, environmental or climate change challenges, no resistance to product, monetary, social, or environmental dumping, no management of problematic demographic trends, migration or integration: nothing in our future can be addressed or resolved by individual countries, let alone historical regions, not even by middle powers, in a world where it seems inevitable that, in twenty years’ time, there is not one European state that will not belong to the group of the world's eight largest economies.

**The European crisis is a crisis of democracy**

Yet, and this is a worrying European paradox, for a large number of citizens and people, instead of seeing the European Union as their main asset in order to exercise their sovereignty, on the contrary they believe it to be a constraint which deprives them of their rights.

In this era of mass information, there cannot be sovereignty without democracy.

A power which is not open to citizens, which makes decisions they do not relate to and which they feel they cannot influence, is inevitably challenged and rejected.

The European institutions are so complex and sophisticated that they are incomprehensible to citizens, sometimes even for those who are personally involved. The powerful challenges to which they are subjected lead to a challenge of the very idea of Europe itself.

Technocracy is thus a powerful source of ammunition for populism.

The European refoundation must therefore be carried out in such a way that it addresses two democratic questions:

1. What are the actual aims of the European Union?
2. What role do citizens play in the European Union?
What are the actual aims of the European Union?

The European Union acts on behalf of States and peoples who have voluntarily and permanently joined it in order to give them access to resources, authority and influence, which would be out of their reach if they remained isolated.

The principle governing the Union is the principle of subsidiarity, which assumes that everyone can fully exercise their responsibilities, locally, regionally and nationally, in the areas of its competence. This can lead to the surrender of a number of powers to states or regions.

We believe that Europe needs to focus on the fundamentals and to stop to regulate plenty of minor daily matters, embarrassing for citizens and making unstable the field businesses are developing.

1. For those countries and citizens who have made the choice, the political integration of the euro area is essential. The existence of a single currency for these nations and for these peoples calls for effective fiscal convergence. Yet there can be no fiscal convergence without shared political authority. The issue of debt, albeit national but whose consequences resound throughout the whole zone, should lead to shared policy decisions. A true area of solidarity, the European Union cannot allow its peoples to tear each other apart and turn their backs on the weakest. Similarly, if we want to avoid imbalances due to the concentration of activities in the more competitive regions and desertification elsewhere, the existence of a single monetary zone calls for planning policies that promote and encourage the harmonious distribution of these activities across the whole territory.

2. It is essential, for peoples and citizens and for a large part of Europe, to strengthen and restore our production capacity. This implies support for research, technological innovation and new production processes, in many areas in response to changing consumer expectations. However, a significant proportion of these sectors cannot be considered without a European recovery strategy. From digital technology to biotechnology, from nanoscience to future networks, we face competition from powerful organizations with which we cannot compete unless we join forces. For the economy, the priority for the euro zone should be to focus on the creation of value by SMEs, entrepreneurs and artisans. Similar to the American "Small Business Act", specific rules should be re-established for small businesses to promote their access to credit and the public sector market. Sensible competition, with a view to promoting growth and thus for everyone's benefit, should encourage and not hinder the creation of large European groups capable of establishing themselves in the global economy. This must be preferred to the dogmatic competition rule, that prevents industrial groups from integrating and allying in the EU. Mobilization of savings should contribute to a European fund for industry in order to stimulate economic activity.

3. It is essential to defend and promote the European social model, too often destabilized by the imbalance between standards which, justifiably, we impose on our own producers on European soil, and in the name of competition, the acceptance on our soil and in our markets products from regions of the world that do not meet any of these standards. This causes an understandable sense of rebellion and rejection among our citizens. The principle of reciprocity should be the cornerstone of free trade agreements and govern all areas in a true and well-balanced partnership. It is essential to reduce regional inequalities. We need to pursue structural funds policies to support the growth of disadvantaged areas, while ensuring efficient and effective use of this aid.

4. A strategy for self-sufficiency and energy security is essential, including the integration of networks and full cooperation for supplies. We propose a European energy community based on the following
points: diversification of a common European energy mix and of supply sources, a mutual assistance mechanism in case of energy shortage. A return to fossil fuels is unthinkable, we must therefore focus our research and development policies on effective renewable energy production.

5. **The defence of the planet and the fight against climate imbalances** is essential. The green strategy has been very ambitious in statements but little effective in its results. The new 2030 goals for emission reductions and use of renewable energy must be one of Europe’s pillars of innovation policy, employment and sustainable growth, in order to gain global leadership in order to tackle post-Kyoto paralysis and to promote our economical perspectives.

6. **Foreign policy and European security** in this new world order is essential. It is an absolute necessity resulting from new issues such as “cyber-threats” and terrorism. Pooling of operational facilities of Member States armed forces is needed to put an end to waste and inefficiency. Europe has been too absent from recent global turmoil, it must speak with one voice on the world stage if it wishes to be heard. Thus, external action must be the intrinsic factor in promoting European values such as respect for human rights, democracy and equity in economic development. The European Union should collectively strengthen its **partnership policy with the Eastern Neighbourhood countries**. In this respect the association agreements signed with Georgia and Moldova are a positive but insufficient step. We would like a Europe of ‘three circles’: in addition to the countries of the euro zone and the European Union sensu stricto, a "circle of shared interests" with countries who wish to move closer to European standards in terms of human rights, democracy, social-market economy and the standard of living.

7. **A fair and effective fight against the tragedies resulting from illegal immigration** is essential. Europe must adopt fiscal, operational and legal means to act within the framework of a common policy on asylum and immigration, the principle of which was agreed in 1999. The first priority is to put in place a European coastguard body responsible for monitoring the maritime borders of the EU and to rescue and receive, in the presence of NGOs, ships in distress in the Mediterranean. Europe cannot think of itself as a fortress closed to the world. But it cannot be open to the four winds, vulnerable to human trafficking. Europe needs a **co-development policy with a win-win partnership with our partners**, including Africa: it must accept regulated immigration, in cooperation with and not to the detriment of the country of emigration.

8. It is essential to **strengthen and reform the Common Agriculture Policy**. To maintain the priority given to food self-sufficiency while promoting the emergence of environment-friendly agriculture, concerned with the quality, traceability and food safety of products and the carbon footprint. The CAP must support not only production, but also the territories threatened by desertion and hydrogeological deterioration, the producers themselves, the sustainable family farms that our societies need to maintain the balance. It should ensure that fair prices are paid for agricultural production, so that farmers can make a living without needing outside intervention from public authorities. In any case, a more balanced distribution of this aid should be the rule. Maintaining a strong CAP should not be provided at the expense of the development of the rest of the planet.

9. It is essential to **fight against all forms of discrimination**. Major differences between men and women, for example in salary or access to positions of responsibility, must become a thing of the past. Thus, the European Union must support toward equal remuneration and responsibility in businesses. EU must combat discriminations as well as violence related to sexual orientation and sexual violence of every kind.
10. It is essential to **promote cultural and linguistic diversity**, which forms the wealth of our continent, our history, our cities and our territories. It makes us what we are. EU’s actions undertaken in the 1990’s must be sustained and amplified. This is contributing to the flowering of the Member states cultures, respecting their national and regional diversity and, at the same time, bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. Faced to its extra-European competitors economical power, the creative sector must be encouraged; European states must keep their public subvention system to the cinema and the audiovisual sector.

**Decisive democratic progress.**

The objective is to effectively involve citizens in the European institutional set-up and have them participate in discussions prior to decisions being taken.

The European Parliament is the democratic platform for elected members and the only institution directly nominated by the citizens of the European Union for the citizens of the European Union, and its role should be strengthened. This requires an increase in its legislative powers, starting with the right of initiative of which it is now deprived.

The Commission has the function of coordination and implementation. Its legislative initiative function should be exercised at the request of and within the framework set by the Parliament and by the Council.

The indication of the candidates for the Presidency of the Commission at the European elections could attract the interest of voters. To add clarity, we propose that the positions of President of the Council and President of the Commission be combined. In this way we would, for certain, finally have a leader of Europe who is democratic, representative and effective.

The European Council consists of legitimate and recognized leaders of each European country. It is necessary to make its work more transparent by making the decisive part of its meetings public and accessible to the citizens, in a democratic scenario which would at last be comprehensible and clear. To be able to hear directly the Heads of State and Government of the European Union compare their views and make their commitments would better enable the understanding and support of the citizens.

**We want a Europe that is fair, open and dynamic. Admired by the world for its culture and values. Respected for its political action.**

We want to wake up the European people because the dream of a united Europe seems to be slipping quietly away and old nightmares are resurfacing.

**We want the spirit that blew on the Fathers of the democratic Europe of the twentieth century to be refounded by and for the young generations of the twenty-first century.**
European Free Alliance

The European Free Alliance (EFA) works to make the idea of a “Europe of the Peoples” a reality. It brings together 40 progressive nationalist, regionalist and autonomist parties from across the EU who represent stateless nations, regions, and traditional national minorities. EFA focuses its activity on the promotion of the right to self-determination, human, civil and political rights, democracy, internal enlargement, multi-level governance, cultural and linguistic diversity; as well as on nationalism, regionalism, autonomy and independence. The right to self-determination is a cornerstone of EFA’s political programme and ideology.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

European Free Alliance
http://e-f-a.org/
It’s time for self-determination for all the peoples of Europe

Welcome to the European Free Alliance European election Manifesto for 2014.

We live in historic times. Across Europe ancient nations, regions, and peoples, currently under the jurisdiction of various states, are increasingly calling for either enhanced autonomy or outright independence, and all the benefits that go with bringing decision-making power back home.

Scotland and Catalonia, because of the success of their pro-independence parties and most importantly the overwhelming support of their people, now have the opportunity to decide on their future and whether they want to become free, independent states.

In May many of our EFA parties are looking forward to success in the European Parliament elections.

The European Free Alliance is best described as a broad alliance as it gathers a diverse range of parties from across Europe each with their own unique approach on how to better the prospects for their people.

Our manifesto very much reflects this diversity, and while respecting our differences, works to build on the overarching values and aspirations that we share in common. Therefore, the manifesto focuses on these shared values of our member parties with seven general policy proposals:

1. The right to self-determination, the internal enlargement, and EU recognition of this process;
2. Improving democracy and transparency in the EU;
3. Overcoming the euro crisis;
4. The development of sustainable energy sources;
5. Developing sustainable agriculture and reforming the Common Agriculture Policy;
6. Developing sustainable fisheries and aquaculture;
7. Facing the challenges to our languages and cultures and working towards linguistic equality.

It is an honour to be your EFA president at such a momentous time for all of our parties. I warmly commend this EFA Manifesto to you as we launch our campaigns for the 2014 European elections, and wish you all good luck and great success in the elections. The time has come for self-determination for a true Europe of the peoples, the time has come to make this aspiration a reality.

Veel geluk,
Eric Defoort - President of EFA
1 Internal enlargement

Open doors to new states of old nations: the EU must be committed to the recognition of new member states arising from self-determination and democratic processes within current member states (which we refer to as the internal enlargement).

In the same way, the EU must ensure the continuity of European citizenship to citizens of these new states. Democracy is a fundamental principle of the EU. It would be inconceivable that the EU would block access to new states that have reached their statehood through flawless democratic processes.

The nations at sub-state level and/or regions with legislative powers must have a role of their own in European decision-making through a strengthened presence in an "Assembly of regions and peoples" replacing the toothless Committee of the Regions.

In this context priority should be given to the validation of informal education, and youth participation.

The Lisbon Treaty was concluded after a protracted process. Hopes that it would lead to more democracy and accountability were not fully realized. Following enlargement and the worst financial crisis that the euro has faced, the EU needs to set new and ambitious targets in order to be a key player in the international arena, a leader in the drive towards a sustainable economy, a model of democracy, social justice and cohesion.

The political capacity of the European Parliament must be further increased, giving it true powers of legislative initiative and of amending the treaties alongside the competent parliaments within the member states.

Sub-state constituencies for the European elections should be created in the member states that have not yet done so.

The legislative capacity of the Council has to become transparent. All legislative deliberations and relevant documents must be freely available to Europeans in the same manner as the documents of the European Parliament. The position of each member state should be made public.

The President of the European Commission will be directly elected. In member states with a devolved structure, all governments of their constituent nations will be required to be part of the process of proposing a candidate commissioner.

The International vacuum of the EU as a player which acts on the basis of the values of democracy, peace, solidarity and respect for diversity has to be clarified and strengthened.

2 Improving the democratic quality of the European institutions

The current crisis has highlighted how in recent decades several governments spent in an irresponsible way without stimulating economic growth and guaranteeing social cohesion. In the first instance it is up to the member states to take the necessary steps, but we also need to formulate a European framework in order to avoid repetition of similar crisis-prone policies in the future.

The member states have to make public the growth and the wider socio-economic context healthily by [1] budget consolidation and reduction of public deficits, [2] structural reforms and [3] investing in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. More fiscal discipline is also necessary because of new challenges concerning demography, the labour market, social security and pensions. Fiscal and budgetary discipline is an essential condition for sustainable growth and the broader socio-economic context healthy by: (1) budget consolidation and reduction of public deficits, (2) structural reforms and (3) investing in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Austerity measures have to be complemented by investments in future oriented policies and by other stimulating measures, in the countries hardest hit by the current crisis. On that healthy basis, Europe will have to re-launch an economic recovery policy based on European high added value investments. Austerity measures have to be complemented by investments in future oriented policies and by other stimulating measures, in the countries hardest hit by the current crisis. On that healthy basis, Europe will have to re-launch an economic recovery policy based on European high added value investments.

EFA supports fiscal harmonization throughout the different Member States and regions, respecting the fiscal diversity and the subsidiarity principle (the rate should be decided by the nation concerned within an EU-wide framework as is the case for the VAT). In order to improve the efficiency and social justice of the current tax system, EFA wants to modify the tax burden imposed on our citizens.

The EU budget has to be managed better (smart fiscal consolidation, better spending and focus on areas where the EU can mean an added value) and a stricter control on all EU agencies, avoiding overlaps and duplications, should be installed.

EFA recognizes the vital importance played by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). EU policies should foster the competitiveness of SMEs.

The current international financial and economic crisis has an important negative effect on the labour market and employment situation in the EU. In this context our main focus should remain on the EU targets to realize an overall employment rate of 75% in 2020. As a priority the low employment rates for groups at risk such as young people, the elderly and the population with a migrant background should be tackled.

With youth unemployment at an all-time high in the EU, it is essential that the policies of all levels of government empower our future generations, inter alia through quality education, skills development and the validation of informal education, and develop an inter-generational dialogue. In this context priority should be given to economic conditionality in the cohesion policy. A (regional) government should not be punished for the mistakes of another government.

EFA rejects the introduction of macro-economic conditionality in the cohesion policy. A (regional) government should not be punished for the mistakes of another government.

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3 Overcoming the Euro-crisis

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realize the EU target to reduce the school drop-out rates below 10% in 2020. EFA strongly supports the Youth Guarantee Scheme with the aim to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Imported goods should be classified according to ecological and social standards in the country of origin and should be labeled accordingly. This measure would contribute to spread European standards in the world.

EFA is committed to an energy strategy which maximizes energy efficiency, prioritises the development of renewable energy, makes the European gas and electricity markets more transparent and provides for active supervision in order to protect consumers sufficiently.

The debate on energy should focus on energy demand, as well as energy supply and production. Energy consumption should be reduced through a more rational and efficient use of energy. Energy efficiency should be the priority since the cheapest and greenest kWh is the kWh that is not consumed and therefore does not need to be produced. Improving energy efficiency means less energy production installations are needed to cover the energy demand. Accordingly, energy conservation through energy efficiency measures leads to financial savings and less carbon emissions. Therefore, EFA believes that there should be more focus on energy efficiency measures, both for the benefit of the environment and the consumer. EFA supports an energy savings target.

EFA believes in ensuring a diversity of energy sources in order to avoid becoming dependent on other regions or territories. Distributed generation, where energy is produced by many small sources, is a good model for some regions and nations and should be promoted where appropriate. The European electricity network should be renovated and turned into a super-smart grid that can deal with big fluctuations in green energy production (offshore wind energy in the North Sea, the Mediterranean solar energy ring, hydropower in Scandinavia) as well as with decentralized energy production, e.g. solar panels on private homes.

We believe that European funding should be specifically allocated for investment in renewable energy development and energy efficiency measures, whilst preserving the autonomy of the nations and regions to decide on their energy mix and recognizing that in order to ensure payable energy, a realistic energy mix focuses on renewable energy sources without excluding certain energy sources as long as alternatives are not yet available. As well as the benefits to the environment, such investment will create sustainable jobs and encourage economic growth. A long
term plan is needed, with investment in skills and infrastructure projects, with- out leading to unrealistic costs, which would make Europe a world leader in the sector.

We believe that the EU should commit itself to an ambitious annual carbon emis- sions reduction target and overhauling our energy policy is essential to achieve this aim.

The development of renewable energy will create jobs and boost the economy as well as being a way of reducing carbon emissions. Promoting more use of renew- ables must, next to maximizing energy efficiency, be one of the cornerstones of the EU’s energy policy. The possibility of micro-generation, tidal lagoons, small scale hydro electric schemes, sea bed turbines and other sustainable power gen- eration schemes should be explored. Given that many European nations enjoy an abundance of coastline, a strong empha- sis should be placed on tidal energy, which is also a technology at a commercially advanced stage.

Planning policy should be the remit of regional governments. Local authorities should be involved in planning procedures for new constructions, so that no one community should have to take a dispro- portionate burden of providing energy for the wider community. Renewable energy projects should bring maximum bene- fits to the local community, in the form of benefits such as lower energy prices.

Ambitious targets for renewable ener- gy production should be set. An increase in production can be achieved through streamlining the consent process, simplifying planning advice, promoting community engagement and promoting community benefit. Funding for renewable energy should be coordinated with other EU funding instruments; in particular the rural development fund as farmers have a vital role in managing resources such as land and water, and structural funds which aim to develop the economies of our poor- est regions.

The use of fossil fuels should be reduced with a view to an eventual end to their production in favour of more sustaina- ble sources. While we are still dependent on their use, local supplies should be favoured over imports. Efficient Emissions Performance Standards should be applied on all new power stations. EFA supports research into carbon capture and storage technology but remains cautious about the viability of the technique.

EFA is concerned by the practice of extracting coal bed methane and shale gas by hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” due to the negative impact on the environ- ment, particularly on underground water courses.

EFA has long called for the phasing out of nuclear energy at a European level. The Fukushima incident was another reminder of the potential dangers of nuclear power. EFA notes that Germany has announced that its nuclear power plants will be phased out by 2022. Switzerland has committed to phasing out nuclear power by 2034 and Italy voted against nuclear power in a referendum in 2011. Even though the share of renewable energy will rise in the future, certain regions cannot allow yet the exclusion of nuclear energy from their energy mix and have to dimin- ish their dependence on nuclear energy in a rational and realistic way. In any case, in order to prevent a production shortage, large investments in the electricity market will be needed.

Whichever way energy is produced, it is vital that the strictest safety measures are guaranteed in every sector, from the production level to waste management. Guaranteed minimum standards should be set at EU level.

EFA wants to promote research and devel- opment in the energy domain as a whole. Renewable energy technologies are not the sole areas of importance for the future; we must also invest in, amongst other things, research on new energy effi- ciency technologies, energy storage and nuclear waste.

In the past, EFA has pointed out the lack of democratic, control and transparen- cy in the energy sector. EFA has concerns regarding undemocratic oil cartels, fossil energy oligopolies, nuclear monopolies, or an alternative energy sector ruled by multinational corporations. Govern- ments should cooperate in encouraging large energy companies to reinvest their profits in improving services or curtailing costs for the consumer.

In the 2011 EFA General Assembly, a motion on energy sovereignty was adopt- ed. It addresses the oligopolies and monopolies in the energy market. EFA believes that our ambitions to estab- lish political control of our countries and regions should be mirrored with control of our energy sources.

5 Agriculture and CAP Reform

A safe and secure supply of food is absolutely critical for the well-being of Europe’s 500 million citizens. Moreover, the viability, prosperity and sustainabil- ity of European agriculture underpins the economic prospects of 1.2 million farm holdings and many more associated food chain and rural enterprises; plays a major role in managing landscapes, protecting the environment and fragile ecosystems; and forms an essential part of the social and cultural heritage of the European regions. With an increasingly industrial- ised food chain, and ongoing revelations about fraud in food labelling and the spread of plant and animal diseases, the case for securing a safe, healthy, seasonal and local supply of food is more relevant than ever. So is the need for an effective reform of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy.

The constituent parties of the European Free Alliance reflect the significant diversity of Europe’s varied agricultur- al landscapes. The issues and challenges facing a livestock farmer in the Highlands of Scotland are different from an olive ter- race in Greece, or a large arable farm in Germany. Different policy strategies will therefore have to be adopted to suit the needs of these different types of farming and different rural economic situations. A “one size fits all” CAP is not in keeping with the principle of respect for diversity which is at the heart of EFA. Neverthe- less, EFA parties do share some basic fundamental interests in agricultural policy, and call for the following interests to be central in the discussions on the future of the CAP:

- The retention of the Single Farm Payment with an adequate budget: Farmers in EFA countries and regions face the economic challenges of a volatile market, high input costs, marginal land and distance to markets. The Single Farm Payment provides an essential bulwark for farm finances, and must be adequately financed from the EU budget. It creates a level playing field between farmers in different parts of Europe.

- The strengthening of support for Less Favoured Areas: Many EFA parties, such as in Bavaria and Galicia are situated in less productive agricultural areas which face significant natural handicaps,
The devolution of power over CAP roles.

The devolution of power over CAP decision making. Under CAP rules, Member States are empowered to make decisions over the implementation of the CAP schemes in their territories, such as how much money to transfer from Pillar I to Pillar II, or whether to apply the “small farmers scheme”. These decisions must be made at a local level of decision making as possible, particularly in Member States where agriculture is devolved to lower levels of government, so that EFA countries and regions can tailor the implementation of CAP to their own needs.

- Greening: The EFA parties face vastly different ecological and environmental challenges in their areas: while flooding is a major environmental problem in northern Europe, the Mediterranean zone faces the challenge of drought. The Commission’s proposal to “green” the CAP through three mandatory and standard measures has been criticised for not reflecting the reality of this diversity. EFA calls for a more regionally flexible approach to greening which allows our countries and regions to tackle the specific problems they face, while ensuring overall equivalent environmental action across Europe, including safeguarding biodiversity.

EFA’s founding principle of respect for diversity across Europe covers many aspects of our citizens’ culture - be it linguistic rights, national institutions or cultural heritage.

And in Europe’s coastal/regions, livelihoods dependent on the sea form an integral part of each area’s heritage and traditions. Generations of fishermen have put to sea to catch fish in the waters around them, and those harvests provide numerous jobs for people onshore. Aquaculture too is playing an increasingly important role in supplying Europe’s food needs - and in sustaining often fragile economies.

Europe’s coastal traditions show as much diversity as any other part of our varied cultures. The issues affecting fishermen in Dnistry or Shetland differ hugely from those consuming Corsica or Sardinia. Likewise, the development of aquaculture has shown huge variation across different seas and climate zones.

Nonetheless, what binds these interests together is the deep link between coastal communities and their dependence on the sea: each fishing town or village has a historic and traditional maritime role which deserves protection.

This protection has not been found in the EU Common Fisheries Policy as it has existed for the last three decades.

An over-centralised one-size-fits-all approach has ignored the needs of individual areas, failed to conserve fish stocks and led to a decline in the fishing industry - and therefore threatened coastal Europe’s cultural traditions.

EFA believes that these traditions and historic rights deserve to be protected, and therefore supports the following key points in fisheries policy:

- Europe’s diverse fishing industries are a vital part of our shared cultural heritage - and the rights and interests of all our coastal communities must be protected.

- Management decision making on fisheries must be devolved, with real power being retumed to the fishing nations and regions. Problems are best solved by decisions being taken at a level appropriate to each fishery with regions

- Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is a key element in safeguarding and enhancing Europe’s cultural heritage.

EFA considers that all the European languages in their written and oral forms are equal in value and dignity and are an integral part of European culture and civilization, contributing to the enrich- ment of humankind. The EU must support the policies of the concerned communi ties to reappropriate their languages.

EFA believes that European languages and cultures are like biodiversity, a living heritage necessary for the sustainable development of our societies. They must be protected from any risk of extinction.

We must prevent our national languages from being reduced to a secondary role of “low” vernacular languages for daily life, while English, promoted by the economic globalisation, becomes the “high” uniform language of important discourses, educa tion, science, economic life, etc. Because its drive is global and essentially economic (as opposed to being political or cultural), the unifying English language is not an identification instrument for Europe, while our national languages become local ones and lose their European scope. EU policies must contribute to reverse this negative trend.

EFA considers that linguistic diversity stimulates creativity, innovation and the promotion of local cultural heritage, thus contributing to economic development. Cultural and artistic creation, cultural heritage, gastronomy, arts & crafts have a job creation potential, help foster identity, cannot be relocated and are basic elements for a sustainable tourism. The language industry, i.e. designing, produc ing and marketing products and services related to languages, is one which has great potential.

EFA considers that the EU must ensure the preservation of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Europe and in particular of all its languages, and must therefore, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, contribute to the promotion and develop ment of this invaluable cultural heritage.

7 Challenges for cultures and languages

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Languages with co-official status must be recognised at EU level.

Although the budget allocated to European regional or minority languages has been greatly reduced, EFA believes that the new Commission programmes for 2014-2020 Erasmus for all, Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens must support NGOs and organisations, initiatives and activities, which work to develop and promote endangered languages. One of the most important issues for EFA is changing the eligibility criteria for community language programmes in order to allow all language groups to apply for these funding opportunities.

The European Free Alliance (EFA) promotes the right to self-determination and supports the aspirations which EFA member parties have for their countries, including independence, greater autonomy and linguistic and cultural recognition.

EFA assembles political parties involved in the quest for enhanced self-government for our stateless nations.

EFA aims for European unity in diversity, creating a European Union of free Peoples based on the principle of subsidiarity, in solidarity with each other and other peoples of the world. EFA promotes a European cooperation based on the diversity of nations, regions, peoples, cultures and languages.

EFA promotes the process of internal enlargement within the European institutions and elsewhere as the mechanism by which nations who gain the status of a State remain as an EU member state.

EFA does actively support the ongoing democratic self-determination processes across the EU.

EFA argues that stateless nations have the right of self-government and of participation in the world and in the European Union on equal terms with other nationalities, some of which are the possessors of statehood, others not.

EFA rejects the two extreme solutions that are presented in the current debate on the future of the European Union paving a way out of the crisis: the centralised and unitarian model or the retreat into the nation state.

EFA advocates the bottom-up approach of a European Union of free peoples based on the principle of subsidiarity who cooperate where necessary in the policy areas where a European added value offers a better policy outcome.

EFA shares the democratic values that underpin membership in the European Union: human rights, respect for democracy and its foundations, gender equality, rejection of racism and xenophobia. It represents a vision of Europe that promotes a more just and more democratic world, including by building solidarity with the peoples struggling for self-determination.
EFA stands for another Europe

Member Parties

**FULL MEMBERS**

- Aland Framtid (AF)
- Autonomie – Liberté – Participation – Écologie (ALPE)
- Bayernpartei
- Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG)
- Chunta Aragonesista (Cha)
- Die Friesen (DF)
- Euskal Alkartasuna (EAI)
- Eninna Lista (EL)
- Esquerda Republicana de Catalunya (ERC)
- Fryske Naasjonele Partij (FNP)
- Lista Za Rajku
- Liga Veneta Repubblica (LVR)
- Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Szövetség (MK)
- Mobyon Kernow (MKB)
- Morawanie
- Mouvement Région Savoie (MRS)
- Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA)
- Omo Ilinden Pirin (OIP)
- Partido Andalucista (PA)
- Partit Ocitan (POc)
- Plaid Cymru
- Partito di a Nazione Corsa (PNC)
- Partito Sardo d’Azione (PSd’Az)
- Federacion PSM-Entesa Nacionalista (PSM-Entesa)
- Rainbow
- Ruch Autonomii Slaska (RAS)
- Slovenska Skupnost (SSK)
- Scottish National Party (SNP)
- Südschleswigschen Wählerverbands (SSW)
- Schleswig Partei (SP)
- Südtiroler Freiheit
- Unión Democrática Bretonne (UDB)
- Unitat Catalana (UC)
- Unser Land

**OBSERVER MEMBERS**

- Aralar
- BLOC
- For Human Rights in United Latvia (FHRUL / PCTVL)
- Lausitzer Allianz (LA)
- Nueva Canarias (NC)

EFA stands for another Europe
European Alliance for Freedom

The European Alliance for Freedom (EAF) is a pan-European alliance of Members of the European Parliament, together with national and regional parliamentarians and parties, united under a political platform calling for national freedom and democracy in opposition to centralised, supranational control. Concerned with issues of freedom and democracy in the EU, the EAF does not operate within the Left-Right political paradigm and its members come from across a wide political spectrum.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

European Alliance for Freedom
http://eurallfree.org/
European Alliance for Freedom
Political Party Manifesto

European Elections 2014
INTRODUCTION

The next European elections will be held from the 22nd till the 25th of May 2014 in all the Member States of the European Union. This charter puts forward the proposal of common political policies that members of the European Alliance for Freedom (EAF) wish to defend during the campaign, such as sovereignty, the retraction – or at least a deep re-examination – of the single currency, and immigration issues.

The European Alliance for Freedom will defend the following fundamental changes:

With mass migration being a simplistic answer to the demographic and economic challenge Europe is actually facing, it is necessary to strengthen the position of the family in Europe and to preserve traditional family policies. These are the only viable solutions to demographic issues, while implementing, for instance, a more equitable tax system.

Defending the right for each Member State to shape and implement its own asylum and immigration policies, as well as all the legislation regarding social and labour rights for immigrants. Migrants from other EU Member States should also be subjected to these measures.

An enhanced protection of secularism in Europe, whose Christian and humanistic roots are threatened by the rise of radical Islam within the European Union, and, in general, an affirmation of the people’s identity and of the nations that make up Europe.
Institutional aspects

1. At least a redefinition of the legislative powers assigned to the European Institutions and, more specifically, those that are linked to the Lisbon Treaty in terms of national sovereignty and subsidiarity principles.

2. A greater consideration of European citizens through national referendums on issues of common interest at the European level.

3. A re-examination of enlargement policies of the European Union by holding referendums in each Member States with regard to accession criteria.

4. The setting up of effective solutions towards lower unemployment rates, especially among young people. This should be based on the conditions and evaluations pertaining to each Member State, and not on EU common policies; the individual approach being more effective than the general one.
The European Alliance for Freedom was formed in order to promote and defend to the utmost the people’s and Member States’ democratic rights against the Brussels drift. Previously, patriotic leaders from various Member States with similar approaches on EU issues had to campaign without the benefits of a real alliance, or in the absence of coordinated action. With a view to the 2014 European Elections, a unified political force has been created in order to fight for the rights of citizens of each Member State of the European Union. This new impetus for freedom wants to curb the federalisation imposed by Brussels. This impetus, at the same, will promote the people’s sovereignty, renewed accountability and a budgetary consolidation of States that is far from the current views of austerity and globalisation.

The state of the European Union in which we live today is a result of a lack of vision, of corruption and, moreover, the expansion of centralised legislative powers in Europe. The sovereign Member States should be a source of innovation and of economic dynamism. They should be able to cooperate and to create bonds of excellence in necessary areas. They should be the engines for growth and spreading prosperity in the face of the failures due to decisions imposed by Brussels.
Economic aspects

1. Solidarity within the EU cannot be a one-way path. The European Union is facing its deepest crisis since its inception and economic issues that are truly real. The redistribution by the wealthiest Member States to those that are facing financial imbalance is not a viable solution and only serves to avoid, in the very short term, the collapse of the system. Therefore, the EAF will call to put an end to supporting measures or other types of funding to Member States in financial difficulty as a result of current economic views and eurocentric dogmatism with regard to the single currency and austerity.

2. The Member States that are facing a severe financial and economic crisis should be allowed to leave the eurozone, while a concerted dissolution of the eurozone should be considered. A Member State will be able to go back to its own national currency, to devalue it if necessary, in order to relaunch its competitiveness.

3. The implementation of protections for small, middle and large sized businesses, for industries in Europe and for the agricultural sector in particular. These protections will help to fight against the unfair competition induced by the mass importation of goods from countries outside the European Union or other Member States.
Social aspects and immigrations policies

1. With mass migration being a simplistic answer to the demographic and economic challenge Europe is actually facing, it is necessary to strengthen the position of the family in Europe and to preserve traditional family policies. These are the only viable solutions to demographic issues, while implementing, for instance, a more equitable tax system.

2. Defending the right for each Member State to shape and implement its own asylum and immigration policies, as well as all the legislation regarding social and labour rights for immigrants. Migrants from other EU Member States should also be subjected to these measures.

3. An enhanced protection of secularism in Europe, whose Christian and humanistic roots are threatened by the rise of radical Islam within the European Union, and, in general, an affirmation of the people’s identity and of the nations that make up Europe.
“Politics, it seems to me, for years, or all too long, has been concerned with a Right or Left instead of right or wrong.”

Richard Armour, American Poet and Author

The **European Alliance for Freedom** (EAF) is a pan-European political party set up in 2010. Our concern is not about ‘left’ and ‘right’ ideologies, but the freedom and the interests of those European Nation States whose sovereignty has been eroded by EU supranationalism, centralised power and so-called 'globalism'.

In the 2014 European Elections the EAF will be fielding candidates in several Member States, leading us to form a new group in the European Parliament: A strong alliance of MEPs that will not be deterred from challenging the EU Establishment that is threatening the foundations of society and the livelihood of families across the Union. Parties or individuals that find common ground with our manifesto and political platform, and who wish to form part of our alliance can contact us for more information.

If you wish to support us, join our team, be active in our campaign and promote our candidate in your country for the upcoming European elections. Contact our Brussels Head Office:

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Alliance of European National Movements

The European level political party „Alliance of European National Movements" was formed in Budapest, Hungary on the 24-th of October 2009, by a number of nationalist parties and national movements from various countries in Europe. Since then, AEMN dedicates its political activities to protect and nurture the diversity of autochthonous cultures, traditions and languages in a Europe of free, independent and equal nations, in the framework of a confederation of sovereign nation states.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

Alliance of European National Movements
http://aemn.eu/
Political declaration

Alliance of European National Movements

• Conscious of our common responsibility for the European peoples and the diversity of cultures and languages they represent,
• Mindful of the inalienable values of Christianity, natural law, peace and freedom in Europe,
• Bearing in mind the numerous threats that powerful forces of globalisation pose to this priceless heritage.

Representing the national parties and movements in Europe, we demand:

1. The creation of a Europe of free, independent and equal nations in the framework of a confederation of sovereign nation states, refraining from taking decisions on matters properly taken by states themselves;
2. The rejection of any attempt to create a centralised European Super State.
3. The promotion of the freedom, dignity and equal rights of every citizen, and opposition to all forms of totalitarianism.
4. The primacy of direct votes by the people or their elected representatives over any administrative or bureaucratic body.
5. The effective protection of Europe against new threats, such as terrorism and religious, political, economic, or financial imperialism.
6. A peaceful and humane settlement of immigration problems through, among other measures, international cooperation aiming at development and self-sufficiency of third world countries.
7. Strong policies in favour of families aiming at solving the demographic deficit in Europe and promoting traditional values throughout society.
8. The preservation of the diversity of Europe that results from the variety of our identities, traditions, languages and indigenous cultures.
9. A common fight of the European peoples against social dumping and the destructive effects of globalisation.

Strasbourg, 15 September 2009

Source: http://aemn.eu/political-declaration/
European Christian Political Movement

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) is a political association of Christian-democratic parties and organisations which are active on all different political levels in Europe. ECPM is represented on the national or European level in 10 EU member states. Spearheads elections ECPM has a broad scope on issues and themes. During the coming European elections campaign ECPM will focus on the following five spearheads: 1. Marriage and human dignity 2. Human trafficking and sex trade 3. Sustainable entrepreneurship and economy 4. Priority for family 5. Freedom of faith, conscience and expression.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

European Christian Political Movement
http://ecpm.info/
FOR A EUROPE OF DIGNITY, FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY
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For a Europe of Dignity, Freedom and Responsibility

Introduction

If the economic crisis has revealed anything, it is for certain that a growing number of people in Europe feel disconnected from the European Union as institution and idea.

The ECPM accepts the EU as a political and social reality. A reality that has brought stability and improved life over the years for many people in Europe. But the EU is in need of a new paradigm based on the Christian understanding of the human being, in order to restore the relation between the European idea and the people living in the member states. We believe the EU has become a project of an elite that is largely out of touch with the reality in the Member States. The European project will only be sustainable if the gap between Brussels and the European citizens is closed.

There are many people working in the European institutions as MEP’s, civil servants and Commissioners with the intention to contribute to the development of the European Union and the wellbeing of its citizens. However, it is clear that these efforts, well-intended as they may be, did not restore this relation between the EU and the citizens.

Towards a Europe we can relate to

There are signals that the economic crisis of the last five years is easing down, but the situation is still fragile and there still is mass unemployment amongst young people is. The greatest risk the EU can take is to simply go back to ‘business as usual’. The old paradigms were the core reason for the economic crisis and the deteriorating relation between the EU institutions, its political direction and the inhabitants of the EU member states.

The ECPM does not pretend to offer a solution for every aspect of the crisis we try to overcome. Our goal is to offer a new paradigm as a direction for the development of the European Union.

The fundament of this paradigm is the realistic view that the human being is relational. In its biological existence, its ecological dependence and economic interdependence, life is relational. Our relational vision is a balance between individuality on the one hand and culture and environment on the other. It is neither collectivist nor individualist.

This is as well the Christian understanding of human dignity that affirms the value of every human being from the beginning and in every phase of its existence, a value that can only be understood in relation with each other. If we understand how valuable the other person is, we can understand the value of life and the need to see and live life relationally. This understanding has shaped the history of Europe and is the foundation of the values we cherish today. All fundamental rights and freedoms are based on the Christian understanding of the preciousness of every individual.

We need a renewed understanding and emphasis on these Christian-relational notions in order to overcome the current crisis. In our understanding, the root of this crisis is individualism in which individual freedom has been separated from the relation with other people and society, and in which the human being is understood as an autonomous individual. This type of individualism has allowed greed to become a major cause for our economic crisis. Individualism is the root of many social problems we face today. The weakening situation of the family, the fracturing of society and the
decreasing solidarity are essentially rooted in this type of individualism. This social situation is a major source of distrust in the European institutions.

Another consequence of this emphasis on autonomous individualism is the commodification of life. There is a development in which weaker and vulnerable life (beginning and ending) becomes subordinated to the stronger stages of life. Currently, the choice of the autonomous individual is often seen as the highest principle and other values like responsibility and mutual care are put under pressure.

The commodification of life is not only seen in medical-ethical debates. It is present in all situations in which the strong use and take advantage of the weak. Human trafficking as modern-day slavery is a real problem in Europe. In our economy we see that those who have a weaker position struggle to maintain a decent level of living. Too often people are seen as a means to an end. Poverty and the number of ‘working poor’ has reached unprecedented level in post-war Europe.

A Christian-relational approach is necessary to counter these consequences and excesses of autonomous individualism and to provide a balanced view on humanity and society. A view that includes the relational and emotional dimensions of life which are more complete than the current autonomous perception of the human being.

This has far-reaching implications for the EU and its policies. Many policies today are based on the perception of the human being as an autonomous individual who will make rational decisions and strive for efficiency. This view is implicitly reflected in many EU policies which are often only measured for their economic efficiency and outcome. This one-sided focus together with the one-sided approach to economy has enforced a disempowered and disconnected feeling. It is clear that a change of direction is necessary.

**Subsidiarity**

A revaluation of subsidiarity based on the relational paradigm is necessary. Subsidiarity means that political decisions and their execution should, in principle, take place at the level to which people relate to and therefore feel empowered towards the decision-making process. Due to the lack of subsidiarity many feel unrelated and therefore disempowered. We need an EU that understands this and tries to build the relation with the people in the EU. This means an EU without the federalist dream of an ‘ever closer union’. Rather an EU that will refocus with more energy at the decisions and tasks that need to be done at this level.

Our relational understanding also includes the cultural dimension. Any person is related to and shaped by the surrounding culture. Even though culture is not a nationalist one-dimensional concept, it is a reality that has tremendous effect on politics and policies. It is a reality that has not been given sufficient weight in EU policy making due to the limited individualist understanding of the human being. As a consequence the EU has been on a crash course with economic and political realities in the member states in the last few years. This has been most visible in the euro crisis, a crisis partly caused by failing to understand cultural differences.

We advocate an EU that takes the relational reality of life and society into account in all its policies. This will open the door to an EU that facilitates more and regulates less. It means that a door needs to be opened towards an EU that will allow more diversity in more policy fields than it currently does.
We as ECPM believe that the relational reality of life means that we cannot separate people from their history and cultural backgrounds. It is therefore not really possible to implement ‘one size fits all’ solutions across Europe. The idea that this was possible, regardless of our cultural diversity, was one of the major reasons for the crisis that hit the foundation of the euro.

The ECPM will present a number of ideas based on our paradigm. In this we will focus on human dignity for all, an inclusive European economy, recognition of family life, freedom of religion, belief and conscience and combating human trafficking.

The goal of these proposals is to improve the EU and stimulate the debate in its direction. We will challenge the existing status quo but we will not accept the label ‘Eurosceptic’ to describe this challenge. We believe a mature debate on the fundamentals of the EU is possible without aiming to dismantle the EU. We challenge the larger European parties to be open to new ideas without labelling them as ‘Eurosceptic’ and we challenge those parties who question the existence of the EU to present constructive alternatives.

We will promote this vision in the coming European elections and in the following years. We invite the people of Europe to be part of this process.
1. For a Europe of Human Dignity

Principles of human dignity transcend time and culture. Cultural values related to human dignity represent some of the most significant aspects of contemporary societies throughout Europe and internationally. Human dignity has increasingly become a phrase associated with values across various spectrums. However, human dignity is not only a value, it is not a belief, and it is not an opinion. Rather, human dignity is a principle and transcends the subjective and presents a reality of critical importance to each one of us. As a principle, human dignity is, therefore, unchangeable and relevant in all cultures at all times. In Europe, the principle of human dignity is inscribed in the first article of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU: „Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected”.

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. In Christianity, this universal principle rests on the human being as created in the image and likeness of God. Created in His image and likeness defines the human being as a relational being. The Christian understanding of God is Trinitarian and therefore relational which means that this is reflected in human existence. Politically this means that human dignity is not just about the value and rights of the individual. Human dignity is not fully realized as long as the value of committed relations is not appreciated and cherished. Human dignity includes valuing relations and striving towards the right and just relations in life ethics, society and economy.

The intrinsic value of the human being includes every stage of human existence. Excluding the beginning or the end of human life from treatment as human, undermines fundamentally the intrinsic value of the human being and is therefore a violation of human dignity. We cannot exclude any stage of human life from human dignity. There is a particular need to protect vulnerable, handicapped, or unborn members of the Human Family.

Valuing life

Issues touching life ethics have since long been part of the EU agenda. Especially in the fields of research and foreign aid. The EU is a major donor to research projects in many fields, including ‘life studies’ that may raise bio-ethical questions. The EU is as well an important supporter of foreign aid and in this way involved in questions around reproductive ethics.

Respect for Human Dignity in the field of Biomedical research requires universal acceptance of the principle that Science must serve Humanity rather than Humanity serve Science. Human life, in whatever form, whatever its appearance or capacity, has inherent and indisputable dignity. Basic biological principles irrefutably show that from the moment of conception or creation the embryo inside or outside the womb is a unique human being with a unique genetic code.

The debate around the report ‘on sexual and reproductive health and rights’ that was tabled by MEP Edite Estrela has made clear that a number of NGO’s and allied MEP’s push for abortion to be included in EU policies. The huge wave of protest from citizens from all member-states lead to the rejection of this report. The high profile of the debate made many people aware that this is playing at EU level. The so-called ‘Estrela report’ seems to be a reaction on the success of the European Citizens’ Initiative ‘One of Us’ that received support from 1,8 million citizens in the EU.

The ECPM welcomes the statements from the European Commission in which it was clearly expressed that abortion is an issue of the member-states and not an issue for EU policies. In addition,
the ECPM recalls that the European Court of Justice has ruled (Brüstle vs. Greenpeace) that a human embryo represents the beginning in the development of a human being.

Following this, and based on the described principles of human dignity, the ECPM calls on the next European Commission to end the financing of activities that presuppose the destruction of human embryos, in particular in the areas of research, development aid and public health.

The ECPM opposes any move towards the inclusion of abortion in EU policies. The ECPM expects from the Commission to continue their clear stance on this issue. The ECPM consequently calls on the Commission to end EU funding that supports the promotion of abortion as part of reproductive health and rights.

The crisis of human dignity

Pope Francis made in the exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" a clear link between the economic crisis and human dignity. In many ways the crisis has revealed unjust economic relations and has in the process undermined human dignity. An economy of exclusion is violating human dignity.

The millions of Europeans that lost their jobs and the many more that felt disempowered, have experienced this in their own lives. The growing poverty in Europe and increasing gap between the rich and the poor is in essence a crisis in human dignity that needs to be addressed as such.

This is not only a European issue. It should be a global priority to fight the enormous injustice that people experience and has effect on even their most basic needs. Even institutions as the World Economic Forum have pointed to economic inequality as a major global problem. In a time in which wages fell substantially, the super-rich only increased their wealth.

The ECPM will therefore set out an agenda towards an inclusive economy based on just economic relations. In our opinion this is the only long-term answer to this crisis. There is a need to end the situation in which the marketplace and financial speculation seem autonomous and separated from society while attacking human dignity. We need an economy that works for the people and advances the dignity of every human being.

For this reason the ECPM supports the ‘Pledge for a work-free Sunday and decent work’ as laid down by the European Sunday Alliance:

To ensure that all relevant EU-legislation both respects and promotes the protection of a common weekly day of rest for all EU citizens, which shall be in principle on a Sunday, in order to protect workers' health and promote a better balance between family and private life and work;

To promote EU-legislation guaranteeing sustainable working time patterns based on the principle of decent work benefiting society as well as the economy as a whole.¹

Governments are in essence not meant to run economies but can support changes in the right direction. This includes the EU governmental institutions. However, even more than renewal of policies, there is a need to see the people behind the numbers as more important than economic figures. This will reflect an awareness of the Dignity and intrinsic value of every human being.

¹http://www.europeansundayalliance.eu/site/euelections2014thepledge
2. For an Economy that Works for People

The worst of the economic crisis that plagued the economies of Europe since 2008 seems to have passed. In some countries there are even some signs of job growth. This is a welcome situation for those who can now find again a job. At the same time businesses and families are still struggling to pay off excess debts as public debts are at post-war highs in almost every EU Member State and cheap ECB money is necessary to keep many banks afloat. In the global economy the emerging economies, whose growth helped European exporters through the crisis, are now showing signs of stagnation.

This shows the fragility of the current design of our economic system. The crisis has demonstrated the major flaws which have to be dealt with in order to prevent a repetition. Simply continuing with the current system without addressing fundamental issues is not an option. The fundamental questions of poverty (and working poor), ownership, ecology, energy, ageing and resources cannot be ignored due to the simple fact that if these issues are not dealt with they will become the cause for a deeper crisis.

Towards a new economic paradigm

For this reason the relational paradigm has to be applied to our economy. Economy is in essence about life. In our view the purpose of all economic activities is to support life and advance the wellbeing for all. Economy is meant to provide sufficient means for all people, to support family life, to let people flourish with their creative talents and to find solutions for the problems we face².

This view leads to the conclusion that economy is not just about efficiency and competitiveness leading to a profit regardless of the socio-cultural context. Economy cannot be seen separated from culture, history and religion. The reverse is also true; our culture, convictions and history shape our economies³. A process which demonstrates that our economy is a relational process.

However, at the moment, the one-dimensional view of the economy as a system of mere production and consumption, is still dominant regardless of its unsustainability in both economic and ecological terms. The dominant factor in this current view is capital which is seen as the most important input and result of the economic process. Seeing capital as the most dominant factor has resulted into an economic system in which capital markets do not only dominate the whole economic process but even become a threat to the real economy. A recent research report from McKinsey shows how the focus on profit for short-term shareholder value is toxic to the real economy of real people, real companies, real production and real services⁴. Worse even, the speculation on food prices has apparently lead to hunger and severe social problems in the global south.

The dominance of capital markets has even put democracy itself in jeopardy. In the last few years we have seen big investment funds and impersonal international bodies overriding the democratic process. In this way the decrease of economic ‘ownership’ has been translated into a situation in which people feel that their democratic influence has gone as well.

An important underlying cause of the economic crisis was the culture of excessive greed in the world of capital markets. This was partly possible due to the autonomy of these markets over the real economy, leading to a mere focus on money disconnected from its effects on real people. This

² See also ‘After Capitalism, rethinking economic relationships’, Jubilee Campaign & ECPF, 2012
³ See also ‘The Economics of Good and Evil’, by Tomáš Sedláček, 2009
⁴ [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/leading_in_the_21st_century/focusing_capital_on_the_long_term](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/leading_in_the_21st_century/focusing_capital_on_the_long_term)
culture is at the same time embedded in the idea that people are no more than producers and consumers who have to satisfy their desires. The latter becoming more and more indebted and disowned.

This situation raises two fundamental questions. It raises the question of values and the question of ownership in our economy. If competition and efficiency are the only values in economic policies then we will create an economy which ignores all other equally important values like trust, responsibility and reciprocity. It also puts fundamental values for a society under pressure like generosity and mutual care. A limited scope of values will therefore lead to the exclusion of important aspects of life and society and as a consequence lead to the exclusion of people.

This is indeed the case in the crisis that hit Europe. It is demonstrated in the described effects on democracy. We can see it even clearer in our economy. Unemployment has risen to unprecedented levels, especially among young people. According to the European Commission there has been a sharp rise of poverty in the EU. The traditional answer ‘more jobs’ to escape poverty is not sufficient in the face of a rise in the number of ‘working poor’. The 2013 Employment Development in Europe review found that only half of the poor who take a job are able to escape poverty. The explosion of unemployment is clearly connected to the massive bankruptcy of small and medium sized enterprises (SME’s) and massive lay-offs by multinationals. Both causes of this mass unemployment point to the need for a new and more inclusive direction of our economy.

What is needed therefore is a renewed emphasis on values and relations in our economic thinking and policies. It is now time for a system that offers no reward without responsibility, no investment without involvement and no profit without participation.

It is time for a relational paradigm that leads to a more inclusive approach in which the dignity of the human being, our common wellbeing and wise stewardship of resources is seen as equally important as competitiveness and efficiency. This approach can guide the EU as well as national governments in their economic policies.

**Guidelines for EU policies**

Based on the outlined idea of relational values in economic policies, policy making has to be done as closely connected to the people as possible. This narrows the scope of the EU policy making to issues that are currently dealt with at EU level. In its economic policies the EU can nevertheless place new goals and benchmarks that define economic success.

A major bench-mark change is to redefine growth beyond mere GDP terms. Growth has to become more than Purchasing Managers Indexes (PMI). Growth in this scenario has to be defined in the first place in inclusive terms. Economic growth is only present if there is rise in employment and decrease in poverty, including a decrease in the number of working poor. Inclusive growth can furthermore include the situation of SME’s as a prime indication of sustainable and long-term improvement of our economy. One crucial growth marker is the decrease of economic pressure on families. We have to drive the EU economy towards a goal: HDi (Human Development indicator)\(^5\) of EU countries should be in the top 35 countries (some EU Countries as Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria are in a lower position than Belarus, for instance, beyond the 50\(^{th}\) place).

Another growth indicator is the rise in ownership and the decrease of private debt. Inclusive growth includes the extent of ecological pressure. The ecological costs cannot be passed to future generations. Therefore the EU should work to a ‘circular economy’ as recommend by the World Economic Forum in order to have a sustainable approach towards the usage of resources.

An important new goal for EU economic policies is to strive for real diversification in our economy and in the financing models of companies and other business models. A high degree of diversity will create a more sustainable economy, especially when this is accompanied by more diversity of financing. This will make our economy less depending on a few types of financing as it is the case at the moment. Sharing the best practices and bending the regulation to that goal can be important EU policy instruments. A culture of social responsibility in the capital markets can be stimulated, showing to the clients that they should chose firms with social responsibility and sustainability.

**Encouraging inclusive growth and renewal of business life**

In working towards a more relational economy it is crucial that there is a clear preference at EU level for all types of companies that are focused on stakeholder value. This policy preference should include the following non-exhaustive list of business models: SME’s, co-operations, social enterprises and forms of shared ownership by employees. It also includes those companies who take social corporate responsibility seriously as an investment.

A facilitating EU means in this specific field that the EU will develop a way that will lead to an exchange of the best practices in inclusive business types. EU subsidies in the economic sphere can be directed towards an increase in inclusive business types in the EU. The EU can further encourage inclusive growth with a preference for local and regional SME’s because they create long-term employment in a region. These preferences can be expressed in the rules for tendering.

The ECPM questions with this proposal the emphasis on competition as expression of the idea of traditional free market principles applied to all spheres of economic and public life. It is time that the idea of the free market is completed with important fundamentals of our economic life like ecological sustainability and inclusive economic growth. It is as well time to question the expansion of the market to all types of public services. The EU should end it’s involvement in this regard and leave it to the member states to decide whether public services should be privatised or not. Especially in crucial important fields like healthcare, all EU pressure for more privatisation has to end.

At the same time the ECPM believes that undue state support for (most of the time big) companies is not compatible with an EU of free exchange of goods and services. Fair competition together with the notions of inclusive growth will lead to more innovation. Innovation in turn is a crucial engine for future economic progress and social improvements. Innovation is especially important to find answers to crucial and pressing ecological questions. More green technologies in transport can be a major step forward to improve our economy, ecology and societies.

**Energy**

Green technologies are ever more important in EU energy policies. The ECPM applauds ambitious EU-wide green targets and national initiatives such as the German ‘Energiewende’, even though negative side-effects such as an increase in the use of coal for energy generation have to be tackled. We have seen an enormous increase in regional and local green energy co-operations in the last decade. Improving the grid at local level to facilitate further growth of private and shared green energy generation can further encourage a development that will make the EU less dependent on
imported fossil fuels. At the same time the EU has to improve the energy grid at European level, in order to protect in particular the Eastern EU Member States from Russian power games. A sharp rise of energy costs must be avoided in order to enable a normal continuation of the economy.

At the same time these technologies have to be developed in a way that they will become less depending on rare earth metals, making them less dependent on Chinese export policies.

**Agriculture**

The same preference can be applied in the Common Agricultural Policy. In this field co-operation can be encouraged as an alternative to expansion, and green innovations can be encouraged. The direct payments (first pillar of CAP) should be better targeted on social objectives and sustainability needs. Second pillar policies should complement this and support the provision of green public services (preserving nature and respecting the relation with creation). Continuing and improving co-operatives, producer groups and interbranche organisations is a proven way to ensure food security, market transparency and fair remuneration for Europe. It is also a way to strengthen the position of farmers in the chain of agricultural industries.

**Trade**

Inclusive growth cannot be limited to the EU if it is to be truly inclusive. Due to the lack of progress in trade liberalization at the World Trade Organization (WTO), the EU is negotiating an increasing number of trade agreements with countries and regions all over the world. For these trade agreements to provide real value for people on both sides of the agreement, they will need serious fair trade. Fair trade includes furthering a level playing field, but is also addressing the so-called non trade concerns. The ECPM wants strong chapters on human rights and sustainable development, subject to the standard mechanisms for dispute settlement, as a minimum demand for consent to any trade agreement. Furthermore, in case of agreements with developing countries they can be accompanied by a process of exchange of green technology innovations.

**The future of the euro**

Temporal reductions of debts, primary budget surpluses and fragile economic growth cannot hide or take away the fact that a number of economies in the Eurozone cannot converge\(^6\). The cultural and connected economic differences can no longer be ignored. The policy with regard to the euro has to become far less ideological and much more practical. The ECPM does not back the idea that the EU and the Eurozone should become identical in the long run.

Before a new crisis will emerge an honest debate is necessary to determine which Eurozone economies have long-term potential to converge. For those economies who did not have these prospects a new path to prosperity has to be designed. In order to keep the EU democracy and economy sustainable and to avoid a repetition of the grim human costs, a slow and careful reset of the Eurozone is necessary.

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\(^6\) See also ECPF publication: ‘the future of the Euro’ [http://www.ecpf.info/thefutureoftheeuro](http://www.ecpf.info/thefutureoftheeuro)
3. Priority for Family and Marriage

ECPM recognizes the family as the most important social entity in the world, it precedes the state and any other community or group. Life starts in the family and relations start in the family. The natural family is a micro-society where elementary skills and experiences are being conveyed. Healthy families lead to a healthy society while fragmented families do the opposite.

The ECPM wants the European Union to respect the sovereignty of the family, based on marriage between one man and one woman, and recognize its inherent rights that are inalienable. The family is not a mere collection of individuals and therefore legislation based solely on the individual will eventually collide with the rights of the family.

The future of Europe

Any vision on the future of the European Union and the Member States should include a view on how to promote healthy families whereas they:

- Are the starting point for forming human assets
- Accompany life from the beginning until the natural end
- Create the social space where children gain confidence, establish relations and grow up into responsible adults
- Give care to infants, children and the elderly and by doing so strengthen solidarity in society while saving state expenditure on, for example, medical and physiological care

Investing in children is investing in the future, as they will grow up to become the most important resource. Parents who invest in their children therefore invest in society as a whole. Parents should not be economically “punished” for taking responsibility to raise their children.

Without any doubt, the view on family and marriage is one of the most important and influential political issues. Many religious, cultural, historical and economical aspects are involved in creating a view. ECPM believes that any form of policy on family should therefore be the responsibility of the Member States and the EU should respect subsidiarity, especially regarding this subject.

Balancing care & work

The family is a caring unity. People, as relational beings, need this environment before they need career, possessions and wealth. At the same time it is clear that the family needs a sound economy to be able to support family life.

The majority of the families in Europe are struggling to find some balance between paid work and family life. To complicate matters, in Western Europe unpaid work is much undervalued at the expense of family life. We advocate therefore that policy makers will see the intrinsic and economical value of care for one’s home and children. In EU economic policies however an economic view is dominant before the freedom and intrinsic value of the family. Two full-time working parents are seen as a general goal in order to sustain the economy.

It is important that care and work can be balanced. In our view the economy has to be balanced towards the family and not just the family towards the economic processes. Without the view that the economy has to serve families, soon family life becomes subordinated to economic processes. In recent years we have seen too often that measures to repair the economic crisis have caused
economic hardship for families. At the same time (extended) family life has been the reason why people were able to carry on throughout the crisis.

EU policy makers can consider the effects of the EU economic policies without interfering in the family policies of the member states. The ECPM does not call for EU measures for families but rather for a change of attitude among policy makers in this regard.

**Labour migration**

The EU should facilitate the Member States only in considering issues that are crossing borders. The most important item is the social consequences of labour migration. The internal market has brought many blessings to the European continent but it has also put families under pressure. Hundreds of thousands of migration workers temporarily work and live in a different country than their families. Especially, in Poland, Romania and Bulgaria this phenomenon is imminent. Whereas there is a clear economic benefit for the man or woman to work abroad - earning a better salary in order to sustain the family economically - , it does have serious negative consequences for the family that is still in the country of origin.

The root of this problem is the extreme focus on economic participation and job emancipation for women. The extreme focus on the economy instead of on the well-being of people has led to one-sided policies in EU and Member State legislation. This mistake needs to be corrected.
4. Freedom of Faith, Conscience and Expression

Faith, conscience and expression are relational and fundamental freedoms. These freedoms mean that we do not just make our own conviction heard but that we give each other the space to do the same, individually and together. Real freedom of faith, conscience and expression only becomes visible via relations with those who feel, think or act differently. Mutual respect for these freedoms will lead to real plurality.

The European Union is, besides a project for peace and prosperity, also a promoter of plurality. In the year 2000 the EU motto “United in Diversity” was adopted. ECPM wholly supports this motto since only a real understanding of each other’s culture and history can lead to a beneficial cooperation on the long term.

Foundations

The basis for the view of the ECPM on freedom of faith, conscience and expression is derived from Article 18 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (The United Nations Assembly, Paris, 1948) which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Furthermore the ECPM fully supports and endorses the Global Charter of Conscience which is summarized in five points:

1. Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is a precious, fundamental, and inalienable human right – the right to adopt, hold, freely exercise, share, or change one’s beliefs, subject solely to the dictates of conscience and independent of all outside, especially governmental control.

2. This right is inherent in humanity and rooted in the inviolable dignity of each human individual. As a birth right of belonging, it protects our freedom to be human and is the equal right of all human beings without exception.

3. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion contains a duty as well as a right, because a right for one person is automatically a right for another and a responsibility for both.

4. The public place of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is best fulfilled through cultivating civility between citizens and constructing a cosmopolitan and civil public square – a public square in which people of all faiths, religious and naturalistic, are free to enter and engage public life on the basis of their faith.

5. The rights of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion apply not only to individuals, but to individuals in community with others, associating on the basis of faith.7

Anti-discrimination

Without any doubt, discrimination is damaging for the society and individuals and it should be addressed in a proper way. However, anti-discrimination laws and policies can create a serious risk of

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7 Global charter of Conscience [http://charterofconscience.org/?page_id=40]
enforcing a form of political correctness that, when applied, put equal fundamental rights and freedoms under pressure.

Anti-discrimination policies can, therefore, become a serious risk to the freedom of religious associations. These organizations only exist with the aim to advance their faith, fellowship, and similar activities. The right to promote these efforts and beliefs is guaranteed in international law as a fundamental right and a cornerstone for democracy. ECPM believes that national states and the EU should be impartial in assessing the legitimacy of religious beliefs and should require conflicting groups to tolerate each other. In some member states, religious organizations and faith-based associations have been shut down because of anti-discrimination legislation (like the Roman Catholic foster care agencies in the UK). The ECPM therefore calls for caution with regard to the Equal Treatment Directives in order to prevent such unintended consequences of EU policy.

It is the view of ECPM that faith inspires many EU citizens to actively engage in society for the benefit of society as a whole. Religious followers are often active in numerous local, regional or national activities addressing issues such as poverty, care and reconciliation. The plurality of religious and ideological worldviews in the EU should be respected instead of rejected in favour of one particular religion or ideology.

The assertion and promotion of equal freedom of all convictions and mutual dialogue are in our view the best way to combat discrimination.

**Freedom to disagree**

Freedom that only protects ideas that are accepted by the majority is not real freedom. Yet, there is a growing tendency in European institutions to promote the freedom of one group at the costs of the freedom of another group. There is less and less freedom to disagree with the views of a vocal political majority. Yet, the European Court of Human Rights has interpreted freedom of expression to protect not only the information or ideas that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also those that offend, shock or disturb. The latter are the true demands of pluralism, broad-mindedness and tolerance. If there is no fundamental right to disagree there is no democratic society.⁸

ECPM believes that real pluralism requires the space for a group, religion or ideology to question the views of another group, religion or ideology at any time. In order to create a genuine debate at the national and European level, there should be room for all views in society.

In the EU there should be a level playing field in this regard, especially when it comes to funding of NGO’s by the EU. The ECPM wants a thorough review of this funding and asks for more transparency. NGO’s who have an ideological or industry related interest in EU policy making should in principle not receive direct funding from the EU.

ECPM wants a European Union that we can relate to, a European Union that respects cultural, historical and religious differences and promotes a genuinely open debate and the freedom to disagree for all.

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⁸ Roger Kiska, “The threat to religious liberties and the European institutions” in ECPM publication Liberty of faith and conscience, Sfera politici (June 2011): 3 - 12
**Parental rights**

ECPM believes that it is up to the parents to decide in which way they want to raise their children. The influence of national governments in this should be limited while the European Union itself should fully respect the principle of subsidiarity, especially regarding this issue.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that among the most important rights of the child, besides the right to life, are precisely the right to parental love and the right to education. The Convention also explicitly states that parents, being the ones who love their children the most, are the ones called upon to decide about the education of their children. Furthermore, Article 2 of the First Protocol of the European Convention of Human Rights explicitly specifies that the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own religious convictions.9

ECPM fully supports these Articles and wants the European Union to respect the rights of the parents in every EU member state. The EU institutions should refrain from any interference in this area. A coincidental political majority of MEP’s in the European Parliament cannot decide over something as personal as the raising of children.

**Freedom of faith and protection of converts in EU policies**

Freedom of belief is a clear indicator of the level of democracy and freedom in a country. It is no coincidence that the countries in which Christians are persecuted the most, are either authoritarian regimes or failed states that are facing a certain level of civil war. In many so-called more well-ordered societies there is in practice no real freedom of belief as well.

According to *Open Doors* over 100 million Christians worldwide are currently persecuted or in danger because of their belief. The number of persecuted people of other faiths is lower, however persecution on this ground is always an act against human dignity.

The ECPM welcomes therefore the adoption of the guidelines to promote freedom of belief in EU foreign policy. These guidelines are a practical demonstration of freedom of faith as core value of the EU. ECPM MEP’s have been in the forefront of the development of these guidelines.

The ECPM MEP’s have in this regard put special emphasis on the right of each person to change his/her belief (or refrain from any belief). This right is the cornerstone of freedom of faith. Without this right there is no real freedom of religion and belief.

However, also within the EU there is a trend of converts that are being threatened because they changed their belief. This is especially the case with migrants and asylum seekers coming to the EU. Given this background, the ECPM wants the European Union to address this issue in the coming years and facilitate solutions for the member states.

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9 Kiska, 3 - 12
5. Human Trafficking: Fighting modern-day Slavery

Trafficking is an ultimate de-humanizing act that reduces people to goods. It distorts relations and severely hurts people to re-establish new healthy relationships. Christian NGO’s have been leading the fight against this modern-day slavery and for the ECPM this is an issue that has to be high on the agenda of the EU.

Approximately 20.9 million people are in forced labour worldwide. Although it is difficult to establish an exact figure, conservative estimates suggest 44 per cent of these people have been trafficked\(^\text{10}\). Trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most common worldwide - 58 per cent of all identified victims are victim of sexual exploitation and forced into prostitution.

Cooperation at EU an international level

Since human trafficking is a cross-border crime, combating it requires international cooperation. ECPM draws the attention of the EP to the positive results achieved by joined non-legislative efforts such as close cooperation with professionals and the civil society organisations active in the field and partnership-building with the private sector which should continue to be strengthened. A business coalition involving companies wishing to keep their supply chains free of goods made by victims of human trafficking is to be welcomed and encouraged through incentive policies at EU level (e.g. reduced taxes). The EU Member States must continue sharing best practices as well as working and establishing stronger cooperation with all the stakeholders in order to better identify, protect and assist victims, including in the legislative process, from being subjected to violence and exploitation.

Prevent and reduce the demand

The best solution, proven to effectively address\(^\text{11}\) and have positive effects on reducing the demand for sexual services, is to encourage at EU level that member states will criminalise the purchase of sex in all circumstances as well as third party sellers (consisting of pimps and traffickers) and decriminalise those personally selling sex, such as the Nordic Model\(^\text{12}\).

Give special attention to children

The EU is under an obligation to make a commitment to do everything in its power to stop child trafficking and to ensure children receive protection and justice.

This commitment must start with eradicating internet child pornography as well as fixing flaws in the children welfare system. We urge the EU to build a technology task force and put in place technology innovation to fight child sexual exploitation. Data systems that track and find missing children, who should be regarded as victims and not runaways, must also be improved at EU level. ECPM is also calling on the member states to introduce a system which would provide every child victim a child trafficking guardian to support them and speak up for their best interests. A guardian who offers security and stability to a child is invaluable in aiding his/her recovery and preventing the child from returning to his trafficker.

\(^{10}\)International Labour Organisation Global Estimate of Forced Labour 2012

\(^{11}\)Seo-Young Cho, Does Legalized Prostitution Increase Human Trafficking?, German Institute for Economic Research-DIW Berlin, Germany, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

\(^{12}\)http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/european-parliament-vote-nordic-model-prostitution-that-fines-clients-1433466#.Uuipg3BlEZQ.facebook
Policies to counter cybercrime connected to trafficking

Most young people who are exploited sexually in return for payment came into contact with the purchaser via the Internet\textsuperscript{13}. It is difficult for the sex services provided online to fall under the definition of sex trafficking because it is hard to prove the three main elements: “force, fraud or, coercion.” Therefore, measures at EU level to adjust the human trafficking legislation to online sex services, as well as programs to raise awareness and prevent people from being offered online jobs in prostitution must be adopted.

Protect, support and assist the victims

The EU common policy must adopt a victim-focus approach by ensuring services are available to help them get out of the sex industry. Therefore, EU common guidelines to better identify victims of trafficking must be developed. Further, Member States should provide proper designation to ensure victims receive the care and the help they need, and link up the national referral mechanisms and the relevant authorities: the police, migration services, border guard services, judges, social fraud investigators and also experts on financial investigations.

For the purpose of better protecting young persons against sexual abuse member states can be encouraged to ensure that persons up to the age of 21 have special status where a trafficking offense has been committed and stand under special protection. The EU can facilitate a process in which families are given assistance to reunite with those European citizens who are victims of human trafficking in another EU Member State. A victim-centred approach also couples assistance in starting their new life either in the country they were trafficked or their home country (see Italy’s model). So they are guaranteed a residence permit and receive education and training to help them start a new career. This is really what every European Union country should be striving for.

\textsuperscript{13} Swedish Government report, pg 35. [http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/14/92/31/96b1e019.pdf]
EU Democrats

The EUD is a pan-European alliance of EU-critics and opponents of EU membership. The EUD opposes further centralization of power to Brussels and wants powers transferred back to national and regional parliaments and decisions taken as close as possible to the citizens. The EUD does not take a position on left-right policy issues – this is a matter for democratically elected national parliaments. The EUD doesn’t provide a platform for racist or xenophobe views. Increased transparency, accountability, subsidiarity and effective democratic control within the EU is our goal.

Source: European Parliament
http://www.elections2014.eu

EU Democrats
http://eudemocrats.org/
Political platform of the EU Democrats

The EU Democrats (EUD) is an alliance of national parties, movements and parliamentarians across Europe that believe decisions must be made as close to the citizens as possible. Our members and allies are against further centralization of power in Brussels and work for the devolution of power from the EU to national and regional parliaments.

Transparency, subsidiarity, democracy and diversity are the four main principles of the EUD - values that we all share. Consequently, EUD takes a strong stand against all forms of discrimination.

The development of the European Union is a matter of great concern to us.

The European Union erodes European democracy in two ways: first, the ever-increasing transfer of power to Brussels widens the gap between citizens and the elites. This transfer makes it more difficult for citizens to control their governments. Secondly, the treaties of the European Union are written to widen the power of Brussels and big corporations at the expense of decision making in democratically elected bodies.

The EUD believes that decisions regarding the balance of power between market and democratically elected institutions should be decided in national parliaments according to results from national elections, and not by treaties that are interpreted by a small number of judges in the European Court in Luxemburg. This is a fundamental, undemocratic flaw in the basic construction of the Union.

The EUD consists of members, movements and member parties from a broad political and regional spectrum; from Scandinavia to the Balkans and the Iberian Peninsula. Our members have the necessary integrity to say: Stop!

The European Union is heading the wrong direction with its ever-increasing centralisation of power in Brussels. The EUD strategy is to unite critical forces that embrace our ideological foundation in a political struggle against the federalization of Europe.

On the whole, the three big political families: Christian Democrats, Socialists and Liberals, share a federalist agenda that controls the European Parliament. But they are silent about their long term goal of creating a United States of Europe. They know that such a development has no support among the citizens of the European states.
The daily work of the EU Democrats involves the following activities:

* Arguing in favour of political independence for the member states and their national elected institutions.

* Monitoring the implementation of the EU Constitutional Treaty (the Lisbon Treaty) in the European Union and highlighting its problems in relation to the political independence of the member states.

* Working against new initiatives from the European institutions aiming at controlling more policy areas.

* Working against the development of a European Union Foreign Service that will undermine the member states foreign, security and defence policy.

* Working against the expansion of the euro zone. The EUD believes that a common currency for Europe is harmful both from a democratic and an economic point of view. The economic development since the introduction of the euro has proved our position to be correct.

* Working for transparency and reforms aimed at total openness in all EU institutions.

Our vision about future cooperation in Europe:

Our common goal is to diminish the power of EU institutions and to create a Europe with peaceful cooperation amongst sovereign States. Within this overall strategy, there are many alternative specific approaches:

1. For some members, the above described goal can only be achieved if their countries leave the European Union.

2. Other members would prefer to change the present European Union into something similar to the European Free Trade Association.

3. Yet, others might have the opinion that the European Union is not only a common market but also an opportunity to cooperate in other fields such as environmental policy.

The EU Democrats find no contradictions between critical movements and "withdrawalists" since we all agree on a fundamental issue in present day politics: To stop the development of the United States of Europe! We must work together to stop the erosion of democracy; improve transparency, openness and national sovereignty.

Our future tasks

EUD has a role to play in the politics of Europe.

We have developed information campaigns on the Lisbon Treaty in the first and second referendums and we will continue with our campaigns in the coming referendums: one in Sweden on the euro and one or several in Denmark also on the euro, as well as the Edinburgh agreement.
We also believe that Icelandic voters are in need of EU information in the event a referendum takes place. Providing information in Iceland is one our top priorities.

Furthermore, EU critical political forces around Europe need a contact in Brussels that can provide actual information on EU affairs.

The failure of the euro is an essential subject on which we can provide information, especially in countries such as Ireland the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia.

The EUD must also fight for the rule of transparency within the EU institutions. For example transparency in the disclosure of information must be the rule not the exception and it should also be applied to the EU budget.

The EU Democrats have the network and the necessary expertise to get the job done.

Is there any other alternative?

Let’s face it. Even if the no-side won some battles (Nice, Constitution and Lisbon), the elites have managed to approve and ratify all treaties. We must join forces NOW in order to save democracy!