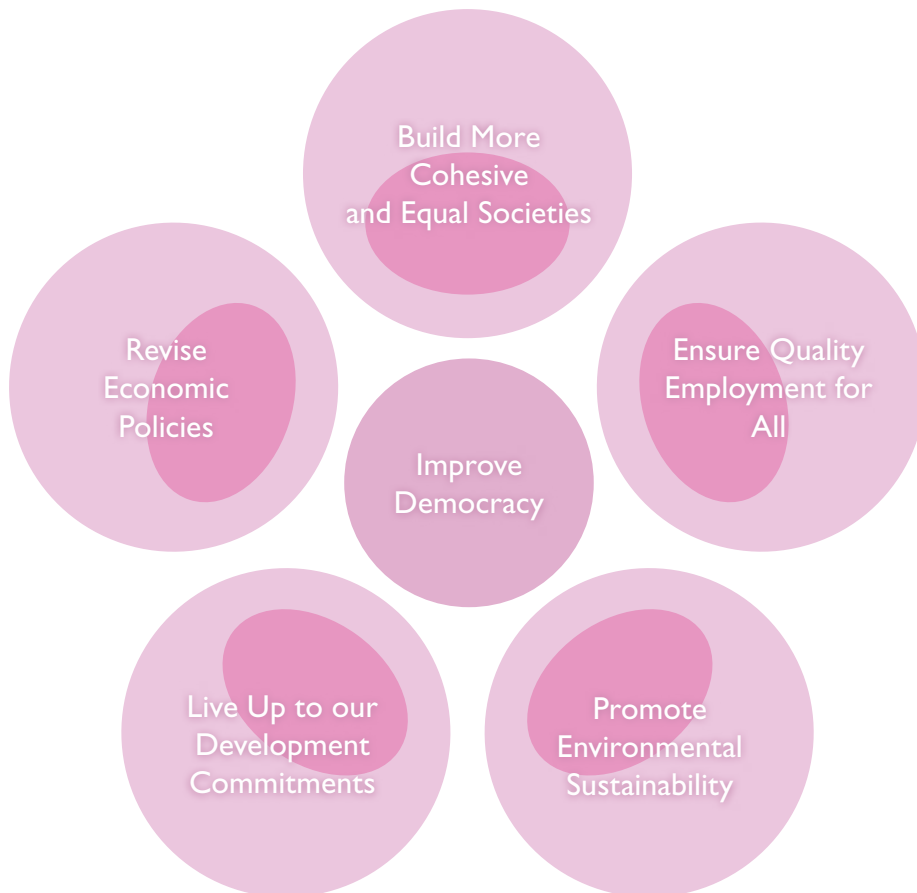


# spring alliance

## A better Europe now

### Manifesto II

Six priorities that focus on delivering wellbeing, solidarity and quality employment while staying well within planetary boundaries





## Introduction

The Spring Alliance brings together civil society stakeholders from environmental, social and development organizations and trade unions to present a positive vision for a Europe that puts people and planet first. Despite a prevailing sense of crisis, the Spring Alliance believes that there is still an opportunity to adopt a better way towards solving Europe's problems.

This however requires a radical departure by the new European Commission and European Parliament from current policies which have not succeeded in solving the crisis and have led to citizens increasingly losing their trust in their political leaders and in the European project. As a result Europe has gone backwards in a number of crucial areas in the last five years and has failed to make sufficient progress in others:

- **EU Democracy:** EU citizens are turning their backs on European institutions. The 2009 elections had a turnout of 43%, the lowest registered since 1979.
- **Poverty:** since 2009, more than 10 million Europeans have been pushed into poverty.
- **Employment:** 27 million people in Europe are unable to find work.
- **Environment:** greenhouse gas emissions in the EU have only been reduced marginally and not sufficiently to avoid dangerous levels of climate change, while the loss of biodiversity has continued.
- **Global justice:** for every euro that Europe spends on "development aid" we actively take 13 euros back from the receivers of "aid" through illicit financial flows, without even taking into account the impact of trade imbalances.
- **Economies:** EU economic growth is not fairly shared and this diverging growth path is jeopardising the EU project.

Together we have developed a comprehensive political manifesto that can put Europe back on track. This manifesto proposes six solutions to six key challenges.

1. Ensure transparency and stronger democratic accountability of the EU institutions towards citizens.
2. Reduce poverty and guarantee universal social protection.
3. Create jobs and ensure quality employment for all.
4. Significantly reduce Europe's environmental footprint by putting in place effective policies in the areas of climate, energy efficiency, renewables, biodiversity, air quality, chemicals and waste and product design.
5. Implement a coherent global justice policy: stop resource grabbing, allow other continents to develop themselves and refrain from bilateral trade and investment deals which undermine the protection of public interests.
6. End austerity and launch a recovery plan that places people and planet first.

This Manifesto is our common vision, built on the extensive expertise of each Spring Alliance member in relation to their sector. These six strategies are strongly supported by all Spring Alliance members, even if each member might not necessarily have taken a position on all details in areas outside of its mandate. Together we recognise and support that expertise, and each will take the lead in their field to monitor the implementation of this Manifesto.

## Our Assessment of the Last Five Years: 2009-2014

In 2010, the EU leaders endorsed a clear agenda: to deliver five targets by 2020 in the fields of employment, R&D and innovation, climate change and energy sustainability, education, poverty and social exclusion. They were realistic, created a coherent framework for policy development and offered an integrated strategy for the European Union. The Spring Alliance would have set higher commitments, but recognised that the strategy, which has since then been integrated into each country's national targets, was a powerful tool with which to forge a common project.

*Where are we, four years after the EU 2020 targets were adopted?*

In general very little progress has been made four years after the EU 2020 targets were adopted, and there has been a clear worsening of the unemployment and poverty rates. The reason for this is to a large extent the approach taken so far in responding to the economic crisis as opposed to the crisis itself. A new approach to addressing the crisis is therefore needed. Our overall evaluation is that:

- The wrong economic policies have been enforced, within a stronger and more prescriptive economic governance process lacking democratic control.
- The wrong welfare reforms and public budget consolidation have been implemented.
- The wrong budget has been approved, without rebalancing EU funds towards convergence between regions, sustainable investment and the fight against poverty but rather continuing to support outdated infrastructures and agricultural policies.
- The wrong banking resolution mechanisms have been put in place; even if we can see some progress, the main causes of the crisis remain to be tackled (risk for society, benefit for the investors and speculators).
- The wrong approach has been taken to address Europe's ecological crisis by slowing down the development of much needed environmental policies and in some areas, such as climate and energy, even risking to depart from effective existing policies.
- The wrong kind of governance has been in place within this period: civil society from all over the world has shown vitality and has raised questions about the necessary revitalisation of current democratic processes. However, at EU level, we have witnessed a shrinking space for social and civil dialogue.

#### **PRIORITY A. IMPROVE DEMOCRACY**

1. Improve democratic control and oversight, in particular of economic policies.
2. Enforce human rights by fully implementing relevant international and European instruments.
3. Ensure that the EU values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, including access to justice and the right to privacy, are guaranteed by Member States.
4. Stop replacing legislation and democratic decision-making processes by ad hoc procedures.
5. Improve transparency of the EU institutions' activities.
6. Ensure parity democracy in the EU institutions.
7. Embed structured dialogue with organised civil society.

#### **PRIORITY B. ESTABLISH MORE COHESIVE AND EQUAL SOCIETIES**

8. Guarantee an adequate social protection floor and access to public services for all.
9. Deliver the poverty target through an EU-integrated anti-poverty strategy.
10. Promote equality for all; guarantee protection against all forms of violence and discrimination.

#### **PRIORITY C. ENSURE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL**

11. Invest in a plan to create quality jobs.
12. Reinforce social dialogue and collective bargaining.
13. Promote decent wages and social protection.
14. Defend workers' health.
15. Invest in greening jobs and skills.
16. Develop inclusive and accessible quality labour markets.

#### **PRIORITY D. PUT ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CORE OF EUROPE'S DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

17. Adopt an ambitious 2030 climate and energy policy framework.
18. Review and strengthen the EU Biodiversity Strategy in 2015.
19. Put in place by 2015 a comprehensive and dynamic product and waste policy.
20. Adopt new policies by 2015 that will reduce overall levels of air pollution.
21. Adopt new and stronger chemical policies through an improved "REACH".
22. Take the social dimension fully into account with a "Just Transition Roadmap".

#### **PRIORITY E. LIVE UP TO OUR DEVELOPMENT COMMITMENTS**

23. Make policy coherence for sustainable development a reality.
24. Tackle global inequality.
25. Ensure that EU Trade and Investment Policies respect social and environmental standards.
26. Increase and improve finance for sustainable development.
27. Revise migration policies to promote shared EU responsibility.

#### **PRIORITY F. REVISE ECONOMIC POLICIES**

28. Re-orient the European Semester towards social and environmental goals and go beyond GDP as an indicator of success.
29. Adopt fair and green fiscal policies.
30. Further reform the financial markets.
31. Base the internal market on the full respect of fundamental rights.

## **PRIORITY A. IMPROVE DEMOCRACY**

European citizens are more and more dissatisfied and skeptical about the current policies of the European Union. 51% of Europeans argue that austerity policies have failed to fight the crisis. This percentage is higher in the crisis-hit countries of Southern Europe: 94% of Greeks, 81% of Portuguese and 80% of Spaniards<sup>1</sup>.

It is necessary to put in place a more democratic equality-driven and participatory process to decide economic and social priorities that are based on the principle of solidarity enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. A sense of ownership of and support for the EU will depend on a paradigm shift and on the increasing accountability of the European institutions. In addition, a regular dialogue with civil society and social partners based on true partnership should be strengthened.

**We therefore call on a new European Parliament and European Commission to:**

### **1. Improve democratic control and oversight, in particular of economic policies**

- Increase the role of the European Parliament in EU decision-making: extend the ordinary procedure in crucial EU policy areas such as the Multi-Annual Financial Framework to give the European Parliament the same legislative powers as the Council of the European Union.
- Give a stronger role to the EPSCO and ENVI Councils, placing social, employment and environment ministers on equal footing with economic and financial ones and giving real power to European and national parliaments within this process.

### **2. Enforce human rights by fully implementing relevant international and european instruments**

- Strengthen compulsory ex-ante sustainability assessments having regard to environmental, social, gender and equality objectives: while defining, implementing and evaluating EU legislation, make a comprehensive impact assessment combining social, environmental, gender and equality objectives with economic ones, by fully using the horizontal clauses of the Lisbon Treaty (art. 8, 9, 10, 11 TFEU) and the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights.
- Promote the accession of the European Union to all key international and European human rights' instruments: promote the accession, systematic ratification and full implementation by the EU and its Member States of all key international and Council of Europe human rights' treaties and other instruments relevant for equality and non-discrimination<sup>2</sup>; ensure full implementation

---

<sup>1</sup> [Gallup](#), surveying a total of 6,177 citizens across the EU

<sup>2</sup> This includes in particular the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.



of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability to which the EU is party; speed up the conclusion of the agreement on the accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights.

### **3. Ensure that the EU values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, including access to justice and the right to privacy, are guaranteed by Member States**

- Make full use of the procedures set out in art. 7 TEU to ensure respect for the values on which the EU is founded (respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights - art. 2 TEU). In some Member States, particularly those under Troika supervision, or those which have been particularly affected by the financial and economic crisis, we are witnessing a neglect of these values, such as restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, including against people who are demonstrating against austerity measures or who take part in social movements.
- Guarantee citizens' rights in environmental matters by supporting new policies and instruments that guarantee European citizens their right to information, participation and justice in environmental matters (including a new directive on access to justice), and their right to enjoy a clean environment as provided to them under EU environmental law, implementing the Aarhus Convention.
- Ensuring the right to privacy: in contrast to the difficulties citizens face in obtaining access to information held by state bodies, modern surveillance technologies enable certain state agencies both inside and outside the EU to gain access to a staggering amount of information about individuals, putting the very concept of private communication in jeopardy. The EU and its Member States should vigorously defend the right of individuals not to be spied on and prosecute those who violate individual privacy.

### **4. Stop the deregulation agenda**

- The Smart Regulation agenda should not lead to deregulating standards contained in current legislation nor make it harder to develop new and higher standards when needed.
- Private industrial standard set by CEN/CENELEC at EU level and ISO at international level are increasingly used to replace political decision making, often without having received a clear mandate from EU regulators to do so. Although standards can be part of pushing forward a quality agenda in Europe in terms of international competitiveness and ensuring the quality of the internal market this will only happen if they do so under a well defined political mandate and integrate requirements contributing to sustainable development by greening products and production processes. Provisions in the EU Horizontal Regulation for resources and capacity building for societal stakeholders should be reflected in the work of national standardisation bodies too.

## **5. Improve transparency of the EU institutions' activities**

- Put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure transparent and regular dialogue with representative organisations and civil society: art. II TEU lays down an obligation to set up a regular dialogue for all the European institutions including the Council.
- Ensure balanced composition and transparency of appointments in EU advisory and stakeholders' groups between representatives of industry, social partners, governments, civil society organisations and independent experts.
- Revise the rules concerning consultation processes to make them more effective, by organising open debates involving all the relevant stakeholders and not limiting this to online consultations, and give more transparent feedback on how the inputs from stakeholders have or have not been taken into account. The conclusions drawn from consultations need to be clear about and take account of who the organisations that responded represent.

## **6. Ensure parity democracy in the EU institutions**

- Ensure gender parity in all the European institutions, in internal decision-making positions and among "top jobs". Where possible, ensure a fair age distribution.

## **7. Embed structured dialogue with organised civil society**

- Adopt strong guidelines for stakeholder engagement, emphasising the role of civil society organisations and the direct participation of people affected by the policies, ensuring a meaningful dialogue on EU policy development at all stages of the policy making process at national and EU level, including in the European Semester and Europe 2020.
- Develop an action plan to ensure sustainability and effectiveness of civil dialogue at all government levels in the design, implementation and evaluation of EU policies, including the development of indicators, regular monitoring and reporting on progress within the Semester process.



## **PRIORITY B. ESTABLISH MORE COHESIVE AND EQUAL SOCIETIES**

In the EU, the number of people living in poverty has increased by 10 million since 2009 and now amounts to over 124 million<sup>3</sup> and (i.e. 1 in 4 of the population); at least 25.6 million of them are children<sup>4</sup>. This means the EU and its Member States are going in a reverse direction rather than making progress to reach the Europe 2020 target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty.

Income inequality in OECD countries is at its highest level for the past half century. Income and wealth inequalities have gone up as a result of changes in the distribution of income combined with the weakening in many Member States of redistributive policies and mechanisms through taxes, benefits and services, as a result of austerity measures. To respond to increasing inequalities in Europe, the design of the tax-benefit system needs to be strengthened and social investment and universal social protection for the well-being of all has to take priority.

The EU should also adopt policies and legislation to promote equality, including equality between women and men, combat discrimination, racism, poverty and social exclusion, as well as guarantee resources enabling dignified lives for all.

**We therefore call on a new European Parliament and European Commission to:**

### **8. Guarantee an adequate social protection floor and access to quality public services for all**

- Define European common principles for the introduction of a minimum income in all Member States with a common relative benchmark for adequacy, to ensure a minimum adequate standard of living for individuals and families living in the EU who do not have sufficient resources.
- Ensure, in line with Article 9 of the Treaty, adequate social protection for all, such as healthcare, education, social, cultural and other key public services and adequate and sustainable income support; carry out effective ex-ante social impact assessments before deciding on any austerity cuts to key public services and benefits, and increase social investment and protection.

### **9. Deliver the poverty target through an EU-integrated anti-poverty strategy**

- Develop an explicit integrated EU-strategy on poverty reduction and exclusion, based on access to rights, resources, and services, through the European Semester, in order to reach the poverty reduction target of the Europe 2020 strategy. This plan should address both the causes and consequences of poverty and social exclusion, including from a gender equality perspective, and propose concrete solutions, backed by EU funds with a road map. The whole process should be developed in partnership with stakeholders, including civil society and social partners at the EU and national level. This overall strategy should form the basis for specific thematic strategies, including implementation of the Recommendation on Investing in Children, Tackling Homelessness and Roma Inclusion.

---

<sup>3</sup> EC, *Communication "Taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"*, March 5, 2014 (data for 2012)

<sup>4</sup> [Eurostat/EU-SILC](#), data referring to 2011; it is estimated that in 2012 the number has increased up to 26.1 million.

## **10. Promote equality for all, guarantee protection against all forms of violence and discrimination**

- Adopt a new Strategy on Equality between women and men in 2015, focusing both on positive measures for the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming in all EU policy areas.
- Guarantee protection against all forms of violence including violence against women by proposing EU legislation to explicitly combat all forms of violence by means of criminal law across the Union. The proposals should build on international and European instruments addressing all forms of violence.
- Ensure comprehensive protection against discrimination across Europe by implementing existing legislation, adopting Article 19 of the Equal Treatment Directive and revising the Pregnant Workers' Directive, and ensuring adoption of the European Accessibility Act to guarantee that people with disabilities can fully access goods and services in the Internal Market.

## PRIORITY C. ENSURE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL

Unemployment across the European Union is at an all-time high. According to Eurostat, in October 2013 some 26.5 million men and women were unemployed across the EU-28, compared to just over 17 million in October 2008. The youth unemployment rate (under 25s) is currently around 24%, representing over 5 million young people. A further 2 million 15-24 year olds are neither in employment, education nor training (NEETs).

Due to the economic crisis, working conditions have also dramatically deteriorated, notably in terms of workers' health and safety and the downward pressure on wages. Given the impact of current working conditions on workers' health, many of them – especially those in particularly demanding jobs and occupations – will be unable to continue working past the age of sixty. Precarious work is increasing while policies to promote even more flexible labour markets are being pursued, and at the same time automatic stabilisers have been weakened and undermined. In-work poverty is also a growing phenomenon while policy makers advocate and impose wage moderation. In 2013, the Commission estimated that 9.4 % of people in work were living under the poverty threshold.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to public spending, social protection and social services, wages have been the principal target of austerity measures across Europe. Wages have been used as the key instrument of adjustment as Member States have pursued a concerted policy of internal devaluation. This trend has not solved the “competitiveness” problems, in particular, in countries subject to financial bailout schemes. On the contrary, it has aggravated existing problems, affected the most vulnerable, and has created increased poverty. This risks further undermining the already fragile citizens' support for the European project. Austerity policies also undermine efforts towards the greening of the economy by depriving sectors and measures which could provide green employment opportunities of the necessary support.

**We therefore call on a new European Parliament and European Commission to:**

### II. Invest in a plan creating quality jobs

- The EU needs a recovery plan with a target of investing an additional 2% of EU GDP per year over a 10-year period<sup>6</sup>:
  - This would support among others: an energy transition; the development of transport infrastructure; education and training; public and private services (e.g. in the health, care and social sectors), which could create up to 11 million full-time jobs.
  - In particular, supporting energy savings, renewable energy deployment (including the whole value chain), and resource efficiency, will lead to investments, reduce costs for companies and households, improve the trade balance and thereby contribute to job creation in Europe.
- A comprehensive job creation strategy should be developed aimed at strategic investment in the so-called “white sector”, i.e. health, care and social sectors involving Member States.

---

<sup>5</sup> EC, *Social Investment Package – SWD on implementation Active Inclusion Recommendation*, February 20, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> See for background [ETUC](#), *A new path for Europe: ETUC plan for investment, sustainable growth and quality jobs*, November 7, 2013

## **12. Reinforce social dialogue and collective bargaining**

- Free collective bargaining and social dialogue are an integral part of the European social model. Both must be respected and promoted at the EU and national level.
- Stakeholders should be better involved in the European economic governance framework.
- In consultation with the social partners, the Commission should submit a proposal for a legal act on information and consultation of workers and anticipation and management of restructuring.
- Agreements concluded in the social dialogue, notably on health and safety, must be implemented by a directive at the request of the relevant social partners.

## **13. Promote decent wages and social protection**

- Competition on taxes, wages and working conditions is leading to a “race to the bottom” with a number of negative consequences for society which need to be addressed. Tax fraud and tax evasion must also be stopped. The EU is not only a free trade zone it also aims for full employment, and economic and social progress.
- Country specific recommendations must promote the European social model instead of challenging or undermining existing national social standards.
- Fair and decent wages and respect for the autonomy of the social partners and collective bargaining must be promoted. Despite recognition in the Treaties of the autonomy of the social partners and restricted EU competence in the area of wages, there is increasing encroachment on, and undermining of, the right to collective bargaining and interference with wage formation systems.
- Wage setting is to remain a national matter and be dealt with according to national practices and industrial relations’ systems. Negotiations between social partners at the relevant level are the best tool to secure good wages and working conditions. The statutory minimum wage, in those countries where trade unions consider it necessary, should be increased substantially; in any event all wage floors should respect Council of Europe standards on fair wages.
- Information, consultation and workers’ board-level representation in companies should be strengthened in order to promote good corporate governance and support “sustainable companies”.
- A definition and relevant indicators for the concept of quality work should be established, including living wages, stable contracts, social security and employment protection, and applied through the European Semester to the employment target of Europe 2020.
- Investment in stronger social protection systems and quality employment should eradicate working poverty and promote an inclusive labour market. A Green Paper on tackling in-work poverty, including aspects such as decent wages, precariousness and labour market segmentation, and employment protection should be proposed.

- The fight against youth unemployment must be a key priority for the EU. Youth employment initiatives must be implemented, with particular reference to the Youth Guarantee, the European Quality Framework for Traineeship and the European Alliance for Apprenticeship. Adequate means should be mobilised to this end.

#### **14. Defend workers' health**

- The European Commission should assume its responsibilities, pursuant to Article 153 of the Treaty, which provides for harmonisation in the progress made with respect to working conditions. On that basis, a new strategy on Health and Safety must be adopted without delay.
- Structures geared towards prevention measures must be improved and reinforced and greater attention must be paid to work-related health problems.
- The Commission should present a directive on musculoskeletal disorders and revise the existing Directive on the Protection of Workers against Carcinogens.

#### **15. Greening jobs and skills**

- The transition towards a low-carbon and resource-efficient society should include a “Just Transition” Roadmap for the overall European economy that will aim to combine ambitious environmental goals with strong social requirements, notably regarding job creation and maintenance.
- Such a strategy should also provide sectorial analyses that identify key challenges for the workforce in terms of skills, training and lifelong learning. Sectorial training programmes, closely involving the social partners, should be actively promoted. Workers should be given an individual right to training.
- The climate and energy package for 2030 should include a strong social dimension by not only supporting technological innovation in the field of low-carbon breakthrough technologies, but also by providing meaningful answers to energy poverty and to potential job losses due to, or amplified by, de-carbonisation.

#### **16. Develop inclusive and accessible quality labour markets**

- Implement the inclusive labour market pillar as part of integrated active inclusion approaches.
- Facilitate access to the labour market for the most vulnerable by investing in personalised approaches rather than through penalties and sanctions. Punishing people in already vulnerable situations will not help them into employment but instead squeeze them into poverty.
- Invest in equal access to life-long quality education and training and in the recognition of informal and formal education.
- Ensure the structured and meaningful participation of the unemployed, and civil society organisations who represent them, in the design, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of employment policies.

## **PRIORITY D. PUT ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CORE OF EUROPE'S DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

Although some limited efforts have been made during the last years, these have been insufficient to halt most current trends of natural resource depletion, ecosystem degradation and climate change. Groundbreaking work<sup>7</sup> by a team of international researchers on planetary boundaries (climate change, biodiversity, nitrogen and phosphorus cycle change, land system change, freshwater use, stratospheric ozone depletion, ocean acidification, chemical pollution and aerosol loading) has shown that for at least biodiversity, climate change and nutrients, the world has already exceeded the limits of what can be considered a “safe operating space”. The recently published Working Group I contribution to the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report (AR5) reinforced the need for Europe to adopt climate and energy policies that are in line with the latest climate science. Biodiversity and ecosystems continue to be degraded and Europe's “Ecological Overshoot Day” continues to fall earlier each year, suggesting that Europe's ecological deficit is growing, not shrinking. The failure to tackle Europe's over-consumption of energy has not only environmental but also economic consequences: Europe's energy trade deficit reached 423 billion euros in 2012 making it the largest in the world and is expected to grow further. The disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, in Japan has also had a significant impact on the EU energy policy debate.

More ambition and determination across the board is therefore needed to reverse current trends and bring our production and consumption patterns into line with the limits of our planet. It is essential that newly elected MEPs and a new European Commission firmly reject the argument put forward by business lobby groups that less regulation is the way out of the crisis. Well designed regulations are not only one of the most effective ways to protect vital public interests – our environment, our health, our resources, our rights as citizens, as workers, as users of public services and as consumers - but also support the development of new jobs and industries in a sustainable low-carbon and resource-efficient economy that is able to operate well within planetary limits.

### **We therefore call on a new European Parliament and European Commission to:**

#### **17. Adopt an ambitious 2030 climate and energy policy framework which will put the EU on track to reaching at least the upper end of the 80-95% emissions reduction target for 2050 and:**

- Adopt three ambitious and binding targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions, energy savings and renewable energy that will secure this.
- Support the adoption of a global, fair, ambitious and binding new international Climate Change Agreement in 2015 which will be essential to achieve the necessary emission reductions globally while creating a level playing field for all major economies.
- Propose a binding target of 10% total tax revenues deriving from environment-related taxes, to be introduced by 2016.
- Support an ambitious global agreement to phase out HFCs, following the adoption of a revised F-Gas Regulation at EU level.

---

<sup>7</sup> Rockström, J et al., *Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity*. Ecology and Society 14(2): 32, 2009.



- Cap the use of unsustainable bio-energy, phasing out harmful biofuels and their subsidies and reduce the role of offsets.
- Increase public investment in breakthrough renewables and energy efficiency technologies as well as low-carbon industrial innovation and programmes for the training or re-skilling of workers.
- Promote a smart grid for European electricity production and transmission to ensure a sustainable energy mix.

## **18. Review and strengthen the EU biodiversity strategy in 2015**

- Following the failure in 2013 to make the CAP greener and fairer, prepare an in-depth review by 2016 to ensure a proposal for real reform by no later than 2018.
- Ensure Member States use all possibilities left to them when implementing the new CAP for a greener and fairer agriculture sector.
- Step up efforts to implement and actively ensure compliance of Europe's flagship conservation policies, the Birds and Habitats Directives, which together form the Natura 2000 network, and the Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives.
- Adopt new legal instruments to deal with the pressures from invasive species and to give effective protection to Europe's soils, the foundation of our ecosystems and wellbeing.

## **19. Put in place by 2015 a comprehensive and dynamic product and waste policy framework**

- Help reduce Europe's resource consumption in absolute terms through a top runner approach that rewards early innovators and ensures inefficient products are eventually taken off the market.
- Transform markets and spur innovation, enhance producer responsibility, fight planned obsolescence and support sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Scale up existing recycling targets and introduce waste re-use and prevention targets.
- Mainstream instruments to support the circular economy within the instruments aiming at re-industrialising the EU.

## **20. Adopt new policies by 2015 that will reduce overall levels of air pollution**

- Set new national emission ceilings for 2020, 2025 and 2030 going well beyond existing international commitments under the Gothenburg Protocol and adopt measures to tackle air pollution at source, in particular from road transport, agriculture, shipping, power generation, construction and domestic heating.



- Strengthen EU ambient air quality standards, in particular for ultra-fine particles, aligned to World Health Organisation air quality guidelines, and also strengthen measures to improve indoor air quality.

## **21. Adopt new and stronger chemical policies through an improved “REACH”**

- Address in particular, substances of very high concern, including endocrine disruptors and “cocktail effects” from chemical combinations, and put in place a European register of nanomaterials.
- Adopt measures to reduce pesticide use in Europe.
- Implement mandatory substitution measures for hazardous chemicals, thereby driving forward sustainable innovation and enhancing competitive advantages.
- Better protect particularly sensitive or vulnerable groups in society (i.e. children and women, especially pregnant and breastfeeding), workers’ health and safety, and also ecosystems that are exposed to high levels of pollutants, such as in cities.

## **22. Take the social dimension fully into account with a “Just Transition Roadmap”**

- Adopt a “Just Transition Roadmap” that will accompany the EU’s climate and energy policies by promoting: quality jobs; worker participation and social dialogue; social protection; education, training and skills related to “greening”; and respect for trade union rights.
- Take measures to compensate for, and protect, vulnerable households from the social impacts of rising energy prices.
- Introduce enabling mechanisms for poorer households to improve the energy-efficiency of their homes, and provide affordable low-energy alternatives for vulnerable consumers.
- Implement the requirement for universal and affordable access to services in existing EU sectorial directives, such as through additional provisions on access to a minimum supply of energy, to secure energy provision for the poor and protect them from power disconnection through establishing a right to energy supply.



## **PRIORITY E. LIVE UP TO OUR DEVELOPMENT COMMITMENTS**

More than ever, it is time to put justice at the centre of social and economic development at the global level. The EU is obviously not in a position where it could, or even should, solve every problem encountered by third countries, but it has a voice which matters on the international, political and economic scene. For this voice to remain credible and be effective, the EU now has to act according to the human rights' principles it has been proclaiming for decades.

**We therefore call on a new European Parliament and European Commission to:**

### **23. Make policy coherence for sustainable development a reality**

In spite of, and because of, the crisis, there is an opportunity to reinvent and restructure the European social model and put Europe on a stronger and fairer footing in the world. This means giving more attention to justice, human rights, poverty, inequality and environment both inside and outside the EU.

- At the political level the Commission President, the High Representative and also the Environmental, Trade and Development Commissioners must demonstrate their political will to implement policy coherence for Sustainable Development, dedicating budget, time and staff to it.
- At the technical level the European Parliament needs to push for prevention and cure systems i.e. strengthening impact assessments and improving the monitoring of the impact of EU policies on the ground plus concrete mechanisms to allow the EU policies to be adapted when they are shown to be damaging the rights and welfare of people and planet.
- At the global level a clear commitment to policy coherence for sustainable development needs to be made and reflected in all EU policies. The EU should ensure that it is the centrepiece of global processes such as the post 2015 (MDG) and post Rio (SDG) discussions, which should be merged into one coherent universal agenda.

### **24. Tackle global inequality**

Poverty eradication is not just about increasing incomes, GDP and economic development. It is mostly about tackling inequalities within and in between societies, which can be done at EU level through not only the fair and sustainable use of natural resources, but also the setting-up of a fairer system of food production. Indeed, in developing countries, many citizens do not benefit from the natural wealth of the land they inhabit.

- Specific, stringent reporting requirements should be imposed on the extractive industries' sector within the Non-Financial Reporting Directive. Taking into account the specific risks that extractive industries cause to ecosystems, livelihoods and social relations in local communities, the reporting requirements for this sector should also be specific under EU legislation. Reports should include detailed information on matters concerning the environment and human rights, risk management, and the policies implemented and the results obtained.

- The five steps of the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-affected and High-Risks Areas should be made mandatory for companies by the EU. The EU should consider the impact of its consumption of minerals on security issues in developing countries. The expected legislative proposal on “conflict minerals” should focus on the responsible sourcing of minerals originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas. The mandatory nature of this legislation will be crucial in order to implement the companies’ duty to respect human rights.
- The EU should reduce its footprint abroad by changing European consumption patterns into sustainable lifestyles. This should begin with a reduction in food waste by at least 50%<sup>8</sup>, as committed to by the EU, and a more sustainable food consumption pattern in Europe by 2020 by bringing current consumption back within healthy diet recommendations.

## **25. Ensure that EU trade and investment policies respect social and environmental standards**

- Ensure that EU trade and investment policies respect social and environmental standards. Public interest clauses should be inserted into EU investment deals. The EU depends on cheap, stable imports of primary agricultural commodities for its high value-added processing industry. Through free trade agreements, the EU aims to secure agricultural market access, and to affirm the roles of the EU as a standard setter and developing countries as standard takers. This is often achieved through reduced technical barriers to trade and reduced export restrictions, while investment chapters are included in these agreements to protect investors’ rights. On the other hand, no public interest clause is included in these agreements. This leaves gross imbalances and flaws in the global agricultural trade regime at the expense of developing countries.
- All public services and social, health, educational and cultural services provided by private providers should be excluded from the scope of trade agreements, in particular the Trade in Services Agreement and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, if their inclusion would undermine the protection of public interests, in order to ensure that universal access to high quality services can be guaranteed to all.
- Concerning public procurement, the ongoing negotiations on trade agreements should not undermine the progress achieved in integrating sustainable development objectives and a mandatory social clause and, in setting tailored rules for social and health services in the directive adopted in March 2014.
- The implementation and enforcement of labour rights and environmental rules should be respected, and their further development ensured in EU trade deals. In particular, such deals, for example the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, should not prevent or discourage the further use of the precautionary principle in environmental policy making.

---

8 As called by the [European Parliament](#) in January 2012

- An investor-state dispute settlement mechanism in any trade agreement should be excluded by the European Commission, whether in a mild or more extreme form, as this is a direct violation of fundamental democratic principles and makes regulating for the public interest prohibitively expensive.
- A mechanism for regulatory cooperation under the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership which would create undue influence of private interest in EU law making, in particular in the fields of chemicals, energy and climate, agriculture and food, should be excluded by the European Commission.
- Responsibilities for investors should be included by the European Commission (e.g. by reference to the OECD guidelines for multinational companies) in any trade agreement.
- The European Parliament and Council should reject any trade and investment deal that fails to exclude regulatory cooperation, investor state dispute settlement, fast track ratification, public services and social health, educational and cultural services by private providers, as well as deeper forms of regulatory cooperation in the field of energy, climate, chemicals, agriculture and food.

## **26. Increase and improve finance for sustainable development**

While developing countries have shown that they can become the main driver of their own development, the EU can support them and prove that it can be a constructive and credible partner in the global efforts to increase and improve the finance needed to support sustainable development for the good of us all. It has the historical responsibility to do so, as it is part of the rich countries which caused the financial and climate crises under which the poorest countries in the world are dramatically suffering.

- Stop undermining the policy space partner countries from the global South need to lead their own development: this means refraining from pushing trade and investment agreements and international taxation standards that are detrimental to developing countries' economic and development interests and to their own regional integration processes. The EU should also endorse, implement and strengthen the UN principles on lending and borrowing, particularly by including private lending. Finally, it should ensure that public and private finance for developing countries supports national priorities and democratic ownership and sustainable state-society relations, in keeping with the commitments made at Busan.
- Increase and improve external public financing: this can be achieved by agreeing the allocation of funds from innovative sources to sustainable development and international climate finance, for example by redirecting subsidies away from fossil fuels and from carbon pricing of maritime and aviation transport, and set aside revenues from the II country European Financial Transaction Tax (FTT). On a longer-term basis, the FTT should be made global. Moreover, the EU needs to meet the longstanding commitment to devote 0.7% of GNI to ODA in a transparent and accountable way and eliminate inflated aid. It should also ensure that the promised new and additional funds for climate finance are over and above aid commitments, and are effectively monitored and transparently reported. Finally, thorough evaluations of the impact on development and poverty reduction should be conducted, to include a section on whether the money could be better used elsewhere, before further promoting the diversion of scarce ODA to blend with loans that mainly benefit European companies.

## **27. Revise migration policies to promote shared EU responsibility**

- Guarantee the protection of the human rights of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection through the implementation of the new “Asylum Package”.
- Amend the Dublin Regulation to promote a shared EU responsibility and solidarity among Member States by applying a burden sharing strategy at the borders of those countries receiving a higher number of asylum seekers and/or undocumented migrants. This must respect the individual human rights of each newcomer regardless of the number of new arrivals<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> For more information and recommendations see [www.socialplatform.org/migration](http://www.socialplatform.org/migration)

## **PRIORITY F. REVISE ECONOMIC POLICIES**

The policies of austerity and fiscal consolidation that prevail in many EU countries are serving as an impediment to progress in achieving the Europe 2020 objectives. Instead of furthering sustainable development and prosperity, these policies have often increased unemployment, precarious work, poverty and economic and social divergence while often ignoring or even exacerbating the ecological crisis. The time has come to call into question the received wisdom that austerity is the “only” solution for Europe. The EU needs an alternative recovery plan that places people and planet first.

**We therefore call on a new European Parliament and European Commission to:**

### **28. Reorient the European Semester towards environmental and social goals and go beyond GDP**

- Put transparency, legitimacy and responsibility into the monitoring of European economic governance.
- Use indicators that go beyond GDP, including multiple indicators on wellbeing, the eradication of poverty, quality jobs, gender equality, equality for all (between the regions and rich and poor), and energy, natural resource use and ecosystem pressures.

### **29. Adopt fair and green fiscal policies**

- Take new decisive and binding measures to tackle problems created by tax competition, including by an adequate degree of harmonising companies' tax bases and levels of tax and to combat tax evasion, avoidance and fraud.
- Eliminate tax havens and immediately implement the resolutions of the European Council and the G20.
- Support an ambitious, comprehensive and efficient Financial Transaction Tax.
- Create the necessary price signals needed to promote energy and resource efficiency by introducing green taxation across the EU in such a way that it will guarantee at the same time, stringent environmental objectives, social fairness, progressivity, and the redistribution of wealth and ensure universal and affordable access to basic goods and services: such as water and energy.
- Ensure a full phase out of environmentally harmful subsidies by 2020.

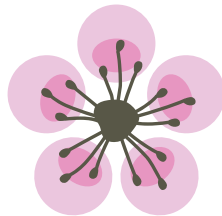
### **30. Further reform the financial sector**

- Reform the financial sector to be solid and transparent in order to rebalance the EU economy.
- Reinforce checks on financial markets and financial institutions for the benefit of the real economy.

### **31. Base the internal market on the full respect of fundamental rights**

- Annex a Social Progress Protocol to the Treaties to ensure that fundamental social rights take precedence over economic freedoms to make it absolutely clear that all free movement provisions of the Treaty must be interpreted in such a way that fundamental social rights are respected.
- Ensure the host country principle for workers working cross-border (equal treatment and non-discrimination of workers and companies in the place where the work is done) to avoid social dumping in Europe.
- Recognise the particular status of public services and services of general interest in respect of the Lisbon Treaty and its Protocol 26 and preserve and protect the non-profit characteristics of those services.
- Do not proceed with any further liberalization measures in the absence of a full and comprehensive evaluation of their potential impacts on all public interests, including social, environmental and economic criteria.
- Adopt a radically new approach concerning transport by taking the general interest and public service obligation aspect of this sector more into account.





The Spring Alliance brings together civil society stakeholders from environmental, social and development organizations and trade unions to present a positive vision for a Europe that puts people and planet first.

*Some members of the Spring Alliance acknowledge the financial support of the European Commission. This publication reflects the authors' views. The Commission is not liable for any use that might be made of the information contained in this publication.*



socialplatform



[www.springalliance.eu](http://www.springalliance.eu)