



the round table

Key issues for European Socialists and Social Democrats

Issue Number 3

July 2000

What's in it for Youth?

Key priorities for the French EU Council Presidency will promote the interests of young people — in particular the focus on creating a Europe of jobs, growth and innovation.

Policies to put Europe at the front of the information society and to ensure equal access for all to the economic benefits it brings will give Europe's youth a head-start in the wired, global economy.

Aid for innovative enterprises will help young entrepreneurs whilst measures to connect all EU schools to the Internet will prepare the next generation for the new economy.

Promotion of sport, fighting against drugs and taking positive action to prevent exclusion from society are further French EU Council Presidency measures focused on youth concerns.

Young People to Quiz French Premier on EU

French Premier Lionel Jospin will mark the first day of his country's EU Council Presidency on 1 July by taking questions from 500 young people from all over Europe, including enlargement countries.

The hour-long session will be one of the highlights of the fourth in a series of Round Tables organised by the Party of European Socialists and its member parties with the European Parliament Socialist Group and its national delegations.

The Paris Round Table — 'What Europe for Future Generations' — begins at 10h30 on 1 July in the Pavillon Baltard, Nogent sur Marne, and is open to the media throughout.

The opening discussion on 'Youth and Europe — jobs, education, European citizenship' is from 11h00 to 13h00.

After a second discussion session on 'Europe's place in the world' (from 15h00 to 17h00) Mr Jospin will take a one-hour session of questions and answers from the floor.

Leading participants in the talks will include: PES President Rudolf Scharping and his deputies Henri Nallet of France and Raimon Obiols of Spain; EP Socialist Group leader Enrique Baron and his deputies Pervenche Beres of France and Pasqualina Napoletano of Italy; French



No holds barred in Jospin Q&A with young Europeans

Socialist Party leader Francois Hollande; EU Commissioner Pascal Lamy; and a number of Socialist and Social Democratic youth movements.

The International Union of Socialist Youth will be represented by its vice-president Anna Lorenzo, the European Youth movement ECOSY by its president, Hugues Nancy,

secretary-general Yonnec Polet and vice-presidents Federica Mogherini and Alexandra Kramm.

The host youth movement — the French MJS — will be represented by its President Gwenegau Bui and international secretary Dylan Boutiflat. After the meeting, MJS is to throw a European party for the participants.

On the table

The European Socialist and Social Democratic Round Table programme resumes in the autumn. Four main themes are to be addressed by the end of the year:

'European Democratic Value' at the Vienna Round Table on 20 October;

'The Mass Media and Democracy' in Italy on 27 and 28 October;

'Modern Economy - Modern Welfare State - Modern Social Democracy' at a German-Dutch Round Table on 18 November; and

'Welfare In a Time of Globalisation' in Sweden on 2 December.

The Meaning of European Civilisation

By Rudolf Scharping, President of the Party of European Socialists

Europe is first and foremost a civilisation founded on the ideals of European enlightenment, of European humanism. It is a civilisation that differs from many others in the world by prioritising the well being of its people.

Europe is a civilisation that recognises the dignity of each individual's future of freedom, with opportunities for creativity, education and training, entrepreneurial courage, independence and individuality as an intelligent mixture of freedom and responsibility, of rights and duties.

Europe is a civilisation, which, like no other in the world, ensures that people can freely develop themselves without becoming the enemy of their fellow citizen. There is no other Continent that has had such a horrific experience of what happens when this freedom and diversity is not respected.

Europe is a civilisation that does not define dignity and freedom according to one's origin, economic usefulness, skin colour, religion, passport or any other external characteristic. It is a civilisation that cannot be limited geographically to the 15 Member states of the European Union. The others are part of it, too.

We cannot respond to the achievements of Charter 77, Solidarnosc and other freedom and civil movements in Eastern Europe, to the historic success of Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa, by paying lip service to what they did to overcome East-West conflict and bring about freedom, democracy and civil rights in Central and Eastern Europe – and still leave the Continent split up economically, politically, socially and culturally as it was when we had the Iron Curtain.

He who argues against Europe's enlargement not only argues against the common civilisation, against the common political future, against the common historical responsibility but also against the common economical opportunities and against the political stability of our whole Continent.

Europe's frontiers do not end at the frontiers of the 15 Member countries. The others are also part of it and we have to find an intelligent, responsible path so that they can also belong to us economically and socially without burdening them and us. This is our big challenge.



Scharping: Vision of Civilisation

We cannot stand by and ignore the insecurity that many citizens feel about the future of Europe and allow it to be turned to eurosceptic sentiment by rightwing radicals - not only openly xenophobic forces but also by parts of the media and the conservatives, be it in Great Britain or in Bavaria.

This euroscepticism, which is deliberately stirred up, has created a new kind of rightwing populism and extremism whose hallmark is that it is anti-EU and the alleged shortcomings of the EU – but which at the same time throws into question the European civilisation I have described.

In combating such populism, European Socialist and Social Democratic parties have become the only political family in Europe whose full membership has signed the common Charter against racism and xenophobia because to us the European project means more than a mere free trade zone.

We are in government in most countries of the EU and it is up to us to build a Europe that is close to the citizen and does not close its eyes to the fears of Europe's citizens. That is why our family is at present organising monthly events on the most important issues on the European agenda: EU enlargement, youth policy, media, economic policy, globalisation.

The Social Democrats must remain the protective force of the ordinary citizen and must develop a vision for the future.

Recipe for Disaster

By Alexandros Liakopoulos

(The following is an edited version of a discussion paper produced for the Bern Round Table. The full text of the paper is available at <http://www.eurosocialists.org>)

Right-wing populism is one of the major dangers to the European experiment. It brings together not only the extreme-right with all its faces – racism, xenophobia, nationalism, anti-Semitism and anti-Europeanism – as well as ethnic nationalism and religious fanaticism but can also be seen as a reaction to economic and cultural globalisation.

The credibility of institutional frameworks has suffered from recent crises affecting traditional political parties. Voter apathy and rising anti-parliamentary feelings have created serious problems for representative democracy. The need for a more managerial approach to politics has resulted in reduced difference between the political agendas of the traditional political families, leading to the 'death of ideologies.'

Since new populist parties that fill the gap in the political spectrum create major problems for a coherent, common European future, analysis of their ideas becomes increasingly important.

Aside from racism and xenophobia – two of the most characteristic features of modern rightwing populism in Europe – new forms of 'conspiracy theory' also pose serious problems.

Across the spectrum of the extreme right, there are numerous conspiracist groups. The range covers neo-nazi and anti-Semitic groups, anti-immigrant organisations and anti-homosexual movements.

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Young Socialist Priorities for EU

By Yvonne Pollet
Secretary General of ECOSY



For 50 years European integration has been based on the economy, finance and currency. For a long period, the single currency was seen as the skyline. For a very long time, politicians evaded the question of the political orientation of European construction. Now that the Euro exists, the motor of Europe cannot only be focused on the creation of a big market. It is now time to convince the people again that Europe is a project of progress.

A Europe of growth and employment for social progress

The ambition of the EU must be full employment. At present the employment rate is very weak, especially for less qualified people. These people fall into long term unemployment. Full employment is a project that must benefit the weakest of society. The American model with a low unemployment rate but with "working poor" is not the model of society that we want. We want a model of development of full employment for everyone. This means a job for everyone, allowing social emancipation and a decent life.

A federal Europe

We as Young socialists express our will to build a Europe based on a clear federalist political project. Indeed, we believe that the deepening of European integration is the only way to allow our society to

decide in sovereignty and democratically about the development model Europe should adopt to use technological innovation and economic expansion in the benefit of the needs of the citizens.

A Charter of Fundamental rights

The European Union should have a Charter of Fundamental rights. We want civic and social rights for everyone in Europe. This Charter should include binding rights that are complementary to the European Convention of Human Rights.

The enlargement of the EU

We consider the principle of solidarity among peoples as a fundamental principle for our ideology and our struggle to make a better world. At this time, countries of Central and Eastern Europe have applied for full membership to EU and the latter has a moral duty to accept these countries, and help them in the best way it can to overcome their social and economic needs and to consolidate a real democratic system through European values and experiences.

Raising the voice of the European Union on the international scene.

The European Union must speak

with one voice on all international issues. We plead for an integrated approach between foreign policy and economic policies (i.e trade policy, external monetary policy and development policy). The EU should promote security in the world by playing a more active role in crisis prevention and management and by taking a greater part in disarmament negotiations.

Education and mobility

Every student should have free access to further and higher education in their own country but also in all other EU member states. The exchange and mobility programme of the Union must also be expanded to keep up with demand, so that students have an equal opportunity to use their right to study in another member country. We call for the introduction of a European framework for mutual recognition of educational qualifications.

A stronger Environmental policy to promote sustainable development

Because pollution of many kinds does not respect any borders, environmental protection will be more efficient if it is implemented at international level. This implies the development of a special model of European wide and world wide regulatory framework which allows the implementation of new policies for agriculture, energy, urban policy and transport.

Recipe for Disaster

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These attitudes are spreading to classic social players such as political parties (mainly the conservative Christian-Democrats), organised interests, social organisations (especially those linked to the church) and some non-governmental organisations. All of this helps to create a more hostile environment, attested to by the thousands of daily attacks against Jews, blacks, Roma, homosexuals or even drug-addicts across the EU.

By attacking European integration and its alleged damage to nation states – with consequent harm to the sense of nationhood itself – rightwing populism can use a new face of nationalism. This new nationalism is often expressed within the borders of a member state, proclaiming the independence of a specific region that is not always characterised by a different national identity.

This new populist nationalism is also displayed in anti-European rhetoric, blaming 'Brussels' for all kinds of economic, political and social problems. The anti-European political discourse pushes aside the benefits and focuses on the costs for society.

Thus rightwing populism aims to increase its political appeal without taking part in the debate about solutions. The strategy is to condemn without proposing alternatives – except of course anti-democratic, racist responses.

Rightwing populists know that they are helping to change social standards by expressing their hate-theories for the first time since World War II with such intensity and with such ease.

The rest follows naturally: skinheads; neo-nazi rock bands; the creation of thousands of racist sites on the Internet and the use of new technologies for advertising and distributing their ideas; Holocaust-denial groups selling their material aimed at re-writing history.

The re-birth of the ancient devils of hate ideologies in a European Union which wants to guarantee future political stability, economical development, social cohesion and tolerance among its people will be one of the major political problems for the Union in the years ahead.

The lessons of history could be a very good teacher.

From London, Via Prague and Bern, to Paris

By PES Secretary-General Ton Beumer



On the right track: the Round Table programme communicates key concerns

Preceding the PES Berlin Congress of May 2001, the Party of European Socialists and its Parliamentary Group are organising along with Socialist and Social Democratic Parties from all over Europe, a series of Round Table discussions.

Approaching our fourth round table in Paris, on Youth and Social Democracy, we see a concentration on two themes:

On the one hand, European Social Democrats and Socialists take up the challenge to define and redefine their stance on the relation between a modern state, a modern economy and a modern and strong social policy (London 17 March, Amsterdam 18 October, Stockholm).

On the other hand, there is the challenge of directly addressing people's concerns and of fighting populist and extreme Right propaganda which, on the basis of fear, threatens our European project of an enlarged EU of economic strength combined

with deepened solidarity and democracy (Prague 5 May, Bern 26 June, Rome, Vienna).

The organisation of open debates outside the context of the European institutions on European Social Democratic policy objectives brings our European Party and Parliamentary Group closer to the national parties and is our contribution to stronger links between European citizens and the EU institutions.

Web Links

International Union of Socialist Youth
<http://www.iusy.org>

European Youth Forum

<http://www.youthforum.org>

Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport

<http://www.coe.fr/youth>

World Youth Forum

<http://www.blackbox.at/wyf/index.html>

How to obtain a regular copy of 'The Round Table'

'The Round Table' is a newsletter published jointly by the Party of European Socialists and the Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists in the European Parliament.

The newsletter will provide advance information about upcoming discussions and summarise the key points of those that have taken place.

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