

## *A CALL TO PROGRESSIVE LEADERS*

Our citizens are facing real danger. Europe has been the world's reference for social justice and equity for decades. We progressives achieved this over generations. Together with workers, unions, associations and representing the great majority of the people. Armed with passion and the thirst for justice and progress for the many, and not just for the few.

This European -and global - governance model is under a historic threat. Should it fall, the only real bulwark against a new global wave of unfettered capitalism and greed would be swept away. Donald Trump and his ultraconservative allies have declared Europe their enemy and are ready to break up the United Nations system and, with it, years of collective work for peace, stability and sustainable economic development for all. Brexiteers deceived the British people with their objective of weakening our Union and shaking up the ties that unite us. Racists and fascists across Europe want to destroy from the inside our achievements of welfare and peace using a narrative of fear that resonates among many of our fellow citizens.

How did we get here? People are frightened, insecure, and feel that their lives are disintegrating. They are disappointed and disillusioned about Europe. Our development model is bringing more inequalities, concentrating power and wealth in the hands of the few, ignores the limits of our fragile planet and does not take account of the complex and interrelated challenges of our times. The European Union has to change, radically, deeply and fast. It is for us to lead this need of transformation. After the Second World War, the main challenge was to ensure lasting reconciliation and peace, and to build our welfare states. Today we must find the same determination, and embed it in a new development model for Europe and the world in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. A progressive Europe has to lead that change. Europe is the land of human rights, dialogue and shared responsibility in solving conflicts. Europe is the homeland of the rule of law, freedom and solidarity. For these reasons Europe must be the strongest champion against those promoting nationalism, dominance, racism and exclusion.

This is our moment, again: in the last century, in crucial times in recent history, progressives were always at key moments in leading the battle for social justice and equality. This time should be no different. Now the challenge is bigger: to preserve and protect what we have fought for and bring change. If we dare, if we are united, if we are courageous we will rise up. Our movement resisted reactionary forces of conservatism and populism before, and we will overcome them again. To save Europe, and to make it better, fairer, and stronger. To protect the European project and change it, we progressives need to say loud and clear who we are and who we represent, standing together to reassert our historic values and principles.

- That the institutions should protect the many against the greedy few. Every woman and man in Europe, according to her or his needs, should have the support of public institutions for a better life, and those institutions have the duty to provide care and open opportunities for all.
- That our land, water and soil belong to all citizens, and have to be protected against the predatory practices from speculators and polluters, which so often lead to exploitation of people.
- That our development cannot be measured by GDP alone, but by the legacy we leave to our children and our children's children, and by a wider notion of sustainable well-being and quality of life.
- That everybody - including the richest and the most privileged – have the duty to contribute their fair share to the welfare of all people.
- That progress today means supporting women in their fight for equality.
- That every citizen has the right to believe - or not- in a religion, to practice it or not, without imposition of dogmatic views.
- That solidarity with those fleeing from war and hunger is our natural obligation as human beings, as is our duty to find peaceful solutions to world conflicts, under the umbrella of our common institutions like the United Nations, created since the Second World War.

Europe will survive and emerge stronger, and Europeans will be proud of their land, if our future is progressive. We stand against those who want to divide us, through fear and disaffection, for a better, fairer and stronger Union. Our Union will be progressive or it will not be.

As progressive members of the European Parliament, we call on our PES leaders to fully seize the opportunity of the next European elections to make our common progressive voice heard - strong and united - and to offer our citizens a way out of the current political, social and environmental crisis that damages their well-being and their future, and undermines the very existence of the European Union. We must re-build social alliances and foster bottom-up participation, strengthen our organizations at all levels and offer true emancipation to people in Europe.

Our political family must win the battle of ideas with our realistic and ambitious vision for a sustainable future embedded in social justice and shared prosperity.