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2 *First Draft* – 3rd November 2009
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4 **8th PES Congress**
5 **Prague, 7-8 December 2009**
6

7 **Resolution n°2**
8

9 **A New Way Forward, A Stronger PES**
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11 The PES is the second political force in the European Union, represented in all EU institutions,
12 committed to putting people first in Europe and across the world. The European elections did not
13 allow us to strengthen our overall numbers in the European Parliament. While some PES parties
14 did make gains or maintain their position, we did not achieve the breakthrough we campaigned
15 for, that of winning the elections and delivering a new direction for Europe. Moreover, despite
16 some promising exceptions, we are far fewer in government now than we were at the turn of the
17 century.
18

19 The PES believes these results are a call to action as well as a call for reflection. As long as
20 Europe's citizens are facing monumental challenges, as long as their jobs and livelihoods are at
21 risk, as long as our planet is endangered, we will stand by people and fight on their behalf for their
22 futures. For this reason, we intend to learn the lessons of these election results and define a new
23 way forward. In order to achieve this, we commit to strengthening the Party of European
24 Socialists.

25 **Who is the real winner of the European elections?**
26

27 The European People's Party, while losing some members to a new conservative, euro-sceptic
28 group, retained their position as the largest group in the European Parliament elections. However,
29 we believe that their election win was a Pyrrhic victory. The vast majority of Europe's citizens did
30 not vote for their programme of business as usual.
31

32 **The biggest election winner was apathy:** 214 million European citizens did not vote in the
33 elections last June. Many of these non-voters were traditional supporters of PES parties. In a
34 context of serious crisis – where unfettered global forces almost led to the meltdown of the
35 financial system with far-reaching consequences for people across the world – citizens were not
36 convinced that democratic politics was able to make a difference.
37

38 Far-right, nationalist parties played on people's fears about the future and gained ground with
39 xenophobic and racist discourse. Social tensions have risen as a result. Reactionary eurosceptics
40 also made gains by portraying the European Union as a threat to people, rather than as a way of
41 shaping global forces and improving their lives.

42 We believe these election results highlighted the fears, uncertainties and disillusionment of voters
43 at a time of profound crisis. **Citizens want change.** The vast majority protested against
44 mainstream parties by abstaining or voting for fringe parties.



45
46 The 2009 European Parliament is by far the least progressive we have ever had. Europe's
47 conservatives dominate the European Commission and Council. We believe this could have
48 grave consequences for ordinary people across Europe: inadequate policies to tackle the crises
49 we're facing will mean ordinary people could suffer a further decline in their working and living
50 conditions. That is why the PES must define a new way forward as a matter of urgency.

51 ***

52 The way forward

53 54 **1. Developing our vision for Progressive Societies in the 21st century**

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56 In the past five years, the PES made enormous progress in developing a distinctive political
57 approach and proposals to tackle Europe's greatest challenges. The PES Manifesto – "People
58 first: A New Direction for Europe" – was our most ambitious ever. Our vision for a New Social
59 Europe was influential in taking forward efforts for the renewal of our welfare states. The PES had
60 a clear plan to tackle the financial and economic crisis with concrete proposals for action at
61 national and European levels. An alternative progressive European recovery plan, a proposal for
62 an Employment and Social Progress Pact, financial market regulation, and a Global New Deal
63 were all initiatives of our political family to face down the crisis and establish root-and-branch
64 reform.

65
66 Nevertheless, our proposals were unable to motivate a majority of citizens to vote and to vote for
67 us. In essence, we were not successful at conveying the fact that the financial and economic
68 crisis is fundamentally a failure of conservative ideology across the world. Many people were not
69 persuaded that we offered a genuine alternative. And part of the reason for that was that we
70 ourselves had not pursued root-and-branch reform with enough vigour while in government. We
71 must make the choices clearer.

72
73 It is only through a fundamental re-evaluation of our vision of social democracy that we can
74 successfully address the issues raised by our electoral losses.

75
76 We must renew social democracy from the bottom up to face today's challenges and meet
77 citizens' expectations. Our aim is to develop a new vision for Progressive Societies in the 21st
78 century. The globalized world implies that we cannot undertake this debate in isolation of each
79 other. Conflicting national solutions are doomed to fail. A vision for social democracy must be
80 coherent at national, European and global levels if it is to be successful. Therefore, the PES will
81 undertake a deep and wide-ranging reflection with our member parties and organisations in the
82 course of the next two years.

83 84 **2. Tackling apathy**

85
86 It is profoundly worrying for democracy that so many people are choosing not to vote. Most
87 citizens are disillusioned with politics: they think it no longer makes a difference to their lives or
realistically shapes the future.

88
89 The crisis has only served to accentuate this feeling of impotence amongst ordinary people.
90 Global forces have run riot in their economies, destroyed jobs, businesses and incomes. While
91 governments have intervened, people see rising layoffs, depressed economic prospects and the
return of bankers' bonuses as evidence that politics does not fundamentally change things.

92
93 There is indeed a historic trend in declining turnout for European elections. Many people do not
94 know what the European Parliament does and cannot see what the political differences are
95 between the different parties. But this disconnect reveals the central challenge for politics and
democracy in a globalized world.



96 In the past, citizens believed that their national parliaments had the powers to solve problems
97 within their countries. The democratic contract was clear between the citizen and the state. But in
98 today's globalized world, people know that problems can no longer be solved within their
99 countries. What politicians across the political spectrum have failed to communicate successfully
100 is that the EU is the missing link in a globalized world. And, as socialist, social democrat and
101 progressive parties, we did not make that vital political link clear between our progressive goals at
102 the national and European levels. That we can only deliver progressive solutions to people's
103 problems by pursuing the same objectives in the four democratic houses that are the local,
104 regional, national and European levels.

105 The PES and our parties must pursue a new politics of engagement with people, placing this
106 missing link in their minds by offering real and distinctive political choices.

107 **3. Challenging a resurgent but fragmented right-wing**

108 Europe's right-wing has changed in a number of ways in the past decade. It has fragmented
109 between traditional pro-European parties and eurosceptic and nationalist parties. Eurosceptic and
110 nationalist parties – some of which have left the EPP to form their own conservative group – use
111 Europe as a scapegoat and think nothing of the grave and destructive implications of isolating
112 their countries and peoples from Europe and the world.

113 Many right-wing parties have borrowed social democratic language to mask their conservative
114 positions. They have pursued a deliberate political strategy of blurring political differences,
115 particularly on social and economic issues. Right-wing pro-European politicians often falsely claim
116 that there is a right-left European consensus. Praise for the welfare state, calls for financial
117 market reform and Keynesian fiscal stimulus, as well as support for the social market economy
118 are just four rhetorical points used for increased electoral appeal. This is in spite of the very
119 different reality revealed by their practice of power.

120 At the same time, many right-wing parties actively deploy the anti-immigration rhetoric of the hard
121 right to extend their electoral appeal further and span across the political spectrum. This plays on
122 people's uncertainties and fears with inflammatory identity politics. Despite the electoral success
123 of these tactics, there is no evidence to suggest that such hardline rhetoric results in anything but
124 higher social tensions, more fear and ineffective migration and integration policies.

125 We must challenge this resurgent but fragmented right-wing, both those mainstream
126 conservatives who seek to dupe the electorate and play on their fears as well as the eurosceptic
127 fringes.

128 The EPP has a clear majority in all European institutions. The PES must be coherent and
129 cohesive in all institutions to maximise our influence at European level. We must make our voice
130 heard as an opposition force to conservative and neo-liberal policies. And we have to address the
131 growing issues of culture and identity, currently dominated by the right, which so concern our
132 citizens. The PES and our member parties intend to make the political choices clear and make a
133 difference during this political term – these are the key preconditions for winning the next
134 European elections.

135 136 **4. Confronting the far-right**

137 The European elections saw the emergence of more far-right parties, exploiting people's fears to
138 advance their own politics of hatred. These parties used populist rhetoric to appeal to fears
139 arising from growing unemployment, economic restructuring, migration and broader social
140 change. The far-right has tapped into a new identity politics, fuelled by social malaise, especially
141 amongst working class voters.

142 We believe their stance as protest parties attracted disillusioned voters more than their actual
143 xenophobic positions. Our task must be to confront the dangerous, racist rhetoric of these parties,



144 exposing the venom at their heart. But it is also essential that we address the actual fears and
145 grievances that have driven a minority of citizens to vote for them.

146 **5. Addressing the appeal of the parties of the left**

147 The fringe parties of the left – green parties and far-left parties – have been able to capture some
148 support as an alternative to mainstream parties.

149 Far-left parties have been able to exploit real grievances amongst working class people who feel
150 insecure about the future. Outsourcing to other continents, mass layoffs and the running down of
151 valuable public services are just three factors that explain the anxieties that drive some citizens to
152 vote for the far left. While the solutions they propose are almost universally recognized as
153 unworkable as a proposition for government, it is the fact that they successfully express people's
154 fears and frustrations that gains them popular support.

155 Furthermore, some green parties have attracted progressive voters to their cause because of
156 growing concerns about climate change and frustrations that mainstream parties were not
157 adequately addressing it.

158 It is only by dealing with the core reasons for their popular appeal – economic and social
159 insecurities, climate change as a central issue for so many progressive voters – that the PES and
160 our parties can begin to tackle these parties of the left.

161 **6. Strengthening our methods and instruments for a stronger PES**

162
163 In order for our reflection on social democracy to be inclusive and ultimately effective and for us to
164 influence European policy-making and act as a credible force for opposition to conservative
165 policies, the PES must strengthen its instruments and extend its reach.

166
167 We must deepen the collective work undertaken with and between our member parties in
168 government and in opposition. The PES should not only be a platform for member parties and
169 organisations to discuss European policies, but also the place where member parties come
170 together to formulate the political vision, strategies and policies for socialists, social democrats
171 and progressives across Europe.

172
173 **PES Leaders will be the driving force** of this increased cooperation. In their meetings, strategic
174 political issues will be debated and decided to determine our common direction. In this regard, a
175 reflection will be reopened on how to make the PES decision-making process deeper, more
176 integrated and effective, including the possibility of extending majority voting in all PES bodies.

177
178 We will strengthen even further the **cooperation between PES members with decision-making**
179 **responsibilities in all EU institutions**, notably with our governments, particularly when they hold
180 the EU Presidency, with our Commissioners, with our MEPs and Members of the Committee of
181 the Regions.

182
183 **We must strengthen the cooperation between our governments** as a priority for improving
184 our cohesiveness. We should bring together PES Prime Ministers, ministers, and sherpas, to
185 coordinate policies before EU meetings and also exchange best practices on how to govern
186 together, how to implement common objectives and shape outcomes in the long-term.

187
188 We will also involve our opposition parties in order to better prepare them for entering
189 government. The PES will develop a strategy to support those of our parties who have won
190 elections, in order to help them in their crucial first 100 days of office.

191
192 We will revitalize our PES issue-based networks and working groups to mobilise the most
193 relevant decision-makers and thinkers **of our member parties and organizations**. We will also



194 explore new, more decentralised ways in which to work with decision-makers and thinkers in each
195 of our member parties, including national parliamentarians, in order to increase the relevance and
196 inclusiveness of our work.

197
198 It will also be important to reinvigorate our cooperation with stakeholders, such as our partners in
199 the trade union movement, and all spheres of civil society.

200
201 Modernising politics, revitalising our party structures, bringing in new generations of politicians are
202 objectives of all our member parties and is an integrated part of how to renew social democracy.
203 The PES will play its full part to serve these objectives by **setting up a PES network on**
204 **Modernising politics.**

205
206 **The PES will also consolidate the role of PES activists.** All members of the PES member
207 parties are automatically members of the PES. Yet, we invited them to be more closely involved
208 in the life of the PES by becoming PES activists. We can proudly state that we are the only
209 European Party that has **20,000 grassroots activists** from all Member States. PES activists
210 have led a tremendous campaign during the European elections. Party members are vital for
211 building a genuine European Party, so we will provide more tools for them to get involved. This is
212 why we have decided to **recognize their role in the PES statutes and create a 'PES activists**
213 **initiative'** in order to build a true European activism, and be heard by PES bodies. PES activists
214 are fantastic multipliers that give PES member parties the opportunity to raise awareness
215 amongst all party members on European politics. We must nurture their involvement.

216 217 **7. Presenting our common platform**

218
219 The PES Manifesto "People first: a new direction for Europe" was a great step forward in
220 providing a **strong, common platform** for the 2009 European election campaign. Never before
221 had we managed to present such a programme of action with common objectives and proposals,
222 agreed by all our leaders and parties, and involving party members, trade unions and civil society.

223
224 In order to present this common platform and communicate our distinctive political programme to
225 voters with PES member parties, we developed strong common elements in the European
226 election campaign. The European Days of Action were a resounding success, especially on the
227 local level, demonstrating the value-added of the European dimension of the campaign. Many
228 PES member parties made efforts of their own to promote the PES manifesto.

229
230 However, it proved difficult to give visibility to our common platform and, therefore, to make the
231 political choices clear in the European election campaign. In many countries, little space was
232 given in the media to a real debate on what was at stake.

233
234 One of the key problems was the absence of a unifying leadership personality to embody our
235 common platform and implement our programme in the event of electoral victory. While the EPP
236 had nominated José Manuel Barroso as their candidate for President of the European
237 Commission if they won the elections, our political family was unable to present an alternative and
238 appeared divided. While our main message was "a new direction for Europe", we did not manage
239 to publicly support a common social democratic candidate to challenge the conservative
240 incumbent.

241
242 Giving a face to a political platform is imperative in today's politics, especially in such difficult
243 elections as the European ones. To make this election relevant, citizens must know that their vote
244 can shape the executive and change policies. We therefore make the commitment of choosing a
245 PES candidate for the European Commission Presidency for the next European elections.



249 **8. Implementing our vision for Progressive Societies in the twenty-first century:**
250 **conquering and exercising power**

251

252 **The role of a political party is to conquer and exercise power in order to implement its**
253 **political vision and programme.** This is also valid at European level. Our ultimate objective is to
254 become the predominant political force governing the European institutions: the European
255 Parliament, the European Commission and the Council. This is the only way to change European
256 policies and take our continent in a new direction.

257

258 In the next five years, we will use all our decision-making responsibilities to pursue a more
259 progressive European agenda. But in order to take Europe in a fundamentally new, progressive
260 direction, we need to win the next European elections. We need a majority of seats in the
261 European Parliament. The campaign for the 2014 elections therefore starts now. We will explore
262 all means to **strengthen the PES for the purpose of preparing for the next European**
263 **election campaign.** We will continue our fight for a fairer and a more social Europe, and be
264 ready to take the lead in 2014.

265

266 We will work on developing a **strong, common Manifesto** inspired by our new vision for
267 Progressive Societies. In this way, the PES will be able to propose to Europe's citizens a clear
268 common vision together with concrete policy proposals to implement it.

269

270 The PES commits itself, at the same time as it adopts its Manifesto, to choose a candidate for the
271 Presidency of the European Commission and to adopt a common campaign strategy. We need to
272 build on the experience of the 2009 campaign and develop, with our Leaders, candidates and
273 activists, a **more integrated campaign strategy** with closely linked European, national and
274 regional elements, to show public opinion the unity of our political family around our candidate
275 and our programme. A stronger involvement of all our Party Leaders in the European election
276 campaign will also contribute to showing the unity and engagement of our party at the highest
277 level.

278

279 At the same time, winning a majority in the European Council is just as important to give a new
280 direction to the European Union. **Winning national elections is therefore the concern not only**
281 **of national member parties but also of the PES as a whole.** The PES will develop measures
282 to increase the cooperation inside our party to meet this goal.

283

284 **Strengthening the Party of European Socialists is fundamental for the future of European**
285 **social democracy. The PES and its member parties and organizations are strongly**
286 **committed to investing all our energy and resources into developing our vision,**
287 **modernising our structures and achieving our common ambition of conquering and**
288 **exercising power in Europe and in the Member States in order to develop progressive**
289 **societies in the 21st century.**

290

