

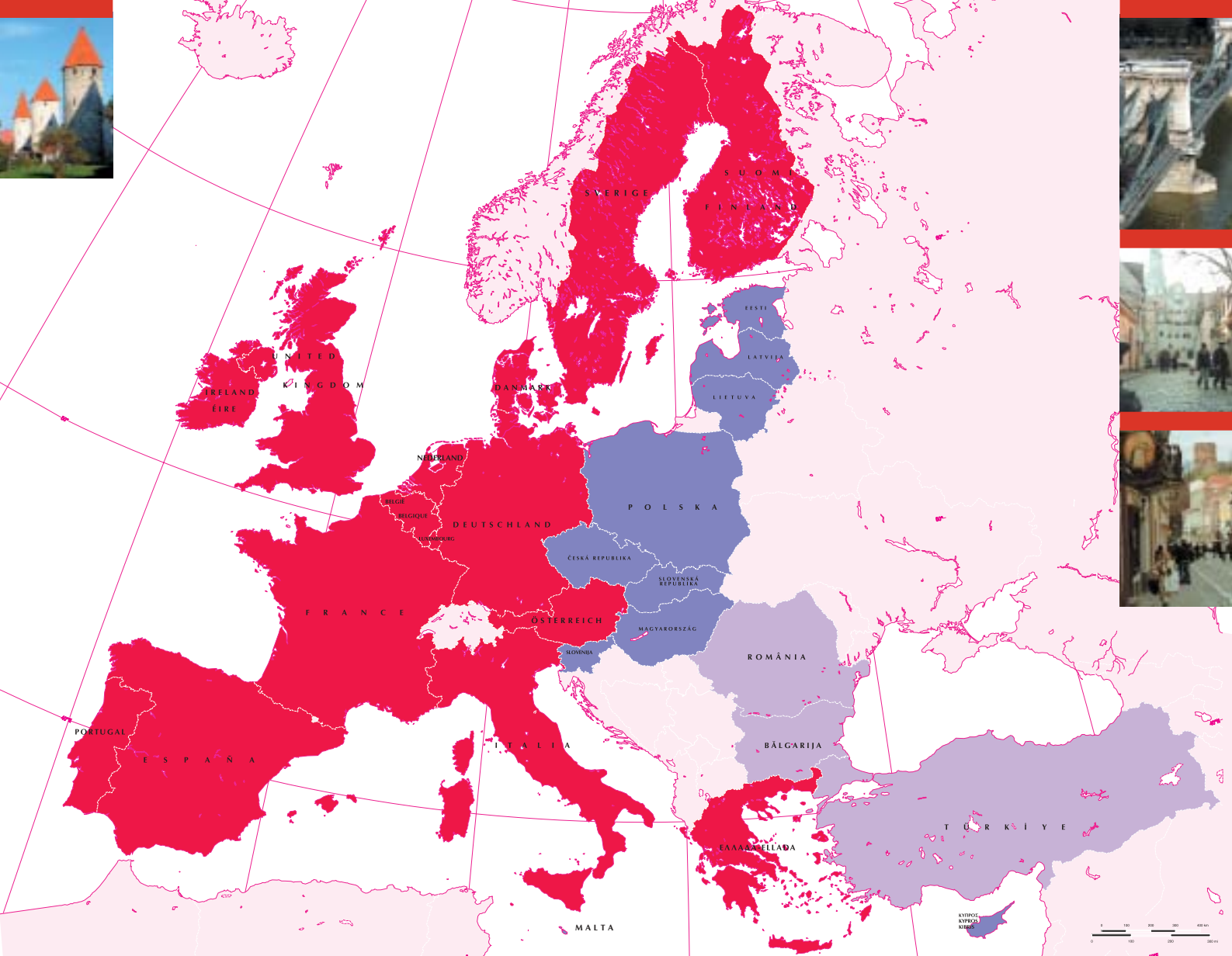
Enlargement



PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF THE PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS

Over the past 30 years, the European Economic Community of six Member States has grown into a European Union of fifteen. Soon it will grow even further, with ten States, the Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, set to join in May 2004, and Bulgaria and Romania aiming for entry in 2007.

Enlargement represents the greatest challenge and the greatest opportunity for the European Union. The PES Group has been a consistent champion of EU enlargement and of the reunification of Europe. We were first to call for new Member States to have the prospect of participating in the 2004 European Elections. After long and sometimes difficult negotiations, an agreement on the Accession Treaty was reached at the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002, paving the way for the EU25 in 2004 and beyond.





Why enlargement?

We believe that enlargement is in all of our interests. Previous accessions have demonstrated the economic benefits to all European countries of an expanded, dynamic, internal market and the enormous increase in trade, strengthening the social market economy and raising living standards within the Union. Enlargement is a 'win-win' situation for all concerned.

As socialists and social democrats, we seek to promote our common values of solidarity, social justice and democracy throughout the continent. We believe in the founding principle of the EU, that by working together we can achieve more than we achieve alone.

We believe that enlargement will be a solution to many of the problems we face together. In a world of insecurity, enlargement offers the prospect of stability and an end to conflicts. Enlargement offers inclusion and the hope of economic prosperity, the consolidation of democratic values and the rule of law for all.

We want the European Union to be a Union of shared values, preserving our different identities, while recognising our common interests as Europeans. Respect for multiculturalism is essential and beneficial to us all: it should not be feared, but supported actively.

The EU can only strengthen democracy, political and economic progress if it remains stable and develops to expand the benefits of working together across the Continent.

Our policy priorities

Our policies for an enlarged European Union include:

- **Welfare and the social dimension**

After enlargement, the EU should work to reduce economic and social gaps between richer and poorer areas of the EU. Peripheral regions must not feel excluded from the benefits of EU membership. We must work together to address the issues of poverty and exclusion. We want to highlight and develop the role of social dialogue as an instrument for social progress.

- **Employment and prosperity**

Opening the market to such a wide Union will stimulate economic growth, creating employment and prosperity. We must use this opportunity to work on our goal of full employment in Europe through the optimal use of European training schemes and job skills development.

- **The environment and nuclear safety**

Enlargement must lead to a raising of environmental standards throughout the enlarged Union. We recognise that time and assistance will be required for the implementation of Europe's advanced environmental legislation, but a clear timetable must be defined for the phasing-in of measures to ensure health and safety standards for all European citizens. We must address together the future of the nuclear industry and the security of energy supplies.

- **The new European borders**

Enlargement will have a clear and immediate impact on the new border regions of the EU. Strong support must be given to the new border states, increasing co-operation between customs, police and judicial services.



- **Women's rights and equal opportunities**

We have consistently sought to promote gender equality throughout the EU. The promotion of women's rights is central to our human rights agenda. The effective implementation of measures against trafficking in women and domestic violence against women must be at the heart of the Union's agenda throughout enlargement and into the future. The promotion not only of equal opportunities, but also of equal participation in the decision making process must be a key priority throughout the continent.

- **Measures against discrimination**

Our group has been at the forefront of the fight against discrimination within the EU and beyond. We led calls for anti-discrimination measures to be given force across the Union under European law. Enlarging the EU means an extension of multiculturalism and the need for strong anti-discrimination measures to protect all European citizens from discrimination on the grounds of nationality, gender, ethnic background, religion and sexual orientation. We must combine effective anti-discrimination measures with social policies that benefit all. The EU must adopt strategies for integrating minorities and recognising their legitimate rights.

- **The fight against corruption, organised crime and terrorism**

Security and the fight against crime are amongst the greatest worries of European citizens. Corruption destroys democracy and our economic security. We all share the responsibility to stop the growth of organised international crime. Enlargement is a chance to further effective cross-border co-operation and to ensure a widened Union of peace, security and justice.

PES Group enlargement activities

The PES Group has taken and will continue to take active steps to promote and facilitate EU enlargement. Our Vice-President, Gary Titley MEP, is responsible for co-ordinating our work and chairs our Enlargement Working Party, which deals with issues arising across the Parliament's committees or affecting several or all countries.

Our members are active in the European Parliament's Joint Parliamentary Committees, almost all of which are chaired or co-chaired by a PES member. We work closely with MPs from PES parties in the future member states to try to ensure that the concerns of all of our constituents are taken on board.

We have excellent and regular contacts with European Commissioners working on enlargement issues, in particular Günter Verheugen and other Commissioners from our political family.

The Group co-operates closely with the Party of European Socialists, which is in a unique position to bring together members of our political family in the existing European Union and the Union of the future.

Maintaining relations with sister parties and their parliamentary groups are an important part of our agenda. The Group regularly sends delegations of MEPs to the accession countries and observer MPs from accession countries regularly attend meetings of the Group. The Group offers young trainees from the future Member States the chance to gain practical experience of the work of the European Union in Brussels. PES Group MEPs are always willing to participate as speakers at conferences and other events organised in the future EU countries in co-operation with the Parliamentary Groups of our sister parties.



As part of our commitment to make the enlargement process a political success, the Group has launched the 'Willy Brandt programme for a successful enlargement'. The programme's main purpose is to provide information about the European Union, and in particular about the activities of the European Parliament and our Group in the future Member States and to provide information about the political situation in those countries to the people of the present EU. The programme takes its name from the German SPD politician, whose work towards the unification of Europe won him the Nobel Peace Prize and inspired the Group's enlargement motto: 'Together for one Europe of Peace, of Prosperity, of Stability'.

By building on the already strong links, which the PES Group has with its sister parties throughout Europe, the Willy Brandt Programme aims:

- To prepare the smooth integration of observers and future MEPs into the activities and the structures of the Group.
- To provide support in the referendum campaigns.
- To work towards the strongest possible representation from the social democratic parties of the future member states in the 2004 European Parliament.

The work of the programme includes:

- setting up a rapid answering service in the Group secretariat to react to EU questions - available for the parties and the parliamentary groups;
- a speakers' co-ordination service, to organise the speaking engagements of PES MEPs and others in the accession countries;
- newsletters with relevant EP information and with specific enlargement information;
- production of information materials about socialist policies and the PES Group in the EP;
- special training sessions for observers and potential MEPs from the new States;
- education and training for Party activists and MPs and their staff and prospective MEPs on how the EU works, the benefits of membership and Group policies;
- an introduction programme for observers and Members from the new Member States, including training and fostering by experienced MEPs;
- training for existing PES MEPs on politics and policies in the accession countries.

The future

The challenge for Europe in the 1980s was to build the single market. The challenge in the 1990s was to create a single currency. The challenge at the beginning of this millennium is to enlarge the EU in a way that creates stability, peace and prosperity for all.

We look forward to welcoming MEPs from our sister parties in the enlarged EU as members of our Group.



Contacts

Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists,
European Parliament, Rue Wiertz, B-1047 Brussels.
Tel: +32 2 284 2111 (Brussels) +33 3 88 17 4001 (Strasbourg)

<http://www.socialistgroup.org>