

**RELAUNCHING**  
**Europe**  
**OUR ALTERNATIVE**  
**VISION FOR THE FUTURE**



Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament



Група на Прогресивния алианс на **социалистите & демократите** в Европейския Парламент

Skupina Progressivní Aliance **Socialistů & Demokratů** v Evropském Parlamentu

Gruppen for Det Progressive Forbund af **Socialdemokrater** i Europa-Parlamentet

Fraktion der Progressiven Allianz der **Sozialdemokraten** im Europäischen Parlament

**socialisták & Demokraták** progresszív Szövetsége rópai Parlamenti Képviselőcsoportja

Grupa Postępowego Sojuszu **Socjalistów & Demokratów** w Parlamencie Europejskim

Grupp tal-**Allejanza Progressiva tas-Socjalisti & d-Demokratiċi** fil-Parlament Ewropew

**Sotsiaaldemokraatide & demokraatide** fraktsioon Euroopa Parlamendis

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Gruppo dell'Alleanza Progressista dei **Socialisti & Democratici** al Parlamento europeo

Ομάδα της Προοδευτικής Συμμαχίας των **Σοσιαλιστών & Δημοκρατών** στο Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο



Group of the Progressive Alliance of **Socialists & Democrats** in the European Parliament

Skupina progresivnej aliancie **socialistov & demokratov** v Európskom parlamente

Groupe de l'alliance progressiste des **Socialistes & Démocrates** au Parlement européen

Europas Parlamento **socialistų & demokratų** pažangiojo aljanso frakcija

Euroopan parlamentin **Socialistien & Demokraattien** ryhmä

Eiropas Parlamenta **sociālistu & demokrātu** progresīvās alianses grupa

Grupo da Aliança Progressista dos **Socialistas & Democratas** no Parlamento Europeu

Skupina naprednega zavezništva **socialistov & demokratov** v Evropskem parlamentu

Grupo de la Alianza Progresista de los **Socialistas & Demócratas** en el Parlamento Europeo

Progressiva förbundet av **Socialdemokrater** i Europaparlamentet

# WELCOME

from **Hannes Swoboda**  
S&D Group President

Dear readers, citizens and friends,

Europe is in danger. Recession has become the status quo in many European countries and austerity is undermining the European social model. The foundations the EU has successfully built on for more than 50 years – democracy, the rule of law and freedom of movement – are threatened in more and more European countries.

This is not acceptable. We cannot let our continent divide into fragments or into a poor south and a richer north, and we cannot give up on the European values we fought so hard for after the Second World War.

It's time to act and to show that an alternative, more socially just Europe is possible. And to demonstrate why Europe's role is important and why Europe is worth fighting for. There is an alternative!

With the 'Relaunching Europe' initiative, we want to start a debate and get your views on how to get Europe back on track and get out of the crisis. It's about gathering young people, politicians, academics, citizens and experts to talk about the Europe we need and you want.

We are travelling all around Europe to start a dialogue and listen to you. We want to talk to citizens from across society, to young and old, politically active, just interested or even disillusioned, and to those whose experiences of Europe are positive or negative. Together we will come up with a roadmap for a better future for all of us.

You can find out more about our initiative and follow our progress on our Relaunching Europe website and Facebook pages. Have your say and join us in our search for a better Europe at [www.relaunchingeurope.eu](http://www.relaunchingeurope.eu) and [www.facebook.com/RelaunchingEurope](https://www.facebook.com/RelaunchingEurope)

I look forward to meeting you and sharing ideas with you for a new Europe.

Hannes Swoboda



Hannes Swoboda,  
S&D Group President

# OUR INITIATIVE: Relaunching Europe

**Relaunching Europe - Our alternative vision for the future** is an initiative by the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament.


In a series of events across the European Union, leading politicians will meet with citizens, academics and representatives of cultural and social organisations to discuss the future we want for Europe.

In discussions that go beyond the immediate day-to-day concerns of Europe, we want to build an inspiring alternative vision for the future of Europe and its citizens.

Each event focuses on a specific theme in order to explore the arguments and build – step by step, debate by debate – our alternative vision for the future.

DID YOU  
**KNOW...**

The European Parliament has been chosen through direct elections since 1979. This means that you can choose who speaks for you in Europe.



Belgian band Suarez performing live  
Brussels, 3 October 2012



“ We want to build an inspiring alternative vision for the future of Europe and its citizens. ”



**S&D Group Bureau Members:**  
(standing from left to right) Stephen Hughes MEP, Edit Herczog MEP, Patrizia Toia MEP, Corina Crețu MEP, Sylvie Guillaume MEP, Hannes Swoboda - S&D Group President, Enrique Guerrero Salom MEP, Libor Rouček MEP, Bernhard Rapkay MEP (as well as Véronique de Keyser MEP and Göran Färm MEP, not pictured).

# TIME for a different EUROPE

The Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament strongly believe it's time for a change of direction. The European Union is the most remarkable achievement of the past century, creating an unprecedented period of peace, democracy, co-operation and prosperity in Europe.

Yet Europe is now in danger. Euroscepticism, nationalism and populism are growing. For too many people Europe is now synonymous with wasted public money and blind austerity imposed by obscure technocrats. And the crisis has also created dangerous divisions between richer and poorer countries and regions. In reaction, people are too often seduced by destructive nationalist and anti-European messages.

But it's unfair to simply blame Europe for the crisis. At EU and national level, the right-wing have blocked moves to regulate the financial markets, tried to make the internal market the sole purpose of Europe and undermined social justice and solidarity.

The conservative answer to the crisis is cuts in services, cutbacks in investment and making ordinary people pay for the mess made by greedy bankers. They're pushing our economy into a vicious circle of recession and using the crisis as an excuse to further dismantle our social system. It's just plain wrong and it doesn't work. The austerity experiment has now failed in several countries.

**There is an alternative.** The Socialists and Democrats have plans for a surer and faster way out of crisis. Our way will restore growth and jobs and reshape our economy for a fairer society. We have ambitious plans for investment in jobs and innovation, better regulation to control the markets and solidarity to make sure citizens can live decent lives and have hope for the future. European policy must shift from a narrow, market-dominated focus to reflect European society and citizens' concerns. We need a different balance between economic, social and environmental concerns, a new sustainable balance between market forces and smart regulation.

This is the only fair way out of the crisis and the only way for a great idea like Europe to survive and flourish in the future.

We believe that the solution is not less Europe, but a closer, better Europe. We need your help to develop this idea and we want to learn from all of you, from your life experience and your expectations for a better life.  
**We need you to relaunch Europe.**



**Photo on top:** "The European Union is the most remarkable achievement of the past century, creating an unprecedented period of peace, democracy, co-operation and prosperity in Europe." European Commissioner for Competition, Joaquín Almunia at the Relaunching Europe event in Brussels, October 2012.

# FIXING THE BANKS and getting out of the crisis

Financial markets are still not regulated enough and it is time that those who helped cause the crisis help fix it – and are held responsible. The regulation of financial markets is one of our main priorities to ensure we avoid a similar crisis.

## FINANCIAL MARKETS AND INTEREST RATES

Greed, excessive risk-taking, poor regulation and distorted incentives caused a catastrophe in 2008 and we're still paying the price. Better regulation of the financial sector can build a more stable financial system, outlaw extreme risk-taking, cut speculation and end the bonus culture.

- We want to see **smarter, stricter financial regulation** and strong supervisory authorities to make sure the financial sector serves the needs of businesses and citizens.
- Unfairly **high interest rates** are bankrupting struggling countries and keeping Europe in recession. Conservative governments have failed to act, but with serious commitment across Europe we can drive interest rates down – through Eurobonds and help from the European Central Bank – and give countries the breathing space they need for reforms.

## TAXATION

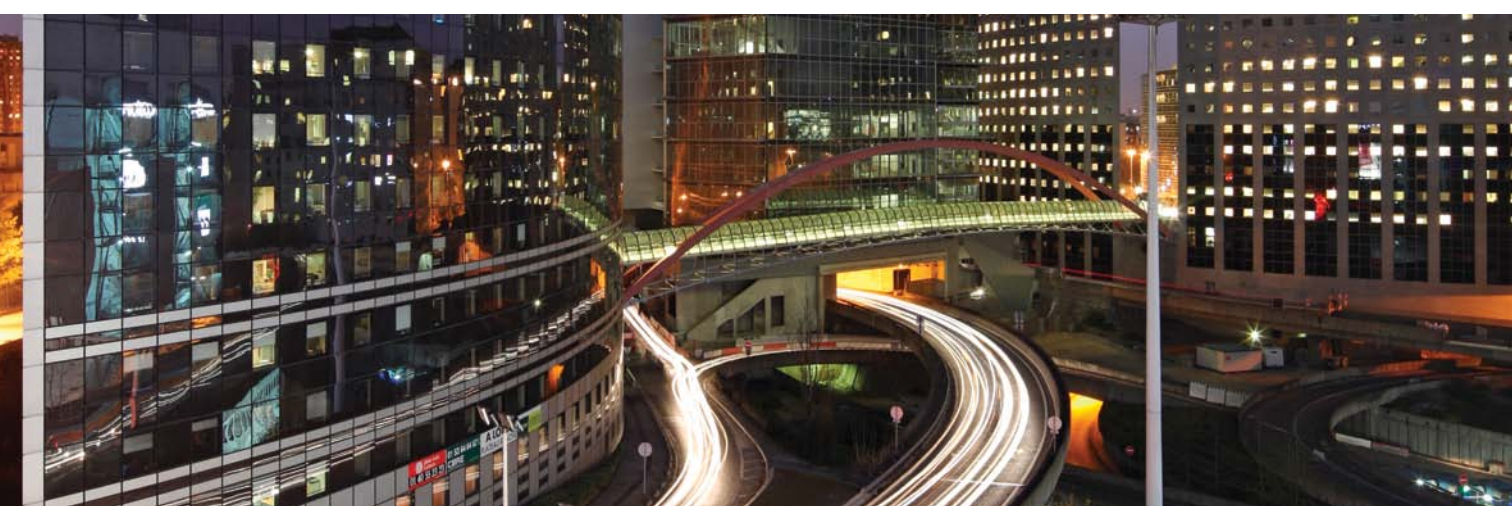
A fair tax system can close the loopholes and the tax havens, bringing in billions of euros to cut budget deficits and finance training and investment, research and development.

- We want a **European Financial Transaction Tax** (a 'Robin Hood tax') to raise €80-200 billion a year.
- **Tax evasion** costs EU governments €1 trillion per year! Closing loopholes and fighting tax havens can give a huge boost to financial and economic recovery, reduce inequality and ensure that hard work and creativity bring rewards.

## BUDGETING FOR GROWTH

Crash dieting is not the answer! Public debt and deficit levels need to be properly controlled, but when public spending is cut too far and too fast, it inflicts massive social damage and actually deepens the recession. We want a realistic strategy that balances the books while letting the economy grow and protecting citizens.

- The **European budget** (at just 1% of overall European GDP) is vital to boost public investment, for example in growth, jobs, research, innovation and infrastructure. We want the budget to focus on the industries, skills and technologies of the future and on creating decent, secure jobs and closing the gap between rich and poor regions.
- EU funds invested in the poorest regions lead to full order books for manufacturers and businesses in the richer countries, so all parts of Europe benefit. **A Europe of solidarity**, investment and sustainable growth is a win-win story.



# GETTING EUROPEANS back to work

For the first time in recent history young people can't look forward to a better life than their parents. Unemployment and job insecurity are rising dramatically, especially among the young, and in some countries youth unemployment is over 50%. Decent jobs and full employment must be Europe's top priority.

For the Socialists and Democrats, it's obvious that fairness for workers goes hand in hand with a stronger economy. While the conservatives are convinced that protecting workers fairly and regulating the labour market damages profits and economic growth, we believe sensible legislation can help build a more inclusive society, reduce economic insecurity and narrow the gap between rich and poor.

## A EUROPEAN 'GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT PACT'

We propose a Europe-wide agreement on growth and employment to launch co-ordinated action in each country to boost employment and investment. Europe has binding targets on many economic issues but still not on employment levels.

Jobs can't be ordered into existence, but investment and incentive policies can be put in place to create a favourable and socially fair environment.

## A EUROPEAN YOUTH GUARANTEE

We want a 'European Youth Guarantee' promising young people a job or further training or education if they are still unemployed after several months – read more about the campaign here:

[www.youth-guarantee.eu](http://www.youth-guarantee.eu)

We can also support school-leavers better with voluntary traineeships. Public funding for good-quality traineeships is a valuable investment for the future.

## THE POWER OF SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES

The Socialists and Democrats are convinced sustainable technology means jobs and opportunities for Europe. We want to see 10 million new green jobs created by 2020, based on renewable energies, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, re-skilling and research and development.

### DID YOU KNOW...

In some countries in Europe 1 in 2 young people can't find work. The talents of a whole generation of bright young people are being wasted.



“ Unemployment and job insecurity are rising dramatically, especially among the young, and in some countries youth unemployment is over 50%. ”



# A NEW industrial revolution

The Socialists and Democrats stand for a new and ambitious European industrial policy. A revitalised industrial sector will provide millions of high-quality jobs and boost the economy. Europe's future economy cannot be based solely on services and a few high-technology niche activities. We will take the lead in championing key high-employment industrial sectors where Europe can still be competitive.

We need a pro-active policy to renew and develop European industry, with an ambitious, strategic approach at European level and better co-ordination between states. We want European policy to champion excellence, sustainability and innovation.

## A EUROPE OF EXCELLENCE

The world is changing rapidly and we need to adapt to new challenges and tough competition. We can't be the lowest-cost producer but we can be the best and the Socialists and Democrats stand for a Europe of excellence: the best-trained workers, cutting-edge research, world-class infrastructure and public services, the highest environmental standards.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDGE IN GLOBAL MARKETS

Sustainable technologies can give Europe a competitive advantage and demand is growing. Europe needs shift to carbon-neutral and renewable energy sources, more efficient use and reuse of raw materials and research to reduce pollution.

## FINANCING INNOVATION

Smaller companies (SMEs) are vital for innovation and growth in Europe. They are a massive source of employment and innovation and too often they have been denied access to the finance they need. We need to make sure they have more public support and that reforms in the financial sector ensure real entrepreneurship replaces short-term profit-seeking. European project-bonds are another tool for financing innovation and investment in infrastructure.

## NURTURING IDEAS

The Socialists and Democrats support innovation and we want to do everything we can to allow companies to grow and build on their ideas. We have pushed for rapid action on a European patent to support new ideas and European entrepreneurs.

## DID YOU KNOW...

Smart, sustainable technology can provide jobs. Meeting the EU's energy efficiency targets will create 2 million new jobs by 2020.

“ The world is changing rapidly and we need to adapt to new challenges and tough competition. ”



# THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION: media freedom and online rights

Access to information and the internet are changing our world and the S&D Group believe we should manage this change for the benefit of citizens. The digital revolution offers opportunities for Europe's jobs and industry, but also for an open, creative and inclusive society.

## MEDIA FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY

Citizens' access to information depends on media freedom and diversity. The Socialists and Democrats have led the fight against those right-wing governments which have tried to limit **freedom of expression**. We want common European standards and policies to guarantee media freedom, as well as EU intervention when media freedom and pluralism are under threat in an EU member state.

## RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS ONLINE

The internet should remain a place of freedom. We reject attempts to curb this freedom through measures like forcing internet service providers to install systems for filtering electronic communications.

Copyright laws should consider competing sets of rights and strike a fair balance between rights for citizens and industry, **access to information and culture**, and **fair rewards for creators**. While we defend internet users' freedoms, we also support proper protection for intellectual property and measures to tackle counterfeit goods. Copyright rules must also cope with rapidly shifting technologies and support new economic models.

## EDUCATION FOR INNOVATION AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

IT skills and education are a priority for the S&D Group. Technology and access to information – especially in scientific and technological fields – are becoming ever more crucial for our decisions as workers, voters, citizens, investors and consumers. Democracy itself depends on citizens' access to such knowledge.

In most EU countries there is still a **digital divide** based on income, education, gender, age or region. We can do better than this and want to see improvements in online participation, online rights and social inclusion.

### DID YOU KNOW...

There are threats to media freedom even in the EU. These can take the form of:

- using public order as an excuse to impose censorship
- allowing monopolies and conflicts of interest to develop
- violating the confidentiality of journalists' sources
- exerting political control through politically biased supervision or licensing authorities



“ The digital revolution offers opportunities for Europe's jobs and industry, but also for an open, democratic, creative and inclusive society. ”

# A EUROPE OF DEMOCRACY and fundamental rights

The S&D Group has fought a fierce battle to strengthen European democracy and to defend and promote the values of human dignity, solidarity and security throughout Europe.

## A MORE DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

- The S&D Group led the European Parliament's **veto of the proposed EU-US SWIFT agreement** on processing passenger data, which failed to safeguard citizens' data and civil liberties. Our action led to a new agreement with better democratic guarantees.
- We helped establish the **European Citizens' Initiative** — an important new way for citizens to have a direct impact on the democratic process. The Citizens' Initiative gives EU citizens the right to set the agenda — if they gather 1 million signatures they can ask the Commission to draft proposals for new laws. We are strongly supporting several Citizens' Initiatives.

## DEFENCE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

- The Socialists and Democrats played a pivotal role in killing off **ACTA**, the controversial anti-counterfeiting agreement which threatened to sacrifice civil liberties to commercial interests. International action is needed to combat the abuse of intellectual property rights, but not at the expense of citizens' freedom.
- The **Schengen agreement** which allows citizens to cross borders freely is a major achievement for Europe and we've long been fighting to defend it. Some conservative governments have tried to restrict this freedom and renationalise their borders but we will continue to oppose this threat to one of our key freedoms, freedom of movement.

## DID YOU KNOW...

The Citizens' Initiative allows EU citizens to call directly on the Commission for legislative action on any issue within its powers. You just have to collect 1 million signatures from across Europe in support of your ideas

## ACTA: WHOSE RIGHTS DOES IT PROTECT?

The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement



Join us for an open debate in the European Parliament  
Thursday 12 April 2012 from 9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Room JAN 402  
or watch and participate live on [www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu](http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu)  
On-line registration obligatory for all participants



Photo on right: S&D Group staff at the Open Days in the European Parliament – Strasbourg, 20 May 2012

# AN OPEN and inclusive Europe: our EuropePlus initiative

Europe is plagued by rising extremism and xenophobia. And sadly many mainstream conservative groups also accept far-right ideas, notably attacking the Roma. The Socialists and Democrats stand for a Europe of tolerance, solidarity and inclusion, united in its diversity, and we're proud to defend the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

We want the European Commission to use its powers to protect civil liberties and democracy and to take firm action against those who ignore them. And we want an ambitious European approach to ending all forms of discrimination, whether based on ethnicity, religion, belief, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

## EUROPE PLUS

We're starting the EuropePlus initiative because we believe that all citizens of Europe, regardless of where they or their parents came from, are an integral part of our society. It's essential that migrants and their children are given opportunities to be full members of European society, through participation and citizenship.

We want all citizens in the EU to be able to have multiple identities: regional, national and European.

## IMMIGRATION, ASYLUM AND INTEGRATION

We want to promote a sustainable asylum policy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms. We take a positive approach to legal migration and integration but we're also committed to tackling the problems that force people to leave their homes and migrate or seek asylum.

## SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

Rejecting racism and intolerance, we stand for positive and concrete answers to the underlying social problems which breed despair and radicalisation in some segments of our societies.

## NATIONALISM AND EUROSCEPTICISM

Xenophobia offers no solution to recession and unemployment. We can't ignore our inter-dependence and through common solutions and unity we can have a greater influence in the world scene.

## STRENGTHENING COHESION

Europe needs to build social cohesion and mutual trust between different groups in society. There are great examples of programmes that work and by learning from local activists, NGOs, the business community and trade unions we can promote the best practices for integration and cohesion.



“ We stand for a Europe of tolerance, solidarity and inclusion, united in its diversity and we are proud to defend the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. ”

# MANAGING GLOBALISATION

## Europe's positive role in the world

In a rapidly changing world where people are more and more dependent on each other, we want a foreign policy based on the principles of solidarity, freedom, justice and equality. And working together Europe's voice can make a difference.

### DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRADE

European trade policy can be a tool for change. The S&D Group want all Europe's trade agreements to work not only for the good of European citizens and businesses, but also to be a force for good in the countries we work with – promoting the fight against discrimination and inequality. We are committed to these fundamental values and constantly insist on including binding social, labour and environmental rules and standards in all our trade agreements.

### SOLIDARITY FOR ALL

Solidarity remains a key concept for the S&D Group. We have ensured that development issues are kept high on the agenda. Ending poverty, reaching the Millennium Development Goals and making aid and development policies more effective remain our political priorities.

### DID YOU KNOW...

Over 215 million children worldwide work as child labourers, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The S&D Group fights for strong rules outlawing child labour, for example ensuring the International Cocoa Agreement banned child workers in the chocolate industry.



Véronique de Keyser, Vice-President of the S&D Group at the Arab Spring Conference, Tunis, 30 March 2012



“ Working together Europe's voice can make a difference. ”

Photo on right: S&D Group President Hannes Swoboda visiting a community project - Mozambique, August 2012

# SAVING OUR PLANET: sustainable development worldwide

The economic crisis has distracted attention from environmental challenges and sustainable development, but **urgent action is needed** at European and global level. Greening our economy is not just an end in itself but can help Europe out of the crisis – a more sustainable economic model will create huge opportunities for employment and wealth creation.

It's **also a question of solidarity** – guaranteeing a decent environment for all and supporting the developing world, where the worst impacts of climate change are already being felt. But also solidarity between generations, because this planet is borrowed from our children, not inherited from our parents.

#### LEADING ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The S&D Group are the main driving force for environmental legislation in the European Parliament, resulting in legislation benefiting citizens' daily lives – on energy efficiency, research and innovation in clean technologies, sustainable transport networks,

restrictions on hazardous substances, limits on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from vehicles and many more.

We believe in the long-term benefits of sustainable development and a fair balance between social, economic and environmental concerns. We reject the right-wing approach of sacrificing environmental measures to short-term corporate interests.

#### GREENING EUROPE'S AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

**Agriculture** and **fisheries** have immense importance for the environment. We want to see radical reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to promote sustainable, high-quality foods; long term management of natural resources; measures to combat climate change; and jobs in rural areas.

On **fisheries** we need sustainable policies to allow fish stocks to recover, end overfishing, eliminate discards and regionalise fisheries management to achieve a healthy marine and freshwater environment.

#### DID YOU KNOW...

The amount of fish we catch could rise by 9 million tons (+10%) if young fish were not caught so early and over-fishing was reduced, according to the UN's fisheries statistics (FAO).

“ We believe in the long-term benefits of sustainable development and a fair balance between social, economic and environmental concerns. ”



# ABOUT the S&D Group



The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (the S&D Group) is the second largest political group in the European Parliament with 190 members from all 27 EU member states and 12 observer members from Croatia.

We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness.

We campaign for social justice, jobs and growth, consumer rights, sustainable development, financial market reforms and human rights to create a stronger and more democratic Europe and a better future for all citizens.

“ We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness. ”

[www.relaunchingeurope.eu](http://www.relaunchingeurope.eu)



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Relaunching Europe initiative.  
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