

OUR  
**ALTERNATIVE**  
VISION FOR A  
**PROGRESSIVE EUROPE**  
**IN THE WORLD**



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



Hannes Swoboda, President of the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament

PHOTO © Uroš Kekuliš Kleva

## "THE FIRST 100 DAYS FOR A MORE PROGRESSIVE EUROPE IN THE WORLD"

Two years ago the EU won the Nobel Peace Prize, for "peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights". The prize was accepted in the name of every single EU citizen. It recognised the EU's success in bringing peace and prosperity to our continent and further afield. We are proud of the positive role the EU has played in the world. This would not have been done without our progressive policies and our continuing work for development, fairness and justice – both in the EU and around the world. Here we set out our vision for a stronger, safer and more prosperous EU in the world, building on what we have achieved so far and creating more and better jobs for Europeans as a way out of the crisis.

Today, the European Parliament has a greater say in how the EU acts in the world, but the challenges we face are bigger than ever. From facing the crisis in Syria, to working together to end chronic poverty in developing countries, to helping neighbouring countries build the democracies they strive for – we have a lot of work to do. The Socialists and Democrats want action.

We want action so that we are able to boost jobs and growth to meet the challenges posed by destructive conservative and liberal policies. We want action to champion the highest standards of human rights around the world, so that corruption has no place to hide, so that crippling poverty is wiped out and so that jobs in the EU are not undercut by unfair competition from abroad. We want EU action for a safer world, free from weapons of mass destruction and ready to take on terrorism and organised crime.

We believe a strong EU, speaking with one powerful voice, is the key to protecting our interests, facing up to global challenges and competing to secure decent, well-paid European jobs. In a changing world of 7 billion people, we believe no individual country is big enough to go it alone. It is only an EU led by the Socialists and Democrats that can make Europe stand up strongly together to improve our citizens' quality of life, reduce poverty and make the world a safer place.

### **Boosting trade and human rights**

In today's inter-connected world, international trade affects every aspect of our lives. Even a simple pair of jeans passes through factories many different countries before it reaches the high street. Today our MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) have real power over how the EU trades with the rest of the world. International trade can help us get our economies out of the crisis and we have championed opportunities for European jobs and businesses selling products and services abroad.

We also see trade as a tool for setting high standards on human rights around the world and persuading our international partners to change the way they deal with workers' rights. We make it clear that we will not make agreements with countries that turn a blind eye to human rights and destroy the environment. From improving conditions in factories in Bangladesh and better protection for workers in Colombia, to fighting child labour in Uzbekistan – we have



made a real difference. These values are important to us and we are not prepared to trade them away.

### Our commitment to the very poorest

It is unfair that the poorest, not just at home but around the world, are paying a heavy price for reckless mistakes made by the banks and governments who failed to regulate the financial sector. The poorest should not be paying for these mistakes. The S&D Group have pushed hard to make sure the EU remains the world's biggest development donor and keeps its promise to help end the vicious cycle of poverty. We must make sure that financiers can no longer gamble with food prices, driving up the cost of living at home and abroad. We also believe that no one should suffer through illness or lack of treatment when there are many solutions available in the EU, from access to affordable medicine to family planning services.

### Acting responsibly around the world

The Socialists and Democrats will not let EU companies make profits at the expense of people's lives – even in far-flung places of the world where they think

nobody is watching. We want to see EU companies act responsibly, ending child labour, paying workers a fair wage, paying their fair share of taxes and respecting the environment. We wouldn't stand for anything less at home. That is why we support greater transparency from EU companies working abroad, both on their profits and payments and on the impact of their activities on human rights and social conditions.

The S&D Group believe that the promotion of transparency and the fight against corruption should be at the forefront of the EU's foreign policy. Corruption leads to human rights violations, perpetuates inequality and impunity, undermines sustainable development and fuels violence and conflict. We take the view that the EU should promote democratic participation, access to information and budget transparency as a means of engaging with our partner countries.

### Standing up for everyone

The Socialists and Democrats have long been a leading voice in defending the rights of minorities and disadvantaged groups around the world. We stand for zero tolerance of violence against women and demand special attention is given to women's

rights. They are the backbone of many communities but all too often the victims of violence and discrimination, particularly in war zones. Where Europeans are contributing to development aid, we will not allow countries to turn a blind eye to discrimination against women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people or any other group.

### Making Europe safer

Although the EU is a safe place, we must not forget that we are surrounded by an unstable neighbourhood. From recent conflicts fighting extremists on our doorstep in Mali, to stopping drug traffickers and pirates, we need to act together to defend the EU and make it safer. It should not be left to some EU countries to act alone to keep us all safe, and most EU countries do not have the strength – military or otherwise – to stand alone. We believe we are stronger together and that requires a strong and effective European External Action Service. We want to see a more active EU protecting people in danger zones around the world and helping those areas get themselves up and running again so that both the EU and areas affected by conflict are kept safe, promoting human security globally.

### A stronger diplomatic voice

We were the driving force in creating the European External Action Service (EEAS) which, under a social-democrat EU high representative for foreign affairs and security is a service Europeans can rely on and be proud of. We have seen how this strong EU voice helped broker a deal to stop Iran developing nuclear weapons, talked Syria into dismantling its deadly stockpile of chemical weapons and helped negotiate a deal between Serbia and Kosovo. Over the next five years we need to strengthen the EEAS to boost the EU's diplomatic presence on the world stage and make sure we are first on the scene in danger zones, not just to help EU citizens – through better consular assistance – but also those in need all over the world.

### Our priorities after the European elections

In this brochure we will set out our alternative vision for the EU on the world stage and what we can do to make it happen. Following *Our alternative vision for Europe – the first 100 days*, here we highlight three areas where we need to get to work on making a difference outside the EU: advancing peace, democracy and human rights, developing an international

trade policy based on progressive principles and a clean, safe planet for generations to come.

Over the last five years we are proud to have stood up to conservatives and liberals who want to put trade above any other concerns and against greens and communists who want to turn their backs on the rest of the world. The Socialists and Democrats have had a strong, proactive, diplomatic voice and a determination to get things done – in line with our progressive values.

From the financial crisis to climate change, the international community has taken too long to make things happen. We want to see rapid change, both within the EU and also at the UN, so that we can react quickly to events that affect our daily lives. EU and international action needs to be quicker and more efficient – we cannot sit around while people are suffering and jobs are being lost.



Hannes Swoboda  
S&D Group President

# OUR ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the last elections in 2009 the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council of Ministers have been largely dominated by the right, so we have had a tough battle on our hands to fight the right's drive for austerity. Here are a selection of our actions and achievements in the last four years, defending a strong, proactive Europe:

## ■ Personal privacy before profit – the death of the controversial Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

Our group was the first to voice its concern about the way the controversial trade agreement was secretly negotiated. ACTA, which was intended to stop the real problem of illegal counterfeiting, ended up as a legal mess, covering everything from internet downloads to handbags. We realised the dangers ACTA posed and the very real ways this could have changed the way we use the internet, potentially framing ordinary internet users as criminals for innocently sharing a few files. We did not want internet companies to police the internet and criminally prosecute innocent users, and therefore we led the way in rejecting this agreement.

## ■ A road map to improving workers' rights

We were not prepared to sign a trade agreement with Colombia at any cost; we fought to include a road map on rights so that the country would put in place robust measures to protect workers and trade unions.

## ■ A push towards peace

We have supported progressive political forces in Middle-Eastern and North-African countries to help everyday citizens create the fair and just societies they fought for. Through our Arab Social Democratic Forum, we have worked closely with them on issues such as youth unemployment and job creation to help provide peace and stability in the region. We also encouraged the relaunch of peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians and have persistently worked to build dialogue with Iran and engage with all sides working for peace in the region. We also pushed to make

sure that no one involved in Israeli settlement activities can have access to EU funding.

## ■ Coming out against discrimination

For us, all human beings are born free and equal. Each and every one of us should enjoy the same dignity and rights, no matter where in the world we live. We have proudly stood up and tackled discrimination and hatred towards all minorities. From the recent moves to introduce anti-homosexuality laws in Uganda to Russia's attempt to ban 'gay propaganda' we have not and will not shy away from denouncing such incitements to hatred and violence on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

## ■ Getting bigger and better

EU enlargement has been a success. The S&D Group have continued to set the bar high when it comes to joining the EU – upholding human rights and stamping out corruption. Thanks to our efforts we helped Croatia in its quest to join the EU, becoming a modern European economy where millions of EU citizens will travel this year for work or holidays.

## ■ Helping the poorest – curbing food speculation

Thanks to the Socialists and Democrats, for the first time the EU will soon regulate commodities to tackle food speculation. High and volatile food prices have a devastating impact on poor and food-dependent countries, quite literally driving people to starvation. We have fought hard, working closely with NGOs and campaigners, to establish an effective system to limit the commodities and methods financiers can gamble with. This will help to curb speculation and reduce inflation and price volatility for staple foods and other essential goods.

## ■ Paying a fair price around the world

It was our group that penned new rules to fight corruption and exploitation in developing countries, making sure that citizens of resource-rich countries can hold their governments to account over profits from their natural resources and claim the financial rewards for what is rightfully theirs. Thanks to this ground-breaking law, EU companies in the extractive industries will have to behave transparently and pay a fair price for the raw materials they take from developing countries, improving the ethics of the products we take for granted – from mobile phones to jewellery – and the lives of those living there.



# PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The EU can have a positive influence on its neighbours and trading partners. We want to make sure Europe behaves responsibly and encourages democratic values around the world – for the well-being of all our citizens and for generations to come.

We want the EU to set the bar high on human rights and lead by example. Until we have the highest possible standards at home, we will not be taken seriously around the world. We want to promote dialogue and openness with other countries, so that together we can raise human rights standards. We oppose the use of the death penalty and torture, and will fight to stop their use anywhere in the world.

Unlike some conservative governments who want to roll back these hard-won rights, we want to fight to make them stronger, making sure that our freedoms are not compromised but championed. We are proud that a social-democrat EU special representative for human rights has led efforts to ensure that the EU acts in a united and co-

ordinated way, putting human rights first around the world so that our good intentions are not undermined by ill-thought-out policies.

## Putting an end to war and armed conflict

■ The EU must be at the forefront of efforts to protect civilian populations in war-torn countries like Syria. **We will safeguard EU humanitarian aid and spending.**

The EU should lead the way in bringing all sides to the negotiating table to map out a sustainable route towards peace.

■ The crisis in Syria is one of the biggest challenges we face right now. **The suffering of the Syrian people must be brought to an immediate end.**

Our group will continue to ensure that despite conservative-imposed austerity, EU frontline humanitarian assistance reaches the millions of desperate people in need of food, medical treatment and basic services, both in Syria and neighbouring countries.

■ **There can be no military solution to the crisis.** Moves which could escalate the violence would only bring more suffering for the Syrian people. We believe that the rising tide of sectarian violence, fuelled by radical groups, poses the biggest threat to security in the Middle East. We are also deeply concerned about the conflict contributing to the radicalisation of some young Muslims in Europe, especially those who join the jihad in Syria and then return home to Europe. We condemn the supply of arms to both to the Assad regime and the extremist opposition. Finding a political solution for a post-Assad Syria must involve all the relevant Syrian and regional players, including the US, Turkey and the Arab states. We will continue to push for a strong, lasting solution bringing all sides to the negotiating table. This cannot wait. Time is of the essence.



Border with Jordan and Syria, November 2011

# WORKING WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS

## Bringing the troops home

■ After over a decade of EU troops being deployed in Afghanistan, we want them home. That is why we support the plan to for a phased and responsible withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country. We acknowledge, however, that in order to accomplish this, the EU must make sure that well-trained and capable Afghan security forces (military and police) remain there to protect the country.

■ **We want to make sure that EU aid to Afghanistan is being used effectively** and to help Afghanistan build support systems for its long-suffering citizens through boosting its police forces, putting more judges in place and setting up more courts to reinforce the rule of law and stamp out corruption. This means that the EU must stand ready to keep helping Afghanistan through targeted capacity-building programmes. The EU should also help neighbouring states such as Pakistan to move in the same direction to fight extremism, terrorism and sectarian violence.

**Protecting the human rights of women and girls should**

## be central to the EU's work in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

## Taking a principled stance on our values

■ The S&D Group want a new strategy with Russia so that we can bring more stability to our eastern neighbourhood. We also want to see Russia work with us on constructive solutions to problems in the Middle East – and Syria in particular. However, we must not and cannot ignore problems within Russia, including unacceptable crackdowns on civil-society organisations, those who oppose the government and LGBTI people. We want to see the EU address this head on, through a friendly and frank dialogue. We must make it clear we cannot accept the suppression of fundamental rights, nor can we accept Russian threats to countries who freely decide to explore trade deals with the EU.

■ The Socialists and Democrats also want to build good relations with our other neighbours. **Enlarging the EU has been a success, boosting our economies, creating more decent jobs and promoting our social standards.** Croatia has

recently proven this, overcoming the devastation of war, corruption and economic turmoil to become a modern European economy. We hope other countries will follow Croatia's path to success. For us, joining the EU is not simply a rite of passage: countries must remain committed to our non-negotiable values of human rights and freedoms for everyone. Countries applying to join the EU must clearly show that they are proactive on stamping out corruption and organised crime if they want EU assistance. We want to see **Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo** take further steps towards becoming EU members.

■ **Turkey in particular is a key partner for the EU** and we want to see further talks to bring Turkey and the EU closer. We want to work together to uphold values such as equality, independence of the judiciary and human rights, including the rights of organisations such as trade unions and freedom for LGBTI groups. Freedom of expression for the Turkish people and the media is also crucial.

Talks should depend on all these important criteria being met and we want the EU to put more pressure on Turkey over these problematic areas and engage more proactively with Turkish people and organisations. By extending the ERASMUS programme for example, we can provide even more opportunities for young people, both within Turkey and across the EU.

■ **We will continue to work hard to build an 'Eastern Partnership'** with our neighbours to the east so that our citizens can travel, work and trade more freely. We were the driving force behind agreements that brought

Georgia and Moldova closer to the EU, boosting trade and opening new opportunities for our citizens. We remain open to signing an association agreement with the Ukraine. The masses who have taken to the streets in Kiev in recent months serve as a reminder of how EU membership is still an aspiration for millions of young people, hoping for greater opportunities and a decent future. We express our full support and solidarity with the peaceful protesters and condemn the government crackdown. We want the Ukrainian authorities to seriously address corruption, selective justice and the rights



of minorities if it wants to move closer to EU membership and fulfil the European aspirations of many ordinary Ukrainians.

## The Sakharov Prize



Each year the European Parliament is proud to award the Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought. The award is a well-respected international award, on a level with the Nobel Peace Prize. Previous recipients have included Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi and Chinese dissident Hu Jia, along with the many other worthy winners. They agree that this award from the European Parliament has helped further their cause, advancing human rights in all corners of the world.

This year the S&D Group successfully nominated Malala Yousafzai, a 14-year-old Pakistani girl who has campaigned tirelessly for girls' education – despite being shot in the head by the Taliban. We nominated her because, like Malala, we believe education is a human right, not a privilege. Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, girls are far less likely to go to school than boys. For girls lucky enough to go to school, many still have their education blighted because they are forced into work or marriage early. We believe that education is an investment for the future and can help women in many parts of the world escape a life of poverty and reduce the dangers of forced marriages, HIV-related illnesses and domestic and sexual violence. A good education for girls can reduce child and maternal mortality and increase entrepreneurship and job opportunities.

PHOTO ABOVE: Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani campaigner for girls' education – winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought 2013

# A STRONG EUROPE IN THE WORLD

## Changing course for the better

■ We want the EU to look at the bigger picture with countries such as Iran, rather than just focusing on their nuclear programme. The vast majority of people in Iran desperately want to see relations with the outside world put back to normal. We should be ready to work with them. The EU should re-examine the sanctions placed on the country which may be harming the livelihoods of millions of ordinary people. This does not mean that we have to be soft with the Iranian leadership when it comes to human rights and freedoms. On the contrary, **engaging with Iran must mean more engagement on human rights and the regional role of Iran**, for example in resolving the Syrian conflict.

■ The S&D Group has taken a lead in reinvigorating parliamentary diplomacy with Iran. In mid-October 2013 an S&D delegation led by our president, Hannes Swoboda, made a ground-breaking trip to Tehran, the first parliamentary contact with Iran in six years. Subsequent developments, like the signing of

the historic Geneva interim deal between the world powers and Iran, have vindicated our position. Dialogue and engagement are the path to an agreement and potential normalisation of relations with Iran – not sanctions and threats. **By engaging in dialogue and evoking the possibility of lifting sanctions if Iran fulfils its commitments, the S&D Group has helped to create more space for diplomacy** and move away from the slippery slope leading to another disastrous war in the Middle East.

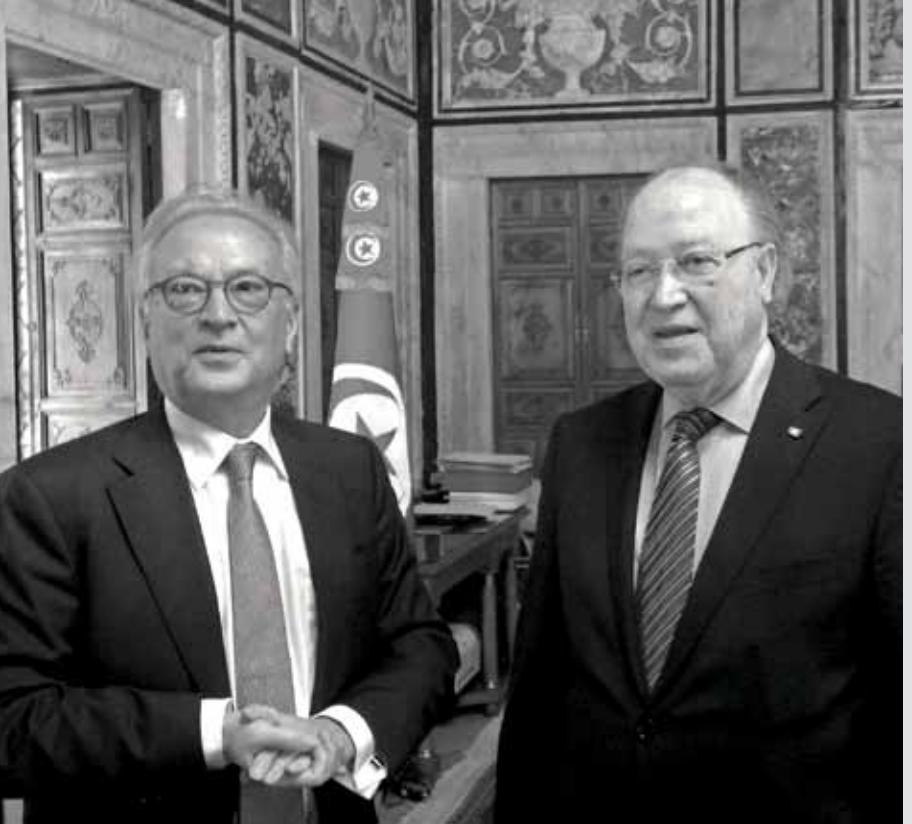
■ The S&D Group firmly believes that dialogue and the easing of sanctions should not only lead to a wide-ranging agreement with Iran on the nuclear issue, but also help the country change course towards a more open and fair society.

■ We have a proud record of helping support democracies and good governance throughout the world. Our MEPs have headed EU election-observation missions around the globe, helping countries strengthen their democracies, shake off dark

authoritarian pasts and ensure everyone has a vote. **We want to make sure that democracy and freedom remain strong** – long after the observers and TV cameras have left the election scene – by assisting countries with technical and expert know-how, so that citizens can be democratically represented for years to come.

## Making a success of the Arab Spring

■ The Socialists and Democrats have been a leading force in the European Parliament in shaping the EU's response to the Arab Spring revolutions. **We want to make sure that Europe lives up to its commitments to help people in these countries get back on their feet** and achieve their aspirations – which are the same as our own. They took to the streets to demand democracy, dignity and justice, but also decent jobs, a good education and equal opportunities for all. And they deserve it – particularly the women who actively helped bring down the dictatorships.



■ We are at the forefront of helping progressive forces in these countries organise themselves and campaign for change. **Our Global Progressive Forum was first on the scene after the dictatorships had crumbled**, bringing together like-minded political forces and setting up the Arab Social Democratic Forum to work together for jobs, opportunities and social justice.

■ We are leading efforts to help the people of these countries get back the assets which were stolen by former dictators and their cronies. We want the EU to provide legal and technical assistance to help the people get back what is rightly theirs.

## A lasting peace in the Middle East

■ The long, simmering conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is right on our doorstep. We therefore have a huge interest in working towards a lasting solution. **The S&D Group want to see the EU be a player and not just a 'payer' in the region**. For us, the right of the Palestinian people to have their own state and the right of Israel to exist within secure borders are without doubt. We therefore believe that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process must be anchored in the fundamental principles of international law, namely human rights law and international humanitarian law.

■ We welcome the recently relaunched peace talks between Israel and Palestine. We want the leaders of both sides to continue negotiating despite powerful voices trying to undermine an agreement. We support all serious and timely efforts for peace and condemn the unlawful Israeli settlement expansions. We have pushed to ensure EU funding does not support illegal settlements and that products that enter the EU from the region are clearly labelled, so EU consumers can be sure they are not buying products from illegally occupied territory.

# TRADE AND AID - CO-OPERATING FOR PROGRESS

## Boosting workers' rights and social protection

■ Using our trade deals to insist on improved social standards can make a real difference. Colombia was one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a member of a trade union, but our insistence on including measures to protect workers and trade unions in a recent EU trade deal has already had positive results. We will continue to hold countries such as Colombia to account, making sure workers get better rights and the brave trade unionists who stand up for them get the protection they deserve.

■ Latin America has long been an important partner for us, however the continent still faces huge problems of poverty and inequality. **We want to work with Latin American countries to create an ambitious plan to promote social standards and human rights.** With booming economies such as Brazil and Mexico on the rise, we want to boost dialogue between Europe,

North America and Latin America to promote trade flows between us, creating jobs whilst respecting our progressive social and environmental standards.

■ Unfortunately, in some parts of the world, **child labour** is still common, forcing children out of school and into dangerous work. We can make it clear that we will not accept this practice.

We have put a trade agreement with Uzbekistan on hold until it improves its abysmal human-rights record. Despite pressure from the conservatives, we were not prepared to back a deal with a country that systematically endorses forced child labour. We want to see a system of traceability introduced, so that European consumers can ensure their purchases do not put money in the pockets of such nasty regimes.

## A helping hand to the world's poorest

■ For too long Africa has been a forgotten continent. **The S&D**

## Group see a bright new era ahead for Africa

, where there can be huge economic growth, millions of new jobs, millions more children in school and better access to clean water. We want to work with our African neighbours as equal partners to boost fair trade and make better use of development assistance and natural resources.

■ We are proud that the EU is the world's largest donor of development aid to poorer countries. An efficient, **co-ordinated and coherent EU development policy** is the most powerful way to lift people out of poverty and provide opportunities for those seeking a better life both at home and abroad. **We want education and healthcare to be at the very heart of EU development policy.** Special attention

should be given to the many women and girls in developing countries who, without access to education, will never be able to claim their rights or have the power to make their own choices

or build a life of dignity for themselves and their daughters. European development money has proven very effective in boosting healthcare and family planning, combating extreme poverty and getting children into school. It should stay that way. However, we will not stand for European taxpayers' money going to governments who do not respect human rights for all or who allow corruption to flourish. Where the EU has led on development, others have followed.

## The EU has pledged to eradicate extreme poverty

, step up the fight against HIV/AIDS and tackle inequalities. We wholeheartedly support these aims – but more progress has to be made and efforts must be stepped up for the long term. We will fight to maintain our support for the world's poorest and make sure that EU countries live up to their commitments of spending 0.7% of GDP on international development aid. This spending target must be a genuine one, with new money that has not committed elsewhere, and funds should be directed towards health and education.

■ The EU should ensure Africa's raw materials are not plundered by foreign companies to produce

items we take for granted, from smartphones to clothes. The people who own these basic materials should get the benefits and EU companies must respect that. **We want a strong legal framework to make sure European companies operate transparently, protect the environment and workers' rights** and pay taxes in the countries where they operate. Thanks to the Socialists and Democrats, tough new EU laws will soon come into effect making EU companies abide by these high standards.

■ Unfortunately the need for humanitarian aid is also increasing. Despite the fact that humanitarian aid amounts to 1% of the EU budget, irresponsible conservative austerity has jeopardised our ability to respond under pressure.

**We want to stop this and make sure the EU is always ready and equipped to help.** Who knows when and where the next Fukushima-style disaster will strike?

■ To complement Europe's financial efforts, we want to see an army of professional EU volunteers established to work on humanitarian-relief operations, boosting the work done by professionals. This would be both



an exciting opportunity for young people and a very welcome boost to resources.

PHOTO ABOVE: S&D Group President Hannes Swoboda with Ollanta Humala, President of Peru, December 2012

# BOOSTING JOBS AND GROWTH

We see trading with the rest of the world as a key to helping us get our economies back on track after the crisis. **We have fought to make sure Europeans benefit from cheaper, high-quality products ranging from household appliances to medicines.**

And fair, balanced trade deals can offer EU companies new opportunities, creating new jobs and strengthening our economies.

The Socialists and Democrats want to be reliable partners to our allies around the world. We want to deepen our relationships with countries such as China and Russia, but be frank and firm where we need to. We want to go and do business with emerging powers such as Brazil, India and South Africa, and look at how we can work together on a whole range of issues from improving workers' rights to increasing investment.

## Emerging economies

- China is one of the world's fastest-growing economies and wields huge power on the world

stage, from Africa to the Middle East. We depend on China for many everyday items, from fridges to mobile phones. **We want to see our companies expanding their business in China and Chinese investors coming to do business here.** We need a frank and open discussion so that we can work together and overcome our differences.

Only a strong EU can negotiate effectively with China. The Socialists and Democrats will continue to tell our Chinese partners that Europeans do not want products made by forced labour and we will not turn a blind eye when dissidents are silenced. **We want to work with China so that we can agree standards on environmental protection, promoting corporate responsibility and transparency, and stepping up the fight against counterfeiting,** which puts low-quality, potentially risky goods on the market and endangers millions of European jobs. We will continue to make it known that we expect more flexibility in

finding solutions to international problems, from the crisis in Syria to supporting unsavoury regimes and forcing local people off their land in Africa. The EU plays by international rules and we expect China to do so as well.

## Welcoming new EU countries

- EU enlargement has also brought success and growth for Europe. As well as bringing stability to our neighbourhood and promoting our social standards, enlarging the EU is a boost to our economies, opening up new markets and opportunities for European businesses, and bringing fresh energy and growth to new and old partners.



## DRIVING THE EU-US TRADE TALKS

Together, the EU and the US account for almost half of the world's economy and one third of world trade, with millions of jobs dependent on this trade. However, our relative share has been declining over the past decade due to the rise of mighty economies such as China and Brazil. This decline, coupled with the financial crisis and rising unemployment, means both the EU and US have to act – and fast. This is why **we fully support talks to boost and open up trade between the EU and the US**.

**A trade deal between our economies could create millions of new jobs, promote growth, cut red tape and unlock huge amounts of investment.** We want to see an agreement which creates high-quality jobs, benefits EU consumers with cheaper prices and better quality, and which opens opportunities for EU industries and companies to sell their goods and services in the US.

Within the European Parliament, **the S&D Group is in a leading position to influence these talks and give the final say** on whether the EU agrees to the outcome. Before we approve any deal we want to make sure that it protects the environment and human health – especially on genetically modified food and the use of hormones – and does not jeopardise our high-quality public services. We will not settle for a reduction in the health and safety or consumer-protection standards which we enjoy in the EU.

Just as we are frank with all our partners around the world, we have also been critical of the USA for failing to sign up to international standards on workers' rights. **We want to see the US uphold the rights of European employees within EU companies based in the US** and we will continue to defend the highest levels of workers' rights and use it as an opportunity to stop the downward spiral of wages and conditions.

When news broke about the huge US surveillance scandal, we were quick to express our outrage. We called for negotiations to be suspended until the United States could give us satisfactory assurances and explanations of why their intelligence agencies had been illegally collecting huge amounts of our personal data – from emails to Facebook messages and even bugging EU offices. The right-wing in Europe appear to be untroubled by this scandal; they are happy to allow trade talks to push ahead, without a murmur about the murky behaviour of the US intelligence services. **For us, the right to privacy for European citizens' personal data is a fundamental right.** We will not allow this to be negotiable.

**"WE WANT A TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE US WHICH CREATES JOBS, BOOSTS THE ECONOMY AND BENEFITS CONSUMERS. WE WILL MAKE SURE IT SAFEGUARDS OUR PUBLIC SERVICES, PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR RIGHTS AT WORK"**

Finally, **we will not allow hard-won social protections in the EU to be undermined**. We therefore oppose proposed investment rules for firms and the so-called 'investor-state dispute settlement mechanism'. We have grave concerns that this could give big firms too much power to block EU policies they do not like – such as new environmental or health legislation – and it could tie the hands of EU member states and open the gates for multinationals and investors to sue EU countries. A similar arrangement in Australia allowed a tobacco giant to sue the government over plain-packaging rules for cigarettes, introduced in the interests of public health. We want to see any legal challenges to EU policies addressed transparently through our existing, reliable legal systems.

**"A TRADE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE US COULD HAVE HUGE BENEFITS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC. WE ARE NOT WILLING TO SACRIFICE OUR SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS OR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS – INCLUDING DATA PROTECTION – FOR THE SAKE OF IT"**



The S&D Group hosted a conference on the EU-US trade agreement which took place in the European Parliament in Brussels on 16 October 2013

# A CLEANER, SAFER EUROPE

The EU's approach to the global challenges of the 21st century must also focus on the international issues that affect our daily lives and our planet, creating a better future for us all. For the Socialists and Democrats there is no doubt that climate change is a global emergency – we only need to look to the freak weather conditions which have struck the EU in recent years – and we will drive the EU's efforts to show global leadership on environmental issues. At the same time the EU must promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness for our industries. A major part of this transformation must be decisive action to upgrade Europe's energy networks to drive down energy bills and create a secure, sustainable energy supply for the future.

## Stepping up the fight against climate change

We believe that if the EU leads the way and takes on the challenge of climate action now, it will be the winner tomorrow. The countries that sit back and do nothing will lose. **Climate action is not only necessary, it is an opportunity to create new jobs and sustainable growth.**

■ The EU must continue to act constructively in international climate negotiations. **We want international efforts through the UN streamlined towards a new climate-change deal.** At the Paris talks in 2015 we want to deliver a binding global climate agreement and will take the lead in ensuring that the commitments are honoured. The EU needs to lead by example by implementing its commitments and by adopting ambitious targets both on reducing emissions and on finance. Special interests must be put aside for the sake of both current and future generations.

■ Many poorer countries are hardest hit by the effects of climate change, although they did not cause it. We want to secure economic support for developing countries both to deal with the major consequences of climate change and to find greener solutions for their economic development. **We want to see industrialised countries provide developing countries with adequate financial and technological support.** The current economic crisis must not be used as a pretext for inaction or for holding back funding for adaptation measures in the EU and developing countries.

■ As well as binding climate-change commitments, **we need long-term disaster risk-reduction plans** so that EU assistance helps food producers in vulnerable areas build resilience to climate conditions which destroy communities around the world and drive up the cost of living at home. Climate change has already wreaked havoc on farmers around the world threatening the food we take for granted on our supermarket shelves. From floods in Asia to drought in the Horn of Africa, vast areas of farmland have been destroyed, livelihoods have been ruined and the price of basic foods has rocketed. The EU must do more to ensure 'food security' for our citizens and those in vulnerable countries.

■ **The S&D Group considers access to water and sanitation to be a fundamental human right.** We will push the EU, international institutions and governments to guarantee this right for everyone. For us water is a public good, not a commodity. Not only will guaranteeing everyone access to safe water improve sanitation and save millions of lives from disease, but improving access to water will prevent future conflicts and disputes over land.



Fishing boats, Ghana, September 2013

# SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR EUROPE

## Action abroad to drive down energy bills at home

- Across the EU millions of hard-working families are struggling to manage rising energy bills. The EU needs to tackle this head on by creating a genuine single market for energy companies, improving our infrastructure, investing in green technologies and reducing our reliance on foreign imports. Only by doing this will we drive down energy prices and ensure we have a cleaner, safer planet.
- At present the EU is not pulling its weight on the world stage when it comes to energy negotiations. This leaves some member states, and the EU as a whole, vulnerable to the largest energy supply and transit countries – as we have seen when countries like Russia have threatened to turn off the taps. The EU needs to speak with one voice and use its combined strength in international negotiations. **We need to diversify our energy mix by sourcing energy from different suppliers and reducing our reliance on Russia.** EU countries
- We want to build better energy connections with our neighbouring countries and
- should allow the Commission to negotiate on their behalf when dealing with major energy suppliers. We also want to see all international agreements in the field of energy assessed by the Commission before they are signed, to make sure they are compatible with the EU's long-term energy and climate goals.
- For too long the EU has been hooked on fossil fuels. We want an energy mix which will meet our climate-change targets and environmental goals as well as guaranteeing secure and affordable energy for all. We want greater investment in energy efficiency and infrastructure which would create thousands of new jobs and boost the economy. **The S&D Group want to see a major push towards renewable energies with clear EU targets** and policies to achieve a sustainable and clean energy economy by 2050, with a special focus on consumer rights and affordable energy.



The S&D Group hosted An Alternative Energy Summit discussing a Progressive Energy Plan for Europe with Jeremy Rifkin - an economic and social theorist, writer, political advisor and activist as well as president of the Foundation on Economic Trends. Bibliothèque Solvay, Brussels, 1 February 2011

# ABOUT THE S&D GROUP

The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (the S&D Group) is the second largest political group in the European Parliament with 194 members from all 28 EU member states.

We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness. We promote social justice, jobs and growth, consumer rights, sustainable development, financial market reforms and human rights to create a stronger and more democratic Europe and a better future for all citizens.



Arab Spring Conference, Tunisia, 29–30 March 2012



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