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**YES Bureau meeting
hosted at the IUSY World Festival
Mellieħa, Malta, 23rd August 2014**

Resolution on European Election Result

Proposed by MJS France

The European elections last May were like an earthquake on the continent that we can't just ignore, as if nothing happened. Despite a clear collapse of the European conservatives, the PES remained the 2nd political party in the European Union, without any left majority in Parliament with our partners from the Greens and from the European Left. Even worse, far-right parties have risen almost everywhere in Europe.

Seeing these facts, an in-depth analysis of the causes of our defeat is needed, as well as a clear road map for the 5 next years.

An inability to embody the alternative in Europe

The record of the European right – political impotence in front of the economic, social and ecological crisis, the implementation of austerity measures at all levels, democratic deficit – should have resulted in an outright victory in the European elections.

Our program - carried by a clearly defined candidate, Martin Schulz - was ambitious and also committing the whole socialist and social-democratic member organisations of the PES. Many proposals from our YES Manifesto have been taken up in this PES manifesto. During these elections the Young European Socialists have been totally mobilised: on the social networks, in the medias, on the ground through the "knock the door campaign" or common action days.

Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge the fact that despite our manifesto, our ground mobilisation and our will to democratise the designation process of the Commission President, we have not convinced. The right crumbled, but remained in majority, and the far-right entered the EP with full force. While the austerity is being rejected by Europeans, the socialists and social-democrats do not appear as an alternative to the right wing policies.

Too many years of compromises between left and right in the European Parliament have weakened our ability to convince voters. Our behaviour partly legitimized some far-right speeches. In the name of our "love for Europe", we finally took up liberal ideas and beliefs instead of fighting them: acceptance of austerity and its social consequences, economic constitutionalism, social dumping or permanent and unbridled free-trade promotion.

It is more than necessary to establish a concrete road map for the 5 next years: fix our priorities, organise ourselves and become a political alternative again, able to get a majority in Europe.

Build a left alternative in Europe and forge a concrete European activism

Our role in the 5 next years will be to remain offensive in the European Parliament, by defending the propositions for which we have been elected and by refusing permanent right-left agreements that have undermined our credibility. Despite some statements by Juncker and the votes of certain social-democrats in his favour, we don't trust him. We do not forget that these same conservatives are trying to stop abortion rights in Spain and are defending ultraliberal policies in many European countries. Far right, populist or conservatives euro sceptical parties in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, The Netherlands and United-Kingdom have substantially increased their representation into the European Parliament, an institution where their goal is to defend an anti-European dream, which is not the way we, as progressive, see the role of the European Parliament in our Democracy. We must deconstruct nationalists propaganda and fight against extreme discourses based on fear, discrimination or any kind of manipulation of European citizens by reinforcing the European Democracy and by making the Parliament more important in the institutions and more visible in the society. As Young European Socialists, our role is also to convince our leaders that the best way to fight populist vote is to act clearly in the field of employment, ecology and democracy. They are also the one, who do not hesitate to ally with far right parties, or even to merge with far right ideas, as it is the case with the FIDESZ in Hungary, member of the EPP.

We will have to build a resolute opposition while facing conservative and neoliberal policies and stand up for liberties and civil rights. It will be our role to unite the left around common values. We will stand for strong propositions for Europe: develop own resources for the European Budget in order to give the EU the ability to act, in particular regarding cohesion and development funds needed for the integration and enlargement process; fight austerity policies, when a deflationary spiral is threatening the continent; increase the funds for the Youth Guarantee; set up a big investment plan for a European energy transition; establish a European corporate tax; lead a tough fight against tax havens and enable a fiscal harmonisation to the top to fight any kind of dumping; establish a European minimum wage; call into question the transatlantic treaty currently negotiated between the European Commission and the USA; and finally promote a democratisation of the European institutions, by strengthening the European Parliament, by setting up transnational lists for the European elections.

As Young European Socialists, we will play our part: by proposing European initiatives/petitions, by continuing to promote our own ideas and values within the PES in the current definition of the next challenges of the mandate and make young people's voices heard by our MEPs or by organising common campaigns.

Embody federalism and forge a European activism will only be possible by building a sense of belonging between all our activists and organisations. That means that the inclusion of all our regions and member organisations in all our events and campaigns should continue to be a pillar in the functioning of the Young European Socialists. In that sense it is important to make our events as open as possible, by making our Summer Camps financially and geographically accessible, by twinning local groups from different countries. Our Winter Schools should remain training places, based on non-formal education, and help our comrades to understand the complex functioning of the European institutions. Including all the comrades and creating a direct link between them and YES should be our aim. A lot has been done in that sense in the last years and we should carry on.

It is up to us to get even more involved in the public debate, by working hand in hand with trade unions, associations and groups at European level or with our Member Organisations and MEPs to gain more visibility in the Medias and social networks.

After the European elections, huge work is needed and numerous fights still have to be lead. We still believe that the socialists and social democrats are the one able to embody a successful alternative to the right, reducing the European dream to nothing. It is our responsibility to be ambitious in our ideas and in the way we organise ourselves. The Young European Socialists will fully play their role in the debates that are already beginning among the European socialists and social-democrats in order to let an ambitious left alternative emerge towards a new Europe.

