



The President

100 days for parliamentary work

Working for a progressive Europe of hope

The 100 days left for parliamentary work before the European elections are an opportunity for the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D Group) to demonstrate how a progressive Europe could look like.

We want a Europe of social justice and employment; A Europe of peace and human rights. We reject nationalism and believe in the Community method as the only method to prevent a single government from blocking vital legislation – in conjunction with a strong and responsible European Parliament.

We are critical of today's Europe, and we, as Progressives, offer an alternative vision, a vision of hope for all Europeans. We reject division between North and South, East and West. Solidarity and mutual interests are the basis of our common Europe. Based on these principles, the S&D Group will use the time until the elections in May 2014 to prepare for a better, more social Europe for our citizens, which takes into account our regional and global obligations.

1) Progressive Economy: Growth, Investment and Jobs

To create full time, quality jobs, we need economic growth and investments - especially in alternative energy and in the fight against climate change. We support a policy of European reindustrialization based on innovation and research which offers our younger generation real jobs and hope for their future.

The S&D Progressive Economy initiative has shown that a dedicated investment strategy is compatible with the long-term, sustainable reduction of national debt levels. To finance increased public investments, the fight against tax evasion and the introduction of a Financial Transaction Tax must be accelerated.

These policies are the main elements of a European Economic Governance which includes a viable Banking Union. We must end the Troikas with their destructive interventions and we must prevent their reintroduction via the backdoor by creating 'Contractual Agreements' between the Commission and individual member states. We insist on the Community method because of its legitimacy and its democratic dimension, with the full involvement of the European Parliament.

2) Equality and Social Justice for All

Increasing poverty and the widening gap between rich and poor are unacceptable for our progressive movement. We need to correct these inequalities and give people new hope for a better future. Social Europe is indivisible and delivers for everybody who contributes to the common wellbeing. Freedom of movement and the right to work and study in all EU countries are fundamental rights of all European citizens.

We reject discrimination of access to social services in national legislation, whilst demanding the introduction of European measures against social dumping and the exploitation of migrant workers. We will apply pressure on governments to make full use of the EU budget to enhance integration, education and social wellbeing of all their citizens.

3) Progressive societies without discrimination

For the past two centuries Europe has undergone radical change, introducing fundamental and civil rights as a result of the struggle for democracy and equality. We will fight against the regressive campaigns of conservative and right-wing forces in Europe, who want to erase the progress made in our societies, most prominently on the rights of women, minorities or LGBT people.

European progressives will uphold the European charter of fundamental rights and we will fight against any kind of discrimination, racism and homophobia. We respect individual choices and the principle of subsidiarity, and we will never accept authoritarian and discriminatory restrictions of individual freedoms.

4) Privacy and Data Protection

Data protection and the protection of privacy are key for progressive politics and a fundamental right of all citizens in Europe. We need strong European legislation to protect privacy and personal data.

The European Parliament has approved a strong proposal, now we cannot accept inaction by the Council. Governments need to negotiate with the European Parliament to adopt sound data protection rules for all EU citizens - before the next European elections -, that will be respected by all, European or not. European data protection legislation must be upheld in all international agreements, starting from a future EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment partnership.

5) Enlargement with care and adequate preparation

Enlargement of the European Union has not come to an end. But any future accession must be well prepared. Fundamental rights and European values must be unequivocally respected.

The accession candidate countries of the Balkans must overcome past divisions and work for regional cooperation. Turkey must show a clear determination for democratic reforms, respect for minority rights and religious freedom. We criticise the increasing authoritarian way the present government is acting, whilst supporting ongoing accession processes. We affirm our solidarity to these countries and their people.

6) Progress and human rights in our neighborhood

Despite setbacks in Ukraine and some Arab spring countries, we will continue to support the aspirations for economic and social development and for democratic institutions of the people from our neighborhood. We have to restructure our Mediterranean Neighborhood policy and offer new forms of cooperation. We have to help these societies in their fight against radical, fundamentalist tendencies which undermine basic rights, especially for women and minorities.

We continue to support all political and humanitarian efforts to find a sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine, as well as in Syria. We are committed to not letting the Middle East submerge itself in a nuclear arms race.

7) A humanitarian and flexible approach to migration

The European Union's immigration and asylum policy cannot be the sum of 28 different approaches. It is a European challenge and Europe must define a common policy as a full political actor and not just as an operational donor. The European response must be based on humanitarian support to rescue refugees and migrants in situations of distress and provide for dignified reception conditions. Solidarity among Member states is key and as progressives, we fight for an increase in solidarity and a revision of the Dublin III regulation to make family reunification possible.

We must clamp down on human traffickers and smugglers through strong cooperation with our neighbouring countries. But we must also open more opportunities for legal migration to the EU, based on the needs of the labour market and mobility partnerships with countries of origin of migrants.

Our societies must be a home for all those who reside, study and work in Europe. Europe must reinforce support to local authorities and member states for inclusion and integration and promote access to nationality and full citizenship rights for all "new Europeans", for children born and raised in the EU and for long-term residents.

8) Steps toward Common Security and Defense together with Regional Allies

In an insecure and dynamic world scene we must implement a European defence and security policy in the framework of a comprehensive concept, especially concerning the fight against terrorism. Potential military interventions should be carefully planned and their execution should always be dependent on a viable exit strategy.

Europe must build alliances of cooperation with regional partners and should always - as promoters of multilateralism - aspire to UN support for military interventions.

9) Trade & aid for jobs, social rights and sustainable development

We give full support to the newly found compromise of a multilateral trade agreement ('Bali Package'), while continuing to negotiate bilateral agreements. Facilitating trade enables Europe to accelerate job creation and enhances human rights - especially workers'rights and environmental protection in third countries. All trade agreements must be negotiated in full transparency.

In relations to developing countries, trade and aid must go hand in hand. We will carefully observe the respect and implementation of our transparency legislation for extractive industries.

10) Constructive cooperation and hope vs. destructive nationalism and despair

One hundred years after the First World War began, we must not give way to a new nationalism which is incompatible with progressive principles and policies. European unification and cooperation with progressive forces worldwide must shape globalisation in a democratic and socially viable way. Nationalism, with its ingredients of xenophobia and discrimination, cannot give hope for a better future, and it cannot meet the challenges of today. Nationalists rely on illusions and scaremongering. Only international cooperation and a united Europe can show the way forward to a better future.