

Environment



PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF THE PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS



Europe cannot simply be an internal market or a dynamic economic growth area. Part of the core of the European project is that it should ensure the improvement of citizens' well-being and quality of life. The Treaties say that the Community should promote a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, and a prudent and rational use of natural resources. In their Summits of Lisbon and Göteborg, the European Member States decided that economic, social and environmental policies should be put on an equal footing and co-ordinated as European priorities. The European Union has also committed itself to contributing to a high level of human health protection. Another clear and ambitious objective is to protect consumers and promote their interests.

Over time, the European Parliament has obtained more and more powers, notably in the field of the environment. The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties enabled the European Parliament to adopt a huge number of legislative acts together with the Council. The Members of the European Parliament, as representatives of European citizens, are therefore able to respond to the public's expectations that testify to growing concern about the environment, public health, food safety, consumer protection and the general quality of life. This legislation has and will have huge consequences for the daily life of EU citizens.

The PES Group firmly believes in the notion of sustainable development and wants EU policies to be based on it. This means maintaining and reinforcing our levels of well-being, employment and economic growth, whilst preserving the environment, consuming less natural resources and making better use of them. We believe that living in a healthy environment is no less than a citizen's right and we commit ourselves to guarantee for future generations a heritage of a well-preserved environment and natural resources. We believe furthermore that action to protect the environment is compatible with our socialist goals in terms of economic growth and employment.



In the field of health, we regard equal access to healthcare as a basic right and we demand that the European Union support ambitious policies setting high standards of health, and that it should be capable of confronting dangers to health both now and in the future.

Finally we want to guarantee high standards of consumer protection and impose clear duties on both producers and traders.



The PES Group has put these principles into practice in its political work in the European Parliament:

On the international environment stage ▶ We gave a particular impetus to make sure that the European Union would be setting a positive example to the rest of the world. At the much-publicised World Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg, PES Group Members were critical of the lack of clear environmental targets and action. We also support rapid and full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and want to see greenhouse gas emissions cut in a way that benefits the environment, jobs and the economy.

Renewable energy ▶ The PES Group wants to see renewable energy use increase from the current 6% to 12% by the year 2010.

Safe food ▶ It is of the utmost importance to rebuild the confidence of people in Europe that their food is safely produced. We made sure that the European Union's new Food Safety Authority will be able to speak out if it believes that the European Union is not acting in the interests of consumers. In the whole area of **Genetically Modified Food**, PES Group Members have been the ones trying to strike a balance between the importance of scientific innovation, European jobs and industry and the right of European consumers to safe food, a healthy environment and freedom of choice based on transparent information.

Health ▶ We supported balanced legislation in order to guarantee fair access to pharmaceuticals, including generics, to promote competitiveness and innovation in our industry; and to provide better and objective information for patients. As regards tobacco, we put people's health before the interests of the industry. Restrictive limits on harmful ingredients in cigarettes have been put in place and tobacco companies are being forced to be more open and honest with European citizens.

Chemicals ▶ We have demanded rapid clear rules for the authorisation of chemical substances and the phasing out of those causing concern, on the basis of the precautionary principle. These rules should also address the question of the protection of workers.

Consumer protection ▶ We promote a binding framework for fair trading standards, transparency, and full information for consumers, while consumers' associations should be acknowledged as key stakeholders. We led the ban on many issues relating to consumer protection, such as the prohibition of dangerous chemical substances in children's toys.

Waste ▶ The PES Group has called for tough action on recycling and re-use of packaging, providing incentives for producers to choose environmentally-friendly packaging options for their goods. In the same spirit our Group has succeeded in making producers responsible for sound environmental management of the disposal of electric and electronic equipment. A similar policy was applied to the car industry.

Cosmetics ▶ The PES Group has not compromised on its opposition to the use of animal testing for non-medicinal cosmetic products, lipsticks, shampoos, creams and deodorant. We adopted a firm stance on the ban of allergens or carcinogenic products.

Environmental Liability ▶ We firmly support full implementation of the polluter pays principle in EU legislation for environmental disasters such as the oil spill from the *Prestige* so that those responsible pay the cost of the pollution they caused.



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