

## **Position Paper**

Adopted by 12<sup>th</sup> YES Congress in Winterthur, Switzerland on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2015

### **YOUNG EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS: A PROGRESSIVE ORGANISATION**

Young European Socialists unites young socialists and social democrats from all over Europe to provide a forum for debate, advocacy, capacity-building and exchange at the European level. Young European Socialists strives to be an integrated and progressive organisation at the heart of the socialist and social democratic movement and to contribute to and shape the European debate and policy.

Young European Socialists works for a democratic, environmental, social and federal Europe, promotes a clear socialist and social democratic vision for its future and combats inequality, social injustice and right-wing and extremist policies. Our vision for Europe is a united democratic community based on, and globally active for, individual and collective human rights and freedoms. To achieve its goals, Young European Socialists works closely with its member organisations and represents the European socialist and social democratic youth within the Party of European Socialists, Party of European Socialists Women, the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, the Group of the Party of European Socialists in the Committee of the Regions, Rainbow Rose, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, the Global Progressive Forum and social fora, and works towards a democratic structuring of these organisations. Besides our cooperation within Young European Socialists's fraternal organisations, the International Union of Socialist Youth and the International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International, we strive for cooperation with progressive partners. Young European Socialists is a committed member of the European Youth Forum and engages with other youth organisations in order to achieve its goals. Young European Socialists will also strengthen their relations with worker's unions, progressive NGO's and left think tanks.

The values and aims laid down in this Position Paper are the basis of our work. It is the aim of Young European Socialists to promote these goals both at the national and international levels in Europe: at the national level with and through our member organisations and at the international level as a growing, coherent and vibrant organisation.

### **POLICY PAPER**

#### **1. THE FUTURE OF EUROPE**

We believe in Europe. We believe in the welfare and prosperity of all people in Europe, equally, regardless of origin, occupation, or place of residence. But Europe and the European Union as they are today do not correspond to our vision of the society we want to live in. In this Position Paper we, young European socialists and social democrats, define the Europe we want and for which we will continue to work.

We want a Europe that is:

A democratic Europe

An Inclusive Europe

An environmental and social Europe

A Europe speaking unison

## **2. A DEMOCRATIC EUROPE**

Democracy is one of the core principles of socialism. Without democracy, we cannot create a society that fulfils the other principles. Therefore the state of democracy in Europe, both nationally and at the European level, is a grave concern for us. Europeans must remain vigilant at all times as the power for people to decide for themselves always depends on the people demanding their rights, and claiming new rights.

### **2.1. FOR A MORE DEMOCRATIC AND FEDERAL EUROPE**

Challenges that require a pan-European approach should be dealt with at the European level: this requires a drastic overhaul of the existing institutional framework. Young European Socialists stands for a federal and democratic Europe. This means that the European Union should not only be the Europe of member states, but should be a political union driven by and for its people.

We see a need for major reform that should begin with the single directly elected European institution, the European Parliament. The reform of the European Parliament is a necessary start: the European Parliament needs to have the power to co-decide on all European Union legislation and the right of initiative. The European Parliament must also have full budget powers. In order to really represent the people of Europe, some of the members of the European Parliament should be elected on pan-European lists put forward by the European parties. The Council of the European Union should be transformed into a truly representative upper house of the European Union's bicameral system, representing the member states: the European Commission should be developed into the government of the European Union, as the main executive power. It should be formed without interference from member state governments or parliaments, and its composition must follow the results of the European elections. It should be fully accountable to the European Parliament.

Today, a significant threat to democracy at all levels comes from the hegemonic discourse of the current economic system that attempts to impose only one possible policy by setting the parameters within which discussion can take place. We should never accept the exclusion of any part of economic policy from democratic control: we should not allow specific economic policies to be enshrined into constitutional law or imposed through undemocratic channels, and will continue to fight for the extension of democracy into all areas of life. Therefore, the role, missions and composition of both the European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank should be profoundly revised. After their critical political role in the salvaging of Europe during the euro-crisis, economic institutions should increase transparency, accountability and democratic legitimacy. National parliaments are an important institution when democratising Europe and their role in European Union must be strengthened. National governments and officials should have a stronger mandate from national parliaments before entering the negotiations. They should also report to national parliaments about their decisions.

### **2.2 INTEGRATION AND ENLARGEMENT GO TOGETHER**

The European Union has enlarged uniting different states with different cultures, political realities, perception of civic processes, procedural habits, development levels, social welfare states and economies. Young European Socialists is proud of this unique diversity of the European Union, and is at the same time not blinded by the difficulties that emerge from the institutional and structural weaknesses of the European Union project. The ambition to deepen integration in order to continue with the enlargement process is one of the main challenges of the European Union.

- Deeper integration is necessary in order to ensure that further enlargement remains possible. Institutional reform, increased cooperation on several policies and extending the competences of the European Union are necessary.
- Application and adherence to the Treaties and principles of the European Union are not only necessary for applicants, but also for existing members. The integration process should be stricter about the control of existing member states.
- Young European Socialists believes that it is of great importance to continue the

process of integration and that the scepticism of a few member states should not prevent it. Therefore, it is necessary to allow decisions to be taken with a large majority, and not with unanimity, because this allows countries to veto, which blocks the democratic process.

- It is a collective responsibility of all member states when one is unable to follow political integration. In the European Union's budget, extra financial means have to be made available and expertise to be offered to these countries, with the aim of allowing integration to proceed at the same pace for all.

The priority of the European Union has to be the further integration of member states towards a fiscal, social and environmental harmonisation and a functioning European democracy, based on a strong European Parliament. The European Union has to work on reforming itself at first so as to be fully able to welcome candidate countries properly, whilst ensuring the continuation of its political project and the enhancement of the fundamental and human rights of all of its citizens. The European Union has to offer sufficient financial means and expertise to enable neighbouring states to comply with the existing European Union's criteria. Furthermore, these countries have to support this common federal Project towards a social and environmental union that fully respects human rights and democracy.

- Thereby, we strongly support Turkey's accession to the European union when those conditions have been fulfilled
- The European Union can guide countries and regions outside of its borders in the enhancement of fundamental and human rights. As integration and enlargement are enhanced, additional integration should follow into world institutions, as individual member states or as EU. The EU should ensure the work of the different bodies of the United Nations, international courts and other bodies that help to shape the conditions for integration of countries and the enhancement of fundamental and human rights of citizens.

### **3. AN INCLUSIVE EUROPE**

The Europe we want is an inclusive one. Everyone, regardless of background, country of origin, beliefs, sexual orientation, lifestyle, gender identity or personal choices has to have equal rights and opportunities. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure the implementation of these rights through services, legislation and control. No one should be threatened, discriminated against or excluded because of who they are. Our ability to benefit from the diverse experiences, ideas and cultures that the people represent, is what makes us stronger.

#### **3.1. ALL DIFFERENT, ALL EQUAL**

The social model Young European Socialists stands for is based on the values of common responsibility, solidarity, cooperation and equality. Our individual and social differences bring us together, they do not set us apart. However, European societies continue to be divided by class differences and discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity disability and others. Many people suffer from these relations of domination, others benefit and defend them. If we want to achieve our model of an inclusive Europe, we need to overcome these power relations.

Everyone has the right and responsibility to contribute and participate in society according to their abilities and, at the same time, everyone has the right to have a decent livelihood, income and welfare in our societies for the sake of inclusion and social cohesion. Young European Socialists makes it its mission to ensure that everybody can make a decent living and fully participate in civil society.

### **3.2. CIVIL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE**

A globalised world means globalised exchanges in culture and people. To create a society where every individual can fulfil his\* personal dreams and expectations must be a goal for Young European Socialists. Regardless of income, ethnic or social origin, gender, sexual orientation or other identities, religious or political orientation, any disabilities and citizenship, everybody should be entitled to fully participate in society.

Young European Socialists stands for a society where everybody's human and fundamental rights are guaranteed, where all individuals have the right to decent work with equal opportunities. The democratic process has to be extended and supported in all parts of society, the private as well as the public sector. No one can be denied the right to benefit from social welfare, education or health care. We need to recognise and tackle both structural discrimination, including social norms, as well as any kind of violence and hate crime based on racism, homophobia, sexism, discrimination because of one's disability gender identity or expression or any other form of discrimination. Any oligarchy or corruption should be banned from the European Union, hence Young European Socialists call for the complete recognition of the United Nations Anti-Corruption Convention by the European Union itself and all member states. The rights of indigenous should be respected. All countries should sign and ratify The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention ILO 169

The challenge is to create the economic and political conditions for the full development of individuality in a common society, where respect for human rights is valued and widespread. We demand anti-discrimination policies combined with a Europe-wide awareness-raising campaign. We demand that this campaign be based on an intersectional approach. We can only tackle inequality if we tackle it as a whole. Comprehensive integration programmes and free language courses for migrants aiming at empowerment and integration have to be developed.

In the middle of major political and economic turmoil, it is essential that we continue to fight against populist rhetoric and populist policies that feeds discrimination. Therefore, social cohesion, job creation and integration must be a priority. We need to continue to fight poverty and growing income and wealth divides. We need to protect and develop welfare states and ensure access to services for all. We especially need to guarantee equal, free and fair access to quality education for everyone at all ages, including adults, particularly those coming from disadvantaged groups. We should also be aware that inequalities between citizens take their roots in the first years of a person. Hence, it is essential to massively finance education for children of all ages and guarantee access to child care.

### **3.3. REAL GENDER EQUALITY**

Inequality between women and men is still a reality in Europe. The economic crisis hits women more severely. Austerity policies have stronger and harder consequences for women, who are much more exposed to the lack of social protection. Furthermore, economic turmoil is often used as an excuse for patriarchy to undermine the rights of women. Young European Socialists continues to work for an inclusive society that guarantees women equal rights, whether political, social or economic.

- The gender pay gap between men and women remains at unacceptable levels in Europe. Thus, strong and effective measures must be put in place in order to reduce this gap and eliminate discrimination in working conditions negotiations. Much further work is needed to accomplish equal career, wage and pension perspectives for women and men.
- Gender-sensitive active labour market policies must be developed.
- Sufficient, paid maternity, paternity, co-maternity and parental leaves must be available for all parents. The system must be open to working women as well as caring men, and parental leave should be equally distributed between both parents. The role and right of fathers to care for their children should be encouraged and supported by state-funded high-quality child care systems which allow both parents to return to work or studies at the end of parental leave.

- We demand the right for parental leave to be extended in all member states to a minimum of a period of 6 weeks before and 6 months after birth. Paternity leave and co-maternity leave of equal length must be a right of all parents, in addition and concurrently to maternity leave.
- Public services need to be continuously developed to decrease the gender imbalance in care work. Also other forms of gendered, unpaid work done by women need to be balanced between the genders both through expansion of services and through education and social change.
- Young European Socialists advocates for high-quality gender-sensitive health care. We demand the right to decide and plan family life, which is possible only when information, free artificial insemination, adequate support for adoption, free contraceptives and legal and safe abortions are available.
- Creation of a women's information service network to deal with awareness-raising activities and public information is also necessary.
- We regard women's right to decide over their own bodies as a fundamental right that has to be integrated into the Community acquis. Respect of this condition has to be one of the criteria for accession to the EU, as well as for continued membership.
- Violence against women, both in- and outside the home, mobbing, trafficking and forced prostitution are a reality also in Europe.
- Victims of human trafficking and prostitution should not be seen as criminals under any conditions
- Young European Socialists calls upon all European countries, in close cooperation with developing and less developed countries to accept gender-based violence such as female genital mutilation as grounds for asylum, and we continue to strongly fight against the trafficking of women and children.
- The struggle for a global right to equality must include all regions in all continents. The general political commitment to the implementation of its goals, in a way that engages in the millennium development goals and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women must be put into practice and lead to more effective and practical results.
- The number of women in any higher position, in the business world as well as in politics, especially in elected positions at the international, national, local or even organisational level is too low. Gender quotas are a good means to raise women's representation in politics as a short-term measure to increase their participation.
- Quotas must be implemented in private and public enterprises, to ensure that both genders at least 40% of all executive board positions.
- The Young European Socialists will continue to push for the adoption of the "zipper system", both on electoral lists and on speakers' lists. Socialist and social democratic parties should lead by example and commit to having 50 % women candidates on all lists, in all elections.

### **3.4. FOR AN ACCESSIBLE EUROPE**

An accessible Europe. Too often people with a disability face difficulties that gives rise to structural inequality. In varying degree, their access to public and private infrastructure is difficult or impossible. Next to these 'practical' issues, people with a disability regularly face discrimination when accessing education, the labour market or in their social life. We find it unacceptable that the lives of people with a disability are limited. Young European Socialists ask for a central registry of disabilities, with the aim to standardise disabilities across the borders of member states. It is unacceptable that some disabilities are simply not recognised by member states. Only then can the freedom of movement of people with a disability be guaranteed across member states' borders. When making this central registry, the definition of a disability that should be used is: "A disability is a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual or group. The term is used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment mental illness, and various types of chronic disease."

Young European Socialists demand that people with a disability are protected from poverty, having a guaranteed income. However, governments should also act to prohibit discrimination on the labour market, opening up jobs to those with a disability. The Young European Socialists therefore strongly urge governments of all levels (national, local and in between) to regard people with a disability as equal citizens when issuing new legislation. Governments should strive for the education of all. This is also true for people with a disability. Discrimination against people with a disability, should be investigated and prosecuted with equal strength as other cases of discrimination. With regards to infrastructure, the Young European Socialists demand that all public buildings be easily accessible to all citizens. Additionally, organisations that represent people with a disability should be (better) consulted when carrying out infrastructural works in the future. The Young European Socialists demand that the mobility needs of vulnerable citizens are guaranteed as much as possible, for a fair price.

### **3.5. THE RIGHT TO BE QUEER**

The latest European Union youth poll on LGBTQIA\* rights showed significant reasons for concern. LGBTQIA\* people continue to face wide scale discrimination throughout all levels of society, including but not limited to, in the labour market, education, health care, judicial systems and politics. In fact the levels of LGBTQIA\*phobia, human rights violations and hate crimes/speech are rising. Young European Socialists demands complete freedom of gender identity and sexual orientation, guaranteed by the state, enforceable anti-discrimination legislation and comprehensive hate crimes/speech legislation to be implemented in every State, as well as a European Directive on combating LGBTQIA\*phobia.

- Young European Socialists urges all member states to adopt equal marriage legislation and grant same-sex couples the right to adopt children. This recognition is essential to guarantee to same-sex couples or LGBTQIA\* individuals the same rights when it comes to being entitled to benefits or proper treatments and ensuring the enjoyment of their freedom of movement within the European Union. The ban on blood donation by LGBTQIA\* people in some countries must come to an end.
- Same-sex marriages and same-sex partnerships must have the same legal status as marriages and partnerships between women and men, including equal social security benefits for same-sex couples. This includes equal rights for one spouse in case of illness, temporary or permanent disability or death of the other.
- LGBTQIA\* people should have the same rights in terms of family planning, including the right to adopt children, equal access to artificial insemination, access to surrogacy and the right to unite families for same-sex couples.
- Young European Socialists demand that the "Gender Identity Disorder" diagnosis be withdrawn from the catalogue of mental diseases of the World Health Organisation. It must no longer be necessary for any person, over and under the age of 18, to have to engage any medical services or procedures in order to have their gender identity recognised legally, declaration of self-identification should be all that is required. Full health care access has to be granted for trans\* and intersex people. Everybody must have the right to change their legal gender, not only to male or female, but also to a third non-gendered category, as well as their name, through a simple and accessible procedure.
- Trans\* people should also retain their reproductive rights after gender reassignment surgery, and any legislation demanding compulsory sterilisation must be abolished immediately as this constitutes a violation of human rights.
- Young European Socialists demands an immediate ban on the genital mutilation and unnecessary medicalisation of intersex children.
- Young European Socialists calls upon all European countries to give asylum to LGBTQIA\* people who are persecuted in their countries because of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression and decision regarding the granting of asylum should be on the basis of a person's self-identification, without any need to

"prove it".

### **3.6. FOR AN OPEN AND MULTICULTURAL EUROPE**

Migration is not a new phenomenon in Europe. Young European Socialists sees that the movement of people creates both challenges and opportunities, not only for migrants, but also for receiving countries. Still, especially with the current economic crisis, European responses to migration remain more based on fear, mistrust, and security policies.

Young European Socialists strongly opposes this approach and promotes a common, coherent rights-based European Union migration and asylum policy that promotes integration, and a more fair and balanced policy response covering all aspects of this complex issue, including tackling the root causes of migration, the social and economic challenges and opportunities of migration, migrant integration, security and protection, asylum procedures and so on.

- Migration and development policies in the migrants' countries of origin. The European Union may and should play a role by investing in the countries of origin, to boost stable democratic systems, social justice, viable economies and sustainable environmental policies. Furthermore, the European Union should reinforce closer partnerships with the countries of origin through the exchange of best practices and knowledge in order to reach balanced development with a long-term vision, which will allow people to thrive in their countries of origin, and not to feel compelled to leave in search of a better life. This specific development aid strategy comes in addition to regular development aid which is aimed at countries of origin of migrants in Europe. All detention centres that work as pre-deportation prisons have to be closed: they are an affront to human dignity.
- Put an end to the large numbers of undocumented migrants by creating a common, stable and coherent asylum policy, including equal sharing of the costs of accepting and integrating migrants between member states, full civil, political and social rights for migrants with or without legal status, the right to unite families, to sole and to multiple nationalities. In this light, and as a sign of solidarity among European Union member states and the viability of their societies, it is necessary to reexamine the European migration policy, which poses excessive burdens to those member states which are at the borders of the European Union and are the main receivers of increased migration flows. Europe cannot close its borders (internal or external). In fact, it needs a solid system of legal migration to fight human trafficking. It needs to strengthen the acquis of free movement between European Union member states, and to ensure that people entering any member state are entering under the same harmonised human conditions, to guarantee the trust between member states, an efficient working of the Schengen Agreement and migrants' protection.
- A multicultural Europe must be based on an active policy against racism and any similar discrimination. This includes eventually admitting that problems in multicultural societies quite often stem from interpersonal or structural racism. The European Union needs to become a region of interculturalism and diversity, where the flawed notion of cultures living side by side is replaced with the idea that internal and external cultural aspirations must not impede any of one's opportunities in life. Therefore, we demand an intercultural opening that includes intercultural mainstreaming (mandatory in public administration and supported in the private sector), teaching intercultural competence as a qualification in vocational education and training as well as in university education and active measures including concrete targets and timetables to increase diversity in both the public and private sectors.
- The European agency FRONTEX has proved to fail to demonstrate adequate consideration of asylum and human rights as a whole. Therefore the accountability of responsible bodies of the agency needs to be increased. More democratic and transparent control structures have to be put into place by including non-governmental organisations such as refugee organisations.

### **3.7. AN INCLUSIVE EUROPEAN YOUTH AND CHILD POLICY**

The future of Europe depends on a European society that is child- and youth-friendly. This society must enable young people to acquire knowledge and skills to take up future possibilities and challenges. It must ensure equal autonomy for all and secure every young person a future. Youth policies have to be mainstreamed into all policy areas of the European Union, with the general aim to improve and develop the living, learning and working conditions and the participation of young people, encompassing the whole range of social, cultural, economic, democratic and environmental issues. Young European Socialists believes that the European Union must continue to promote and to support partnerships between young people from the European Union and from outside. When creating the new youth policies the young people must be involved in the process properly and effectively.

We believe that the agenda to improve young people's chances in the knowledge economy through education must go hand in hand with a legislative process to ensure that jobs and educational placements provide for a decent living: therefore a widened youth pact is necessary.

- One European Commissioner for child and youth policies has to be elected with a widened political mandate, enabling this European Commissioner to advocate youth policies on all matters. This mandate must include the obligation to organise consultations, a meaningful participation of youth at all levels of decision-making and a real dialogue between young people, youth organisations and decision-makers.
- European youth policy needs to consider young people not only as the future of Europe, but also as the present, being citizens with full capacities and with the same rights as anyone, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, geographical or economic background. In the process the voice of the youth must be taken seriously and be included in the decision making. Young people must have full citizens' rights and should be able to participate in political and governmental decision-making processes, including the right to vote from the age of 16.
- A clear framework must be established for non-formal education and its complementary role to formal education practices, yet non-formal activities may not be subject to the same regulatory frame as formal education: the safe space for self-development in non-formal education needs to be protected.
- In all areas of European policies, and especially in the field of sustainable development strategy, social policy and foreign affairs, young people have to be incorporated into the decision-making process.

#### *Put children's rights at the heart of European policy*

- The European Union should maintain and develop legislation on children. The European Union should urge its member states to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All relevant European Union legislation must be evaluated on the basis of this Convention. Control mechanisms must be developed including granting the European Court of Justice jurisdiction over the implementation of the Convention. It is also necessary to offer children opportunities to demand their rights. Therefore Young European Socialists requests the creation of a European Union children's ombudsperson.
- The role of the European Union children's ombudsperson will be to coordinate work of mutual benefit between offices of children's ombudspersons in different states in Europe, and also to work with children's rights non-governmental organisations on developing shadow reports to the United Nations on the progress made by states who have signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Children should be heard more in the policy processes concerning them. We should also aim to give them an ability in and understanding of society and political processes from an early age. For this, we need age-appropriate political education in early-education institutions, tackling gender, class and ethnic hierarchies from pre-school age.

## **4. A SOCIAL EUROPE**

Europe needs to be more than just an area for single markets or a place for governments to externalise difficult decisions. It needs to be a place of rights and welfare, of participation and power for its citizens. We need a social Europe, that legitimises the economic union, and sets the framework within which the economy can work. We need a social Europe that defines the level of welfare and services the economy needs to help provide, not other way around. Young European Socialists works for this huge change in thinking of the European Union to be achieved, for the benefit of the people living in Europe.

Social rights need to be set and guaranteed at the European level in order to ensure equality between European citizens. We need to create a European welfare model that takes in best practices of the European states through a progressive fiscal harmonisation, rather than encouraging a race to the bottom. We need to move towards new thinking on welfare states. Welfare systems should be public services so as to provide the same rights to all citizens and in order to improve the fair and solidary redistribution role of the state. Every person must have the right to a decent job, and also a responsibility to contribute to society to the best of their ability. We must look towards the creation of an inclusion guarantee, a commitment that guarantees every member of European societies the tools and skills to participate fully in society, lead a fulfilling life and contribute to the welfare state. This demands a wide range of education, employment and democracy policies that together form a basis for active citizenship.

### **4.1. OUR EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL**

It is high time that the European Union enter into a new path towards a social Europe. A monetary union without a social and democratic approach is not our vision for Europe. The European social model has to ensure each and every person in Europe a decent life, welfare and protection against risks. No one in Europe should live in poverty or be excluded from society. Therefore we demand a European social model composed of the best in each national system. Europe urgently needs an investment plan that sets the course of the European welfare states back to improving the quality of services and accessibility of them, rather than the current austerity trend that only serves the purpose of destroying the welfare states.

- Young European Socialists demands free public services under democratic control. The European public service strategy can no longer be based on privatisation and continuing liberalisation. We demand public services that guarantee everyone everywhere equal quality and access to their essential needs.
- We demand health care that is accessible, high-quality and free of charge.
- Young European Socialists calls for a new solidarity between generations. We demand a pension system in all European countries that prevents poverty amongst the elderly. Equal access to pension and retirement schemes has to be realised. Laws against age discrimination have to be implemented and reinforced. The high risk of poverty among elderly women has to be tackled specifically. Career length and hardness of work in some sectors have to be acknowledged in the definition of the retirement age and reflected in the possibility of benefiting from early retirement.
- High-quality free child care is a social right and an important tool to improve women's access to the labour market. We demand the availability of public child care for every child following parental leave.
- Social discrimination in Europe needs to be abolished. Young European Socialists condemns any discriminatory practices of social discrimination such as a lower minimum wage for young employees or lower unemployment benefits for specific groups in society. All kinds of discrimination should be fought with the same strength. Discrimination based on disability, racial, sexual or gender, religion and philosophy issues should be strongly condemned by law. Any act of discrimination should be condemned and punished.
- The sectors that must be protected and in which services need to be guaranteed in an accessible and affordable way under the concept of services of general interest and services of general economic interest include: security, justice, health care, education,

water, energy, public transport, post and telecommunication, public media and information, culture, sports, child care and social security.

- The European Union and member states must have the right to impose public service requirements on private companies, and to establish publicly-owned market actors in certain sectors.
- The Common External Tariff should be reactivated at the borders of the European Union so as to protect our European social model and the environmental and social norms existing on our continent, instead of importing their absence from abroad. By forcing all companies who ignore the core principles of our democracies (the respect due to human dignity and to the environment, and to the next generations) to pay, we would make such behaviours financially unaffordable and at the same time improve living conditions in producing countries.
- A European housing directive has to be developed. This should exclude social housing from the scope of the market economy and include improving accessibility to decent housing and housing conditions, especially for students, working youth, young families and those less-favoured groups which are particularly affected by poverty, such as disadvantaged people and the elderly. The rights of tenants and the right to privacy of the home need to be strengthened.
- Homelessness should not occur in Europe. More attention should be paid to the issue of homelessness, by providing care, imparting basic skills, and promoting social integration.
- The European Union and member states must have the right to establish publicly-owned market actors in the housing industry if the private markets cannot provide enough affordable apartments.

#### **4.2. AN ECONOMY THAT SERVES THE WELFARE STATES**

Young European Socialists rejects the current thinking of the European Union, namely the single market. Young European Socialists thinks that the economy needs to be an instrument that serves the welfare of the people and the welfare state. Therefore we demand a complete turn in Europe's economic strategy:

- We strongly condemn austerity policies. The current stability and growth pact has proven to be inefficient. The addition of the fiscal compact only makes things worse. We demand the fostering of innovation, development and an environmental transformation for a Europe of jobs. In times when demand is shrinking, we demand for anti-cyclic investments in education and growth in order to create the necessary employment and to ensure the social security of all. We demand a new pact: a pact for growth and full employment. The new pact has to change the current guidelines on financial stability: the maximum deficit should vary across countries, according to their overall debt situation, the severity of the crisis in the country and the ability of the state to finance core welfare policies for its population.
- The classic concepts of GDP and economic growth are abandoned and replaced by the social progress index. This index takes not only into account economic progress, but also progress on basic human needs, education, personal rights and a number of other social standards. This index becomes the European-wide standard for evaluating the countries performance and future socio-economic policies.
- Inequalities between the European economies need to be balanced in order to develop a stable European economy.
- To reach common European social goals, a system of minimum standards and target corridors needs to be combined with a social progress clause, which ensures that the level of social security already achieved at the national level will be maintained.
- We demand binding goals for the reduction of national current account imbalances in Europe.
- We need a new industrial policy in Europe, which strengthens the base of the European economy and builds up an industrial core for all regions in Europe.
- Regional employment disparities have to be targeted via specific policies focusing on the quality of education and training, investment in skills, education and life-long

learning and partnerships at a local and regional level to promote job creation and address the skills gap.

- Redistribution cannot be the only solution, rather mechanisms must also be developed which allow workers a stake in the ownership of state companies.
- We demand effective financial institutions: we call for the restriction of speculative financial market products, the supervision of banking and a financial transaction tax.
- The European Central Bank must have the right to directly lend money to the states and the European Union itself so as to eliminate any kind of market speculation on the European debt.
- The European Central Bank should take into account unemployment levels, beside inflation, within the Eurozone to set its monetary policies. As Young European Socialist we are in favour of Eurobonds to strengthen the lending capacity of European countries.
- Tax competition must not exist in the European Union. Taxation systems must be coordinated and respect a clear regulatory framework with the aim of harmonisation, starting with harmonisation of the corporate tax base and value added tax rates. Tax havens must have no space within the European Union, nor in its overseas countries and territories. A minimum level of corporate taxation is needed. Europe needs a massive dose of investments to kick-start the economy and foster growth. Young European Socialists demand a big push for investments that serves the real economy. Therefore the existing framework of the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund should be further developed. Furthermore, investments in projects that are strategic for the future, but cannot find funding from private banks or the EIB, should be excluded from the debts calculations of the member states, such as investments in education, renewable energy and other measures for the transition to a low-carbon economy, support for SME's, innovation and human capital.

The European budget has to change. The European Union has to increase its own resources and reform and expand its budget, with a strong political will and clear political choices for investment in the welfare of all its citizens. The 7-year budget cycle must also be changed to reflect the 5-year cycle of the European parliament mandate. This increases democratic control and the transparency of the European budget policy.

YES demands that a ceiling concept of 1% of member states' gross domestic product for the European budget can be applied only once the European Union has a new clear fiscal strategy with its own tax sphere. Otherwise, a 1,5% ceiling must be applied. The spending on the common agricultural policy should be reduced in favour of improving the financing of research and development investments, sustainable development in underdeveloped regions and the maintenance of the social security system and free public services. A European tax on capital movement and a European green tax can increase the European Union's own funding abilities.

#### **4.3. EDUCATION FOR ALL**

For Young European Socialists, education is the key to encouraging young people to learn to think independently and critically and drives sustainable progress for Europe. Education can ensure the self-fulfilment of all by promoting equality, active citizenship, high-quality employment and better cultural understanding. Education empowers the young and old to take on the challenges of the future. Therefore, we fight for a free access to education regardless of social background, country of origin, gender or age, or the level of education. Young European Socialists strives for quality education for all, free of charge and free of discrimination. We believe the educational process to be a lifelong process. Education should produce active citizens and not prepare students only for the labour markets.

##### *Free and equal access to education*

Public, secular, high-quality education, starting from the earliest age, should be guaranteed for free for every child, adolescent and adult in Europe. Trends to privatise education, leading to lower or non-existent grants and increased and differentiated tuition fees, mean excluding the less affluent from education. In the view of Young European Socialists education is a public

good and can never be treated as a commodity. It constitutes one of the key means of ensuring equality of opportunity in society, and guarantees the rights of individuals to self-development and fulfilment.

- Young European Socialists fight for comprehensive and integrated schools in the whole of Europe. Comprehensive schools are essential for equal chances in the education system. Teaching methods must be introduced that make the most of individual and social abilities.
- Secondary-level education should be mandatory in order to reduce the number of youth who are not in education, employment or training and to provide fair, equal opportunities to all youth. Researches show that the higher the education level of young people, the more likely they will find a job.
- Young European Socialists underlines the necessity to improve the accessibility of higher education. All levels of education, also higher, should be free for everyone: there should be no tuition fees. A system of public grants for all students should be in place to finance the individual student's costs, and these should be available at all levels including students in research or doctoral programmes.
- Other, non-financial, access barriers to education like knock-out exams and numerus clausus systems have to be eradicated.
- Students need social infrastructure to ensure adequate conditions for living and studying in the same place. Student housing must be publicly provided at an affordable price level.
- To achieve equal chances for everyone, young people from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds have to be encouraged and economically supported by public programmes and networks that help them find their own way in the education system.
- Education has to be accessible at all levels for people with disabilities. Special programmes and teaching methods meeting their particular skills and needs have to be developed. Common learning experiences, mutual understanding and the abolition of discrimination have to be established in education institutions to reach an integrated system.
- Personal counselling and pupil-oriented programmes such as dual education should be strengthened to prevent drop-outs. Moreover, people who have left education prematurely should be able and encouraged to return to their studies at any time during their life.
- Self-organisation, democratisation and co-decision of student unions at all levels of education is essential for the concept of active citizenship. At every level of education, these independent bodies have to be established.
- Gender-sensitive subjects together with gender-sensitive teachers' and learners' tools and anti-discrimination programmes have to become standard in all schools. Gender sensitivity should be mainstreamed into all teacher training, including nursery and pre-school teachers' training. Gendered segregation between studies should be fought by active policies stimulating women to enter into traditionally more male-dominated fields of study and vice-versa. Programmes promoting the choice of untraditional fields of study are an example of this policy.
- Racism and xenophobia have no space in public education institutions. The experience of values such as freedom, democracy and solidarity as well as awareness-raising concerning historical backgrounds and political debates help to avoid racism and xenophobia, and should play an important role in teaching and study.
- Public investments need to ensure elementary and higher education for everyone. In the view of Young European Socialists, sufficient education funding has to be ensured through a progressive tax system. Charging students or levying an additional tax from graduates can never be an option.
- The yearly investment of at least 6% of the national gross domestic product of all European states as well as 1% of the European Commission budget into education have to become effective guidelines. Budget lines for education and research have to be separated to ensure that extra investment in one is not at the expense of another. Sufficient extra funding to train and employ enough teachers and academic staff is

necessary.

- Pressures to privatise education at any level have to be counterbalanced, and a ban on private companies owning any part of public educational institutions introduced.

### *For a real European education area*

Young European Socialists welcomed the basic principles of the Bologna process: it is necessary to ensure student mobility, promote better intercultural understanding and multilingualism, and improve the personal development of European students. We also welcomed the introduction of the new Erasmus-Plus programme, that brings together educational and youth policies, and their funding at the European level, creating better opportunities to have an overall picture of the field. Young European Socialists is, however, increasingly worried about the course of events. The reforms are too often misused to implement other reforms such as the introduction or raising of tuition fees that limit study opportunities, cuts in financing or staff numbers or the introduction of less flexible education systems. The Erasmus-Plus programme received increased funding, but also included the redirection of funding from non-formal education, youth or civil society projects to formal education and institutions. Young European Socialists strives for a real European education area, based on the principle of free and equal access for all.

- The Bologna process should be about real diploma recognition, including vocational education and training, European Credit Transfer System credits and parts of study. The Bologna process should be about the increased mobility of all students, not just of the richest ones. A more integrated and more controlled approach in the Bologna process, involving students and higher education institutions themselves has to be established.
- We need an evaluation and re-assessment of European education policies, but not only this: if evaluation shows that social mobility has not been increased, that free and equal access to higher education is in danger and that national implementations of the Bologna process serve the market rather than students' needs, not only national policies must be questioned, but also the process itself must be reconsidered. Therefore, a critical evaluation will also have to examine which elements in the process and its implementation led to undesirable results and where the core of impacts can be found: in this critical consideration there should be no taboos.
- Increased spending in the Bologna process to enhance student and academic staff mobility, especially for students from less advantaged financial backgrounds, is necessary.
- Diplomas and credits from both formal and non-formal education need to be recognised by all European educational, state and professional institutions.
- The European education area has to be opened to students from third countries, under at least the same beneficial conditions as European students.
- The Erasmus-Plus programme must continue to have increased funding that needs to be directed at a wide scale of areas of education, civil society participation and youth work.

### *High-Quality secondary education*

Making education throughout life accessible to all is the key to a prosperous future. Unfortunately, only primary education is part of the Declaration of Human Rights. Secondary and further education are also human rights. Social standing must never be a barrier for attending school. Just like every other institution in society carries a responsibility to overcome social and economic inequalities, school carries the responsibility of opening up access to education for everyone. As education and training is a key to personal self-fulfilment and participation in civil society. Secondary education should therefore stay free of charge meaning no tuition fees nor payments for materials. All students must have the right to access further and higher education after the completion of secondary school. Furthermore, there should be no financial, social, cultural or any other kind of barrier preventing students from accessing higher education. A degree in VET should entitle the student to access both academic and vocational third-level education and must not be regarded less worth than a degree in academic secondary education. Secondary education must provide knowledge and

competences required for entering higher education. It is the responsibility of the school to inform the students of all the possibilities and requirements for continuing their education.

### *Vocational education and training - VET in society*

There is commonly a twisted understanding of VET as educational institutions into which so-called low-performing students are pushed and labelled as less competent than students entering academia. The problem of VET being labelled as second-hand in regard to academic education is mainly a result of bad information and the governments' lack of interest in the field of VET. VET provides learning by doing and interest-based education. So it is the task of elementary school to guide students towards an informed choice when facing continuous education within either academia or VET. VET students shall be given the opportunity to develop skills over a period of at least three years of education and training. It should also be possible to pursue a degree in both VET and academic secondary education regardless of which of the two orientations a student chooses in the first place. Well-designed VET systems in the first place pay attention to the individual learner and the development of personal skills, while still preserving the orientation towards the labour market. The relation between VET and the labour market must, however, never evolve into a situation where the labour market fully dominates the VET system, as this could lead to serious violation of the right to education for critical thinking and democratic citizenship.

### *Life-long learning for everyone*

Education and life-long learning constituted the most important pillars of the Lisbon strategy, however, in the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives "Youth on the Move" and "New Skills, New Jobs" this has been reduced to the employability of young people and retraining of older workers at risk of redundancy. Citizens must be continuously supported in every way to participate in life-long learning. The success of the life-long learning initiative depends on not confining it to middle and higher management or to a market-based logic, but applying it to all workers according to their choices for self-fulfilment. It must embrace different elements including vocational education and training in order to prepare people for the labour market and cooperate closely with the private sector, whilst remaining independent of it. The private sector has an important role to fulfil in the life-long learning agenda, in that it must take on its responsibilities to keep on training its employees, however it cannot interfere with autonomous education itself.

- The budget for life-long learning programmes has to be increased, and a comprehensive strategy at the European level to implement life-long learning as promised in the Lisbon strategy has to be developed.
- It is important that everyone has the right to receive additional schooling of their choice free of charge, especially the disadvantaged.
- A minimum of 3% of national gross domestic product has to be invested in research and life-long learning in every member state.
- Schools must promote Lifelong Learning in the sense of recognizing the knowledge gained in school and providing students with skills and competences for its practical use. The concept of Lifelong Learning must be the link between formal, non-formal and informal education and must ensure the setting of standards in education

### *Full recognition of informal and non-formal education*

Learning outside of formal education institutions plays an important role in the learning process and development of young people. Informal learning includes the experience of values, learning to build one's own opinions and arguments and education to think critically. Non-formal education is gained in social experiences like voluntary work, social engagement or other activities in teams or groups. Young European Socialists see informal and non-formal education as extremely valuable for both the individual and for society as a whole, and therefore calls for its full Europe-wide recognition in the academic, state and professional spheres. Young European Socialists stress that this value must be additional: it can never

replace formal education or perform tasks that should be the state's or a company's responsibility, and voluntary work can never replace a decent, paid job.

- Non-formal education and prior learning have to be fully recognised and strengthened in the European Union as a tool to empower people and give them the opportunities to reach self-fulfilment.
- Recognition of informal and non-formal learning processes has to be encouraged to establish a culture of emancipatory life-long learning. Young European Socialists welcomes the increased funding of the European Voluntary Service. Other European and national programmes for voluntary work as well as informal and non-formal education have to follow. The accessibility of voluntary programmes to disadvantaged groups in society has to be increased.
- All volunteers should enjoy full social rights. Misuse of voluntary work as cheap or even free labour has to be prevented.

#### **4.4. MORE AND BETTER JOBS**

For Young European Socialists, full employment remains a central part in our vision to create a high-quality European social welfare state. It is more important than ever, now that the unemployment crisis in Europe shows no signs of abating. Young European Socialists opposes easy and low-cost firing. Everybody must have the right to have a decent job with guarantee of a fixed contract. Therefore, Young European Socialists advocates more and better jobs for everyone. Therefore we demand:

- Large scale investment in employment and growth. We need a European investment programme that concentrates on jobs and growth creation in a way that renews European industries and promotes sustainable growth.
- Work has to pay. Young European Socialists demands that a guaranteed European minimum income above the poverty line is implemented: this must consist of a living wage set either as a national minimum wage or through collective agreement negotiations.

##### *Working time*

- The redistribution of work must be achieved through the reduction of working time, with the aim to reduce unemployment and achieve a higher quality of life. Our goal is to decrease working time to 32 hours a week, not only as a way of increasing freedom for workers or sharing work, which is important, but also as a result of the general increase in productivity.
- The working time directive has to be changed, ensuring a maximum of 40 hours working time per week for all workers in the European Union. A special provision has to be drafted to guarantee existing shorter working times in several member states of the European Union.
- Part-time employment should not mean working in poverty: conditions of part-time employment have to be equal to those of full-time employment. Additionally, part-time work should be a choice, not a necessity. Full-time contracts should remain the basis of legislation and the norm. Conditions of agency work have to be equal to steady contracts.

##### *Active labour market policies*

- Young European Socialists demands an active labour market policy in Europe. Active labour market policies should effectively support transitions between jobs as well as from unemployment and inactivity to jobs, empowering life-long learning systems enabling workers to remain employable throughout their career and facilitating labour market mobility and transition.
- Active labour market policies should especially enable young people to enter the labour market more easily, at the same time protecting them from exploitation through unpaid internships or short-term contracts without proper social security.
- Discrimination on the labour market should be strongly condemned by law and therefor

the government should increase control mechanisms to companies and employment agencies to determine whether they discriminate in their recruitments.

### *Youth unemployment and decent jobs for youth*

- Youth unemployment and young people working in poverty have to be effectively tackled throughout the European Union. To have a realistic picture of youth unemployment we need proper and trustworthy qualitative and quantitative data
- Young European Socialists demands for a really binding, European youth guarantee to be established. This guarantee must ensure that every young person under 25 and every recent graduate under 30 will receive a job, further training or education within 3 months of becoming unemployed or graduating.
- Links between secondary and higher education institutions, research and technology centres and enterprises have to be strengthened. We support the idea of a specific youth entrepreneurship scheme which ensures young people have full access to social security.
- Young European Socialists also calls for the adoption of a framework directive for internships: internships should be decently paid, not exceed 6 months each and not represent more than 10% of the workforce of the company or administration concerned. Moreover, trainees should be recognised the same rights as people employed under a short-term contract, and internships should be taken into account in the calculation of pension rights.

### *Equal European labour markets*

- Unemployment among people with disabilities remains unacceptably high. There is a need to provide a broad spectrum of employment opportunities, including protected and assisted employment, the possibility to obtain and constantly renew qualifications and representation of disabled people.
- Free mobility of workers must be a real mobility for all people. YES rejects the exclusion of anybody from the right of free movement. Free mobility of workers has to go hand in hand with free movement of social benefits. The mobility of pension schemes, health care benefits, unemployment benefits and other social benefits of collective agreements have to be ensured.
- Undeclared work has to be transformed into regular employment.
- Posting workers abroad must not be used to create double standards on national labour markets. Posted workers should be subject to the same labour-related rights and privileges as the workers of their destination country. These policies have been supported by the decisions Court of Justice of EU.
- Young European Socialists calls for strong trade unions in Europe. We demand a proper representation of workers in the social dialogue. We believe that collective agreements are the best way to strengthen the rights of workers to negotiate wages. We demand the expansion of the scope of and enhancing the right to information and consultations and improving working facilities for representatives of employees in European works councils. We demand a new social pact whereby trade unions can function on a European level to have true social dialogue in far more sectors than now is the case. The European Commission should make this its priority to foster and secure the social dialogue in the long run. Young European Socialists demands the right to engage in neutrality agreements, the right of trade unions to enter the workplace, as well as the right to strike and to establish picket lines. We also demand that the workers' right to strike is globally acknowledged and the International Labour Organisation's convention 87 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise - is ratified by all member states and thoroughly honored. The informal economy must be abolished to strengthen the work of trade unions. Young European Socialists will not accept any European legislation violating the possibility for trade unions to act and negotiate as well as we will not accept any form of social dumping within the European Union. This way, all member states should ensure the right to organise in trade unions and for the unions to have the necessary tools to actually change the conditions on the labour

market.

- Young European Socialists has a special responsibility to make this a reality. The only way to secure a fair free mobility of labour and a better labour market is to have stronger trade unions and organise more people. We are the young labour movement of Europe and should act in close cooperation with our partners in the trade unions. Young European Socialists should participate actively in the development of the European Trade Union Confederation Youth and include more young trade union activists in our work.

#### **4.5. PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT**

Protecting the environment is essential for the quality of life of current and future generations. The challenge for both developed and developing countries is to combine this with improving living standards in a way which is sustainable in the long run. In other words, economic, social and environmental policies must be closely integrated. That is why Young European Socialists decided to propose a Policy Paper on green socialism, defining more precisely our common goals and the ways to reach them, in order to progressively transform our economies through a green transition and to prepare the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015.

##### *Innovative environmental policies*

Our Europe has to be environmentally sustainable.

- The European Environmental Agency should become the actual environmental control body ensuring the respect and implementation of European Union environmental legislation. The agency must be supplied with sufficient financial means and ability to open a judicial inquiry in order to bring countries and companies to justice if they infringe legislation.
- Energy efficiency must be emphasised at all levels of domestic and commercial life across Europe. Passive and active houses should become the building standard in all newly-built houses in Europe, and this development should be encouraged by both incentives and tighter regulation.
- The principle of "the polluter pays" has to be the guiding principle in establishing green taxes. These taxes have to be invested in financing a European environmental fund.
- It must be a priority to intensify research into new, alternative energy resources. The European energy strategy has to be based on clean and sustainable forms of energy production and distribution, not on highly polluting and insecure fossil and nuclear forms of energy production and distribution as it currently is.
- Sustainable water management must be one of the main concerns of the European Union.
- Clean and free drinking water must available to everyone.
- We must protect biodiversity and oppose the development of genetically engineered crops and animals.
- Special attention should be brought to animal rights. Common European laws and regulations should be implemented for the protection of laboratory animals. Common laws should be passed against the hunting or fishing of endangered species, and animal welfare must be protected more robustly within agriculture, particularly intensive factory-farming techniques for fur should be banned.
- All energy in Europe should come from renewable energy sources. This demands huge public investments in research, building and protection of wind turbines, solar panels, water energy plants and more. Young European Socialists calls for a green transition of the energy sector. This can be done with political regulation and public investments. We furthermore demand a gradual reduction of the use of nuclear power: Young European Socialists has the ambition to make Europe a nuclear-free zone.

##### *Fighting the increasing climate catastrophe at the global scale*

The European environmental policy can only be effective when embedded in a global strategy through a binding agreement. European Union member states must accept their own

responsibility and aim for ambitious targets, followed by the use of Europe's strength in global negotiations to adopt sustainable policies.

- A safe global livelihood is a human right, including a safe and healthy environment. The European Union must use its authority to promote a better environment for all. Young European Socialists fights for energy sovereignty for everybody, meaning that everybody should have the right to obtain decentralised, democratically controlled, 100% renewable energy.
- Global warming must be stopped and sufficient policies should be adopted to make sure that the earth's temperature increase does not exceed scientifically considered recommendations.
- The European Union must commit to increase the share of renewables in its total energy mix to 30% by 2020 and to 100% by 2050.
- Europe-based multinationals and members of the European Union involved in waste dumping in developing countries should be sanctioned.
- Excessive profits from price rises caused by the rapid depletion of natural resources should be subject to windfall taxation.
- The production of greenhouse-gas intensive food should be discouraged and the production of low greenhouse-gas food encouraged. Taxation could be a useful tool for this.
- Privatisation of the water supply should be prohibited.

#### *Sustainable transport networks*

Today, the vast majority of personal transport is still based on the use of fossil fuels. A radical change in mentality is crucial, and the use of more environment-friendly alternatives should be encouraged.

- To reduce the environmental damage of road and air transport and to address its increasing congestion problems, the European Union needs to promote alternative modes of transport and to develop and implement a directive for clean cars.
- Public transportation should be as cheap as possible in cities should be free of charge. The European (high-speed) rail network should be developed. Continental transport of all kinds of goods has to be moved from the roads onto the railways and waterways, which are more efficient and sustainable.
- Common system for searching timetables and buying tickets should also be developed.
- Improving public transport networks across Europe, both in urban and rural areas, has to be made a priority in Europe, both nationally and in European Union policies.
- Carpooling should be actively promoted in areas where public transport is insufficiently developed.
- Planes have to become cleaner and the number of short-distance flights should be decreased by increased incentives to use rail travel and by higher taxes on short-haul and domestic flights. A European tax on flights within 500km should be imposed. At the same time we should improve rail network and boat access all over Europe. must also be subsidised (through a tax on airlines) to make it cheaper than short-haul flights.
- Interrail ticket system is important to movement of young people. It should be developed even further and make sure it stays as cheap as possible.

#### *Reform the common agricultural policy*

In a globalising world and an enlarging European Union, the original goal of food security, embodied by the common agricultural policy, has to be redefined, bringing other priorities such as sustainability, efficient water management, food production on the basis of quality rather than quantity, environment- and animal-friendly ways of production, and a focus on rural populations with high standards of quality of life and welfare. This model can empower small farmers and producers, based on local and organic produce and respect the environment and the principles of cooperative production. It would be much more compatible with the European policy regarding the development of the poorest countries.

Codetermination by the European Parliament on all matters of reforming the common agricultural

policy has to be implemented. This would increase the transparency of the common agricultural policy as well as reveal the expenditure at national level without risking unfair competition.

## **5. A EUROPE SPEAKING UNISON**

### **5.1. A STRONG AND COHERENT FOREIGN POLICY**

A large share of the world's power today lies in Europe. The European Union must use this power to make our world fairer, to ensure human rights are respected, to strengthen international law, to support peace and prevent conflicts, to promote international democracy, and to create a fair distribution of the world's wealth. Security and development are closely inter-dependent. This strong, common and coherent foreign policy should be the doctrine of the European common foreign and security policy and the association agreements. Its most important instrument is the European External Action Service, directed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: we want the Service to be a well-functioning multilateral system built on the basis of the United Nations and other partner multilateral organisations of the EU, a strong labour movement, disarmament, fair trade, an enlarged international development cooperation based on engagement, and a serious neighborhood policy with strengthened democracy promotion.

The challenge of European foreign policy lies in making the European common foreign and security policy a tool of international solidarity, both by increasing the actual importance of the common foreign and security policy and by changing the current content of it.

#### *Improve international law*

Societies without laws are left to the solemn arbitrary decision-making of the strongest, leaving the smaller and weaker with no rights and only few opportunities to affect their development. This also applies to our international society. Therefore, international law is crucial to build international democracy and a fair world order. We see the urgent need to develop and strengthen it, especially in a direction where human rights and democracy are at the core of it.

- The International Court of Justice has to become the independent judiciary in the new global governance system and become more than the treaty guardian it is today. It should become a true international fundamental rights court, linked to the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and a newly created World Environment Organisation. There should be no option for states to exempt themselves or their citizens from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. All countries should sign and ratify the statutes of the International Criminal Court, whose mandate should be strengthened by replacing the present ruling principle of complementarity, binding the hands of the International Criminal Court, with the principle of universal jurisdiction. The regional tribunals should be merged into the International Criminal Court, which should become an integral part of the global judicial system.
- International law must be improved in order to not only regulate the behaviour of states at international level, but to apply to everyone including individuals, associations and corporations.
- It is of great concern when states violate international law, since it unbalances the world and makes it a more insecure place. With respect to this, we strongly condemn any so-called pre-emptive strikes or wars.
- An independent and unique international prosecutor's authority should be established and be responsible for the coordination and the management of the impartial investigation necessary for the international court procedures. National and EU law should hold corporations, both national and multinational, responsible for serious breaches of international law all over the world as to exclude company policies and actions constituting violations of fundamental and human rights.

### **5.2. GLOBAL DEMOCRACY**

Globalisation means that we can no longer rely solely on national solutions to problems. Sustainable development and security must be achieved together. At the same time democratically organised states, regions and municipalities remain the indispensable cornerstones for better communities and a better world. Instead of replacing or undermining democracy, international co-operation must aim to expand and strengthen democracy in communities and at all levels where it is lacking. Since we have nations in Europe in which democracy hasn't been reached, we should specifically target democracy training and co-operation in those places.

- Power over global development cannot be left to multinational companies and their search for short-term returns on capital.
- The interests of capital must not be allowed to dominate the shaping of international rules and agreements.

The globalisation of democracy and the democratisation of globalisation are natural aims for socialists and social democrats. When the market forces can be reined in, then globalisation and fair distribution of wealth will be a force that can serve everyone. By strengthening global trade union rights and free trade unions, these can then function as a strong counterweight to the interests of capital.

- At the global level, we must work for a shift of power from the market to political institutions. International bodies such as the United Nations must be more representative even for those countries with limited resources.
- Socialists and social democrats must take the lead in organising global solutions to global problems, even though the obstacles can appear insurmountable and we meet opposition from individuals and powerful capitalist interests.

The demands for democracy, respect for human rights and social security grow stronger around the world. There have never been so many democratic states as there are today.

#### *The United Nations – a protector of peace and people*

Young European Socialists believes in cooperation, international law and multilateralism as the best way to reach peace and international democracy. Therefore, the United Nations is the most relevant global body the European Union must invest time and energy in, and the European Union must improve its coordination within the United Nations to enable the European Union's common foreign and security policy to become effective. The United Nations also needs to be reformed, especially in order to increase the effectiveness of its decision-making process, to protect human beings instead of borders and to implement its own decisions more effectively.

- The United Nations must be reformed in order to become more democratic and representative of the world's population. The aim is to enable the United Nations General Assembly to function as the parliament of the world. International political networks of all political families must cooperate towards this goal.
- The United Nations Security Council needs reform aimed at abolishing the system of permanent members' vetoes. This is a long process, and one initial step should be to have only one permanent member from Europe, a seat that should be taken by the European Union. Permanent seats made available in the process of reform should be attributed to emerging countries from under-represented regions of the globe such as Africa, the South American continent and the Indian sub-continent.
- The United Nations should strengthen its cooperation with civil society, and especially globally organised youth organisations.
- The United Nations' competence and human and financial resources to execute humanitarian interventions must be improved.
- The United Nations charter must be revised in order to enable the United Nations to effectively stop genocide and other crimes against humanity and human rights, no matter whether they are perpetrated due to domestic, regional or international conflicts.
- The United Nations should be the governing organisation in international taxation and have the possibilities to combat tax avoidance and evasion.

- In parallel, cooperation and coordination among the various international institutions, both political and financial, must be strengthened in order to make international politics more effective and transparent.

### **5.3. FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH**

The development of democracy is threatened by poverty and authoritarian regimes. Organisations that use violence to achieve their aims call for tough opposition. At the same time, this opposition must not be allowed to compete with respect for human rights and the individual's right to respect for personal integrity. The struggle between the interests of the people and those of capital continues: the person's democratic right to vote should be superior to the financial means of a minority.

Our belief as socialists and social-democrats is that democracy is an ongoing process to be extended in the entire society: through democratic elections between free political citizens, social reforms and redistribution to give everyone a future and avoid oligarchies, or towards free trade union rights.

People all over the world have the same hope of being able to live in a secure and socially responsible society based on respect for human values. Solidarity and cooperation between people, workers or between countries or regions should always be promoted instead of permanent competition. Collective solutions to our common challenges, in education, health, sustainable development or to face ecological disasters, are always more effective than any kind of individualism or nationalism.

Still today, almost half of the world's population lives on an income of less than two United States dollars per day. The majority are women. More than half a billion people in work earn less than one United States dollar per day. A person living in the industrialised world is expected to live almost 30 years longer than a person living in one of the least developed countries in the world.

We have to ensure that more countries strive towards the best of conditions, with opportunities for development and a fair distribution of wealth.

Used in the right way, aid can act as a catalyst for increased education, equality between men and women, for building faith in the future, and it can also be used to fight corrupt and undemocratic governments. Together with efforts in other areas, aid can create the conditions for development. Unfortunately, there are few countries in the rich world that live up to the United Nations goal of 0,7% of their gross domestic product in aid.

But the increase in aid today is not enough. One way to increase global resources is to introduce taxes and charges by means of agreements between states. Aid should contribute to break powerlessness, hunger and hopelessness. For this reason, the issues of democracy and human rights are also fundamental when it comes to aid. Aid on its own does not create positive development. On the other hand, it contributes to creating the conditions for development together with efforts in other fields.

- A long-term effort must be made to promote democracy and human rights, strengthen civil society and build institutions that function well.
- The poorest countries must be given the opportunity to build health and education systems and other institutions that international investors show no concern for.
- Change our aid and trade policy, by supporting a wider diversity of economic activities, instead of subsidising monocultures or tobacco and alcohol production. On the other hand, we should cease to excessively support European food exports and the development of wider European fisheries, devastating the local economies of our developing partners, especially for the poorest people.
- The main responsibility for positive development lies with every country and its people.
- One way is to hold back aid to governments that lack ambitions when it comes to a fair distribution of welfare: countries where taxes are low and where corruption is

widespread. Debt relief should not be considered as development aid. It is a duty of developed countries to relieve the so-called debt of developing countries, as developed countries themselves are the source of the problem looking at history and more specifically during times of colonial expansion and exploitation in today's developing countries. Young European Socialists demands full debt relief with no strings attached, except for good future cooperation in all fields.

Women are often the poorest among the poor and those most at risk. The power relationship between the sexes means that girls do not get to go to school to the same extent as boys do, that laws governing ownership are advantageous to men, that women have lower wages and poorer working conditions and very little say in the development of their societies. Aid must contribute to increasing the opportunities for people to run their own lives and to exercise influence over the development of their countries.

High social and environmental standards should be instruments of our foreign policy as well, instead of the constant liberalisation clauses imposed in all bilateral agreements with other countries or regions abroad. Promoting fair trade means to limit and progressively erase any kind of social or environmental dumping by taxing products or sanctioning multinational companies that do not respect these rules or disregard human rights. Using the European Union's trade influence to reach higher standards instead of the current exploitation of people and nature could be an important tool and a way to return to the roots of our socialist and social democratic internationalism.

#### **5.4. DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS**

Respect for human rights is a precondition for democracy and a fundamental expression of the basic values of socialism and social democracy. Human rights as expressed in the general declaration of the United Nations from 1948, as well as in other conventions, form an inviolable rule. Despite the fact that all states have formally recognised the declaration of human rights, violations of these rights take place all the time and deliberately. The 4th Geneva Conventions bind every nation to overcome serious crimes of war and crimes against humanity . Everyday breaches are still taking place concerning these greatest human rights violations. To stop these violations, should be one of our first priorities.

Socialists and social democrats hold that human political, economic, social and cultural freedoms and rights are universal, indivisible and individual. They must not be violated by states or any other actors. A decisive step forward is the possibility of holding individuals to account for crimes against human rights within the framework of international justice.

The rights of women have always been at risk and rooted in a traditional cultural under-ordering in every society, though expressed in different ways. Equality between women and men is a central social issue for both men and women. Creating equal opportunities, rights and obligations entails changes in a number of areas of social life. It is a human right not to be discriminated against because of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and to choose whom to live with, together with the right to decide over one's own body and reproduction. Neither in our own society nor in any other culture can this type of violation be accepted. That women, regardless of what they want, are passed on as chattels to the relatives of their men if they die, female genital mutilation and murder in the name of honour are all examples of harmful traditions and practices that must cease to be observed.

- For women not to be given the right to decide over their own bodies is not compatible with a socialist and social democratic concept of humanity.
- Women must be given the same rights as men in every area of social life.
- Poverty and structural disadvantage means that women and children face special risks of being exposed to horrible forms of trade in people and of sexual exploitation. This involves serious violations of their human rights. This is one more reason to fight poverty and strengthen the rights of women and children. This work must be carried out both at the national at the international level.
- The role of men and violence perpetrated by men must be given more thought. The discrimination of half of humanity must be made visible and combated.

- LGBTQIA\* rights are as fundamental a part of the protection of human rights as anything else. We should react equally strongly to any case of violation of the rights of women, minorities and LGBTQIA\* people. This should be illustrated in our foreign policy as well as in development aid programmes.

The violation of children's rights is extensive and especially distasteful since the victims have no way of protecting themselves. It is often their guardians that commit the crimes and the home that is the scene of the crime, just as it is for women. When children instead of being given a good upbringing, care and education are exposed to exploitation early on, it leads to a catastrophe for both the victims and society as a whole. It must be acknowledged that though child labour might not be as big of a problem in the European Union that it is the developing countries, European companies still use child labour in their factories abroad. These companies must be sanctioned and civil society organisations, must be allowed to inspect the factories. Also unscheduled inspections must be legally allowed to the factories that are being suspected in using child labour.

- Child labour and other forms of slavery, every form of sexual exploitation, the use of children in war, crime, human trafficking and trade in children and their organs – all this must be combated forcefully.
- Unless individual states are prepared to do something about this, it is up to the international community to step in and take effective actions.

In a world where recognition, identity, security and influence are needed to defend one's interests and where they have been intimately linked to national states, the rights of those who are stateless are at serious risk.

Murder and abuse are always wrong, even when carried out by states in the name of justice. For this reason, we will continue undaunted in our struggle against capital punishment and torture.

Popular education and knowledge are important if we are to respect traditions, cultures and religions. A lack of respect and understanding leads to racism, xenophobia, homophobia and religious fundamentalism. Democracy, peace and a good social order become the first victims. On the other hand, respect and understanding do not mean that we abandon our basic values of freedom, equality and solidarity. Crimes against these values can never be accepted on the grounds of ideology, tradition, culture or religion. It is important that we understand and recognise that there are nuances and even large differences within a culture or a religion. No culture or religion can claim to stand outside democracy and human rights as overriding values. For this reason, the same principled approach must be applied when it comes to the rights of citizens such as freedom of expression, free and regular elections, free media and the legal rights of individuals. Only by doing so could European democracy conquer its past dictatorships.

Conservative ideas have been put forward from cultural, political and religious quarters on a struggle between civilisations, instead of promoting the value of a multifaceted world based on a democratic foundation. These ideas must be dismissed. Socialists and social democrats are convinced that dialogue, respect, tolerance and common sense can overcome differences and divisions. Fundamentalist intolerance and a lack of respect lead to deep divisions in the relationships between people, nations and civilisations. Wise political leadership can instead enrich the world with this pluralism. Fundamentalism that can lead to violent extremism is something that exists in all world religions. This fundamentalism is the expression of a human philosophy that is foreign to democracy, humanism and tolerance. Action to meet this extremism must to begin with be handled by political and religious leaders and not between religions.

## **5.5. SOUND NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICIES**

Today, international cooperation is quickly developing at the regional level. In Europe, the European Union is on its way to becoming an all-European organisation. Regional co-operation is also developing through the Southern Common Market in Latin America, the Association of

South East Asian Nations in Asia and the African Union in Africa. These are mainly directed at economic cooperation but touch on human rights, common security and questions that must be collaboratively addressed. These regional forms of cooperation must take on greater responsibility than they have today, both for their own development and for security. It should be the European Union that has the primary responsibility for upholding international peace and security in Europe and the African Union that shoulders this mission in Africa. The European Union should support other regional organisations. The final responsibility lies with the United Nations Security Council. Increased joint regional engagement strengthens both the United Nations and global security.

Along with greater regional responsibilities comes the need for more coordination between them. For example, we need better forms for consultation between the European Union and the African Union and between the European Union and the Southern Common Market, but also with the regions in the South. There are still great differences between the North and the South, even if the differences within these areas have increased dramatically. The need for a well-functioning dialogue is pressing. We must take the perspectives and viewpoints of the South into consideration when we shape our policies. This applies to aid, foreign and security policies as well as policies in different rounds of international negotiations and organisations, not least in the field of economics. Even other areas of the world require a well-functioning dialogue. One such area is education and culture, where increased cooperation between the European Union and the African Union could increase mutual understanding and promote exchange also in other areas.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine affects the world in a way few other conflicts do, and it affects our common security. Israel as the stronger party has a special responsibility to show caution in the use of violence, and to take the initiative in pushing the peace process forward. Israeli settlements, the construction of the separation wall on occupied territory and excessive violence must cease. The Palestinians must distance themselves from the suicide bombers. Terrorism can never be justified. We want to see an independent, democratic and revitalised Palestine side by side with Israel, with safe and recognised borders for both parties. No change in the borders is acceptable that has not been agreed on by the parties. Without mutual engagement there can be no peace. The global community must take responsibility to support the Palestinians in the work of reconstruction. An international presence is needed to strengthen security and combat terrorist actions. The European Union must shoulder more responsibility. The goal is a viable and sustainable Palestinian state based on international law and the resolutions of the United Nations.

## **5.6. ENGAGE AND DISARM**

### *For a peaceful world*

Young European Socialists commits to a peaceful world. We believe in multilateralism, trust, respect, equality and solidarity. The European Union's history is a success story of the peaceful cohabitation of nations. Keeping the peace is an important obligation for us. The European Union shall support security for the European Union through contributing to conflict prevention and conflict management. This must be done through active diplomacy and wealth redistribution, and also by being a mediator supporting sustainable solutions.

### *We stand for solid conflict prevention*

The external affairs of the European Union, the neighbourhood policy and the engagements of the member states in international organisations like the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe should aim to avoid or reduce conflicts and engage in civil peace-building. If conflicts heat up, we expect the European Union to use its role to deescalate. War is not a political instrument for us.

### *We stand for disarmament*

Young European Socialists calls for a strengthened effort in disarmament. The quantity and

quality of weapons produced and exported by European companies is still increasing and jeopardises peace in the world. Therefore, Young European Socialists calls for continuous efforts to reduce the number of weapons produced in Europe.

We strongly condemn nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction: these weapons pose a grave threat to humanity, regardless of whose hands they are in. To achieve disarmament, serious multilateral initiatives are needed with total international disarmament as the final goal. The European Union must invest more time in advocating international disarmament through all its channels and relations with international partners. The European Union should also set the example by starting to disarm its own arsenals that are in the hands of different member states. All nuclear weapons present in Europe owned by non-member states must be removed or, preferably, dismantled immediately.

#### *We want to reduce military forces in Europe*

Defence policy in Europe has changed in the last decade. Moving from a highly-armed defence army in the bloc confrontation of the Cold War, it moved towards a pre-emptive and externally acting military force. Young European Socialists condemns the ongoing militarisation of foreign policy in some member states. Pre-emptive attacks are not an option for us. European armies shall only be used in a defensive situation. The European Union's member states no longer need national armies to fight against each other. Young European Socialists calls for national forces to be reduced step by step. Nevertheless, a limited ability for military intervention should be kept as a last-resort option for humanitarian interventions in case of genocide or when civilian populations cannot be otherwise protected. Military intervention should only happen under United Nations mandate.

Young European Socialists believes that true security needs to be open and dialogue-based in order to be a good basis for improved involvement of and cooperation between all states. Exclusive defence systems risk new conflicts through exclusion. Therefore we see the mainly western defence alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, critically and wish to replace it with a United Nations-based multilateral approach.

### **5.7. A STRONG GLOBAL LABOUR MOVEMENT**

Basic human rights in working life must be strengthened and respected everywhere. Freedom of association and the freedom to make agreements must be guaranteed, and slave labour, child labour and discrimination, including wage discrimination between men and women, must be eliminated. The work of the International Labour Organisation must be given greater authority, and more countries must be persuaded to ratify the International Labour Organisation's conventions.

The international and national trade union movement plays a decisive role as a force for change in society and as a resource for sustainable economic development. Free and democratic trade unions protect the rights of workers and their conditions of employment and contribute to greater social justice. Without trade unions and progressive political movements that cooperate across borders, multinational companies will easily be able to pitch industries and countries against each other. Companies act across borders. So too must trade unions and politics. For this reason, workers all round the world must be guaranteed the right to take international sympathy action. The emergence of stronger European and international labour law and of international trade union agreements is promising both in terms of economic development and in terms of justice.

From technology and communications to trade, economics and politics, the world is undergoing rapid change. The consequences of this rapid globalisation directly impact workers around the world, affecting their daily working and family lives. The key challenge unions face today is to make economic globalisation serve rather than enslave working people, and to defend their

rights in the face of increasingly centralised bodies of power. Trade unions are being confronted by the new and difficult challenges of economic globalisation. Modern technology has erased geographical borders and increased the pace of change in industry. Twenty years ago, companies found it difficult to move production from one country to another: today it can be done quickly and easily. The driving force behind this change is the quest for ever cheaper production.

Every one of these decisions affects working people and their families, which is why we believe that international trade union activities are more relevant than ever. The core mission of a strong global labour movement is to improve workers' wages, working and living conditions, and to ensure that workers' rights are respected.

A global labour movement should bring together trade unions at the national and international level to help members challenge the neo-liberal agenda of corporations and conservative governments, and to ensure that all share in the wealth generated through sustainable economic development.

Young European Socialists insist on the importance of supporting trade unions in their fight for a fair redistribution and the defense of workers' rights in Europe and in the world.

Some of our goals we want to achieve by working together internationally are:

- Build a strong global labour movement.
- Organise the unorganised.
- Strengthen international solidarity.
- Engage with transnational corporations.
- Negotiate international framework agreements.
- Secure workers' rights, including the rights of women workers and informal laborers.
- Fight for sustainable economic development, and
- Promote fair trade, social justice and the elimination of poverty.