

YES Summer Camp declaration

Drafting committee



This joint declaration presents the socialist and social-democratic values, ideas and positions, which have been discussed, shared and developed by the participants of the 11th Young European Socialists Summer Camp in Foca, Turkey.

As socialists and social-democrats, democracy is at the heart of our political commitment. We believe that people should decide for themselves the society they want to build together. In a period where conservatives try to weaken democracy by denying the existence of alternatives, we on the contrary defend the necessity of a political debate on the future we want.

We support the idea of an **ambitious European democracy** and support all democratic movements on our continent and in the world. Therefore, we deeply support our Turkish and Arab comrades fighting for our common values of democracy, freedom and equality. We believe that democracy is a process and has to be developed everywhere in society: in schools, universities, firms, or through social media, culture and all kinds of political and associative commitments. As part of progressive and democratic movements, we believe in the role of civil society and social mobilisation as part of the democratic process. Everyone in society, regardless of his or her disability or difference, should have the right to participate in this democratic process. The press and media also play an important role here and should be controlled democratically to avoid the influence of finance and political parties on them. Their role is to inform not to manipulate. Political parties should be democratically organized and be fully transparent in their sources of financing. Only this way, through more democracy, will it be possible to fight far right extremists by giving people the possibility to decide their own futures.

We stand for a **democratic economy**: all political and economic decisions should be controlled by European citizens. We want an economy that is useful for society and puts citizens in the foreground. Hence, finance should be put at its right place to avoid any dependence of

states towards the financial markets. Undemocratic decisions cannot be accepted: the Troika perfectly illustrates the lack of democracy in Europe today, imposing policies on democratically elected institutions. The influence of lobbies in European and national institutions should be regulated and controlled. The financial power of the few cannot dictate the law for the majority. Corruption has to be fought with determination by the entire socialist family.

Furthermore, we stand for a European federalism: that means a real European democracy. We want a transparent and political European Union. The European Commission could be seen as a European government- respecting the other levels of democracy at the local, regional and national levels- with the Council of the EU as an upper house and the European Parliament as a House of Commons. In our vision, the only directly-elected institution, the European Parliament, should also be the most powerful: the right for initiative and co-decision rights on every topic should be given to the parliament.

Fighting for European democracy also means democratizing the European institutions, including the European Central Bank, whose objectives and policies should be controlled by the European Parliament. Its role should also be to put an end to the speculations of financial markets on sovereign debt. We need to change the statutes of the ECB in favour of growth and employment as it is the case for the Central Bank of Japan and the American Federal Reserve. A democratic control of the ECB by the European Parliament is also needed.

Despite the crisis, Europe remains extremely wealthy in a global context. We believe that Europe should show real solidarity with countries that need it, and not just when it is an advantage to Europe. It is clear to us that austerity will not solve the crisis. However, we should be careful with our natural resources, as they are limited. For instance, vast amount of food are being wasted in the supply chain of the food industry. This is happening at a time when more and more people are having trouble paying their bills.

A democratic and federal Europe means a European Union able to finance its policies. The EU needs an increased budget through its own financial resources. A Financial Transaction Tax, a European Tax on benefits or a Green Tax are all concrete options we as socialists and social-democrats want to promote. We are also aware that high social standards are part of a functioning democracy. The consequences of austerity on public services and public media are unacceptable. Far right extremists are the only ones gaining from it. On the contrary, we stand for a **social constitution** in Europe ensuring the rights of everybody. Social and fiscal harmonization to the top is at the core of our political agenda. Together with trade unions and social movements we will continue our fight for a better life and improved social and environmental norms.

We want to achieve these goals through a strong **common European activism**.

The European elections in 2014 will give us the opportunity to fight for our values and the Europe we stand for. Our social media presence should have a common visual identity in order to lead an awareness campaign and try to mobilize young people for the European elections. Furthermore, common days of action and activities as well as a big common European rally will be a way of leading that **common campaign**. The inclusion of all our member organisations in the setting of our priorities is important to us. Hence our common manifesto will be the result of an inclusive and democratic process. Moreover, we want to underline here the importance of European political parties. They are part of the European democracy we want to build and should become more integrated and contest truly European campaigns, despite the local, regional and national differences that might exist.

All in all, we believe that in democracy, an alternative always exists. Today, facing a conservative and liberal Europe, socialists and social-democrats represent the ambitious political alternative.

As socialists and social-democrats, we strongly believe that the development of equality in all of society has to remain at the heart of all our policies and aims. We fight for the respect of all persons and not only the tolerance of difference.

Equality in Europe means to us a further integration and harmonization of our social, environmental and fiscal norms. We, as Young European Socialists, stand for a European minimum wage and an upward fiscal harmonization. A financial transaction tax and a minimum tax rate on firms or minimum income taxation would facilitate a step towards further social integration. **Furthermore, capital should be taxed at the same rate as labour. As socialists and social-democrats we believe in the principle of progressive taxation.** For us fair taxation is a way of redistributing wealth and giving everyone the possibility to live a decent life. Equality between territories through an improved European cohesion fund has to be ensured. We want to harmonize the living conditions while respecting our natural resources. Solidarity and integration are core values of the socialist family.

As socialists and social-democrats, we also believe that all humans are equal. Discrimination against certain ethnicities or specific groups on account of their country of origin is unacceptable. Geographical as well as social mobility are amongst our basic rights. Human rights and the access to common goods should always be respected as fundamental rights. Access to water, to energy and housing, and also to education, culture and economic and social integration for everyone is a duty of society. For all these reasons, we strongly oppose any kind

of liberalization or privatisation of public firms, especially concerning water and energy supply. The recent European initiative of thousands of citizens to impede any European directive in favour of privatisation of water showed that the will of the people could succeed when we are united. This example shows that equality remains a fight that we are willing to lead.

Believing in the rights of all humans to a good life, we stand for equal rights for LGBT*QIA (lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual) people as well as gender equality. It is a non-negotiable part of our values and has to be implemented in the name of our democratic values. Our priority here is to put an end to any kind of discrimination. Socialists and social-democrats should put the debate on equal rights forward in society. We want equal wages, same working time conditions and career perspectives for everyone, regardless of their origin, their sexual orientation, identity, disability or gender. The gender pay gap should be decreased with all possible instruments. Talking about the gender issue, we should bear in mind that women are being killed every day because of the violence of men. This fight is one of our priorities: we have to support civil society and associations defending these common values. Quotas for women in firms and politics are a midterm solution to reach a long-term change of mindsets. States should force the implementation of an equal share of the parental leave. Women should no longer be subject to discrimination, because of their ability to have children.

We acknowledge the much discrimination that people with disabilities face in society as a whole and we as socialists and social-democrats express our deep concerns about this and pledge to make these issues a priority in our campaigns, work and all our activities. We as socialists believe in the importance of inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in all our activities, organisations and throughout our political family. Accessibility of infrastructures should be guaranteed at all times. We are committed to improving this.

To achieve further equality, education remains our main instrument to change mindsets, break social determinism and share common values to build an open and fair society. All people should have the right and possibility to have a degree. Education should be free and public. Already in kindergarten these values of equality should be implemented. Equal access to child facilities is a necessity for us. Schools are not only a place to learn a profession or develop competencies. It is the place to build true citizens, aware of the challenges of democracy and a multicultural society. Moreover we do not recognize any hierarchy in studies; and children with different backgrounds should be in the same classes as long as possible to promote social cohesion. A high quality education for all is an objective for us: no “second class” schools or universities should ever be accepted. Tuition fees do not belong to our vision of an open and fair education system. Furthermore, financing the education system should be the priority in all national budgets. Specific financial means should be used for schools, where the needs are higher- especially in the poorest areas.

In our analysis of society, we also believe that the struggle between classes remains. It remains a fact that social conflicts still exist, when the richest become richer and the poorest still have to fight in their everyday life for a decent life. Social rights have been gained since previous generations began this fight, but we have to go further by refusing any inequality. The false debate on a “middle class” has made the comprehension of our society more complex as no definition of it can be made. It has mostly weakened our own parties by weakening our political message itself.

The history of our continent is a history of encounters between cultures, of a dialogue between differences. It is a long history of migration and of exchanges. Wars and conflicts have marked this common history, but our will to overcome it through unity, while respecting our diversity, has been our strength. Instead of a “Europe fortress”, we stand for an open Europe Union defending its values and its unique social model.

Too often migration is being described as a problem; we as socialists and social-democrats on the contrary believe that it can be an opportunity. Integration and participation should systematically be implemented and remain our common answer. Similarly, we do not fear the enlargement of the EU as conservatives do. We do not see the enlargement as a way of weakening the social and political construction of the EU neither, as opposed to the liberal perspective. Integration and enlargement both together define our view on Europe.

An open Europe is not a Europe Union imposing free trade agreements against the will of southern countries. We truly think that the right to a decent life and a sustainable development is a goal for all, not only Europeans. Our trade and common foreign and security policy as well as our migration policy have to reflect these values.

In the last weeks, a discussion on a transatlantic treaty between the USA and the EU has been announced, questioning the European construction we want. The content of the negotiations will focus on “no- tariff barriers”, that is to say on the economic, social and environmental rules that are at the heart of the European integration.

As socialists and social-democrats, we do not want to negotiate the whole European integration. We strongly believe that the converging of our welfare states, based on further political integration has to remain our goal. Fiscal and social harmonisation would become practically impossible through this treaty. By deleting norms and lowering our European quality standards, which are the reason why our European products are bought, we would lose our export capacities instead of improving them.

We stand for democracy and transparency. Hence, our data being watched by the American executive services at the request of multinational firms clearly questions the democratic control of our data and our identity on the internet.

Shale gas and GMO lobbies already put pressure on European states' political sovereignty in order to keep exploiting more natural resources, regardless of the dramatic consequences on our environment and on working conditions. On the contrary, we want to preserve our democratic choices and continue with determination our fight against climate change through an ambitious energetic transition. At a time of recession, job losses and when the gap between labour and capital incomes keeps widening, we have more than ever to stick to our social model. The European integration process should not be weakened or slowed down in any way. For all these reasons, Europeans have to put an end to the negotiations with the US on this free trade agreement.

We do not think that liberalising markets will create jobs, while defending and extending our social and environmental norms, also in our commercial agreements, would. We do not think that fiscal harmonization should be reached by dumping, but through the implementation of common rules. We do not think that the planet and our ecosystems will be protected by multinational firms, "green capitalism" and greenwashing, but through binding rules and massive investments in renewable energies. To free market dogma, we oppose socialist economy and solidarity. According to us, the only representative elected body in the EU should have a say on this question.

Europe is currently facing a deep economic recession. The austerity has been the main political instrument to overcome the crises. It is clear that implemented cuts in each sphere of the society will not produce the promised solutions. Investing in the present and future of young generation has to be the priority in Europe. We should bring back jobs, social cohesion and solidarity in society.

It is about time to take youth unemployment into account, not just as a symbolic issue which is supposed to be discussed, but as a real priority for the European politicians. YES has been advocating for the implementation of the **Youth Guarantee** since 2009. In 2013 we are glad that the EU agenda has risen up the Youth Guarantee as a measure which should be introduced among the EU member states. YES calls once again for the attention of the EU leaders and heads of the member states on the process of implementation of the Youth Guarantee. In order to launch a sustainable and effective measure the EU politicians should take into account the different challenges faced by young people in each member states' labour market. We should develop politics which will improve the employability of the young people and at the same time insure the progress of different regions. We need an employment strategy which should achieve simultaneously equal growth of the different regions. This will help the

EU to have successful mobility programmes instead of further migration flows and brain drain. We need to create equal opportunities for young people in Europe. The implementation of measures as a **European minimum wage** can improve the social cohesion between the member states. We also think that increasing the retirement age will not solve the crisis and will make it even more difficult for young people to find a job.

YES calls the EU politicians to set as a top priority the creation of **new European job plan**, based on massive investments in the green economy. We need more jobs in the sphere of the future energetic transition which Europe needs to do. Energy supply- and green industries will create thousands of jobs that would be relocated. It is our duty to develop right now in Europe renewable energies, to reduce the dependence on nuclear energy, petrol and gas. Europe must invest in the energy transition.

Young people in Europe are the first affected by unemployment. We want jobs for everyone. States which have the lowest unemployment rates have the lowest weekly average time of working (including full-time and part-time jobs). YES Summer Camp 2013 calls for a reduction of the working hours per week, while keeping the same wages. We want to reduce working time in all the society, to have better working condition for all the European workers. Europe should strive for a maximum employment rate, but this should not be at the cost of living conditions. We strongly reject the concept of working poor, created by measures such as German's mini jobs. In the near future the introduction of the European minimum wage would be a necessary step so to safeguard the living conditions of all European citizens.

YES Summer Camp 2013 calls for finding a solution to the problems caused by social dumping. The employers should always comply with the local social legislation of the country they are working in (not the country where the company is based in). The workers should also be paid by equal wages (including social security contributions) with the local workers to ensure a fairer competition between countries.

The European elections in 2014 will give us the opportunity to fight for our values and positions. This is an important moment for YES and its member organizations to express their commitment to the fight for social democracy on the European level. This is a chance for all of us to give an answer to the lacking participation of young people in European elections. We will campaign for more young MEPs and most importantly for an alternative...