

PES newsletter - May 2010

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PES solution to Euro-zone crisis vindicated as Conservatives wake up to our plan

Two months after the PES put a concrete plan to save Greece on the table, and fully three months after the PES put a proposal to provide guarantees for the Euro-zone, the Conservative forces have finally woken up and taken our advice. The Euro-zone meeting of 7 May and the EU Economic and Finance (ECOFIN) Ministers Council on 9 May, saw the agreement of a new crisis 'stabilization fund', and a new European Monetary Guarantee. In addition, the Financial Transaction Tax has been put back on the agenda. As usual, the Conservatives risk destroying the deal by forcing public finance cuts on Spain and Portugal.

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PES allies succeed in putting Financial Transaction Tax back on the EU agenda

Speaking on the series of decisions taken by ECOFIN ministers on 9 May, Party of European Socialists (PES) Economic and Finance Network Chair, Andreas Schieder said that; 'I am particularly heartened to see that the idea of a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) is firmly back on the agenda. In a time of crisis, circumstances demand fresh thinking. I am glad that the Conservatives Finance Ministers have softened their opposition to an FTT'. Mr. Schieder praised the role that the PES activists had played in keeping this issue at the top of the agenda.

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PES and Fatah agree closer party cooperation

PES President Poul Nyrup Rasmussen and Fatah International Commissioner Nabil Shaath met (12 May) to discuss the current state of affairs in Palestine and ongoing proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and to agree on further cooperation between the PES and Fatah. Mr. Rasmussen said that, "we firmly believe in the need to accelerate negotiations to reach a two-state solution. I can assure to Mr. Abbas and Mr. Fayyad that they will have our support in pushing for more initiatives, like the White Intifada, that build on the direction of the conclusions adopted at the EU summit in December 2009".

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Not enough progress is being made in building a Social Europe

"Not enough progress is being made in building a Social Europe", was one of the conclusions of the PES Social Europe Network meeting in Brussels on 10 May. Although the decisions to save the Euro and set up a financial stability mechanism were welcomed, concerns about the effects on the social security systems of the member states were raised. Network chairperson Alejandro Cercas reminded the meeting that social consolidation needs to go hand in hand with any fiscal consolidation.

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Calls for EU Commissioner for Fundamental Rights to deliver a Women's Rights Charter intensify

Zita Gurmai, has renewed her pledge to continue the fight for an EU Women's Rights Charter. "It was a point in the Gender Equality Chapter of our Manifesto for the 2009 European Elections, and since then PES Women never stopped fighting for it", she announced. It has been **called for it at the PES Annual Conference** in December in Prague, a working group has been established, and EU Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, Ms. Reding has been pushed to take on board our demands, through our meeting with President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, in Strasbourg in March.

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Commission move towards more ambitious CO2 reduction target

"It is technically feasible and economically affordable for the European Union to move its CO2 reduction target from 20 up to 30%", says a **communication from the European Commission** published last week. The Commission argues that adopting more ambitious targets today, will quickly pay enormous dividends tomorrow, especially by creating new and sustainable "green" jobs, increasing energy security and improving air quality. It is estimated that the new plans to reduce emissions will cost 33 Billion € (0.2% of GDP), while creating up to 400,000 new jobs and will significantly reduce the need to import expensive and unsustainable fossil fuels to Europe.

NEWS FROM PES MEMBER PARTIES

New Dutch Labour Party Leader meets PES President in Brussels

Job Cohen, newly elected leader of the PvdA in the Netherlands, met PES President Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, in Brussels on 11 May. Mr. Cohen spoke of his desire to participate fully in PES leaders meetings and coordinated strategy. He reemphasized his commitment to European deficit reduction plans that do not stifle growth. Already campaigning for the Dutch elections in June, making Mr. Cohen leader has given a boost to the PvdA led alliance, which is currently heading the polls. Dutch citizens associate Mr. Cohen with good political management after his successful tenure as Mayor of Amsterdam.

Big success for SPD in North-Rhine-Westphalia

"The most important aim is achieved: the coalition government of CDU and FDP is dismissed", said SPD's leading candidate, Hannelore Kraft, following the regional elections in North-Rhine-Westphalia on Sunday. Ms. Kraft is the party leader of the local branch of the SPD and has now started discussions with the Green Party to build a coalition. As both these parties together are missing one seat to hold a majority in parliament, a third coalition partner is needed. The SPD will therefore probably hold talks with the FDP (liberal party), as well with the CDU (conservative) and Die Linke (left party). Hannelore Kraft comes from a working family and joined the SPD in 1994. In 2001 she became Minister for German and European Affairs and was Minister for Science and Research from 2002 until 2005.

PES President in Prague supporting CSSD ahead of Czech Elections

Last week PES President Poul Nyrup Rasmussen was in Prague with PES Czech Party, the CSSD, and Jiří Paroubek to lead an expert seminar as part of the CSSD election campaign. Also participating was Viera Tomanová, the Social Affairs Minister of Slovakia, from SMER-SD.

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Upcoming events

May

- 26 - Competitiveness Ministerial meeting
- 27-28 - Fact-finding mission to Chisinau, Moldova
- 27-29 - Congress of the Finnish Social Democratic Party
- 28-29 - General elections in Czech Republic

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