

OUR GOAL : THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE



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The coming year will be crucial for the enlargement of the European Union. We expect to see not only the conclusion of negotiations with most of the candidate countries, but also much progress in the Convention, which is preparing the future of the enlarged Union.

This position paper from the PES Parliamentary Group seeks to promote enlargement as a priority for all Europeans. It is the result of wide debate within our Group. I would like to thank all colleagues who have been involved in our enlargement working party, in particular its chair, our Vice-President Klaus Hänsch, and Jan-Marinus Wiersma, who both made major contributions to the paper.

As socialists and social democrats, we will seek to promote our common values of solidarity, social justice and democracy within and across the Member States of the existing and the new European Union. We share a common belief that economies are stronger when societies are just. We support a market economy, not a market society: by working together we can achieve more than we achieve alone.

Although we concentrate on the positive aspects of enlargement, we are not naïve about the difficulties that it will present. The coming enlargement has been better prepared than any previous one, but it presents challenges of a quality and a scale which the EU has never before had to face.

As our position paper makes clear, the costs of non-enlargement would be higher than the costs of enlargement. Delay would put at risk the reforms carried out in the applicant states and the economic investment that has followed.

We believe that enlargement will be a solution to, not a cause of, many of the problems we face together. In a world of insecurity, enlargement offers the prospect of stability and an end to conflicts. Where there is now social exclusion and poverty, enlargement offers inclusion and the hope of economic prosperity. In a world where human rights and democracy are sometimes taken for granted, enlargement offers the consolidation of democratic values and the rule of law.

A globalized interdependent economy and world political order calls for an enlarged union working closer together, having more influence and more responsibility. We want the enlarged union to be more than just a single market. The new EU must be able to deliver high social and environmental standards for all of its citizens. Only through economic progress and stability can these aims be achieved.

Our political family, through the Party of European Socialists and its Parliamentary Group, in the European Parliament is in a unique position to bring together people in the existing EU and the candidate countries. Our Members have direct experience of previous enlargement negotiations, from inside and outside the EU. Our approach contrasts with the unconstructive statements of right wing demagogues.

Our position paper sets out the work we have done to take the process forward. Let's continue to work together for the successful reunification of Europe.

POSITION PAPER ADOPTED BY THE PES GROUP ON THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE EU

Enlargement represents the greatest challenge and the greatest opportunity for the European Union. The leaders of the Union's governments recognise that the process is irreversible. The EU is engaged in detailed negotiations with 12 countries and some of the most difficult issues for the Union and for the candidates are now being addressed.

This paper sets out the views of the Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists on the enlargement of the European Union, our priorities for an enlarged EU and the practical steps we are taking to move the process forward.

Starting with the landmark conclusions of the Copenhagen summit in December 1993 on the beginning of the enlargement process our Group in the European Parliament has supported and promoted the enlargement of the EU to the East and to the South. We recognise the magnitude of the challenge, and the importance of the opportunities it presents. We were first to call for citizens of the candidate countries to have the prospect of participating in the European elections in 2004. The Treaty of Nice, which opened the way for new countries to join, brought that prospect closer. The European Council has set out a road map and timetable for accession, which we endorse.

We also support the detailed work of the Commission in the negotiations, in which we insist that each country and each policy issue should be treated on its own merits. Progress by the countries in the negotiations has varied to such an extent that it no longer makes sense to lump them together in two artificially determined groups. In the negotiations, we continue to believe that there should be no waiting, no hostages, and no backtracking from the conditions.

Our desire to see the first accessions take place soon is based not only on our recognition of the benefits of enlargement, but also on our awareness that delay will put at risk the reforms carried out in the applicant states and the economic investment that has followed. We will do all in our power to ensure that the prospect of participating in the 2004 European elections becomes a reality for citizens of as many candidate countries as possible.

WHY ENLARGEMENT?

We believe that the coming enlargement is in our own interest, in the best sense of the term. Previous accessions have demonstrated the economic benefits to all European countries of an expanded, dynamic Internal Market and the enormous increase in trade, strengthening the social market economy and raising living standards within the Union and its status on the world stage. The coming enlargement to the East and South will lead to a "win-win" result for all concerned.

We now have the historic opportunity not just to reunite Europe and heal past divisions but also to guarantee security, stability, and prosperity in the candidate countries and the existing Member States. Bringing the world together against threats such as international terrorism also means bringing Europe together. The recent atrocities have reinforced our belief that global problems require global solutions: an enlarged and integrated EU will increase our chance contributing to the establishment of a just and safer world order. Enlargement must be used to strengthen the Common Foreign and Security Policy and enhance Europe's impact on global affairs.

Membership will further help to consolidate democracy and social market economy in the for-



mer communist states. After the collapse of the dictatorial system in Central and Eastern Europe, citizens of these countries want democracy, freedom, welfare and new rights. With enlargement the people of the applicant countries will contribute to the building of a new democratic community, sharing pro-European ideals and values.

The timing of enlargement is a very sensitive issue in the applicant countries. They are all keen to join as quickly as possible, but the pace of progress must be weighed against the quality of the outcome. Lasting success of enlargement depends on well-defined terms of membership. In this, transition periods and phasing-in can permit flexibility in the early stages of membership, to the benefit of both sides, as part of an inclusive strategy.

There can, however, be no transition periods for the criteria which have been agreed as pre-conditions for accession: respect for democracy and the rule of law, a functioning market economy and adoption of the rules and legislation of the EU. These must be met from day one of membership. In the negotiations, we have seen that criticisms made by the EU have in fact benefited the candidate countries by helping to speed up reforms. The timetables for joining the European Union and for joining Economic and Monetary Union are separate issues. The introduction of the euro will depend on when the candidates meet the Maastricht criteria for joining.

One consequence of our insistence that strict criteria for membership of the EU must be met is that there is no automatic right to join the EU and for the foreseeable future, the borders of the Union and the borders of Europe will not coincide. The EU must therefore conclude effective agreements with those States (especially with Russia) that do not join for whatever reason. This would involve close co-operation, for example to expand transport and telecommunications networks, to guarantee energy production and distribution, and to protect the environment. Ultimately, there must be more options in Europe than merely being 'in' or 'out' of the EU.

Enlargement is desirable and inevitable. To halt the process would only be possible at the expense of incalculable and barely controllable political reactions in the EU and throughout Europe. The costs of non-enlargement would, undoubtedly, be higher than the costs of enlargement.

FROM TRANSITION TO INTEGRATION

The coming enlargement is not comparable to any previous one. Not only because of the number of candidate countries involved and the current gap in living standards between the EU and the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but also because changes have never been attempted on this scale. This is true regarding historical as well as social, and cultural factors. Having been at the forefront of the enlargement process from the beginning, we have neither underestimated the challenge nor lost sight of our great objective: to build a larger community of peace, welfare and opportunity.

The new Member States will add to the cultural diversity of the EU. We welcome the additional value that this will bring to the Union. We must also all be aware of the differences and be sympathetic to each other's difficulties.



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We have to confront, together, the challenges of globalisation, the Information Society, and the maintenance of peace on our continent and elsewhere. Despite our divergent histories, we must promote a more integrated Europe. As European Socialists and Social Democrats, we are profoundly convinced that the European Union must be more than a single market. We want it to be a Union of shared values to meet the challenges of the future. While preserving our different identities, we must recognise our wider interests and identity as Europeans.

Respect for multiculturalism is essential and beneficial to us all: it should not be feared, but supported actively, through regional programmes, and an active role for local authorities as well as cultural and educational institutions.

Our political family has been decisive in defining active EU employment and innovation strategies, promoting social progress and enhancing social justice. For us, the challenge of enlargement is to make it the vehicle to offer these achievements to all Europeans, irrespective of their origin. We want our social market system to become the basis for the larger Union.

The EU can only foster democracy, political and economic progress if it remains stable and develops a stronger political identity. Regional cohesion, social dialogue, sustainable development and full employment must remain at the core of our policy in an enlarged European Union.

ENLARGEMENT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM THE UNION

The Nice Treaty makes the EU ready for enlargement, but not for the functioning of an enlarged Union. What is needed is not a few minor changes to the existing system, but a new design for the Treaties and the institutions. Making the charter of fundamental rights legally binding would entrench political cohesion through respect for the rule of law throughout an enlarged EU.

Enlargement brings its own challenges to the workings of the EU institutions. A major increase in the number of official languages of the Union cannot be coped with simply by installing more interpreters' booths in meeting rooms, but any proposal to concentrate on a few working languages would raise very politically sensitive issues.

There must be the widest possible debate about what the new Union should look like. To turn the challenge of enlargement into an opportunity, we have to transform this complex process into a clear project and make it understood and accepted by the people in the EU and in the applicant countries.

In preparing the next Treaty review, our Group calls for a Convention to bring together representatives of the Member States, national and European Parliaments and the Commission with a clear mandate to elaborate proposals for the 2004 IGC. Prior to accession, the candidate countries must be given an advisory role, and from the moment of signing the accession treaties a full role in those preparations.



We want the enlarged European Union to be more than just a single market. The new EU must deliver high social and environmental standards for all of its citizens. A larger EU with countries growing closer together will have more influence and more responsibility on the world stage. The people of Europe must be united on a common project. This has not yet been achieved with only 15 Member States and with 28 or more, the task will become even greater. But we believe that enlargement will be a solution to, not a cause of, many of the problems we must face together.

Our priorities for an enlarged European Union include:

• **WELFARE AND THE SOCIAL DIMENSION**

The development of economic and social cohesion across the EU and within its regions has been of enormous benefit to its people. The maintenance and further development of high social standards and conditions is central to the identity of the EU and the expectations of its citizens. Solidarity and joint responsibility for the future of Europe are at the heart of our concerns. The enlarged Union must have and promote a high level of employment and fundamental social standards and conditions. Cohesion is not only about funding - we must establish better instruments and criteria for social, economic and regional development. We also want to encourage the development of pensions, health care, and childcare systems in the new EU, while respecting the rights of individual Member States in relation to welfare provision.

Economic and social cohesion must be developed for the whole Union after accession. Peripheral regions must not feel excluded from the benefits of EU membership. We must work together to address the issues of poverty and exclusion and the need to modernise the welfare state. We want to highlight and develop the role of social dialogue as an instrument for social progress. Restructuring and conversion programmes for older industries in the candidate countries must be put in place.

• **THE ENVIRONMENT AND NUCLEAR SAFETY**

The EU seeks to preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment. Sustainable development and the environment are integrated into all policy areas. Enlargement must not lead to a diminution of standards in environmental protection. Public health and food safety in the Member States and in the candidate countries must be improved. New Member States must adopt and implement the existing rules. There have to be realistic and verifiable targets for progress and environmental impact assessments must be carried out before Community funds are allocated or delivered for new projects.

Enlargement must lead to a raising of environmental standards in the candidate countries, as well as further improvements in the existing Member States. Transitional periods for environmental issues must be avoided where possible and limited in their scope and duration where they are essential. We recognise that the candidate countries may need some time for the implementation of environmental legislation because of the high costs involved but a clear road map for phasing-in must be defined. We must address the future of the nuclear industry and the security of energy supplies as part of an overall energy strategy.



• **FREE MOVEMENT AND BORDERS**

Most citizens of countries participating fully in the Schengen system like the freedom of movement and the absence of passport controls that it brings. The candidate countries want to join the system.

Most countries of Eastern Europe are still low-income countries. Conditions vary between the applicant countries, but in general migrants have lower levels of qualifications and financial resources than do workers in the existing EU. There are fears in some existing Member States about massive labour migration or displacements of economic activity after enlargement. The experience of previous enlargements shows that such fears are exaggerated, provided that a coherent policy of economic development is pursued. Labour mobility throughout Europe is limited and on previous occasions, the judicious and flexible use of transitional periods benefited existing and new EU members alike. For example, there were fears about free movement of labour from Spain in 1986, but Spain is now a net importer of labour.

To gain broad acceptance in the Member States concerned, we support the Commission and Council's flexible approach to transitional periods on the free movement of labour and services in the accession negotiations, but we need a more thorough analysis of the effects of free movement on the labour market. Particular consideration must be given to the border regions, where enlargement is likely to have a clear and immediate impact. Special cross-border flanking measures should be considered in regions where people are likely to commute across borders.

• **WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

We have consistently sought to promote gender equality throughout the EU. The promotion of women's rights is central to our human rights' agenda. We have campaigned for the development of equal opportunities leading to their incorporation in the Treaties. Bearing in mind that the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* in the sphere of gender equality is an essential precondition for accession, we want gender mainstreaming to be implemented.

La mise en oeuvre efficace de mesures contre la traite illicite de femmes et les violences domestiques à l'encontre des femmes doivent être au cœur du processus d'élargissement et le rester une fois l'UE élargie. Les gouvernements des pays candidats devraient promouvoir la participation égale des hommes et des femmes dans le processus décisionnel, conformément à la recommandation du Conseil du 2 décembre 1996.

• **MEASURES AGAINST DISCRIMINATION**

Our Group has been at the forefront of the fight against discrimination within the EU and beyond. We led calls for anti-discrimination measures to be given force across the Union, as they now are in Article 13 of the EC Treaty. We want to promote such measures during and after the process of enlargement. We cannot ignore outstanding human rights problems in applicant countries, any more than violations by the existing Member States.



OUR POLICY PRIORITIES

We must work with the applicant countries to counter all forms of discrimination. We are concerned at the treatment of the Roma and other ethnic minorities. There is also much evidence of discrimination against people on the grounds of their sexual orientation. We have to combine effective anti-discrimination measures with social policies that benefit all and introduce new rights and obligations.

The EU and the candidate countries must adopt strategies for integrating minorities, to recognise their legitimate rights and, in particular, introduce legislation against discrimination pursuant to Article 13 of the EU Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

• **THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION, ORGANISED CRIME AND TERRORISM**

Security and the fight against new and old forms of organised crime are among the greatest worries of European citizens. Corruption destroys democracy and makes the economic environment unpredictable. We all share the responsibility to stop the growth of organised international crime. Most countries operate anti-corruption programmes but their police forces and civil administration are not always able to cope when countries are targeted for a transit role for criminal activity.

The fight against corruption, organised crime and terrorism is a priority for progressive parties and it is a matter of enlightened self-interest to include the candidate countries in this fight. Judicial, police and customs co-operation must be extended to the candidate countries, with more technical assistance and financial support. An effective system of co-operation at the EU's external borders is essential if we are to guarantee the free movement of persons and cross-border mobility within an enlarged Union and to enable us to fight against human trafficking, drug trafficking, the illegal trade in arms, money laundering and terrorism.

• **ENLARGEMENT AND THE EU BUDGET**

The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and the structural funds account for 80% of EU budget expenditure. Participation of the applicant countries in those policies will be phased in during the first years of membership, as in previous enlargements, while respecting the principle of non-discrimination. Phasing in will not only help to keep the EU budget under control, but also immediate full participation would stretch the capacity of the new countries to absorb the financial input and to co-finance projects. It could also cause social and management problems. Steps must also be taken to prevent problems in other budget areas.

The economic and political benefits of enlargement will be greater than the budgetary costs. The likely costs for the European Union budget, which will arise from accession until 2006, can be catered for within the provisions of the 1999 Budgetary Agreement. After 2006, a new Financial Perspective to reflect conditions in the Member States will be necessary and take into account increased costs after 2006.



• **AGRICULTURAL REFORM AND CONSUMER POLICY**

For some candidate countries the transition to the market economy has involved extensive restructuring in agriculture. After accession, many holdings may not be competitive and have to give up farming. The potentially adverse social impact must be mitigated by structural measures. In an enlarged Union, direct payments to agricultural producers must be uniformly determined and tied to social and ecological criteria.

Land prices remain considerably lower than in the EU and there are fears that foreign investors will buy up land on a massive scale. We believe that such fears are as exaggerated, as are those in the existing Member States about the free movement of labour. Flexible and mutually acceptable transition periods will help to address concerns.

The question of the costs of enlargement for the Common Agricultural Policy and that of CAP reform are closely linked and each has a bearing on the other. We are committed to finding a solution that is non-discriminatory to farmers in the new Member States. In each case, particular attention must be given to consumer policy. Existing standards of food safety within the EU must be maintained and improved following enlargement.



For the PES Group in the European Parliament, enlargement is not an abstract issue: we have taken and will continue to take practical action at all levels.

The first Vice-President of our Group, Klaus Hänsch, is responsible for co-ordinating our endeavours in the field of enlargement and chairs our Working Party on Enlargement, which works in particular on horizontal issues arising in the parliamentary committees or affecting several or all countries. A specialist PES MEP is responsible for following the progress of negotiations and the Parliament's reports for each individual applicant country and each important issue. PES members are also active in the Joint Parliamentary Committees, almost all of which have a PES chair or vice-chair. In those Committees, we work closely with MPs from PES parties in the candidate countries to try to ensure that the concerns of all of our electors are taken on board. The Group has had a positive impact on the debate in the Parliament.

We are constantly developing relations with the applicant countries, creating opportunities for dialogue and debate about our common future. We have excellent and regular contacts with European Commissioners working on enlargement issues, in particular Günter Verheugen and other Commissioners from our political family.

The Group co-operates closely with the Party of European Socialists, which is in a unique position to bring together members of our political family in the existing European Union and the Union of the future. Our joint initiatives include a series of Round Tables organised in the candidate countries with the involvement of the Group, the Party of European Socialists and the host country party.

Relations with sister parties and their parliamentary groups are an important part of our agenda. The Group has sent delegations of MEPs to the candidate countries and observer MPs from candidate countries regularly attend meetings of the Group. Experts from those countries can be invited to PES working groups in parliamentary committees. The Group now offers young trainees from the candidate countries the chance to gain practical experience of the work of the European Union in Brussels. PES MEPs are always willing to participate as speakers at conferences and other events organised in applicant countries in co-operation with Parliamentary Groups.

The Group can provide advice to sister parties on the accession process and enlargement reports in the European Parliament. As part of our campaign to promote enlargement, we intend to organise further meetings in the candidate countries. PES parties will be involved in the Group's information campaign on the post-Nice process, in which we will promote our common ideals for EU reform.

In the run-up to the 2004 European elections the Group will intensify its work in all these areas. It is our deepest wish to ensure that the participation of the citizens of candidate countries in those elections becomes a reality and we look forward to welcoming MEPs from our sister parties in the enlarged EU to membership of our Group.



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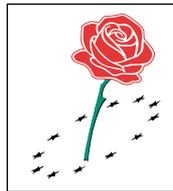


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