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Adopted position paper

YES: 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. YES 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, YES works closely with its member organisations and represents the European socialist and social democratic youth within the PES, PES Women, S&D and PES Groups, Rainbow Rose, FEPS, GPF and social fora, and works towards a democratic structuring of these organisations. Besides our cooperation within YES's fraternal organisations, IUSY and IFM-SEI, we strive for cooperation with progressive partners. YES is a committed member of the European Youth Forum and engages with other youth organisations in order to achieve its goals.

The values and aims laid down in this Position Paper are the basis of our work. It is the aim of the 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 respond to our vision of the society we want to live in. In this Position Paper we, young European socialists, 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 with one voice

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 European level, is a grave concern for us. Europeans must remain vigilant at all times as the power for people to decide for themselves is always dependant 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 large reform that should begin with the single directly elected European institution, the European Parliament. The reform of the European Parliament is a necessary start: 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 MEPs should be elected on pan-European lists put forwards 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 members states: the 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 impose only one possible policy by setting the parameters within which the discussion can take place. We should never accept 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. National parliaments are an important institution when democratizing Europe and their role in the EU must be strengthened.

2.2 INTEGRATION AND ENLARGEMENT GO TOGETHER

On the 1st of January 2007 the European Union enlarged to 27 member states, uniting different states with different cultures, political realities, and 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 EU 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 competences of the European Union are necessary.
- Application and adherence to the Treaties and principles of the Union are not only necessary for applicants, but also for 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 big 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 has 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 harmonization 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. The European Union has to offer sufficient financial means and expertise to enable the neighbouring states to comply with the existing European Union's criteria. But furthermore these countries have to support this common federal Project towards a social and environmental Union. Thereby, we strongly support Turkey's accession to the EU.

3. AN INCLUSIVE EUROPE

The Europe we want is an inclusive one. Everyone, regardless of background, countries of origin, beliefs or personal choices has to have equal rights and opportunities. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure the realisation of these rights through services, legislation and control. No one should be threatened, discriminated against or excluded because of who they are. The European Union is what the European citizens in their diversity 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, ethnicity 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 responsibility to contribute and participate in the 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 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 globalized world means globalized exchanges in culture and people. To create a society where every individual can fulfil her or 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. Any oligarchy or corruption system should be banned from the European Union, hence Young European Socialists call for the complete recognition of the UN Anti-Corruption Convention by the European Union itself and all member states.

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 under 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 of benefiting 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 gender identity, gender expression and every form of discrimination.

The challenge is to create the economical and political conditions for the full development of individuality in a common society, where the 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 is 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 immigrants aiming at empowerment and integration have to be developed.

In the middle of big political and economical turmoil it is essential that we continue to fight against populist rhetoric 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 is hitting women more severely. The austerity policies have stronger and harder consequences on 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 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 policies of the active labour market must be developed.
- Sufficient, paid maternity, paternity, co-maternity and parental leaves must be available for all parents. The system must be open to the working woman as well as the caring man 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 mothers and fathers to return to work or studies at the end of the parental leave.
- Public services need to be continuously developed to decrease the gender imbalance in care-work. Also other forms of gendered, un-paid work done by women need to be balanced between the genders both through expansion of services and also 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 safe abortion, 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 for the EU as well as continuity of the membership.
- Violence against women, both in and outside the home, mobbing, trafficking and forced prostitution are a reality also in Europe.

- Young European Socialists calls upon all European countries, in close cooperation with developing and less developed countries to accept gender-based violence like female genital mutilation as a reason to accord asylum and we continue to strongly fight against trafficking of women and children.
- The struggle for a global right to equality must include all regions in all continents. The Beijing + 15 declaration and platform for action has to be strengthened. 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 international, national, local or even organisational level is too low. Gender quotas are a good means to elevate 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 women occupy at least 40% of all executive board positions.
- ECOSY – Young European Socialists will continue to push for the adoption of the “zipper system”, both by electoral lists and by speakers' lists. The socialist parties should lead by example and commit to having 50 % women candidates in all lists in all elections.

3.4. THE RIGHT TO BE QUEER

The latest EU youth poll on LGBTT rights showed significant reason for concern. LGBTT people face continued discrimination in society, the labour market, education and politics and, in fact, homophobia and cases of civil rights denial are rising.

- Young European Socialists demands complete freedom of gender identity and sexual orientation, guaranteed by the state, and sufficient anti-discrimination legislation to be implemented.
- 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 LGBTT individuals the same rights when it comes to being entitled to benefits or proper treatments. The forbiddance of blood donation to LGBTT 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 and death of one of the couple.
- LGBTT people should have the same rights in terms of family planning, including the right to adopt children, equal access to artificial insemination and the right to unite families for same-sex couples.
- Young European Socialists demand that the “Gender Identity Disorder” diagnosis is withdrawn out of the catalogue of mental diseases of the WHO. It must be no longer necessary for any access to healthcare or legal procedures. Full healthcare access has to be granted for Trans* and Intersex people. Everybody has to have the right to change their legal gender, not only to male or female, but also to a third non-gendered category, and their name, with a simple and accessible procedure.
- Transgender people should also retain their re-productive rights after gender corrective surgery and any legislation demanding compulsory sterilisation must be abolished immediately as they are violating human rights.
- YES demands the immediate stop and ban of genitalia mutilation of intersex children.
- Young European Socialists calls upon all European countries, to give asylum to LGBTT people who are persecuted in their countries because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

3.5. 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 now with the current economic crisis, European

responses to migration remain more based on fear, mistrust, and security.

Young European Socialists strongly opposes this approach and promotes a common, coherent rights-based EU 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 etc.

- Migration and development policies in the migrants' countries of origin. The EU may and should play a role by investing in the countries of origin, to boost stable democratic systems, social justice, viable economies and sustainable environment policies. Furthermore, EU should reinforce greater partnership 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 feel compelled to leave in search of a better life. This specific development aid strategy goes next 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 immigrants between member states, full civil, political and social rights for immigrants with or without legal status, the right to unite families, to sole and to multiple nationalities. In this dimension, and as a sign of solidarity among European Union member states and viability of their societies, it is necessary to re-examine and reform the Dublin II Regulation, which poses excessive burdens to those member states which are at the borders of the European Union and are the main receivers of increased immigrant flows. Europe cannot close its borders (internal or external). It needs to strengthen the *acquis* of the free movement inside EU Member – States and to ensure that people entering any European Member States are entering under the same harmonised human conditions, to guarantee the trust between Member States and 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 by the idea that internal and external cultural aspirations must not impede any of your 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 and 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 NGOs like refugee organisations.

3.6. 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 people 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 believe that the European Union must continue to promote and to support partnerships between young people from the European Union and from outside.

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 the present, being citizens with full capacities and with the same rights as anyone, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, geographical or economic background. 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 NFE 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 in 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 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 NGOs 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 as well as we should aim at giving them the ability and understanding of society and political processes from 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 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 to assure equality between the European citizens. Even if the implementation of the policies will take place at the national level. We need to create a European welfare model that takes in best practises of the European states through a progressive fiscal harmonisation, rather than a encourages 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 a 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 entered 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 has 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.

- YES 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.
- YES 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 sector have to be acknowledged in the definition of 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. 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.
- Social discrimination in Europe need to be abolished. We as YES condemn any discriminatory practices of social discrimination like 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 racial, sexual or gender 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 frontiers 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 firms ignoring the core principles of our democracies – the respect due to man's dignity and to the environment, the respect due to the next generations – to pay, we would make such behaviors financially unaffordable.
- 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. The legal period of notice by landlords must be extended to at least six months: currently many Europeans endure the permanent

- danger of losing their abode due to their landlords' personal preferences.
- Homelessness should not occur 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 housing industry if the private markets cannot provide enough affordable apartments.

4.2. AN ECONOMY THAT SERVES THE WELFARE STATES

We as YES reject the current thinking of the European Union as namely the single market. We as YES think 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 the conservative austerity-only policy. The current stability and growth pact has proven to be inefficient. The addition of the fiscal pact only makes things worse. We demand fostering of innovation, development and an environmental transformation for a Europe of jobs. In times of economic downturn, we demand for anti-cyclical investments in education and growth in order to create the necessary employment and to ensure the social security of all. We demand 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 the core welfare policies for its population.
- Inequalities between the European economies need to be balanced to develop a stable European Economy.
- Investments for the future such as education or the transition to a low-carbon economy should not be included in the debt calculation.
- To ensure that a system a common European Social goals is not misused to drive social standards in some member states down, a system of minimum standards and target corridors need to be combined with a social progressive clause, which ensures that the level of social security already achieved at national level will be kept.
- We demand binding goals for the reduction of national account balances in Europe.
- We need a new industrial policy in Europe, which strengthens the base of the European economy and builds 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 addressing 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, supervision of banking and a financial transaction tax. The existing framework of the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund should be further developed. The European Central Bank (ECB) 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.
- 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.

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 transparency of the European budget policy.

YES demands a ceiling concept of 1% of member states' GDP for the European budget can be

applied only when Europe has a new clear fiscal strategy with its own tax sphere. Otherwise a 1,5% ceiling has to be applied. The spending on the common agricultural policy should be reduced in favour of improving the financing of R&D investments, growth stimulus in underdeveloped regions and the insurance 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 and age. Young European Socialists strives for quality education for all, free of charge and free of discrimination. We understand the educational process as 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. The 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.
- The secondary level education should be mandatory in order to reduce the number of youth who are not in education, employment or training. 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: this implies that 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 a social infrastructure to ensure adequate conditions for living and studying at the same place. Student housing must be publicly provided and 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 experience, 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. In a society where professional destiny is largely determined by the curriculum achieved, it is necessary to provide active support for those who have or are about to leave education prematurely. 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. The 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 choosing 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 educational funding has to be ensured through a progressive tax system which taxes high income and capital income and discharges low and middle labour incomes. Charging students or levying an additional tax from graduates can never be an option.
 - Yearly investment of at least 6% of the national GDP 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 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 educational institutions introduced.

For a real European education area

Young European Socialists welcomes 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. Young European Socialists is, however, increasingly worried about the course of events. The Bologna process is often misused to implement other reforms like 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. Young European Socialists strives for a real European educational area, based on the principle of free and equal access for all.

- The Bologna process should be about real diploma recognition, including vocational training, European Credit Transfer System credits and parts of study. The Bologna process should be about increased mobility of all students and 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.
- The upcoming second decade of Bologna will and must be used for evaluation and for continuing the process in order to reach better standards. 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 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 become open for students from third countries, under at least the same beneficial conditions as European students.

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 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 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 GDP has to be invested in research and life-long learning in every member state.

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, the learning of building one's own opinions and arguments and the 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 sees 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 stresses 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 have to be encouraged to establish a culture of emancipatory lifelong 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 the voluntary programmes for 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. Young European Socialists opposes easy and low-cost firing. Everybody must have the right to have a decent job. Therefore, Young European Socialists advocates more and better jobs for everyone. Therefore we demand:

- Work has to pay. YES demands that a guaranteed European minimum income above the poverty level 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 decreasing working time to 32 weekly hours, 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 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

- YES 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 facilitate 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

Youth unemployment and decent jobs for the youth

- Youth unemployment and young people working in poverty have to be effectively tackled throughout the European Union.
- Young European Socialists demands for a binding, European youth guarantee to be established. This guarantee must ensure that every young person under 25 and recent graduate under 30 will receive a job, further training or education within 3 months of becoming unemployed or graduating.
- Age discrimination must be tackled and the increasing segmentation of labour markets needs to end.
- The links between higher education institutions, research and technological 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.
- YES demands decent working conditions for young people, we oppose underpaid and unpaid jobs, long working hours and temporary employment for the young generation
- 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.
- YES demands the urgent elimination the gender pay gap. We want more women in leadership positions and support quotas both in public and private sectors.

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.
- The free mobility of workers must be a real mobility for all people. YES rejects the exclusion of anybody from the right of free movement. The free mobility of workers has to go hand in hand with the 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 same labour related rights and privileges as the workers of their destination country.
- YES 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 work councils. We demand better regulation supporting the multinational work of trade unions. YES demands the right to engage in neutrality agreements, the right of trade unions to go into the working place, as well as the right to strike and to establish picket lines. The informal economy must be abolished to strengthen the work of trade unions. YES will not accept any EU-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 union. This is way all member states should ensure the rights to organise in trade unions and for the unions to have the necessary tools to actually change the conditions on the labour market.
- YES has a special responsibility to make this 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 this in close cooperation with our partners in the trade unions. YES should participate actively in the development of ETUC 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 continuing economic growth and 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.

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 legal sanctions 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 the research and education and related environmental strategies, realising a European environmental fund.
- It must be a priority to intensify the research in 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. The implementation of the European water directive has to be secured and member states have to address their lack of commitment to it.
- We must protect biodiversity and oppose the release of genetically engineered crops and animals into the environment. We must promote measures like the labelling of genetically engineered foods and the segregation of genetically engineered crops and seeds from conventional and organic seeds, in order to give citizens the opportunity to

- make informed choices and responsible decisions about their future.
- 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 with regards to intensive factory farming techniques.
- All energy in Europe should come from renewable energy sources. This demands huge public investments in research, building and protection of windmills, solar panels, water energy plants and more. YES 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 plant: YES has the ambition to make Europe a nuclear-free zone.

Fighting climate change globally

The European environmental policy can only be effective when embedded in a global strategy. The European Union must work towards a progressive global consensus on addressing climate change. European Union member states must accept their own responsibility and aim at ambitious targets, followed by the use of Europe's strength in global negotiations pressuring states like the United States, China and India 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. YES fights for energy sovereignty for everybody, that means that everybody should have the right to get 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 the 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.
- Any proposed green taxes must be designed in line with the polluter pays principle. No industry should be protected in the name of national interests or for any other non-environmental reasons. The aim of the green taxes must be to change behaviour and therefore eventually make themselves redundant.
- 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.
- Privatization of 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 other more environment-friendly alternatives should be encouraged.

- A directive for clean cars has to be developed and implemented.
- The European Union has to establish a legally binding certification system for both imported and domestic biological fuels.
- 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.
- Public transport has to be free of charge and one European (high-speed) rail network developed. Passengers' rights have to be strengthened. Continental transport of all kinds of goods has to be moved from the roads onto the railways and water which are more efficient and sustainable.
- 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. A high-speed integrated European rail network must also be subvented (through tax on airlines) to make it cheaper than short haul flights.

Reform the common agricultural policy

The common agricultural policy uses up 40% of the European Union's annual budget. In a globalising world and an enlarging European Union the original goal of food security has to be redefined. Bringing other priorities such as sustainability, efficient water management, production of food on the basis of quality and not quantity, environmental and animal-friendly ways of production, and the focus on rural populations with high standards of quality of life and welfare. This model can empower small farmers and producers on one hand, and would be much more compatible with the European policy regarding the development of the poorest countries. Nowadays, the importance of agriculture should not be underestimated.

- Young European Socialists underlines that the expenditure on the common agricultural policy must be substantially reduced and must also be reformed into a social rural development fund and an innovative rural environmental and forestation initiative. The focus of both shifts from general agricultural production into protecting and strengthening the natural value of the landscape, stimulating environment-friendly production patterns of small farmers and stimulating the production of renewable energy.
- Co-decision by the European Parliament on all matters of reforming the common agricultural policy has to be implemented.
- Payments of agricultural subsidies should be re-nationalised whilst the decision-making and coordination of the policy should remain at the European Union level. This would increase the transparency of the common agricultural policy as well as reveal the expenditure at national level without risking unfair competition. Local and organic productions, respecting the environment and the principles of cooperative production, should have priority in the new common agricultural policy.

5. A EUROPE SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE

5.1. A STRONG AND COHERENT FOREIGN POLICY

A large share of the world's power lies today 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 in the coming years will be the new 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, a strong labour movement, disarmament, fair trade, an enlarged international development cooperation based on engagement, and a serious neighbourhood policy with a strengthened democracy promotion.

The challenge of European foreign policy lies in making the European common foreign and security policy a tool of international solidarity by both 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. The International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have to become an integral part of this judicial system. 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, which 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.
- 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 being responsible for the coordination and the management of the impartial investigation necessary for the international court procedures.

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 the global trade union rights and free trade unions these can then function as a strong counterweight to the interests of capital.

- On 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.

We socialists believe in the opportunities presented by globalisation. Although in many countries the internal gap between the richest and the poorest had been widening, the economic globalisation of the past decades has led to greater welfare and contributed to a reduction in poverty for several hundred million people. The distances between people have been reduced in the wake of globalisation; knowledge and understanding of the living conditions on the other side of the globe have improved. The demands for democracy, respect for human rights and social security grow stronger round the world. There have never been so many democratic states as there are today.

The United Nations – a protector of peace and human beings

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 more effectively its own decisions.

- 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 organization in international taxation and have the possibilities to combat tax avoidance and evasion.
- In parallel the 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 issue is whether power should be measured in terms of money or in terms of every person's democratic right to vote. Globalisation offers great opportunities but brings with it problems and very real challenges.

People all over the world bear the same hope of being able to live in a secure and socially responsible society based on respect for human values.

- Through democratic elections between free political parties citizens can make their voices heard on issues of social reform and free trade union rights.
- Advances in democracy means that fewer people die of famine and fewer wars are fought between nation states.
- The current pitching of low-pay countries against each other makes it difficult to fight for better conditions.

Our conclusion is not that we should prevent change but rather that we must steer the process of change. It will not be international capital interests that ensure that people will be prepared for work in new areas. What is needed instead is firm political decision-making and trade union-political co-operation in order to achieve success in the face of global competition.

One of the most important ideas in the socialist and social democratic movement is that

security for people and investment in skills is a prerequisite for greater growth.

- We do not believe that insecurity and fear of losing one's job can contribute to development.
- Collective solutions to the problems of education, health, the environment and infrastructure are often the most effective.
- We as young socialists and social democrats, have two parallel strategies. We can in a spirit of solidarity work to ensure that globalisation spreads welfare all over the world and that everyone can feel secure in their jobs.

The expanded globalisation of the last few decades has contributed to increased welfare and a higher average income level almost everywhere. But still today, almost half of the world's population live on an income of less than two US dollars per day. The majority are women. More than half a billion people in work earn less than a US 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.

Making demands for a trade policy for developing nations and sharpening the struggle for decent working conditions is not enough.

- The industrialised world must not disadvantage developing nations by means of import tariffs and export subsidies to their own industries and farming. The developing nations are losing incredible sums because of trade barriers. It is especially important that subsidies to farming in tobacco production and alcohol are abolished.
- Farming is the most important sector in developing economies. It is therefore of critical importance that European and North American farming policies are reformed. The EU initiative in abolishing trade barriers for the least developed countries is a step in the right direction.
- Every year the EU spends almost half of its budget on direct subsidies to agricultural production, equivalent to more than the total global aid budget. These recourses should be used to develop welfare, improve the environment, develop the countryside and strengthen European competitiveness instead.
- Both domestic disadvantages and foreign dumping of foodstuffs strike hard at the majority of the world's poor who depend on agriculture for a living.
- Genuine free trade in agricultural products would provide for greater security and better incomes for both farmers in developing countries as well as for industrial workers in the rich countries.
- Excessive fishing on African waters by EU countries has crippled several African economies and destroyed the livelihoods of local fishing communities. European companies have purchased the fishing rights from undemocratic governments unconcerned with the wellbeing of their people, and thus contributed to the deepening humanitarian crises in many parts of Africa. The EU must curb European fishing on the African waters, and buy the product from the local fishers at fair and just prices.

We will work 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 UN goal of 0.7 percent of their GNP in aid. Within the EU we are well on our way and aid is rising slowly but surely, though countries like the USA and Japan must join in with considerable contributions.

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. Poverty is a question of unreasonable living conditions and of hunger but also of a lack of democratic influence. Aid is a contribution to breaking 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 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.

Aid makes for demands on the recipients as well. The main responsibility for a positive development lies with every country and its people.

- Corruption of every sort hinders development. For this reason it must be combated in different ways.
- 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 if looking at history and more specifically during times of colonial expansion and exploitation in today's developing countries. YES demands full debt relief with no strings attached, except for good future cooperation on 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.

Ecology and fair trade should be instruments of our foreign policy as well, instead of the constant liberalization clauses imposed in all bilateral agreements with other countries or regions abroad. A reciprocity in our commercial exchanges should be the norm, so as to defend the rights of workers and the respect of the environment not only within our borders but also vis-à-vis our trading partners, as a way of returning to the roots of our socialist 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. Human rights as expressed in the general declaration of the UN 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.

Socialists and social democrats hold that the 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 men and women 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 who to live with, together with the right 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.

- When women are not given the right to decide over their own bodies it is not compatible with a socialist and a 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 the violence perpetrated by men must be given more thought. The discrimination of half of humanity must be made visible and combated.
- LGBTQ-rights are as fundamental a part of the protection of human rights as anything else. We should react equally strong to any case of violation of the rights of women, minorities and LGBTQ-people. This should be illustrated in our foreign policy as well as in the development aid programs.

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.

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

In a world where recognition, identity, security and influence are needed to defend ones 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 free from 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 a cultural, political and religious quarters on a struggle between civilisations, instead of promoting the value of a many faceted world based on a democratic foundation. These ideas must be dismissed. We 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 plurality. Fundamentalism that can lead to violent extremism is something that exists in all world religions. This fundamentalism is the expression of a philosophy of man 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 developing quickly on the regional level. In Europe the EU is

on its way to becoming an all-European organisation. Regional co-operation is also developing through Mercosur in Latin America, Asean in Asia and in Africa through the African Union. 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 EU that has the primary responsibility for upholding international peace and security in Europe and the AU that shoulders this mission in Africa. The EU should support other regional organisations. The final responsibility lies with the Security Council of the UN. Increased joint regional engagement strengthens both the UN and global security.

Along with greater regional responsibilities comes the need for more coordination between them. We need better forms for consultation between the EU and AU for example and between the EU and Mercosur, 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 into consideration the perspectives and viewpoints of the South 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 EU and AU could increase mutual understanding and promote exchange even 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 demonstrate caution in the use of violence and to take the initiative in pushing the peace process forward. Israeli settlements, the construction of the wall on occupied territory and excess 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 vitalised 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 world community must take responsibility for supporting the Palestinians in the work of reconstruction. An international presence is needed to strengthen security and combat terrorist actions. The EU must shoulder more responsibility. The goal is a viable and sustainable Palestinian state based on international law and the resolutions of the UN.

5.6. ENGAGE AND DISARM

For a peaceful world

YES engages for a peaceful world. We believe in multilateralism, trust, respect, equality and solidarity. The European Union history is a success story of 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 through being the mediator supporting sustainable solutions.

We stand for a solid conflict prevention

The external affairs of the EU, the Neighbourhood policy and the engagements of the EU member states in international organisations like the United Nations and the OSCE 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

YES calls for a strengthened effort in disarmament. The quantity and quality of produced and exported weapons from European companies, is still increasing and jeopardises the peace in

the world. Therefore YES calls for ongoing 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 the aim of 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 block confrontation of the cold war, it moved towards a pre-emptive and ex-territorially acting military force. We as YES condemn the ongoing militarisation of external policies in some member states. Pre-emptive attacks are not an option for us. European armies shall only be used in a defence 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, limited ability for military intervention should be kept as a last resort option in situations of humanitarian interventions in case of genocides or when civilian populations cannot be otherwise protected. Military intervention should only happen under UN mandate and following a Security Council decision.

We as YES believe 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 NATO critically and wish to displace it with a UN 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 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 (ILO) must be given greater authority and more countries must be persuaded to ratify the ILO'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 trades unions protect the rights of workers and their conditions of employment and contribute to greater social justice. Without trades unions and progressive political movements that cooperate across borders the multinational companies will easily be able to pitch industries and countries against each other. Companies act across borders. So too must trades unions and politics. For this reason workers all round the world must be guaranteed the right to take international sympathy action. The emergence of a 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; 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 national and international level to help members challenge the neo-liberal agenda of corporations and conservative governments and to ensure all share in the wealth generated through sustainable economic growth.

Young European Socialists insist on the importance of supporting trade unions in their fight for a fair redistribution and the defense of worker's 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 trans-national corporations.
- Negotiate international framework agreements.
- Secure workers' rights, including the rights of women workers.
- Fight for sustainable economic development, and
- Promote fair trade, social justice and the elimination of poverty.

Done at Södertälje, Sweden, on 9th March 2013.

Thomas Maes, Secretary General.