

Europe

**AND THE THREAT FROM
EXTREMISM AND POPULISM**

**A PROGRESSIVE
RESPONSE**



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

EXTREMISM WG

*Working Group on Extremism, Populism,
Nationalism and Xenophobia*

This publication represents an activity report of the
**S&D Working Group on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism and
Xenophobia**

Chair - Sylvie Guillaume, MEP

Edited by Frazer Clarke and Linda Moldovan, S&D Group Secretariat

Content

Preface by Hannes Swoboda	4
Sylvie Guillaume on the “Far-Right and Populism on the Rise: Urgent Action Required”	6
The Budapest Declaration of The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament	8
Policy Document on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism, Xenophobia, Islamophobia and Antisemitism of The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament - Adopted on 17 th November 2010	10
Policy Paper on the Rise of Right Wing Extremism and Populism in Europe of The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament - Adopted on 16 th April 2014, in Strasbourg	14
Press Monitoring	19
S&D Activities	23
A. Conferences	23
B. Fact Finding Missions	31
C. Study on Democracy Backsliders: Measuring Democracy in the EU	34
The Extreme and Radical Right: a Challenge to Social-Democrats - by Jan Marinus Wiersma	36

Preface

by Hannes Swoboda



When the S&D Group decided to set up a special working group to monitor the growth of populism and right-wing extremism in Europe five years ago, we were celebrating the economic and political success of a major enlargement of the European Union, but we were also observing a worrying dynamic both in Eastern and Western Europe: the silent rise of new nationalisms and populisms, the tendency to question minority rights, the use of racial hate speech in political discourse against a backdrop of a growing distance between citizens and institutions.

We decided to monitor these trends because, as Socialists and Democrats, we felt and still feel that these dynamics risked building a trench right through the heart of the European Union. Indeed what was at stake was the very core of the European project as one based on democracy, citizenship, equality, non-discrimination. Growing populism and right-wing extremisms questioned the idea of Europe as a community of rights and values.

The Extremism Working Group has been working incessantly during the last five years, not just as an alert and response mechanism, but also and foremost as a unique forum for political debate over the state of democracy, rule of law and rights in the European Union.

It was this reflection that supported our Group in its parliamentary work, allowing us to promote and push forward

political resolutions and initiatives including on fundamental rights in the EU, on minority rights, Roma rights, LGBTI rights.

Today, as we celebrate the anniversary of the tragic events of 1914, that marked the beginning of World War I and the start of a long dark phase in European history marked by immense suffering, by death and destruction, we need to remember that Europe was born from this tragedy to secure peace, welfare, prosperity and ensure that nationalism and populism would never again lead the way.

If we look at the European Union as it is today, we cannot say these core objectives of the European project have yet been secured. New nationalisms and new movements and parties using fear and hatred against minorities are again on the rise and new divisions between East and West, North and South are created and exploited.

The truth is that the European Union today is in many ways failing to fulfil its promises and its duties. The austerity driven response to the crisis, promoted by conservatives and liberals in Europe, has produced unacceptable levels of unemployment, rising inequalities, unbearable social costs and cuts to citizens' basic rights.

Nationalisms and populisms have been growing out of this misery, exploiting people's fears and insecurity. And they have been growing also because the distance between

citizens and politics has widened in Europe, making it difficult for citizens to talk, choose, be heard.

One of the main lessons coming from the work of our S&D Extremism Working Group is that the fight against nationalism and populism can be won if we stand firm against the rhetoric of hate, discrimination and aggression, and at the same time if we succeed in putting Europe back

on track and back to work, away from austerity, towards economic and social policies producing welfare, growth, jobs and education for all.

This fight for a new, alternative Europe - a fair and social Europe for all - has been at the centre of our efforts during these five years and it will remain our top priority for the years to come.



Hannes SWOBODA
President of S&D Group
January 2012 - June 2014

Far-Right and Populism on the Rise

Urgent Action Required

by Sylvie Guillaume



In recent years, we have witnessed the **rise** and, in some cases, the **consolidation of ideologies of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and violence, as well as of anti-European rhetoric.**

The challenging climate in which we are now living, (which Paul Krugman, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, describes as “austeritarian” Europe), marked by the disintegration of social ties and citizens’ rejection of governments and political elites, offers a fertile breeding ground for racism, xenophobia and hate crimes, which are rising to an alarming extent. Why alarming? Because our values of democracy, solidarity and tolerance are under threat.

These ideologies go against the very principles on which Europe is built, challenging policies that foster an inclusive, open and tolerant society, and opposing values such as peace, freedom and modernity.

Alongside violent extremism, which is becoming more evident and easier to recognise, **there are also remarks, allusions, taunts and other insidious forms of expression that become**

more widespread day by day, not least through the new media of the very popular social networks. The discourse there is left wide-open; but we must respond, otherwise we would leave people to draw the conclusion that those words - as trivial as they seem - can become acceptable in our society, which is absolutely not the case.

Hate speeches that were unthinkable a few years ago, are **now gaining popularity**; this **uninhibited narrative** has crept insidiously into the political debate, to the point that it has now become more or less “acceptable”.

Finally, it is now **common to see populism, nationalism and Euroscepticism prosper in debates in the European Parliament** and this trend is not very likely to be reversed, considering the activity of parties such as the Front National, UKIP, or Golden Dawn.

The fight against extremism and populism has always been a political priority for our Group and we have always worked to develop concrete answers and solutions, in line with our values and beliefs as socialists and democrats. While

hate speeches continue to infiltrate mainstream political movements, exploiting the fears of the most vulnerable, as a recipe for a supposed electoral success, it is more necessary than ever to build the means to fight against these discriminations. They should be considered as unacceptable, rather than just being trivialised.

Our **Working Group on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism and Xenophobia** has carried out extensive monitoring of **this phenomenon**, in the European Parliament and in the Member States, having constant **exchanges of views with NGOs and experts**. We have also visited several countries, through **fact-finding missions**, such as the one in **2011, in Luton, United Kingdom**, on the development of the **English Defence League**; or in **2012 in Athens**, to look at how **Golden Dawn** has developed in Greece.

We organized **conferences**, such as that on the **attacks in Oslo and Utøya** on 22 July 2011, where we had the opportunity to listen to particularly moving testimonies from survivors of the massacre.

We also **supported the publication**, last autumn, of a **report** from the think tank **DEMOS** measuring the general state of democracy in the European Union; and focusing on several Member States in particular. The study confirmed that there are significant concerns regarding **threats to democratic principles which exist at all levels of society**. More generally, the report showed that Europe has become less tolerant towards minority groups, especially regarding attitudes towards Muslims, which have substantially hardened since 2000.

In terms of our parliamentary work throughout the last mandate, we have repeatedly called - and we are still calling - for Member States to finally unlock the proposal for an **anti-discrimination directive** and intensify their efforts so that we can finally move from words to acts; and make sure that the statements of support made by most of the democratic

forces, do not remain mere wishful thinking. In July 2012, despite conservative opposition, we managed to have the EP adopt a **resolution on the situation of fundamental rights in Hungary**, highlighting our concerns about the abuses of a dangerously populist government, threatening European values, with serious attacks against freedom of speech and minority rights.

Finally, on 14th March 2013, we supported the adoption of a **resolution to strengthen the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crime**. We asked in particular for the strengthening of all European criminal law instruments, in order to combat those crimes more efficiently, while in compliance with the principle of freedom of expression. We also invited the Council to revise the Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on the fight against certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, to extend its content to demonstrations and acts of anti-Semitism, religious intolerance, anti-Gypsyism, homophobia and transphobia.

It is in this context that we must, more than ever, strengthen our efforts to restore economic growth and the job market, thus **allowing people to regain trust in the future**. But recent election results show that we need to pay more attention to the concerns of citizens, as they no longer believe in proposals made by traditional parties and want a radical change in the current management of politics. This message must be heard.



Sylvie Guillaume

MEP, Vice-president of the S&D Group;
Chair of the Working Group on
Extremism, Populism, Nationalism and Xenophobia
January 2012 - June 2014



The Budapest Declaration

The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

We call on the European Union to take urgent and resolute action against growing forces of hatred and division in society.

We denounce all forms of extremism and populism, including ultra-nationalism, xenophobia, islamophobia and anti-semitism. We are deeply concerned by the influence of these forces on young people and by mainstream right or centre-right parties adopting extremist policies both in opposition and in government.

We warn that these developments threaten European influence in the world and the development of our Union. We need to tackle unemployment among young people, who lack hope for the future.

Our vision is of an open and inclusive society and a European citizenship that adds to the quality of people's lives. We call for robust defence of the EU's fundamental values of tolerance, non-discrimination and cultural diversity.

Inclusion, integration and education must be the cornerstones of a successful European Union.

Across the European Union, Roma integration needs special attention. This includes a comprehensive strategy for jobs and education to improve living standards, respecting the dignity of the Roma people whilst expecting them to shoulder their responsibility in society. Roma communities need protection from exploitation by organised crime and from all forms of discrimination. We call on governments to reject policies that undermine these goals, such as the recent expulsions of Roma from France.

The EU has a crucial leadership role to play in realising our vision. We call for:

- **URGENT** development of policies on social problems that extremists are quick to exploit, such as poverty and joblessness;
- **FULL** European Commission commitment to defence of the Treaty and making member states respect their obligations; and
- **IMMEDIATE** adoption by the Council of the anti-discrimination directive.

We pledge our support for progressive new laws to defend the European model of tolerance and inclusion. As the leading progressive group in the European Parliament, we welcome open discussion of all genuine problems in

society. We are proud of our constructive agenda for social and economic reform and we believe that in open debate our views will prevail over the shallow solutions offered by populists, eurosceptics and ultra-nationalists.

We commit ourselves to monitoring activities that threaten social coherence and pledge our support for effective counter-measures. We urge all political forces to join us in promoting the democratic values of the European Union and in rejecting movements based on hatred or suspicion of specific groups in society.

To this end, we invite the European institutions to issue a joint solemn declaration of their commitment to a Europe of freedom, tolerance and justice.

Policy Document on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism, Xenophobia, Islamophobia and Antisemitism

The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament Adopted on 17th November 2010

- 1.** The S & D Group is concerned that more and more incidents and actions, encouraged and endorsed even by governments, including elements of extremism, even religious extremism, populism, extreme nationalism, islamophobia, anti-semitism and xenophobia, take place in the EU. We are witnessing common practices amongst right-wing/centre right-wing political forces to include far-right ideas in their programmes and policies implemented. Often these policies (such as recent expulsions of Roma in France and previous events in Italy) are in direct violation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Treaty of the European Union and the principles of non-discrimination and free movement. The EU's fundamental values of tolerance, non-discrimination and the principle of "unity in diversity" must be protected and respected, in order to maintain and promote an open and inclusive society and EU citizenship. We equally reject religious extremist ideology which goes against our fundamental European vision. We call on all political forces and social actors in society to work on the basis of these principles and to promote the democratic values of the Union. We urge all political forces to distance themselves clearly and unequivocally from populist, extreme, or far-right-wing ideas and actions. We urge them to condemn strongly the rise of xenophobic activities and organisations by the far-right. This is the only guarantee for maintaining a real democratic, free society inside the EU. And it is the only viable way forward for our EU countries, acting at national level, or at EU level.
- 2.** There is a huge risk of gradually dismantling the social fabric of our societies if we propagate populist stereotypes about immigrants, the Roma, people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds or sexual orientation. This problem is aggravated through the fear of social decline, which a large part of our society faces. The fight for the basic principles of the welfare society and against poverty and social exclusion is therefore not only of vital importance for social and economic policies but also for the prevention against extremist tendencies

within our society. We don't accept the criminalization or stigmatization of social groups because of the economic difficulties. This fight is also essential to preserve our democratic values. Young people, in particular, are more likely to be manipulated towards extremist views, as they tend to be more vulnerable and fragile. Even more so as they are the prime victims of the current economic and financial crisis, creating massive unemployment, precarious jobs, insecurity and unstable social conditions. We must all fight against the real causes for extremism and provide adequate solutions for dealing with these causes.

3. In any event, problems related to the economy and migration should not be used to split the society and to develop economic nationalism and economic populism. Right and centre-right-wing parties should also pay attention not to use such policies as a method to cover government inefficiencies or, even worse, to deflect attention from other critical issues going on in member countries. It is even more unacceptable that extreme policies are adopted by "mainstream" parties of the right or centre-right in opposition or in government. The S&D Group calls on these parties to condemn strongly the rise of extremism and xenophobic activities and organisation by the far-right – there should be no place at all for extremism in the public sphere, be it at local, regional, national or EU-level. It is a fact that the present economic insecurity and the lack of a strong European social dimension breed extreme right-wing populism.
4. There is an obvious link used by the extreme right between extremism and anti-Europeanism and between xenophobic movements and social issues. These links will in the longer run not only harm the European cause and harm further European integration but also weaken the global role of the EU and its influence in the world – a fact that mainstream right-wing and centre right-wing parties should recognize, accept, and take a stand on.

5. We consider all forms of extreme nationalism to be unacceptable. In Central and Southern Europe, national animosities between neighbouring countries play into the hands of right-wing extremists. We are conscious of sensitivities that arise from historical "wounds" - many of which are still open in parts of Europe. However, they cannot be healed by reactionary rhetoric that invokes and misuses demons of the past. As Socialists and Democrats, we have to condemn all attempts to misuse national minorities for nationalistic goals. History is unchangeable. Now is the time to look to the future.
6. The "wounds" of history can, and should, be overcome by positive policies that isolate extremists and extreme nationalists. Hence, we support all efforts to strengthen societal bonds and mutual trust between majority nations and minorities. It is imperative to enhance cross-border cooperation that will benefit all citizens. Emphasis should be placed on cities and regions with massive unemployment and on the least developed regions since underdeveloped regions are sources of support for far-right movements.
7. The S & D Group is strongly of the opinion that inclusion, integration and education play a key role in making our societies successful. The strongest defence against extremism and intolerance lies in the development of a different vision of Europe, which puts a stronger social dimension at its heart. We stand for a Europe of social justice, social inclusion and decent work. The current economic and financial crisis has led to economic and social despair which again has nourished the rise of the extreme right. The stigmatization of some ethnic groups and religions, racist propaganda, islamophobia, anti-semitism and discriminatory activities and rhetoric actions by extreme right-wing groups and arbitrary measures of expulsion taken by some governments, are only bound to lead to social unrest and failure of



integration. Instead we need to follow best-practice examples of integration and experience from people working on the ground and develop a coherent set of guidelines. National governments, mayors, political parties, NGOs, trade unions, companies and people with far-reaching experience in integrationist measures have a shared responsibility in this respect and should work together in order to achieve viable results.

- 8.** The EU has a crucial leadership role to play in dealing with these issues and the Commission must fulfil its role as the guardian of the Treaty, making the Member States respect their obligations. The Commission has lately been far too evasive in its defence of citizens' fundamental rights. The Council of Ministers should without delay adopt the anti-discrimination Directive. Also the European Council must play an active, dynamic and forward-looking role in combating extremism, populism and xenophobia – we encourage the European Council now to re-state in a declaration its commitment to the fundamental principles of the EU and for their application in practice by all Member States.
- 9.** The issue of Roma integration in Europe requires special attention. It necessitates a comprehensive strategy of generous employment policies; it requires an extraordinary effort to provide education for all Roma citizens, and thus gradually improve their living standards. Fully-fledged integration of Roma minorities is a long-term task for the entire EU.
- 10.** In the meantime, we call on governments to refrain from policies that undermine the long-term objective (such as the recent expulsion of Roma by France and previous events in Italy), and to do everything in their capacity to protect Roma communities from exploitation by organised crime, and from all forms of discrimination.

11. We invite our sister parties in the Member States and candidate countries to analyze their policies concerning extremism, populism, nationalism, xenophobia, islamophobia and anti-semitism, and to exchange views about best practices concerning in particular immigration. The socialist family must enhance its dialogue with citizens and we must all reinforce the dialogue with our members and voters concerning these issues, in order to regain the trust of both majority and minorities in society.

12. The S & D Group proposes the following basis for our policies:

- a)** We call on all EU institutions to step up their efforts against any form of extremism, populism, nationalism, xenophobia, islamophobia and anti-semitism which are contrary to EU's fundamental values, take all measures necessary to correct the situation and demand that new legislation be adopted in areas not already covered by the existing legislation;
- b)** We will monitor closely all EU actions in this field and at the same time monitor all decisions and actions taking place in the member countries and draw up regular reports which will be given to the press and media and to NGOs working on these questions;
- c)** We call on political right-wing and centre right-wing parties in government or in opposition to condemn extremist policies and actions. We call on all political and social actors to work together in order to ensure that EU's core values and fundamental rights are respected;
- d)** We will undertake fact-finding missions to countries, and regions, within the EU and candidate countries with the aim of learning about good and bad examples of how to deal with and prevent extremism;

- e) We will organise conferences and meetings to explore the every-day life struggles inside different ethno-cultural groups. We shall strive to find solutions and models that will tangibly improve the conditions of immigrant communities via education and employment. We shall devote increased attention to tackling the real causes behind crime in such communities, many of which stem from failed integration policies, especially amongst the younger generation;
- f) We will organize thematic meetings in Member States treating extremism, populism, nationalism and xenophobia and invite NGOs, experts, journalists and people working daily on the ground with these issues, with the aim of putting forward a series of recommendations and demands;

- g) We encourage the media to use its existing self-regulatory measures to assess extremist, nationalist and xenophobic acts and trends in a high-principled manner. We invite intellectuals, whose voices are heard by the public, to condemn these phenomena. We will strive for a balanced perception of history and avoid one-sided interpretations, in order not to favour any political forces nor feed any radical nationalistic movement;
- h) We will build a network and develop contacts and alliances with national parties, parliamentary groups, NGOs, the press and media and across the EU institutions;
- i) We will work in favour of translating the rhetoric of a stronger social Europe into concrete policies that address poverty and economic insecurity.

Policy Paper on the Rise of Right Wing Extremism and Populism in Europe

The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament - Adopted on 16th April 2014

Europe's values are under threat. They are being challenged by the rise of ideologies of intolerance, racism, xenophobia, violence and by narratives that go against the very core principles on which the European Union is founded. Speeches of hatred that would have been inconceivable a few years ago are gaining in popularity, becoming more uninhibited, and to an extent acceptable in the political debate. More subtle forms of intolerance influence the actions of governments in several Member States and it is by now common to see populist and extremist rhetoric openly expressed.

OUR WORK

Having set up a **working group on extremism, populism, and xenophobia in the European Union**, our Group has been monitoring and promptly reacting to any event or activity that went against the principles of a free and inclusive Europe. **In 2010, the S&D Group adopted a policy document that proposed a set of actions for the current mandate. As we reach the end of the legislature, we have made great progress towards our objectives, having:**

- monitored closely the state of play regarding extremist movements, as well as good practices regarding integration, both at European level and in the Member States. **We carried out fact-finding missions**, including ones to the UK, Greece, Belgium, France and Romania. We have also **drawn up or commissioned reports** that provide a more in-depth analysis, including a comprehensive report that gives a thorough overview of the state of democracy in Europe, published by the independent think tank Demos;
- constantly flagged up developments that put into question the fundamental principles of the EU, working with our social and political partners to ensure that fundamental rights and freedoms are respected. We have regularly **organised conferences and debates with civil society, journalists, experts and representatives of different communities**. These events have included: "An Open Society for All; Media Freedom and Democracy under Threat"; "Media Freedom under Threat: National Problems, European Solutions?"; "The Influence of

the Extreme Right on Mainstream Politics”; “Social Integration - the Key to a Fair and Open Economy”; and “More Openness, More Democracy - The Response to the Oslo and Utøya Attacks”;

- proposed and worked to develop concrete policies to create a stronger social Europe, promoting and supporting initiatives aimed at addressing discrimination, hate crimes and extremism. **We initiated and supported resolutions** (such as those on Discriminatory internet sites and government reactions in 2012; Strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crime; and the Progress made in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in 2013), **reports** (such as those on the Regulation establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund; the Situation of fundamental rights in the EU; and on the EU Justice Scoreboard), **debates in the plenary of the European Parliament** (such as those on the Rise of right-wing extremism in Europe, and on the Situation of the Roma people in the EU in 2013); as well as **calling the European Commission and Council of the EU to account** (for example by the Oral Question on the Situation of Roma in Member States in 2012)

WHAT WE SEE TODAY

Europe under stress

Europe is going through a period of stress and a **prolonged crisis that manifests itself on an economic, social, political level, as well as at the level of personal and national identity**. The economic crisis in itself does not determine the rise of extremism, but the factors deriving from it play a crucial part, as European citizens have to face **increasing poverty, unemployment and imposed austerity**. These can impact on citizens’ way of life and create a **fear of losing their social-economic status quo**. One of the main issues on which populist and extremist parties base their rhetoric throughout Member States is the supposed threat that migration and

minorities represent to their national societies, **migrants and minorities being used as scapegoats** for most of the difficulties that citizens are going through. It is the conjuncture of these factors that has led to a **loss of trust in the established system and traditional parties**, providing a breeding ground for angry anti-establishment rhetoric.

The rise of right-wing extremist and populist parties and movements

We have observed a growing trend in the popularity of right-wing populist, anti-establishment and extremist parties and movements. Although they may demonstrate different degrees of aggressiveness (some of them presenting themselves with “new clothes”, focusing on social themes and seeking to de-demonise their parties, on the margins of respectability), **these parties share many similarities and focus on the same issues in their narrative**. Tolerance towards extremist violence begins from the acceptance of extremist ideologies and ideas, develops as a generalised justification of illegal acts, and ultimately can turn into an attack against social cohesion and democracy.

Rhetoric of intolerance, aggressiveness and hate

Far-right populists and extremists try to present themselves as the real representatives of the people, voicing the problems that citizens face and expressing their dissatisfaction with the current state of play. They adopt a very simplistic narrative, stating the obvious in an emotional way, rebelling against all the difficulties the society is going through and in return bringing forward only proposals that are clearly unfeasible and even damaging.

Issues such as **the economic crisis, migration, globalisation and ultimately the idea of a united Europe are used, misused and misrepresented irresponsibly, with the sole purpose of gaining more popularity**. Populist parties focus on immigration in their rhetoric, highlighting it as a burden or even as an invasion,

and making random connections between immigration and the consequences of the economic crisis.

Very worryingly, **hate speech has infiltrated the political and social debate in Europe**, stretching the limits of acceptability of expressions of hatred to very high levels, fuelling a climate of suspicion, aggressiveness and, ultimately, crime. We have reached a stage where dissimulation is no longer necessary and xenophobic, discriminatory and even racist ideas can be expressed freely and without being reprehended.

Another worrying aspect is that in some member states extremist, anti-LGBTI, nationalist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and anti-Roma declarations from the far-right are becoming more and more frequent and without being challenged by mainstream parties and politicians.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

Reveal the reality behind populist and extremist speech

What is the Europe that populists and extremists promote? How would our lives be if we followed their scenarios of intolerance and xenophobia? We need to **show where populist and extremist proposals would actually lead** and have a **strong voice against any discourse promoting discrimination, aggression or hate**. We need to counter their narrative point by point, giving fact based arguments against every misleading idea, every wrong fact and wrong number; and every destructive proposal that they make. Populists and extremists distort reality to better suit their ideas and most of the time have no basis for their affirmations, other than emotional ones. As socialists and democrats, **we can provide facts, figures and constructive proposals for the future**, and they should be brought forward every time we face populist speeches.

To the growing trend of mainstream parties adopting a populist discourse, we also need to respond by emphasising the benefits of our progressive vision. **We must not give in to**

populism, but react against it, expose it, and counter it with tangible proposals and an honest approach.

We should engage in raising awareness and launching information campaigns to reveal the true face of populism and extremism.

Populists fight against the European Union, while at the same time benefiting from European funds, both as Members of the European Parliament and as European parties and foundations. **While making vindictive speeches in plenary** that then go viral, in order to show their electorate how active they are, **they do not attend committee meetings and do no work in the proceedings of the European Parliament**. Declaring without any basis in fact that there will be invasions of populations from one Member State to another; that a whole ethnic group is made of criminals and should be expelled from Europe; that whole religions are violent; that acts of terror committed by far-right lone wolves could have a justification; racially insulting officials of Member States - all these are forms of hate-speech that incite to violence, that go beyond freedom of expression and deserve prompt reactions.

Extremism represents a dangerous phenomenon, being a **manifestation of hatred and aggression** and people should be made aware that by supporting or tacitly accepting extremism, they are supporting violence. And once it gains power and legitimacy, violence can become less controllable by legal or political means. Whilst isolating the violent extremists, we should try to engage in comprehensive debates with the supporters of populist or radical parties and movements, providing them with alternatives.

The fight against extremism and populism should be seen as a shared responsibility of all of European society, endorsed by all politicians, the education system, the media and the civil society, as a matter of protecting our democratic society and the values we all share, irrespective of our political affiliation.

Promote real alternatives for the future and campaigning for common values

Our vision for the future of Europe and its Member States encompasses a set of proposals for solving the problems that Europe and its citizens now face and reinforcing the trust of people in the EU:

- have a sustainable approach to migration and asylum, promoting integration, citizenship and the implementation of a common asylum policy, showing respect for human rights and solidarity between Member States;
- continue to stand for the free movement of citizens and workers, seeing it as a free choice and not a forced option due to poverty or as an instrument to abuse social systems;
- fight for high social and labour standards for all workers and combat social dumping, having a thorough revision of the Directive on posted workers;
- put employment and economic growth, instead of austerity measures and cuts, at the heart of the economic policy;
- promote the European Youth Guarantee to ensure good-quality jobs for young people;
- combat poverty and build a more socially fair Europe, balancing economic and social objectives;
- make the decision-making process at EU level more democratic and open to public debate and consultation;
- create a new and more industry-friendly economic policy, with support for a cross-sector re-industrialisation and reshaping of the financial sector to finance the real economy;

- promote gender equality and reduce the gender pay gap;
- continuously promote equality and combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Providing solutions for the economic, financial and social crisis is our number one priority. **Mainstream forces across the political spectrum need to respond and address the concerns of the European citizens.** We need to **tackle the issues of unemployment, austerity, poverty, immigration and defining a cultural identity without turning to xenophobic rhetoric and false answers.** Engaging in debate with the citizens and offering tangible solutions, we will deal with extremism and populism by removing their rebellious and anti-system mask.

We want to **revive the European Idea and regain the confidence of people** and their enthusiasm for the European Project, and remind them why the EU was created and what it stands for: peace, freedom, modernity and unity in diversity.

We want to promote an **inclusive Europe, where integration is seen as a joint and respectful endeavour for living together and benefiting from diversity.** We must try at all levels, including at the local level, to engage in more debates with people of different backgrounds and origins, providing the common ground to talk to each other and learn about their shared values.

We need to **tackle xenophobia and social violence through positive campaigning, with the active involvement of civil society, victims' groups and institutions for social protection and cohesion.** We must establish projects to inform and train students about European democratic values and to develop their critical thinking. It is through the educational system, sports, the internet, social media and the mass media that we can reach the people, and especially the young.

Strengthen our democratic tools

Our democratic society possesses a wide set of democratic tools and institutions that can be used to monitor, evaluate and take action against extremism and violence. Some of these mechanisms are already taking effect, while others need further development in order to become effective.

We need a **clear and sufficiently deterrent legal framework, effectively applied in every Member State, to counter discrimination, hate-crime and hate-speech**. When extremism and populism tend to illegality, such as incitement to hate or bordering on physical or psychological aggression, we should make full use of the criminal laws and judicial procedures to investigate and sanction them as appropriate.

The EU and its member states should facilitate, **under clear and strict regulation, the collection and publishing of statistical data regarding hate crime**, in order to better apply existing legislation.

We need to continue our struggle for a **European Directive against all forms of discrimination**, inside and outside the working environment. In a Europe where we talk about migration, asylum, ethnic or religious minorities, gender equality, it is of utmost importance to create the legal framework that would provide common benchmarks for the protection of all citizens against any form of discrimination. **A more effective implementation of the Council framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia and its extension to cover gender-related crimes** is also an important point for us.

One of the priorities should be **to set in motion the Commission's EU Rule of Law scoreboard**, monitoring the state of rule of law and fundamental values in all Member states. This will give the EU a full monitoring capacity, ranging from political dialogue, moral persuasion, financial

and technical support, to legal infringement and to the end solution of article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, the "nuclear weapon".

There should be a **strict application of the new EU legislation for funding of European political parties**, conditional on observing the values on which the European Union is founded.

Protect the fundamental principles and civil liberties of the European Union

Fundamental values are not a luxury that we can afford to give up or bend at times of economic crisis. On the contrary, it is now more than ever that we need to stick by the values enshrined in the treaties (Article 2 TEU), such as "the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities", which all Member States have pledged to respect and protect. But these fundamental values are currently under threat, challenged directly by the far-right, or more insidiously by right-wing governments allured by the possible gains of adopting populist rhetoric.

It is our responsibility, as the leading progressive force in Europe, to engage even more strongly in promoting "pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men" as the core principles of our society. We need to continue our fight for **better mechanisms to protect democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms in the European Union**, including through the creation of new tools for addressing breaches in Member States.

Press Monitoring

Since 2012, the working group has monitored day-to-day issues related to extremism, populism, xenophobia, and

discrimination, following events and general trends in Europe, as well as initiatives taken against them.

2012

Racist chants were heard in football matches across **Europe**, in places like Germany, United Kingdom and Italy. In European matches, UEFA fined fans in Croatia, Germany, Spain and Russia for racist behaviour during matches.

Disturbing instances of racial abuse on Twitter were highlighted, with a number of footballers and celebrities leaving the site after becoming targets. Twitter said it did not moderate or filter content on its site, but insisted it had a set of rules intended to protect users and promote good behaviour. Experts monitoring the internet activity of the far-right warned of thousands of racist tweets and messages inciting violence every day.

In **Austria**, the Freedom Party official responsible for an election poster campaign that urged “Love your home country instead of thieving Moroccans” apologised and had the posters removed. The slogan “Heimatliebe statt Marokkaner-Diebe” was placed on the Freedom Party placards for local elections.

In **Germany** investigations continued in the case concerning the National Socialist Underground, a neo-Nazi group responsible for Germany’s worst acts of far-right violence

since the Second World War. Its members murdered a policewoman, shot dead nine immigrants, mounted two bomb attacks and robbed 14 banks to finance their operations. The arrest of 24 members of the banned neo-Nazi group Aktionsbüro Mittelrhein also highlighted the danger still posed by these groups across Germany, especially in the east of the country.

In **Saxony**, the state parliament expelled eight far-right MPs from the assembly for wearing clothes favoured by German neo-Nazis. The NPD party lawmakers refused to remove t-shirts and shirts from the Thor Steinar company.

In **Greece**, right-wing extremists Golden Dawn won 6.9% of the vote in the national elections, and 21 seats in the Greek parliament. The rise of Golden Dawn also led to an increase in attacks against immigrants. The Public Order Ministry withdrew police guards who were protecting Golden Dawn MPs, saying it did not want the guards to face a conflict of interest between protecting officials and having to stop them from breaking the law. The UN’s Human Rights Council also highlighted increasing numbers of racist attacks on immigrants in Greece. Golden Dawn president Nikos Michaloliakos made comments about the Holocaust in



a TV interview, suggesting that there were no gas chambers and crematoria in Auschwitz. Athens prosecutors ordered the arrest of one of the party's MPs after he hit a female, communist MP during a live TV debate.

The **Hungarian** Eurosceptic far-right Jobbik party launched a campaign against the government's austerity policies with a rally in central Budapest, denouncing the policies as diktats from of the European Union and international lenders. Far-right activists in Hungary burned the EU flag and called for the country's exit from the bloc.

In June 2012, Hungary's parliament adopted a resolution against extreme expressions, racism and xenophobia following an incident with a Jobbik MP who made anti-Semitic remarks.

January 2012 saw the introduction of Viktor Orban's new constitution, with opponents arguing that it jeopardised the country's standing in the European Union and revealed his ambition for one-party rule and repression of personal freedoms within Hungary. The Venice Commission found "numerous problematic elements" in the laws regulating the judicial system and even called for the constitution to be amended.

The European Commission at one point considered a Treaty violation procedure in relation to the independence of the judiciary. The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the political developments in Hungary on the 16th February 2012. The text, tabled by the Socialists and Democrats, Liberal, Green and the European United Left/Nordic Green Left groups, expressed "serious concern" about "the exercise of democracy, the rule of law, the respect and protection of human and social rights, the system of checks and balances, equality and non-discrimination."

In the **Netherlands**, Geert Wilders, founder of the Party for Freedom, created a website where anyone could complain about "misconduct" by people from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and other eastern and central European countries and which caused "nuisance" to society. The website received unanimous condemnation from Commissioner Viviane Reding, President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz, MEPs, and ambassadors of 10 European countries, who sent an open letter to political party leaders in the Netherlands protesting against the website. Hannes Swoboda, the leader of the S&D Group, urged the Dutch government to take a stance and shut down the site.

2013

European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmstrom, stated at the beginning of the year: “not since the Second World War have so many extremist political movements had a place in elected parliamentary assemblies. In some countries, we also have neo-Nazis elected”.

In September, the London-based think tank Demos published a report - **Backsliders: measuring democracy in the EU** - commissioned by the S&D Group. The report measured the state of democracy across the EU, revealing a worrying general decline.

Counterpoint, a UK-based think tank, said that the European elections will result in a “number of populist radical right gains” and predicted that although after the 2014 elections there were likely to be more far-right MEPs, they were unlikely to make a mark on policy. Most of them were motivated by a hard-edged, exclusive nationalism that rendered co-operation on the European stage difficult.

UEFA approved stricter sanctions against racism which included suspending players and coaches and closing stadiums. Several sanctions were imposed throughout the year, including fining, playing without fans and closing stadiums, because of racist chants and racist banners. **FIFA** announced plans for a task force to address racism in soccer after a player walked off the field in response to racial taunts. President Sepp Blatter called for a “united front of the football community in our zero-tolerance policy against racism.”

In **Bulgaria**, in March, three members of a Roma family were killed and one was seriously injured by a Bulgarian retired army officer who lived next door. Police had been deployed in the area to prevent more bloodshed as Roma families threatened to take revenge.

In the **Czech Republic**, in August, during a weekend of far-right demonstrations, around 60 neo-Nazis were arrested while trying to attack the Roma community in Ostrava, 300 km east of Prague.

Geert Wilders, president of **Dutch** nationalist party PVV and Marine Le Pen, president of the **French** Front National were looking for a coalition in the European Parliament and had contacted the Belgian Vlaams Belang and the Italian Northern League.

In **France**, in August, an airforce sergeant with alleged links to the extreme right was placed under investigation for attempting to carry out a terrorist attack against a mosque near Lyon. Around 150 Muslims gathered around the mosque to protest against the rise of “islamophobia”, on the day after the arrest.

The death of Clément Meric, a 19-year-old leftist student killed by far-right militants, resulted in protests from left-wing militants and the ban of three far-right groups suspected of links to the killing: Troisième Voie, Jeunesses Nationalistes Révolutionnaires and Envie de Rêver.

The intelligence agency in the eastern **German** state of Brandenburg called on Germany’s sports clubs not to ignore the problem of far-right extremism in their midst, warning that neo-Nazis were actively trying to influence life in sports clubs. Social workers reported that neo-Nazis were not as easily recognised as they used to be. The tactics of the far-right were also much more subtle than previously, becoming athletes first and then recruiting young people. Many became successful in their clubs, putting them in a better position to transmit their views, particularly to children and young people.



In **Greece**, an anti-racist rapper, Pavlos Fyssas, was stabbed to death by a Golden Dawn sympathiser. Although the party denied any link with the murder, a wide investigation was carried out. There were a series of arrests of Golden Dawn members on charges of forming or belonging to a criminal organisation, including the leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos and some of its MPs. In the meantime the Government had decided to pass a stronger anti-racism law. In May, a Golden Dawn MP was taken out of a parliament session for shouting “Heil Hitler”.

In August, four **Hungarian** men were found guilty of killing six Roma, including a five-year-old child, in a wave of racially-motivated attacks between 2008 and 2009. Three of the perpetrators were given life sentences and one of them was given a 13-year prison sentence.

The National Media and Info-communications Authority launched proceedings regarding right-wing newspaper Magyar Hírlap over an anti-Roma diatribe by one of its columnists. Zsolt Bayer had written that a “significant section” of Hungary’s Roma population are animals and called for a “final solution” to the problem “by any means”. The right-wing polemicist, a founding member of the Fidesz party, wrote his column in reaction to reports of a fight in a village pub in which a man had been stabbed.

In July, the European Parliament endorsed the Tavares Report on the state of democracy in Hungary, which recommended that Hungary adopt a set of measures to reinforce its democracy. The Norwegian Helsinki Committee joined a growing list of international organisations voicing concern over Hungarian government policies.

In **Sweden** a series of riots took place in May in a suburb to the north of Stockholm, with disenchanted immigrant youths torching cars, a school classroom set on fire, and far-right extremists chasing immigrants through the streets.

The **UK** Independence Party made exaggerated predictions to exploit fears over mass immigration from Romania and Bulgaria and put the issue at the heart of its campaign strategy for the 2014 elections.

In **Italy**, Beppe Grillo and his Eurosceptic 5 Star Movement gained the support of 26% of the vote in the parliamentary elections. The populist movement based its campaign on an anti-European and anti-system rhetoric, stating that it promoted direct democracy. His critics said he was more of a despot than a democrat, as Grillo dominated the movement.

Integration minister Cécile Kyenge was subjected to racist comments by far-right politicians after her appointment in April. Mario Borghezio, an EFD Member of the European Parliament from Italy’s Northern League, was expelled from the Eurosceptic group for what its leader called “repugnant” racist remarks towards Kyenge. Roberto Calderoli, one of the four vice-presidents of the Italian Senate, also made offensive comments. In September militants from the far-right party Forza Nuova left blood-covered dummies outside an administrative building in Rome to protest against the minister’s proposition to grant Italian nationality to all people born in the country. Soon after, ministers from 17 EU member states gathered in Rome to condemn the acts of racism directed at Kyenge and called for a new pact to stamp out racism across Europe.

S&D Activities

The Working Group on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism and Xenophobia has initiated events, fact-finding missions and projects seeking to raise awareness of the danger that

extremism represents, to monitor the worrying trends, and to propose actions.

A. Conferences

CONFERENCE ON EXTREMISM: "AN OPEN SOCIETY FOR ALL"

DATE: 17 November 2010

TOPIC: The fight against all types of extremism, xenophobia, intolerance and hate.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Martin SCHULZ, President, S&D Group - Prof. József BAYER - Prof. András BALOGH - Poul Nyrup RASMUSSEN, President of the Party of European Socialists.

Held in **Budapest** and chaired by Martin Schulz, with political and social stakeholders participating in the debate, the conference set out the S&D Group's stance against extremism and made the case for combating the rise of extremism in all its forms. At the turn of the century, any discussion on extremism was largely kept out of public debate, while extremist groups were beginning to find their way into parliaments and governments, gaining a platform to air their ideologies. The Group's aim was to maintain a balance between defending freedom and preventing hate speech.

A delegation visited the homes of Roma people near Budapest on 15 November. The Group also met Béla Schwartz, Mayor of Ajka.

After the debate, the Group adopted the "Budapest Declaration", affirming the S&Ds' position on promoting European values and actively engaging in the fight against all forms of extremism and xenophobia.

"MEDIA FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY UNDER THREAT"

DATE: 18 November 2010

TOPIC: Media freedom under attack - the pressure and threats that endanger the independence of journalists in EU Member States

GUEST SPEAKERS: Martin SCHULZ, President, S&D Group - Maria BADIA i CUTCHET, Vice-President, S&D Group - Hannes SWOBODA, Vice-President, S&D Group - Catherine TRAUTMANN, MEP - Tanja FAJON, MEP - Ivailo KALFIN, MEP - Victor BOSTINARU, MEP - Sergei STANISHEV,

Leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party - Aidan WHITE, General Secretary, International Federation of Journalists - Velislava DAREVA, Journalist, Duma Newspaper - Borislav TSEKOV, President of the Board of Governors, Institute of Modern Politics - Emilia NEDEVA, Association for European Integration and Human Rights.

In **Sofia, Bulgaria**, journalists participated in a debate on freedom of the press, and the Group discussed the consequences of threatening media freedom. The participants denounced not only the actions being taken against the Press in Bulgaria and Romania, but also constraints on press freedom in France, Italy, Poland, and throughout Europe. Sergei Stanishev and Martin Schulz stressed the links between government intervention and media censorship, and the pressure exercised on the media. The dramatic deterioration of working conditions for journalists was also raised, alongside the role of press freedom as a guarantor of democracy.

They emphasised that we must be vigilant about economic conglomerates with cross-border capital that might exert pressure on the media. The European Parliament has a key role to play as a watchdog for media freedom in the Member States.

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/media-freedom-and-democracy-under-threat-throughout-eu>

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/events/sd-conference-media-freedom-and-democracy-under-threat-sofia-18-november-2010-national-palace>

MEDIA FREEDOM UNDER THREAT: NATIONAL PROBLEMS, EUROPEAN SOLUTIONS?



DATE: 3 March 2011

TOPIC: A discussion on the rapid deterioration of press freedom in countries including Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and France.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Jacki DAVIS, Moderator; Maria BADIA i CUTCHET, Vice-President, S&D Group - Ioana AVADANI, Executive Director, Centre of Independent Journalism, Romania - Roberto NATALE, President of the Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana, Italy - Borislav TSEKOV, Director, Institute of Modern Politics, Bulgaria - Jean-Marie CHARON, Sociologist CNRS, France - Gábor HORVÁTH, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Népszabadság, Hungary - Lorenzo CONSOLI,

former President, International Press Association - Xavier VIDAL-FOLCH, Deputy Director, El País, and President, World Editors Forum - Aidan WHITE, General Secretary, International Federation of Journalists - Valeriya VELEVA, Trud, Bulgaria - Carlo VERNA, Unione sindacale giornalisti RAI, Italy - László HALÁK, National Alliance of Hungarian Journalists, Hungary.

The conference brought together MEPs and experts in the European Parliament, to discuss the situation of the media in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and France, which was described as 'dangerous' despite the existence of national and EU laws. Participants called for the Commission to come up with adequate regulations that would help develop a more press-friendly environment in the EU, actively promoting the harmonisation of standards for media freedom. The EU needs to set a positive example to the rest of the world by promoting basic rights. More must be done to condemn incidents of abuse of media freedom in the EU, and monitor the actions of governments in some Member States, who actively obstruct safeguards for the freedom of the press.

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/events/sd-group-conference-media-freedom-under-threat-national-problems-european-solutions-thursday#1>

"THE INFLUENCE OF THE EXTREME RIGHT ON MAINSTREAM POLITICS"

DATE: 1 June 2011

TOPIC: The rise of extremism, and the dangers of it influencing the policy-making process.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Jacki DAVIS, moderator - Hannes SWOBODA, Vice-President, S&D Group - Monika FLAŠÍKOVÁ BEŇOVÁ, Vice-President, S&D Group - Claude MORAES MEP, S&D Co-ordinator for the Civil Liberties Committee - Anton PELINKA, Professor, Central European University, Hungary -



Jean-Yves CAMUS, Professor, Institute of International and Strategic Relations, France - Andres KASEKAMP, Professor, University of Tartu, Estonia - Nick LOWLES, Editor, Searchlight Magazine, UK - Jan Marinus WIERSMA, Expert on radical right and minorities - Andreas HIERONYMUS, Executive Bureau Member, European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

The roundtable in the **European Parliament in Brussels** offered a dialogue with experts on the rise of extremism, populism, nationalism, and xenophobia in the EU. Concerns were raised about the tendency of centre-right political forces to make use of far-right policies in their own political agendas often in direct violation of EU fundamental values. Only through engaging in discussion is it possible to find solutions to combat the rising popularity of extremists and populists. Sessions covered: first, the "Impact of extremism on mainstream politics - national experiences" and secondly, "European response from the S&D Group", providing a national and European perspective. Stakeholders including international experts, researchers, representatives of NGOs, and members of the S&D Group proposed new ideas on how to counter extremist discourses.

"SOCIAL INTEGRATION - THE KEY TO A FAIR AND OPEN ECONOMY"

DATE: 25 November 2011

TOPIC: Migration has become one of the most used and misused issues in European political debate. The conference discussed the effects of migration on the labour market and the economic development of the receiving countries.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Hannes SWOBODA - Vice-President, S&D Group - Matt CAVANAGH, Associate Director for UK Migration Policy, Institute for Public Policy Research, UK - Jesús FERNÁNDEZ-HUERTAS MORAGA, Researcher, Foundation for Studies on Applied Economy, Spain - Emir KIR, Minister for Social Action and International Relations, Belgium.

Held in the **Square Meeting Centre** in **Brussels**, the conference looked at the economic impact of social integration with leading politicians and research institutes discussing the relation between labour-force movements and the economic policies of the EU and its Member States. The aim was to promote an evidence-based discussion on the effects of migration on the labour market, social provision, and the benefits and challenges for host countries.

The financial crisis has led to a rise in unemployment and increased scepticism about the effectiveness of social integration and a fair economy. In a time when the financial crisis has exposed the most vulnerable citizens to even greater insecurity, it is important to protect European citizens. Education and training were highlighted as central to achieving social integration, and reducing discrimination in the workforce is also of the utmost importance.

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/social-integration-precondition-fair-and-open-economy>

http://www.hannes-swoboda.at/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/HSwoboda_Social-Integration.pdf

"MORE OPENNESS, MORE DEMOCRACY" THE RESPONSE TO THE OSLO AND UTØYA ATTACKS

The poster features the title "MORE OPENNESS | MORE DEMOCRACY" in large, bold, purple letters at the top. Below it, the subtitle "The Response to The Oslo and Utøya attacks" is written in white on a purple background. The central image shows several hands of diverse people clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity. Text on the poster includes the date and time: "THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 09.00 - 12.00" and the location: "Athens Square S&D, European Parliament - Brussels". A list of speakers is provided, including S&D Group President Hannes Swoboda, Vice-President Sylvie Guillaume, and other members of the group. At the bottom, there are logos for the S&D Group and social media links for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

DATE: 6 December 2012

TOPIC: The attacks in 2011 in Oslo and Utøya Island in Norway and the response of Norwegian society.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Hannes SWOBODA, President, S&D Group - Sylvie GUILLAUME, Vice-President, S&D Group -

Miguel Angel MARTINEZ MARTINEZ, Vice-President of the European Parliament - Anna HEDH, MEP - Prableen KAUR, Member of the Norwegian Labour Party Youth Organisation; Trond BLATTMANN, Chair of the "22 July" Victims National Support Group - John HESTNES, Vice-chair of the "22 July" Victims National Support Group - Vibeke Hein BAERA, Lawyer Advokatfirmaet Lippestad AS - Øyvind STROMMEN, Journalist and author of the book Eurofascism - Jean Paul MARTHOZ, Vice-president of the Europe/Central Asia Division of Human Rights Watch - Matthew GOODWIN, University of Nottingham - Jean Yves CAMUS, Institute for International and Strategic Relations, Paris - Erika FATLAND - Anthropologist.

Held in the **European Parliament** in **Brussels**, the conference looked at the impact and the consequences of the tragic attacks of the 22 July 2011 in Norway. Despite the lessons that could have been learned about how extremism can lead to the ideology that triggered those acts, these tendencies continue to exert an influence on individuals and movements across Europe. It was not simply an isolated incident, but was symbolic of a wider extremist movement in Europe.

One of the most surprising elements was the reaction of the Norwegian people to the tragic events, their resolution not to give in to fear, their renewed commitment to 'openness and democratic values', and the dignity, simplicity and strength of their message to the world. Bringing together people that had been directly affected by the events to discuss with academics and practitioners studying extremism, the conference analysed the dynamics of what had happened, as well as of future movements. The attacks in Oslo and Utøya could foretell the rise of other far-right groups across Europe. To prevent the spread of violent extremism, we must understand its causes and the ideology and networks through which it spreads.

The dignified and brave response of Norwegian society, which stood firm for 'openness and democracy' should stand as example for European society.

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/events/sd-conference-more-openness-more-democracy-response-oslo-and-ut%C3%B8ya-attacks-thursday-6#1>

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/extremism-and-open-societies-lessons-norway-after-ut%C3%B8ya>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PcK67W4svY>

"CAMPAIGN FOR INTERNATIONAL ROMA DAY 2013"

DATE: 6 - 8 April 2013

TOPIC: Celebration of the International Roma Day and launching an awareness-raising campaign.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Juan de Dios RAMIREZ HEREDIA, former S&D MEP - President of the Spanish Union Romani - S&D interns for the Young Roma fellowship: Rafael CARMONA FERNANDEZ, Marietta HERFORT, Roman KROK.

For International Roma Day 2013, the S&D Group campaigned to raise awareness and promote integration and empowerment of the Roma. It also launched policy recommendations for Roma inclusion (see link below). The campaign was promoted on the internet, both on the S&D website and social networks. The S&Ds also worked with NGOs, participating in events and supporting other campaigns against discrimination. During the campaign, S&D president Hannes Swoboda received Roma activists' delegations, who were also invited to attend S&D Group meetings and discussions on Roma integration.

The campaign concluded on 8 April with a final event to mark Roma Day during the S&D Group's meeting. The event celebrated Romani culture and potential, with S&D MEPs participating in a debate and the first Roma Member of the

European Parliament, former member of the socialist group, Juan de Dios Ramirez Heredia speaking about empowerment. The most moving moment was when the three Roma trainees shared their experience as young Roma professionals faced with constant discrimination, but never giving up hope and the fight for better chances and a better future.

The S&D has a Roma Trainee Programme through which young Roma across Europe are selected every year to become interns for the Group Secretariat. The programme was developed in 2010 and has been a very successful and fulfilling experience for both the trainees and the Group.

Brochure:

http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/SD-ROMADAY-LEAFLET_PbP_WEB.pdf

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/sd-group-calls-eu-commissioner-roma-issues#1>

PRESENTATION OF THE DEMOS REPORT “BACKSLIDERS: MEASURING DEMOCRACY IN THE EU”

DATE: 18 September 2013

TOPIC: Pre-launch presentation of the DEMOS study on democracy under threat in the European Union.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Hannes SWOBODA, President, S&D Group – Sylvie GUILLAUME, Vice-President of the S&D Group - Juan Fernando LOPEZ AGUILAR, Chair of the LIBE Committee - Kinga GÖNCZ, Vice-chair of the LIBE Committee - Massimo D’ALEMA, President of FEPS - Ernst STETTER, Secretary General of FEPS - Jonathan BIRDWELL and Chris TRYHORN, the authors of the report - Ralph SCOTT, Communication officer, DEMOS, Representatives of PES, FEPS, OSI and PES Group in the Committee of the Regions.

Held in the **Leopold Hotel** in **Brussels**, the event was attended by a large number of S&D Members of the European Parliament, as well as leading NGOs and experts on democracy and rule of law. Two of the authors of the report, Jonathan Birdwell and Chris Tryhorn set out their findings, and participants looked at the democratic state of play in Europe both on a macro and micro scale. A set of proposals for future actions was discussed.

The report produced by DEMOS represents one of the most extensive analyses of the state of democracy in the European Union and its Member States, developing a set of indicators for the measurement of fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law in the EU, as well as proposing common benchmarks to be developed.

http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/DEMOS_report%20_executive_summary_0.pdf

<http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/backsliders>

“ROMA INCLUSION - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL”

DATE: 5 December 2013

TOPIC: Roma inclusion at local level and the importance of local action in implementing the National Roma Integration Strategies.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Mark ROGERSON, Moderator - Hannes SWOBODA, President, S&D Group - Sylvie GUILLAUME, Vice-President, S&D Group - Kinga GÖNCZ, Vice-Chair of the LIBE Committee - Ioan ENCIU, MEP - Roger STONE, Leader of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council – Andriana SUKOVA TOSHEVA, European Commission, Director, Social Market Economy in Member States – Jean-François PLOQUIN, Director General of the Forum Réfugiés-Cosi – Francisca

CONFERENCE ON *Roma Inclusion* CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL



THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2013
09:00 - 12:30

European Parliament, Brussels
Room A3G-2

► **REMEMBER!** e-d.roma-inclusion@europarl.europa.eu



CONFERENCE DEBATE

OPENING REMARKS	Hannes Swoboda S&D Group President Sylvie Guillaume S&D Group Vice President Roger Stone Coif Rapporteur for Roma
1st DEBATE	Good practices in Roma projects and financing opportunities at local, national and European level
2nd DEBATE	Roma inclusion in a Europe without borders

Held in the **European Parliament in Brussels**, the event was co-organised with the PES Group in the Committee of the Regions. The debate focused on the role played by local authorities in the process of integration, and the three dimensional perspective that should be given to Roma inclusion, at a local, national and European level.

The conference offered a platform for intense dialogue between local, regional and national authorities, Members of the European Parliament, experts, civil society and representatives of the Roma community. They exchanged examples of good practices, pointing out the difficulties encountered on all sides in the process of integration. A common effort should be made, ensuring constant dialogue between Roma communities and the authorities, in order to find the best practical solutions. The Roma should be constantly involved in the policy-making process, as well as in its implementation.

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/socialists-and-democrats-european-parliament-and-committee-regions-join-forces-calling>

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/fr/events/roma-inclusion-challenges-and-opportunities-local-level>

http://pes.cor.europa.eu/NEWS/Pages/131205_Romainegration_EN.aspx

DEBATE ON THE RISE OF EXTREMISM AND POPULISM IN EUROPE

DATE: 5 March 2014

TOPIC: Unmasking the reality behind populist and extremist narratives.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Hannes SWOBODA, President, S&D Group - Sylvie GUILLAUME, S&D Vice-President - Magali

PLEGUEZUELOS AGUILAR, Head of the Andalusia Regional Delegation to the European Union - Alekos TSOLAKIS, European Commission Expert, European Regional Development Fund - Heinz SCHADEN, Mayor of Salzburg - Dilek KOLAT, Berlin Minister for Social Affairs - Damian DRAGHICI, Secretary of State, Special Adviser to the Romanian Prime Minister on Roma - Lili MAKAVEEVA, Director, Integro Association.





BALENT, Project Manager, Robert SCHUMANN Foundation, France - Peter KREKO, Director Political Capital, Hungary - Patrick DAHLEMANN, Local Councillor Torgelow, Germany

The debate was held in the **European Parliament in Brussels**, with two leading experts and a representative of local authorities presenting their findings and experience in dealing with far-right extremism and populism. The debate with Members of the European Parliament focused on the aggressive activities of the far-right in times of crisis. Another point of discussion was the importance of unmasking the demagogy of populists both inside and outside the European Parliament, and revealing to the public the difference that exists between their words and their actions. In their experience in the European Parliament, S&D Members witness the lack of activity or even presence of far-right MEPs, who prefer to make their voices heard in plenary speeches in order to be seen by their voters, but not actually participate in the policy-making process.

OTHER PRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS

A series of reports and books was presented in the framework of the working group, such as: "The New Face of Digital Populism" - a DEMOS report by Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell, and Mark Littler; "Populism in Europe: Hungary" - a DEMOS and Political Capital report by Jamie Bartlett, Péter Krekó, Jonathan Birdwell, Jack Benfield & Gabor Gyori; "Recapturing the Reluctant Radical: How to win back Europe's populist vote" - a Counterpoint report by Catherine Fieschi, Marley Morris and Lila Caballero; "Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for the Far-Right in Britain" - by Robert Ford and Matthew Goodwin.

<http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/policies/extremism-and-populism>.

B. FACT-FINDING MISSIONS

FACT-FINDING MISSION ON THE FAR RIGHT IN THE UK, CASE STUDY: THE ENGLISH DEFENCE LEAGUE (EDL)

DATE: 26-27 May 2011

LOCATION: Luton and Barking, United Kingdom

S&D MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION: Hannes SWOBODA, President, S&D Group - Monika FLAŠIKOVA BEŇOVA, Vice-President, S&D Group - Richard HOWITT, MEP - Kinga GÖNCZ, MEP - Ioan ENCIU, MEP - Emine BOZKURT, MEP.

The S&D delegation visited **Luton, United Kingdom** to assess the situation regarding the impact of the English Defence League (EDL), a far-right, anti-Islamic organisation that was set up in Luton, in spring 2009. The EDL, with around 80,000 supporters on Facebook and local groups across England, had staged more than 30 demonstrations, many of which were marred by Islamophobia, racism and violence.

The far-right group was formed after a small number of protesters from an extreme Islamist group held up placards at the homecoming of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment in Luton, reading "Butchers of Basra" and "Anglian soldiers go to hell". At a subsequent demonstration EDL supporters attacked Asian businesses, smashed cars and threatened passers-by. The EDL built its network of supporters (and its influence) through Facebook. Despite the loose nature of the group, the EDL was easily able to mobilise thousands of its supporters onto the streets on many occasions. It was holding talks to become a 'legitimate political party' - a project that later failed.

The MEPs condemned attempts by a racist far-right group to foster extremism, and highlighted the need for a common front against violence and extremism in every form.

They met representatives of the local authorities, Members of Parliament and community representatives, holding debates and taking part in the campaign to "Show Racism the Red Card" in football. The delegation's visit was also marked by an EDL demonstration against their presence in Luton.

Having had the opportunity to look into the response of the local community to the activities of the far-right in Luton, in Barking the delegation focused more on the reaction at political and administrative level. Meeting with Members of Parliament and local authorities, the main point of discussion was the BNP and how the Labour Party and the councillors managed to respond to and counteract the presence of the far-right in the local council. MP Margaret Hodge stressed the importance of reconnecting with citizens. By addressing individual concerns, the local party would then be able to take on wider issues; starting by tackling problems faced at local level, initiatives could be further developed at national level.

http://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/videos/video_visit_a_success_despite_edl_presence_1_2724052

FACT-FINDING MISSION - ROMA INCLUSION IN HOME COUNTRIES - ROMANIA

DATE: 26 June 2012

LOCATION: The Fantanele Hamlet, Romania

S&D MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION: Hannes SWOBODA, President, S&D Group - Sylvie GUILLAUME, Vice-President, S&D Group - Kinga GÖNCZ, Vice-chair of LIBE Committee - Ioan ENCIU, MEP - Carmen ROMERO LOPEZ, MEP - Emer COSTELLO, MEP - Peter SIMON, MEP.

The fact-finding mission to the small hamlet of **Fantanele** (which has around 2,300 inhabitants, mostly of Roma origin), was organised after the S&D President Hannes Swoboda visited Berlin, where he met with citizens from Fantanele who had moved to the German capital. Over ten years, they had a peaceful community of around 700 people in the Neukölln neighbourhood. The Roma community in Neukölln had also attracted attention from the international press, due to the unusual fact that they all came from the same village. The Group wanted to better understand the reasons for their moving, and also to determine what could be done to encourage the development of the Fantanele hamlet.

In Fantanele, five MEPs met with the local authorities and community, visiting a school and family houses and talking to the citizens of the hamlet about their living conditions and the reasons why large numbers of them had moved to another country. The authorities presented a series of projects they were planning to develop and there was a debate on possible projects to reunite separated families and attract the young to return and get involved in agriculture.

FACT-FINDING MISSION - COUNTERING EXTREMISM - GREECE

DATE: 1 October 2012

LOCATION: Athens, Greece

S&D MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION: Sylvie GUILLAUME, Vice-president, S&D Group - Kinga GÖNCZ, Vice-chair of LIBE Committee - Emine BOZKURT, MEP - Sylvana RAPTI, MEP.

Visiting **Athens, Greece**, the S&D MEPs held meetings with stakeholders in the Greek capital, including the mayor, ministers and other government officials. A roundtable with civil society, representatives of immigrants, national and

international authorities in Greece was held, involving the Forum for Refugees, Immigrants of Second Generation, Syrian women, Egyptian youth, representatives from the Bangladeshi, Tanzanian and Indian communities, representatives of LGBTI groups, victims of racist violence; representatives from the Greek Ombudsman, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Bureau in Greece, the National Commission for Human Rights, and the Racist Violence Recording Network.

The mission had two main objectives, first to analyse the extent of support for the extreme right, and mainly the Golden Dawn party; and second to analyse its causes. Another issue for the delegation was the situation of the victims of discrimination and extremist aggression and the work of associations such as *Medicins du Monde* that provide assistance and shelter to migrants. The repercussions of the crisis on Greek society transcended economic and financial issues, and included a social standstill and a lack of trust in democratic institutions, as well as a feeling of social, economic and personal insecurity that was putting pressure on society. Street violence was highlighted as a problem, stemming from criminal organisations that included either migrants or extremist groups.

Discussing possible causes for the dissatisfaction of the Greek people with mainstream politics and the growing support for extremist parties, two main points became evident: the austerity measures and the high levels of irregular migration that Greece was subject to. Concerted action was required at all levels: community level, local, national and European level, in order to tackle the very complex problems that Greek society was facing.

Among the proposals that were developed were: creating a solid cross-party anti-Nazi front; taking strong action against criminality of every kind; sending clear messages against extremism and xenophobia at political level; creating solidarity networks; better management of the EU borders;

more social cohesion and solidarity at European level; and amendment of the Dublin II Regulation.

FACT-FINDING MISSION - ROMA INCLUSION IN RECEIVING COUNTRIES - FRANCE

DATE: 12 April 2013

LOCATION: Lyon, France

S&D MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION: Hannes SWOBODA, President, S&D Group - Sylvie GUILLAUME, Vice-president, S&D Group

The fact-finding mission to **Lyon** was organised by Vice-president Sylvie Guillaume in collaboration with the local authorities, inviting S&D president Hannes Swoboda and a delegation to look at a pilot project of Roma inclusion being implemented in several neighbourhoods of Lyon. The Andatu pilot project, initiated by Forum Réfugiées and financed by regional and local authorities, as well as through European projects, has developed into a successful example of local integration. Unlike other mechanisms, such as the “villages insertion”, which had often proven to be discriminatory and with limited results, the Andatu project approached a process from a different angle, working with the Roma as individuals, and not as a separate community.

The project consisted of giving families and individuals the possibility to integrate in their neighbourhoods, in apartments spread around the city and not all together in agglomerations of precarious households. Having fulfilled the precondition of not having a criminal record, the families were offered a contract, through which the association provided them with accommodation and constant assistance in order to help them adapt to the new environment. The families assumed responsibility for paying their part of the household charges, registering their children in school and participating in

language courses and professional integration programmes to prepare for the job market. The pilot project started with 400 people and proved a real success for both the administration and the participants.

FACT-FINDING MISSION - ROMA INCLUSION IN RECEIVING COUNTRIES - BELGIUM

DATE: 18 June 2013

LOCATION: Ghent, Belgium

S&D MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION: Sylvie GUILLAUME, Vice-president of the S&D Group - Ioan ENCIU, MEP

The city of **Ghent**, the third largest city in Belgium and one of its most important educational centres, appears to be very diverse ethnically, with various ethnic communities, including Roma people (of different nationalities). The city had several successful integration programmes, but its authorities were asking for European support in order to tackle the challenges of integration.

The day started with a visit to the Dampoort neighbourhood where social workers presented the delegation with examples of good practice, explaining how they were working to create better communication mechanisms with the different communities by offering vocational training, arranging social and cultural activities to help them integrate and improve their employment prospects. The greatest challenges related to health issues, problems associated with anti-social behaviour and illegal activities. Integration was a complex process, carried out in cooperation with the city, public organisations and NGOs.

During a meeting with the local authorities, the discussion focused on the need to set an integrated European policy plan for the integration of the Roma, supplementing the mandatory National Roma Strategies. The plan was to



make a start on building a more socially just Europe, with an emphasis on minimum wages and equivalent conditions for employment; to tackle, condemn and take action against the social and economic disadvantage and discrimination faced by Roma communities in some member states; tackle cross-border crime; and develop better methods of exchanging information between action-takers and policy-makers.

The debate with the representatives of the local communities focused on the views of the ethnic groups present, discussing issues such as the reasons why they left their countries of origin, their prospects for the future, their life and activity in Ghent and also the work some were doing in NGOs. The issue of Roma empowerment was also raised, as well as the very small amount of funding available and the limited capacity to implement community-based projects.

C. STUDY ON DEMOCRACY BACKSLIDERS: MEASURING DEMOCRACY IN THE EU

One of the most important initiatives of the **S&D Group** is **Working Group on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism and Xenophobia** was to commission an independent and comprehensive study on the state of democracy throughout the EU.

In 2011, when the crisis was beginning to bite hard, the Group warned that Europe was facing a democratic and social crisis, not just an economic one. Having monitored the rise of populist and extremist movements since 2009, a potential link was soon made between irresponsible austerity measures, growing mistrust in national and European institutions and political parties and the rise of populist and extreme-right forces. The EU needed a thorough democratic evaluation.

Europe as a democratic collective project was at stake: with poverty rising, unemployment sky-rocketing and citizens seeing the Troika as the face of Europe - where decisions impacting on their lives were taken far away, without their control. With extremist movements on the rise and governments taking controversial decisions that

endangered the rule of law, an overview of the state of democracy in the EU was essential. Looking deeper into reasons for backsliding, defining democracy through a set of comprehensive benchmarks, the report also indicated a set of tools the EU needs to ensure that democracy and the rule of law are always respected.

The Group wanted an independent report that could act as a useful tool for measuring and reinforcing democracy, a report that would give a broad picture of democracy in Europe, define indicators applicable to all Member States, and create an EU wide Democracy Index, as well as providing an in-depth look at national case studies. It commissioned DEMOS, a leading cross-party think tank from the UK, to conduct the research.

The report provides an in-depth, independent analysis of European democracy, assessing parameters and indexes that could define its current shape, outlining actions to prevent and stop democratic backsliding in Europe. It sets out ways forward for European institutions and policy makers to reinforce and promote fundamental rights, citizenship,

democracy and the rule of law. This study analyses what makes the substance of European democracy today, dealing not only with formal aspects of democratic dynamics, but also with the practical exercise of citizenship.

The Democracy Index was based not only on traditional electoral and procedural indicators, such as respect for the rule of law and the level of political stability and fundamental rights and freedoms, but also focused also on essential dimensions to the democratic process, such as the possibility and willingness of individuals to exercise active citizenship and - most importantly - the level of political and social capital in European societies; that is the level of trust and satisfaction with politics and democracy.

In presenting this study, the S&D contributed to the work in progress in the EU ahead of Commission proposals on the rule of law; and opened a wide political and social debate on European democracy and on democratic participation in Europe.

http://www.demos.co.uk/files/DEMOS_Backsliders_report_web_version.pdf?1380125822

THE EXTREME AND RADICAL RIGHT: A CHALLENGE TO SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS

Points for debate

The radical and extreme right in north-western Europe has been on the rise. It has gained considerable support in countries like Denmark and in the Netherlands, as well as entering the Swedish Parliament for the first time. The new radical right has much in common with extreme right-wing parties – often with neo-fascist backgrounds – have already existed for some time in France, Italy, Austria and Belgium, but there are also major differences. The FN of Marine Le Pen has actually copied some of the policies of the new radical right. Some of these parties have been accepted as partners of conservative minority governments, for example in the Netherlands, at one stage. The new radical right has shifted the debate from racial (racist, anti-Semitic) to cultural factors. The views on minorities are no longer ethnic but determined by a perceived clash of religions (Islam as a fascist political ideology). Since the start of the eurocrisis they have added strong opposition to the EU as a political priority. The parties of the radical right operate within the democratic framework, though their internal organisation is generally authoritarian.

They present themselves as anti-elite, operating in a very provocative way, using very tough language, rejecting compromises (at least at the rhetorical level) and attacking the traditional parties for their lack of understanding of the ordinary people.

They are very anti-left, accusing the social-democrats of being wrong on migration and integration and of being technocrats that are only interested in personal promotion.

They promote a kind of welfare chauvinism ('national preference') taking advantage of resentments caused by globalisation and the 'abuse' of the welfare state by immigrants. They aim at voters who can be labelled as "globalisation losers". They present the majority as under threat from a minority. They also profit from fears caused by criminality and European integration. They promote a do-it-yourself assimilation to replace existing multicultural approaches. Some of them deny the possibility of merging different cultures (ethno-pluralism).

They profit from the wave of conservatism (anti-solidarity and anti-liberal) in Europe. In some countries right-wing parties use them to implement their own conservative economic policies. It looks as though a new kind of political correctness has come into existence that is the opposite of the tolerant and multicultural attitudes that were dominant in our societies and promoted by progressive forces. This new narrative attracts more and more voters, but also has an impact on mainstream politics. The atmosphere of pessimism allows the radical right to paint a picture of a dangerous world from which the people should be protected. In the past we wanted to change the world, but now the world is changing us.

Recent elections in the new EU member states also show an upsurge in radical and extreme right-wing parties, as the example of Hungary shows. The radical right in this region has different characteristics. The identity issues have historical and ethnic backgrounds and are not caused by migration or religious differences. The political environment is different because of the on-going transformation processes

and the lack of established political traditions. These parties cater for the so-called “victims” and voters frustrated about the European integration. They combine anti-Roma policies with a strong anti-EU attitude.

What to do

We have to analyse in depth the shifts within the extreme and radical right and study the motives of those who vote for it. We have to fight it on principle but also tackle the cause of its electoral success. Research in a country like the Netherlands shows that most voters are not so much driven by personal dissatisfaction (their own interests) but by a sense of social malaise (what is happening to their environment). It turns them against those political parties who they hold responsible. It is therefore not only a fear of foreigners that motivates them. A lot of Wilders’ Party of Freedom supporters actually think that his ideas on Islam are too radical. This broader context leads to the following questions and remarks.

There is no single definition of right-wing populism or of extreme nationalism. Its manifestations depend on regional and national contexts. One has, for instance, to make a distinction between post-soviet, pre-EU accession, post-accession and old member states.

We have to analyse the correlation between the rise of the radical right and the partial collapse of social democracy. Did the left ignore certain popular aspirations for too long? Have we not been listening and have we forgotten to adapt?

We have to study the consequences of the changed political landscapes for class voting and party identification as key indicators of political stability. All over Europe the so-called people’s parties have difficulty maintaining their support.

The history of immigration shows that periods of openness have been followed by periods with much less open borders and vice versa. Today it is regarded by many as the most

visible aspect of globalisation which explains the appeal of the radical right on this issue. But is it realistic to try to close the door and how will the demographic aspect be played out?

Social-democrats and socialists will have to develop a new narrative which either bridges the gap between hope and fear; between the cosmopolitan and the nationalist, and between cultural conservatism and progressive economics or chooses the one or the other direction.

We have to investigate what we can learn from populist politicians without copying them. Social democrats can however never become purely poll driven politicians.

We need to discuss the limits of ‘classical’ tolerance in immigration societies. Social democrats have embraced diversity but does it have its limits when it is seen as threatening social cohesion or as a cover for illiberal attitudes? Above all it seems that a new sense of equality has to be promoted.

We have to close the gap between the traditional definition of rational citizenship and the more emotional concepts of national identity. But doing that we should keep in mind that identity is a vague concept and before wanting them to be completely like us we will have to define what we are And that will not be easy.

We have to define the new battlefield where social economic cleavages are translated into social cultural policies.

Finally

Though this contribution concentrates on the challenge of the extreme right, social-democrats are also confronted with left-wing populism. Parties of this category concentrate on social issues offering alternatives that are considered to be unrealistic by mainstream parties but nevertheless can attract a lot of voters. We have seen this in The Netherlands, but to the surprise of many, Dutch voters chose to be pragmatic in the last parliamentary elections.

By offering more credible solutions and by being honest about the consequences of the eurocrisis, the traditional parties were able to considerably reduce the support for the populist ones. But this does not mean that their attractiveness has disappeared. There remains a large support base that they can tap into, but how far they can do so depends in particular on what will happen to our socio-economic model in the years to come.

Jan Marinus Wiersma

Fellow Wiardi Beckman Foundation,
Former Member of the European Parliament
- European Socialists Group



[socialistsanddemocrats](https://www.facebook.com/socialistsanddemocrats)



[socsanddems](https://www.youtube.com/socsanddems)



[socsanddems](https://www.instagram.com/socsanddems)



[TheProgressives](https://twitter.com/TheProgressives)

www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu