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Europe in the lead: progressive solutions to global challenges

DRAFT resolution to be adopted by the PES Congress in Malaga on 11 November 2023

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IV. Conclusion

5

6 Improving the life of citizens has always been the priority of our political movement. It has been
7 our goal in the current European mandate and will always remain our main objective. A few
8 months before the next European elections, we, the Party of European Socialists, want to reiterate
9 our determination to work for bettering the lives of European citizens. Since the last European
10 elections, Europe and the world have undergone massive crises and changes. Through the
11 Covid-19 pandemic, through the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and the ensuing rise
12 in energy prices and the cost of living, the uncertainties regarding supply chains, through the ever
13 more visible impact of climate change and biodiversity loss, through the erosion of democracies,
14 through demographic change, our members have fought to support citizens. These crises made
15 the existing inequalities between men and women more visible and deepened them, especially
16 the gender care gap and the gender income gap.

17 Our work is far from over and will require the same determination to ensure a future of shared
18 prosperity, equality, and stability. We have never shied away from bringing about the necessary
19 progressive changes: for us politics is about framing transformations and planning the future. We
20 have one objective: ensuring that no one is left behind. We want to ensure that everyone can live
21 with respect, dignity and security: empowering everyone to choose their life, their career, and their
22 place in society. Everyone should be treated equally, be able to develop their full potential and
23 live in dignity. We will continue to provide real solutions to the needs of the people, not false
24 narratives, or simplistic fixes. The Party of European Socialists will continue working to provide
25 common solutions to our common problems.

26 In the current global context, the European elections of 2024 will be crucial in 3 major ways:

- 27 • First, to determine if, and crucially how, our societies will manage the transformations of
28 today's society.
- 29 • Second, for putting democracy, the rule of law, and gender equality at the very heart of the
30 European Union.
- 31 • And third, to determine the position and the role of the EU in today's and tomorrow's world.

32 As Party of European Socialists, we want to focus on those priorities by building a future of
33 solidarity, cohesion, and equality. To achieve this, we need a strong parliamentary group of our
34 family in the next European Parliament to push forward a progressive agenda and to counter the
35 worrying and dangerous alliances between conservatives, liberals, and far-right parties in different
36 Member States. That is the best guarantee to stay on the path towards a future that is social,
37 sustainable and feminist; a future that respects the rule of law, human rights, gender equality,
38 intergenerational solidarity and diversity, a future that uplifts and empowers our democracy and
39 societies and all individuals, regardless of their circumstances.

40 We, socialists and democrats, will take the decisions needed to solve the problems of our time,
41 to protect democracy, to protect our citizens throughout the transitions occurring in our world, and
42 to uphold the essential role of the EU on the world stage, with the following 25 objectives.

43 **I. Protecting citizens through transitions**

44 The world is always changing. However, the pace and depth of the transitions that our societies
45 are going through is much faster than it has been in decades. The climate emergency and the
46 threat to nature and biodiversity are posing existential threats and challenges that humanity has
47 not faced in centuries. Demographic change challenges our labour markets and social security
48 systems. The link between civilisation and digital technologies has become a reality that changes
49 the way we work, the way we relate, and the possibilities and dangers of our future. Our political
50 family has always been about progress, about bringing about positive change for our citizens. For
51 this to happen in a way that is beneficial to the many and not only a small elite requires it to be

52 framed by politics and the polity. All transitions need a gender perspective. Employment rates are
53 back to pre-2008 levels, yet many still live in precarious conditions. We remain convinced that
54 neoliberal politics are politics that can ultimately only harm the workers, the middle classes, as
55 well as the vast majority of European citizens, and that the politics of the far right lead to the
56 outright destruction of social welfare systems, healthcare, education and public services. The cost
57 of living is increasing, and we need to protect people's purchasing power so that everyone can
58 live a life in dignity. We need new policies and better decision-making, but we also need to remain
59 true to our fundamental values. Worker rights, quality jobs with good wages, social justice,
60 solidarity and equality were the foundations on which we built our societies, and they must remain
61 the foundations on which we construct our future. To accompany our societies through these
62 many transitions, we want to focus on the following priorities:

63

64 **1. Quality jobs for all**

65 Our family has put social issues at the heart of European policymaking. The EU started
66 implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, endorsed a Social Action Plan, and
67 strengthened the links between its social, climate and economic agendas. This mitigated the
68 impact on citizens of the various crises the EU faced over the past years. Yet strengthening social
69 policies and combating inequalities is still needed more than ever. We will continue to put people's
70 welfare and social justice at the centre of our political action.

71 We want to ensure quality jobs for all, regardless of their age or gender. The green and digital
72 transitions are radically transforming our economies: new jobs are created, and others are
73 disappearing. Strong investment in green and digital technologies, in the circular economy as well
74 as in other more traditional sectors such as care, healthcare, transport and housing renovation
75 can lead to great job creation.

76 These jobs must be as socially sustainable as they are environmentally sustainable, with decent
77 working conditions, fair wages, equal pay for equal work and work of equal value and a fair labour
78 mobility. Our fight for fair minimum wages, for stronger collective bargaining, for the rights of
79 platform workers, or for pay transparency pave the way. Our next battles are the regulation of
80 artificial intelligence and algorithms in the workplace, closing the gender pay and pension gap,
81 the better prevention of psychological and mental health risks, an EU strategy on realising the
82 'Vision Zero' approach to work-related deaths in the EU and ensuring the quality of traineeships
83 across the EU. Ensuring good conditions everywhere will also help reduce labour shortages in
84 certain sectors where safety at work is a particular issue.

85 Working weeks are still too long for some, irregular schedules compete with family life, and
86 technologies blur the line between professional and private time. We are fighting for workers' right
87 to disconnect, and we support a reduction of working time while maintaining the same salary level.
88 Experiments of 4-day workweeks have shown their positive impact. We will keep fighting to
89 improve citizens' wellbeing, enabling workers to better combine their professional and private
90 obligations and reach an equal share of unpaid domestic and care work between men and
91 women. One in three women in the EU do not have a paid job and women do the large majority
92 of part-time work in the Union.

93 When Covid-19 hit, we secured the creation of the SURE instrument, which allowed governments
94 to mitigate unemployment risk and protect workers from redundancies. As SURE proved
95 successful, we want to further develop it as a permanent tool for governments to address future
96 crises. With changing labour markets in the EU, we push for an ambitious strategy on education
97 and training, ensuring citizens and workers acquire the necessary digital skills and AI literacy. A
98 digital, sustainable and circular economy needs a well-trained and technically skilled workforce.

99 We will create an EU Upskill Programme in various areas of information and communication
100 technology and the green transition, ensuring that everyone can have the required skills for the
101 labour market and sectors with shortages. Enhancing workers' competences will prepare them
102 for the new labour market and help them move from sectors in decline to new activities that meet
103 the needs of the twin transition and ensure a fair sharing of their benefits. As new digital jobs will
104 be created, we have to take action for women to pursue careers in STEM, an area still dominated
105 by men. We call for an ambitious investment in high-quality and affordable education for all,
106 including through the creation of the European Education Area by 2025, while ensuring the
107 qualifications and skills needed for a just and sustainable transition. These upskilling efforts must
108 be rewarded with better jobs and higher wages. During Covid-19, we proved that we could
109 safeguard workers from losing their jobs, we will show the same determination for the sectors
110 phased out in the transition.

111 We stand by trade unions at both national and European level, in full respect of their autonomy.
112 To encourage collective bargaining in the Member States also means that Union policy and
113 legislation must allow room for independent and equal national social partners to negotiate
114 collective agreements. We are convinced that reaching the objective of 80% collective bargaining
115 coverage by 2030 will guarantee better working conditions, better wages, and a better functioning
116 EU economy. Social dumping, work-related crime and the exploitation of workers have no place
117 in the European labour market. They undermine wages, workers' rights and our fight for decent
118 work for all. Considering their strong cross-border dimension, they require a European answer.

119 Key proposals

- 120 • *We want the European Pillar of Social Rights to continue guiding the next European*
121 *Commission. We will fight for the full implementation of all 20 principles of the European*
122 *Pillar of Social Rights and its inclusion in the EU institutional framework.*
- 123 • *Adopt an ambitious Platform Work Directive by the end of the legislative mandate, ban*
124 *zero-hour contracts and fake self-employment in all sectors and fight all types of precarious*
125 *work.*
- 126 • *Improve working conditions for essential workers and increase investment, especially in*
127 *the care sector, to enhance the profession's attractiveness to men and women, ease labour*
128 *shortages, alleviate recruitment problems and promote the retention and wellbeing of staff.*
- 129 • *Ensure workers have the right to access upskilling, reskilling and life-long learning during*
130 *paid working time.*
- 131 • *Regulate artificial intelligence and the use of algorithm in the workplace, enshrining the*
132 *human-in-control principle in EU law, and ensuring an adequate level of AI literacy within*
133 *the workforce.*
- 134 • *Close the gender employment, pay and pension gaps by 2030 by introducing binding*
135 *targets per Member State and age group.*
- 136 • *Make work safe through a directive on psychosocial risks at work, including mental health*
137 *risks, a broader directive on work related musculoskeletal disorders and rheumatic*
138 *diseases and a 'Vision Zero' approach to work-related deaths in the EU.*
- 139 • *Defend workers' right to disconnect and push forward a reduction of working time keeping*
140 *the same salary level via collective bargaining or legislation.*
- 141 • *Strengthen and defend workers' and trade union rights, including union access to*
142 *workplaces, the right to organise, the right to bargain collectively, and the right to strike.*
- 143 • *Strengthen the role of social dialogue and independent trade unions, nationally and at*
144 *European level, increasing collective bargaining coverage to 80%, in line with the Adequate*
145 *Minimum Wages Directive and incentivising collective bargaining by allowing trade unions*
146 *in well-functioning national self-regulatory systems room to negotiate collective*

147 *agreements. Trade unions' role in the management of the just transition must also be*
148 *reinforced by strengthening democracy at work both at the national and European level.*
149 • *Revise the European Works Council Directive to strengthen information and consultation*
150 *of workers.*
151 • *Revise the Directive on Temporary Agency Work to prevent exploitation throughout the*
152 *subcontracting chains and ensure equal treatment between workers.*
153 • *Continue to push for a fair workers' mobility, preserving work-life balance as well as*
154 *avoiding brain drain and labour shortages in their country of origin.*
155 • *Strengthen the mandate of the European Labour Authority with investigative and*
156 *sanctioning powers to combat social dumping and labour exploitation effectively.*
157 • *Limit subcontracting and ensure joint and several liability throughout the supply chain.*
158 • *Support the creation of a real European Education Area by 2025, to ensure quality,*
159 *accessible and affordable education across EU, and to establish a common European*
160 *framework for the recognition, validation and accreditation of knowledge, skills and*
161 *competences acquired through non-formal education.*
162 • *All internships, traineeships and apprenticeships must be paid, and exploitative practices*
163 *prevented.*
164 • *Support a smooth transition from work to retirement at the end of one's career.*
165 • *Better reflect wage distribution and wage inequalities in the European Semester as a step*
166 *towards the UN Sustainable Development Goal 10 to reduce inequality within and amongst*
167 *countries.*

168 **2. Fighting unemployment, labour market exploitation, poverty and social exclusion**

169 Our fight for jobs also means ensuring that everyone has the possibility to work. We will continue
170 to combat unemployment and will not leave the long-term unemployed behind when there is so
171 much useful social and environmental work to be done. Guidance, trainings, re-skilling and
172 upskilling must be made available to ensure that everyone can have the skills required for the
173 modern labour market. The PES is also fighting to reconnect the long-term unemployed with
174 meaningful work through Local Employment Guarantees.

175 Access to adequate social security benefits for all workers and for the self-employed is a pre-
176 condition to prevent in-work poverty and labour market segmentation and to foster a level-playing
177 field in the Single Market. Yet, social-security systems in Europe are too often designed for
178 workers with a full-time contract of indefinite duration and ill-equipped to protect vulnerable
179 groups. This has bad consequences - not only for those individuals but also for the functioning of
180 labour markets, the stabilisation capacity of welfare systems and their funding.

181 The prevailing levels of inequality the EU faces call for public action. Our political family is
182 determined to bring wellbeing to all our citizens, through well-funded public services and strong
183 welfare states. We want the EU and its Member States to work towards the complete eradication
184 of poverty in Europe with the introduction of a European Anti-Poverty Law. As a first step, we are
185 now pushing for robust national minimum income schemes as the best way to provide a safety
186 net that can protect people against suffering and deprivation. We will fight the non-take up of
187 social benefits by promoting automatic payments.

188 **Key proposals**

- 189 • *Introduce a European Anti-Poverty Strategy, paying particular attention to the gender*
190 *dimension, and monitor it through the European Semester.*
- 191 • *Boost the relevance of the EU Platform for Combatting Homelessness and secure an*
192 *operating budget.*

- 193 • *Support the S&D-driven call of the European Parliament to allocate at least EUR 20 billion*
- 194 *of funding to the European Child Guarantee and push for more ambitious child poverty*
- 195 *reduction targets.*
- 196 • *We want a European complementary unemployment reinsurance mechanism, to support*
- 197 *Member States in the event of a strong increase in unemployment.*
- 198 • *Build on the success of SURE to make it a permanent instrument to be prepared for future*
- 199 *crises.*
- 200 • *Fight inequalities through quality public services and investment strategies.*
- 201 • *Secure funding for Local Employment Guarantees, building on the success of the Youth*
- 202 *Employment Initiative.*
- 203 • *Continue to fight for increased social investment and improve access to social protection*
- 204 *for workers and the self-employed.*
- 205 • *Launch a concerted effort to combat work-related crime on the European labour market,*
- 206 *including initiatives to close legal loopholes, strengthening enforcement of existing*
- 207 *legislation and strengthening sanctions linked with the infringement of labour market*
- 208 *legislation aiming to protect workers.*
- 209 • *Ensure that access to European funding is linked to social conditionalities, including clear*
- 210 *collective bargaining conditions, and that companies that do not comply with labour rights*
- 211 *are excluded from it.*
- 212 • *Minimum income is often the last social safety net. National minimum income schemes*
- 213 *must be strengthened across the EU in order to improve the lives of citizens throughout*
- 214 *the continent.*
- 215 • *Develop common minimum standards for workers social security benefits with a focus on*
- 216 *duration, adequacy, and accessibility of the benefits.*
- 217 • *Continue working on the transparency, the simplification of administrative requirements*
- 218 *and procedures, clarity of rules, transferability of rights and entitlements and provision of*
- 219 *social security systems,*
- 220 • *Ensure better traceability of citizens' social security rights to fight fraud and exploitative*
- 221 *labour practices. Cross border enforcement should be further improved for better*
- 222 *transparency and coverage, with true digital tools such as a European Social Security*
- 223 *Pass and a European Labour Card.*
- 224 • *Support the inclusion of a Social Progress Protocol in the EU Treaties to guarantee that*
- 225 *workers, trade union and social rights take precedence over economic freedoms in the*
- 226 *event of conflict.*
- 227 • *Rebalance the European Semester by implementing the Social Convergence Framework.*
- 228 • *Adopt a Sustainable Development and Social Progress Pact.*
- 229

230 **3. Ensuring secure, sustainable and affordable energy for all**

231 Ensuring energy security and affordability for all is imperative for our political family. At the last
 232 PES Congress in Berlin in 2022, we adopted a European Pact for Affordable Energy and Social
 233 Cohesion to protect European citizens' purchasing power. In an exceptional time, we successfully
 234 spearheaded the agreements on keeping energy prices low with a cap on market revenues from
 235 renewables, nuclear and lignite, a windfall tax on fossil fuels, a price cap on gas and other energy
 236 sources, and a new liquified natural gas (LNG) price benchmark to curb market volatility. The EU
 237 has now set up a mechanism for joint gas procurement and has updated state aid rules to assist
 238 industries and society.

239 We are fighting for a stronger and strategically independent Energy Union that ensures security
 240 of supply, sustainability, and Europe's wellbeing. While the EU reduces reliance on Russian gas

241 with REPowerEU, we call for accelerating the complete phase out of fossil fuel usage, the rollout
242 of renewable and low-carbon sources, and the production of renewable hydrogen in line with
243 strategic independence energy needs. Europe needs to invest in comprehensive grid and storage
244 infrastructure, in new renewable energy production capacities, in interconnections, in ensuring
245 the fast deployment of renewable sources for energy generation and transmission, in increasing
246 energy efficiency, and in promoting structural changes to reduce energy demand. We call for the
247 regulation of the energy market to prevent artificial wholesale and retail price spikes, and to ensure
248 greater price predictability, stability, and affordability. To embrace this transformation towards
249 carbon neutrality, Europe needs massive investments in public digital infrastructure and
250 innovative technology, to become a digital leader, retain its global competitiveness, and unlock
251 huge benefits in terms of efficiency and productivity, thereby reducing emissions.

252 Key proposals

- 253 • *Intensify investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency and aim for a 100%*
254 *renewable or low-carbon energy mix to ensure sustainable energy independence and*
255 *energy affordability.*
- 256 • *Accelerate the roll out of renewable-based power and renewable energy production chain*
257 *capacities, including renewable hydrogen to completely phase out fossil fuels, and address*
258 *strategic energy independence needs.*
- 259 • *Focus on the development of clean technologies, including the production of renewable*
260 *hydrogen, to ensure that Europe is the leading force in green energy production and the*
261 *maintenance of a competitive industry with quality jobs.*
- 262 • *Ensure energy cohesion, and an efficient energy system by investing in sufficient*
263 *renewable energy production, in EU strategic infrastructure and a pan-European energy*
264 *grid and storage facility that ensures uninterrupted energy supply throughout Europe.*
- 265 • *Protect our strategic infrastructure, including our energy grid, against foreign interference.*
- 266 • *Push for the progressive reform of the wholesale electricity market to ensure that affordable*
267 *energy is provided, developing a long-term strategy to ensure price predictability and*
268 *affordability while incentivising investment in renewable sources.*
- 269 • *Protect the most vulnerable, develop a strategy against energy poverty, ensure social and*
270 *territorial cohesion, and consider energy a social service of general interest.*

271 **4. The Green Deal for a just transition to end climate change.**

272 The green transition must be accomplished as fast as possible. Our ultimate targets are to reach
273 carbon neutrality no later than 2050 and keep global warming to 1.5°C. This must be underpinned
274 by a just transition that protects workers and the most vulnerable and takes into account the
275 gender perspective. The PES continues to fight for a transition that prioritizes the wellbeing of
276 society and goes hand in hand with our economic interests. The Green Deal must remain
277 Europe's compass in this fair and sustainable transformation. It is about providing support so that
278 no one is penalized or left behind, but without any pauses in the ecological transition that must
279 move forward. With instruments such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility we aim to ensure
280 that there are sufficient investments to underpin the energy reforms that will help build an alliance
281 between environmental and social progress.

282 Socialists and democrats are the architects of political breakthroughs such as the European
283 Green Deal, the Climate Law, and the Fit for 55 package. With the Carbon Border Adjustment
284 Mechanism, we achieved a price on carbon pollution and addressed carbon leakages. We pushed
285 for an emission reduction system that includes more sectors and evens the playing field with the
286 second Emissions Trading System. With RefuelEU Aviation, AFIR, and FuelEU Maritime, we set
287 binding targets to accelerate the decarbonisation of all modes of transport and boost the uptake
288 of sustainable fuels. We pushed for green mobility, aiming to limit emissions from vehicles, make

289 the air cleaner, urge greater innovation in clean technologies and ensure territorial justice. We
290 pushed for the protection and restoration of our forests. By framing the sustainable transition with
291 the Green Deal, we can achieve dynamic economies, environmental protection, and a more social
292 Europe. We will ensure that carbon emissions are reduced by at least 55% by 2030 and call for
293 the reduction of short-lived emissions, such as methane. We will improve quality of life in Europe
294 and push to create the right conditions for other countries to join us on a journey towards a greener
295 future.

296 The fight against climate change is also a fight against inequality. With instruments such as the
297 Renovation Wave, the Just Transition Fund, the Social Climate Fund, and the good
298 implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds, we aim to make sure that all
299 citizens benefit from a green and sustainable future. The implementation of the One Health
300 approach should interlink human health, animal health and the environment. Animal welfare
301 needs to be an integral part of a society of solidarity and a healthy planet.

302 The European Green Deal has revolutionized our present and future. It ensures that Europe leads
303 the green transition while strengthening its social model and providing more and better jobs
304 throughout all EU regions, and a better environment in which citizens can enjoy better health. It
305 also sets a strong example in international fora such as the UN COP. Europe has been leading
306 the discussions to keep climate targets in place. Our political family will keep aiming to maintain
307 the ambition on climate mitigation and adaptation first and foremost at this year's COP28. The
308 impact of climate change is already being felt and will only get worse with time. The increasing
309 number and scale of the natural disasters that have hit many in Europe and the world this year -
310 such as floods, droughts, storms and forest fires – are a stark confirmation of the need to act now,
311 without any breaks. In Europe, we will continue spearheading this transition process. We call for
312 a new Investment Plan for the Green and Digital Transitions, to bring forward legislation that
313 ensures positive societal changes, and greater equality, including gender equality.

314 Key proposals

- 315 • *Ensure that we reach climate neutrality at the latest by 2050 and reduce emissions by at*
316 *least 55% by 2030, as well as propose ambitious EU-wide post-2030 intermediate targets*
317 *for 2035 and 2040 in accordance with the European Climate Law and scientific*
318 *recommendations. Our commitment to the EU becoming climate neutral in line with the*
319 *international commitments of the Paris Agreement should be reflected in a future revision*
320 *of the EU treaties.*
- 321 • *Maintain international pressure at the UNFCCC to ensure that global warming is kept at*
322 *1.5°C.*
- 323 • *Stress the need to accelerate climate action in all sectors of the EU economy, including*
324 *transport and land sectors, enhance ambition and promote a green and just transition,*
325 *contribute to emissions reduction, push for affordable, inclusive, safe and green mobility,*
326 *railway usage and infrastructure, as well as sustainable, aviation and maritime fuel.*
- 327 • *Ensure that the green transition leaves no one behind and is socially fair, placing particular*
328 *attention to most vulnerable groups, SMEs and territorial cohesion, with instruments such*
329 *as the Just Transition Fund and the Social Climate Fund.*
- 330 • *Establish green social protection schemes with EU support to cover people against the*
331 *impacts of climate change and environmental degradation and the impact of this transition*
332 *on jobs and living conditions.*
- 333 • *Ensure a shift to a circular economy by incentivising more sustainable modes of production*
334 *and consumption.*
- 335 • *Preserve precious raw materials and reduce waste through the sustainable use of raw*
336 *materials.*

- 337 • *Ensure the adequate support of vulnerable groups and areas directly impacted by climate*
- 338 *change and biodiversity loss with early prevention, adaptation, and financial assistance*
- 339 *mechanisms. Focus on fast rehabilitation services for people and areas already hit by forest*
- 340 *fires, floods and other natural disasters and step up international efforts for nature*
- 341 *restoration.*
- 342 • *Call for an Investment Plan for the Green and Digital Transitions that leverages the positive*
- 343 *interaction between digitalisation and the fight against climate change.*
- 344 • *Ensuring that consumers actively participate in the green transition, through the adoption*
- 345 *of Empowering consumers in the green transition and right to repair proposals.*

346 **5. Preserving biodiversity**

347 The EU's transition towards sustainability must also be a path towards restoring biodiversity,
 348 including with the full implementation of the Nature Restoration Law. The biodiversity and climate
 349 crises are interlinked. Overuse of land and sea, the direct exploitation of organisms, pollution and
 350 invasive alien species have contributed to the severe degradation of biodiversity and the
 351 ecosystem. Europe's forests, air, sea, water, soil, pollinators and animal species must be
 352 protected and restored, leading to healthy environments for our citizens, better health, resilient
 353 ecosystems and liveable cities. There should be zero tolerance for environmental crimes that
 354 reduce quality of life in the long term. Strict sanctions must be imposed on polluting companies
 355 that affect human health and the environment. A healthy seabed and soil can capture more
 356 carbon, assist in achieving climate neutrality goals, and produce food. European agriculture,
 357 fishing and aquaculture must become green and sustainable, in line with the Farm to Fork
 358 Strategy. More funds need to flow towards small and medium sized farms and rewards should be
 359 given to those who meet environmental and biodiversity criteria. We will fight for the reduction in
 360 the use of pesticides, the reduction of plastic and chemical pollution, and the affordability of
 361 organic food. Access to clean air, water and food are human rights. Access to water is the
 362 challenge of the century. We must promote water efficiency, the resilience of water sources and
 363 water storage and the development of distribution infrastructures. Society must learn to adapt to
 364 better water management practices in order to ensure universal access to water and food security.
 365 European solidarity and investments are needed to prevent water scarcity and ensure continuous
 366 water supply across the EU. The way forward is to make responsible use of our resources and
 367 materials, shifting to a circular economy, as described by the Circular Economy Action Plan. In
 368 our effort to restore and protect the environment we commit to follow a science-based approach
 369 and be in constant dialogue with social partners, civil society and local communities.

370 Key proposals

- 371 • *Restore Europe's forests, air, sea, water, and soil, reduce deforestation through*
- 372 *sustainable forestry and ensure the protection of natural reserves.*
- 373 • *Strengthen the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to ensure that EU agricultural policy*
- 374 *contributes to climate transition and increased biodiversity to secure sustainable, long-term*
- 375 *food production within the EU.*
- 376 • *Strengthen animal welfare standards through the adoption of strong and ambitious*
- 377 *legislation.*
- 378 • *Provide incentives for carbon capture, water filtration and clean air provision.*
- 379 • *Reduce the amount of microplastics released in sea, air, and soil and ensure a complete*
- 380 *ban on intentionally added microplastics in products.*
- 381 • *Promote the use of environmentally friendly pest control systems and reduce the use of*
- 382 *chemical pesticides. Member States should set targets to reduce their pesticide use and*
- 383 *ensure that the EU wide targets are achieved, while taking into account national*
- 384 *specificities.*
- 385 • *Promote the use of more sustainable and environmentally friendly fishing practices.*

- 386 • *Safeguard food security by ensuring the resilience of our sustainable food production and*
387 *consumption, restoring nature, and ensuring the affordability of healthy food, including*
388 *organic food.*

389 **6. An economically resilient Europe that is ready to face crises**

390 Public investments at the local, regional, national and EU level, supported by European
391 resources, are key to a resilient, sustainable, and fair economy. In addition to this, for several
392 years, we defended an update of the EU's economic governance framework to better reflect the
393 investment needs of our societies, with more credible targets, duties, and obligations to avoid
394 social regression. In the context of the green and digital transition, we must take necessary
395 measures to ensure that all resources in the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Structural
396 Funds are accessed effectively. At the height of the pandemic, we adapted to the impact that this
397 extraordinary crisis had on public finances. We pushed for the activation of the general escape
398 clause of the Stability and Growth Pact, allowing us to overcome the Covid-19 crisis successfully.
399 This temporary option must be kept on the table for exceptional crises in the future. Mechanisms
400 to account for the assistance given to Ukraine in the new economic governance framework should
401 be explored.

402 The proposals of the European Commission open the way for a progressive economic
403 governance reform. We must use this opportunity and the ongoing legislative process to reinforce
404 the capacity for green and social spending, promoting shared prosperity, reducing social and
405 gender inequalities and ensuring no return to austerity, better democratic accountability and
406 greater coordination at European level, while strengthening our commitment to make public
407 finances social and economically sustainable. The reform of the economic governance rules must
408 ensure that they are effective on the ground.

409 Next Generation EU, the biggest investment plan Europe has ever had, is one of the greatest
410 successes of social-democratic-inspired European economic policy, of which we are proud. In
411 addition to making full use of existing instruments, we continue to stand for a permanent long-
412 term EU investment capacity with real European solidarity. Building on the success of SURE,
413 developing it as a permanent tool would permit countries to address future emergencies by
414 protecting workers from economic instability. The European Semester must be complemented
415 with instruments to address social imbalances by introducing a Social Convergence Framework.

416 We support the completion of the Banking Union to protect taxpayers from bankers' mistakes. We
417 also support the full implementation of the Basel standards for banks, to ensure the resilience of
418 EU banks against domestic and international turmoil. The shadow banking sector should be
419 subject to the same levels of regulatory standards and oversight. Cryptocurrencies are even more
420 unstable and predatory than traditional finance and must be subjected to the same regulatory and
421 anti-money-laundering oversight.

422 Key proposals

- 423 • *Reform the EU economic governance framework to stimulate growth and resilience-*
424 *enhancing public investment to prevent fiscal-structural plans from causing social*
425 *regression, with a social "do no significant harm" clause.*
426 • *Build on the success of SURE to make it a permanent instrument to be prepared for future*
427 *crises.*
428 • *Fully integrate the Social Convergence Framework as part of the European Semester,*
429 *establishing social objectives at the same level as economic and environmental ones.*
430 • *Complete the Banking Union including the third pillar, and advance the Capital Markets*
431 *Union.*

432 **7. An economy at the service of the people**

433 We want to promote the European model social market economy. We want to create an
434 environment that supports SMEs, cooperatives, innovative start-ups, and industries that
435 contribute positively to transitions as a key component of the European economic fabric, with an
436 indicative target of one million new start-ups by 2027, fostering women's entrepreneurship in
437 particular. We remain committed to the implementation of the Commission's Social Economy
438 Action Plan, which will adapt the regulatory framework and will raise the visibility of social
439 economy enterprises while creating an environment for the social economy to thrive, including
440 the necessary access to markets and finance.

441 Private finance and corporations must serve our public objectives. We need to complete the
442 Capital Markets Union to mobilise private capital, but we must also introduce clear green
443 standards and reporting requirements to prevent greenwashing. The CMU project should benefit
444 everyone, including ensuring good outcomes for ordinary citizens and their savings. The
445 European Commission and European system of financial supervision, including the European
446 Central Bank must act jointly to reorient the financial system towards enabling our transition goals,
447 making it more resilient in the face of climate risks.

448 Companies must be held accountable for their activities throughout their value chains. The burden
449 of proof should be placed on them to demonstrate that they are in full compliance with international
450 standards.

451 **Key proposals**

- 452 • *Increase measures to steer private investment towards the green transition, ensuring that*
453 *its implementation does not deepen inequalities between regions.*
- 454 • *Set common targets for public bodies, enterprises, fund managers and pension funds to*
455 *divest from fossil fuels and invest in green assets.*
- 456 • *Combat greenwashing by introducing EU-wide minimum standards for sustainable*
457 *investment funds, to avoid investment funds being labelled as green while still funding*
458 *unsustainable economic activities.*
- 459 • *Strengthen the mandate of the European system of financial supervision to make the*
460 *financial system contribute to the transition and strengthen its resilience to climate risks.*
- 461 • *Adopt an ambitious Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and Forced Labour*
462 *Regulation to make European companies accountable for the social, human rights and*
463 *environmental conditions throughout their value chains.*
- 464 • *Implement the Social Economy Action Plan.*
- 465 • *Adopt social and gender equality conditionality in public procurement.*
- 466 • *Support women in the economy, in particular by supporting women's entrepreneurship and*
467 *start-ups.*

468 **8. Tax justice: ensure all individuals and corporations pay their fair share.**

469 Fair and progressive taxation is essential both to the functioning of welfare states and to tackling
470 inequalities. Those who earn more, should also contribute more to the common good – not the
471 other way around. In order to make that happen, Member States must coordinate and cooperate
472 more on tax matters and financial transparency, ensuring the proper implementation of the public
473 country by country reporting directive. Our governments secured the OECD/G20 deal on
474 minimum corporate taxation, and we will pursue the global fight for tax justice, so that wealthy
475 corporations and individuals cannot evade, avoid, or optimize their tax bills. This deal enjoyed
476 overwhelming support among Member States, yet the EU implementation was delayed by
477 Member States that raised unrelated disputes. To prevent blockages by Member States and
478 ensure a smoother implementation, several measures must be considered, including, but not

479 limited to, a move towards the extension of qualified majority voting in certain tax matters. Many
480 corporations have taken advantage of the energy price instability to increase profits margins;
481 these should be subjected to additional taxation. We need to put a stop to this greedflation,
482 whereby corporate profits soar and price hikes are pushed towards consumers, which diminishes
483 people's purchasing power. According to the International Monetary Fund and the European
484 Central Bank, rising corporate profits account for almost half the increase in Europe's inflation
485 over the past two years as companies increased prices by more than spiking costs of imported
486 energy. In the EU, the top 1% own 25% of all wealth. Extremely wealthy individuals should also
487 be made to contribute through additional taxation and by ensuring that income from capital is not
488 taxed less than wages. Current taxation policies reinforce gender biases, inequality, and
489 traditional gender roles. While most Member States have abolished tax regulations that explicitly
490 differentiate between men and women, implicit biases are still prevalent. Taxation policies need
491 to be made gender sensitive.

492 Key proposals

- 493 • *Support the implementation of a coordinated taxation of capital gains in the EU Member*
494 *States.*
- 495 • *Distribute wealth fairly by taxing the ultrarich with an EU initiative to support the*
496 *implementation of a wealth tax and a tax on top earned income in Member States.*
- 497 • *Support the European Parliament in calling for the European Commission to assess the*
498 *feasibility of an excise duty on the repurchase of shares by corporations.*
- 499 • *Address the profit-driven inflation identified by the IMF and the ECB by continuing to*
500 *support the European framework to recover windfall corporate profits, especially on the*
501 *energy market.*
- 502 • *Further halt tax competition by harmonising corporate income tax bases in line with the*
503 *ongoing OECD/G20 process, so companies cease to exploit different EU legislations to*
504 *minimise their tax bills.*
- 505 • *Continue the efforts to establish a Financial Transactions Tax by relaunching the enhanced*
506 *cooperation process to achieve an FTT in as many Member States as possible.*
- 507 • *If a global deal cannot be reached on reallocating taxing rights, implement a Single Market*
508 *Levy on multinationals operating in the EU.*
- 509 • *Ensure that the application of sales taxes does not disproportionately affect women,*
510 *notably those on menstrual products.*
- 511 • *Europe needs a common financial registry and a Financial Intelligence Unit to better tackle*
512 *illicit financial flows by improving monitoring, accountability and law enforcement. We*
513 *support the Unshell Directive, which will put an end to corporate entities that serve only to*
514 *avoid tax.*
- 515 • *Introduce obligations for firms enabling tax avoidance. We must go further by introducing*
516 *penalties for intermediaries making profits by helping large corporations to avoid taxes.*
- 517 • *Move towards the extension of qualified majority voting in specific tax matters.*

518 **9. Quality of life in cities and regions**

519 Changes need to be made at global, continental and Member State level, but many must take
520 place regionally and locally for them to be successful. The question of social justice and territorial
521 cohesion is inseparable from that of a fair transition. We need long-term solutions to ensure that
522 this transition offers industrial modernization, promotes social cohesion, averts rural
523 delocalization, addresses depopulation and talent drain, and encourages an active and healthy
524 lifestyle. This transition can strengthen the wellbeing and longevity of generations to come.
525 Everyone deserves a good quality of life, irrespective of their background, age, disability, gender,
526 or sexual orientation.

527 The EU should demonstrate solidarity through a strong cohesion policy, to support regions, cities,
528 coastal, outermost, sparsely populated and rural areas in the sustainable transformation of our
529 societies. We must engage in the debate on the future of cohesion policy, building on the
530 progressive principles of cohesion. We must develop sustainable and affordable solutions for all
531 regarding urban planning, public transport, housing, including social housing, care services,
532 buildings, energy and public spaces. Citizens need to be able to make informed choices to actively
533 contribute to tackling climate change and our environmental crisis. Tools such as the New Urban
534 Mobility Framework, Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition and the Right to Repair
535 Initiatives, give citizens the opportunity to become active actors and beneficiaries of the green
536 transition. Furthermore, initiatives such as the Urban Agenda for the EU and the European
537 Territorial Agenda may provide useful guidance in the implementation of funds at local and
538 regional level.

539 Key proposals

- 540 • *Simplify and flexibilise rules and procedures of Cohesion Policy, strengthen the place-*
541 *based approach, keep a long-term perspective of investments as well as create synergies*
542 *with and draw lessons from other existing instruments and funds.*
- 543 • *Ensure Member States meet the requirements to receive funding.*
- 544 • *Provide the funding allocated to Cohesion Policy. To ensure ongoing implementation of*
545 *projects and programmes for a cohesive Europe in the context of rising costs, an inflation*
546 *compensation should be explored.*
- 547 • *Cohesion Policy is one of the most successful policies of the EU. It promotes territorial*
548 *convergence, social and economic development, equality, and benefits its citizens, its*
549 *regions, its Member States, and the Union as a whole. It is the most visible manifestation*
550 *of European solidarity. The next Multiannual Financial Framework must ensure a strong*
551 *Cohesion Policy, while promoting measures to support the efficient and full use of the*
552 *available funds.*
- 553 • *Strengthen the multilevel governance model through increased involvement of local and*
554 *regional actors in decision-making processes, as they are the government level closest to*
555 *the citizens.*
- 556 • *Support the development of cross-border administrative cooperation and the infrastructure*
557 *that goes with it, with the funding of INTERREG.*
- 558 • *Introduce an Erasmus+ for civil servants of the EU Member States.*
- 559 • *To sustain a rich cultural sector is a key element in the welfare of citizens and ensuring*
560 *European cultural diversity as a fundamental EU value.*
- 561 • *Support measures that empower and strengthen the role of local and regional authorities*
562 *in delivering the policies that better the lives of all citizens and create cohesion between*
563 *cities and communities.*
- 564 • *Introduce new dimensions to the concept of “rural proofing”, such as demographic impact,*
565 *job creation, educational framework and gender impact to better take into account the*
566 *reality of rural areas in EU policies.*
- 567 • *Assist regional and local authorities in the drive to strengthen and further develop*
568 *sustainable and affordable public transport, exploring free travel for target groups such as*
569 *the young, the elderly and low-income families.*

570 **10. Affordable and quality housing for all**

571 Our political family is fighting homelessness and fiercely stands up for the right to housing. For
572 too many Europeans, finding an affordable and decent place to live is a dire problem. We call for
573 a European Plan for Affordable Housing that would support the construction of new affordable
574 housing and the renovation of the existing housing stock. We further advocate for reforms of the
575 state aid rules to allow national and local authorities to invest more in public housing. We must

576 protect tenants and promote the principle of good governance at all levels and for all regulations
577 in the field of housing. Those struggling in the housing market the most, among them the young
578 and elderly, must especially be supported. Our political family advocated for the Renovation Wave
579 and Affordable Housing Initiative. We additionally want to ensure a balanced approach on
580 measures on short-term rentals.

581 Key proposals

- 582 • *Introduce a European Plan for Affordable Housing that reforms state aid rules to allow*
583 *national and local authorities to invest more in public housing. Specifically, revise the*
584 *Services of General Economic Interest Directive in view of broadening the definition of*
585 *social housing to enable the implementation of sustainability goals such as social mix and*
586 *social cohesion.*
- 587 • *Support the Renovation Wave and the New European Bauhaus as key components of the*
588 *green transition, by significant public investment in energy-efficient renovation and*
589 *construction.*
- 590 • *Seize the opportunity of the green transition and Renovation Wave to increase the safety*
591 *of buildings. Develop an EU-wide residential fire safety strategy that secures the objectives*
592 *of the Green Deal and that protects the most vulnerable citizens.*
- 593 • *Introduce a European definition of areas vulnerable to energy poverty, locate them by an*
594 *audit of the European building stock and take targeted action in these areas.*
- 595 • *Introduce anti-speculation policies targeting the explosive growth of short-term apartment*
596 *rentals and the accumulation of housing property owned by investment and vulture funds.*
- 597 • *Assist cities in establishing and implementing the approach of Housing First and secure*
598 *funding in this regard.*
- 599 • *Introduce and better take into account specific qualitative criteria going beyond the financial*
600 *bid when it comes to tenders for public housing projects.*
- 601 • *Introduce tougher regulations preventing housing being left vacant and avoiding the*
602 *privatization of public or social housing.*
- 603 • *Include affordable and quality housing indicators in the European Semester.*
- 604 • *Promote making at least 30% of new construction affordable housing for the lower-income*
605 *group, and another 30% affordable for the middle-income group.*

606 **11. Affordable and accessible quality care and healthcare for all**

607 Care and support must be core values of our society. Access to healthcare, prevention and early
608 detection of diseases is a fundamental part of our model of society. It is also one of the biggest
609 concerns of our citizens. Covid-19 highlighted the vast disparities in European healthcare systems
610 and demonstrated the need for high and well-funded quality healthcare for all. As socialists and
611 democrats, we furthermore recognise the vital role of healthcare workers and advocate for fair
612 working conditions, decent wages and strong labour protection.

613 The Covid-19 crisis demonstrated that the EU is a crucial actor in cross-border health crises.
614 Health authorities in the EU worked in solidarity. This was unprecedented and offered the best
615 chance of success, amongst others in offering vaccines to all our citizens. Such collective action
616 remains important as the EU continues to be confronted by new emergencies, such as war,
617 inflation, natural disasters and climate change, increasingly serious disruptions in the supply of
618 medicines and health products, the risk of new pathogens with pandemic potential, and increasing
619 levels of antimicrobial resistance. The EU should therefore strengthen its health emergency
620 preparedness and response systems.

621 Quality healthcare must be affordable and accessible to all. We promote the One Health approach
622 and to use the European Health Union to supplement national healthcare systems. We recall that

623 the Covid-19 pandemic has shown gaps and opportunities for improvement, including in terms of
624 health workforce as well as availability and affordability of medicines. Working together at EU
625 level may help preventing such issues in the future. It is also high time for fair pricing,
626 transparency, and equal access to medicines, while supporting innovation in the sector. We need
627 to act in a coordinated manner. Possibilities to coordinate voluntary joint procurement of
628 treatments, materials, and equipment, also outside of crises, should be facilitated by the European
629 Commission.

630 Putting mental health on the agenda is long overdue. We must deliver on the implementation of
631 an EU Mental Health Strategy, promoting a preventive approach, identifying resources and needs,
632 fighting stigma, raising standards, and disseminating best practices. Particular attention must be
633 paid to those who are disproportionately affected by mental health issues such as the young, the
634 elderly and women.

635 Key proposals

- 636 • *Support measures prioritising and establishing affordable quality healthcare and treatment*
637 *for all by, implementing Principle 16 of the European Pillar of Social Rights which grants*
638 *“everyone [...] the right to timely access to affordable, preventive and curative health care*
639 *of good quality”. Additionally pursue an ambitious reform of the EU pharmaceutical*
640 *legislation putting access, affordability and environmental sustainability at the centre.*
- 641 • *Modernise the European framework for the support and organisation of the healthcare*
642 *professions, including revising the Professional Qualifications Directive and developing a*
643 *strategy fighting medical brain drain in Europe to allow for a territorial cohesion in access*
644 *to healthcare.*
- 645 • *Increase investment in public healthcare both in urban and rural areas where it is needed,*
646 *to ensure access to quality healthcare wherever citizens live.*
- 647 • *Increase EU action on non-communicable or chronic diseases, including the*
648 *implementation of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan.*
- 649 • *Promote increasing the ratio of medical practitioners per inhabitant and facilitate*
650 *accessibility to consultations.*
- 651 • *Fully exploit the shared competence that the EU and its Member States have on defined*
652 *aspects of public health. To better prepare for future pandemics, improve the EU health*
653 *emergency governance framework and include the European Health Union in a future*
654 *revision of the Treaty, with continued respect for health systems as a national competence.*
- 655 • *Fully avoid or reduce to a minimum “out of pocket payments” for patients.*
- 656 • *Foster and invest in gender-specific medical research.*
- 657 • *Reform public incentives for medical research and innovation to better address the highest*
658 *medical needs for our patients and society.*
- 659 • *Implement models of fair and transparent medicine prices in Europe.*
- 660 • *Pursue the voluntary joint procurement of medicines and medical equipment, facilitated by*
661 *the European Commission.*
- 662 • *Antimicrobial resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health. We need to practice*
663 *prudent use of antibiotics for the benefit of the society as a whole, with a holistic EU action*
664 *plan, including a more ambitious EU list of antibiotics specifically reserved for human use*
665 *and better monitoring, reporting, and education in EU Member States.*
- 666 • *Implement an EU Mental Health Strategy by promoting a preventive approach.*
- 667 • *Develop and implement national mental health strategies in every EU Member State.*
- 668 • *Promote the “health in all policies” principle in all public institutions such as schools, sport,*
669 *agriculture, urban planning, and other fields.*

- 670 • *Prioritise access to and affordability of quality medicine and improve the environmental*
671 *sustainability of production.*

672 **12. Support quality public services**

673 Public services are the asset of those who have none, they are essential for every European
674 citizen and a crucial part of our society. We want well-funded public services, including social
675 services, which are essential for making our societies more equal, strong, and resilient,
676 particularly in times of crisis. We will continue to push for investments that benefit everyone and
677 allow for a redistribution of wealth. The EU must support this strengthening of the welfare state.

678 Services of general interest are core elements of the EU social market economy and are
679 instrumental to the daily lives, comfort and security of citizens and enterprises. Competition policy
680 and state aid rules must be on the side of the people, not corporate interests, and must not impede
681 public and non-profit alternatives to the marketization of public services.

682 Public authorities at the local, national, and European level have a key role too in promoting quality
683 jobs in Europe. They must promote collective bargaining, the respect of trade union rights and
684 guarantee decent working conditions, fair remuneration and stable contracts. As buyers of private
685 goods and services, they have a strong leverage over private companies. Public procurement
686 must be put to good use with a strengthening of social clauses. We cannot accept that public
687 money supports a race to the bottom.

688 Key proposals

- 689 • *Ensure universal access to high-quality and affordable public and essential services and*
690 *make it a top European priority.*
- 691 • *Support the digitalisation of social services, where appropriate. Still maintain offline access*
692 *to social services.*
- 693 • *Ensure that all public procurement contains binding quality, environmental and social*
694 *clauses, including on collective bargaining. No public funding should go to any company*
695 *that fails to uphold high social standards, decent working conditions and respect for*
696 *workers and trade union rights.*
- 697 • *Ensure access to services of general and economic interest through a revision of the de*
698 *minimis regulation and the Services of General Economic Interest Directive.*
- 699 • *Continue investing in public services and ensure they have the means to meet their*
700 *mission.*

701 **II. Promoting democracy and gender equality**

702 The defence of democracy has historically been at the very root of our political movement. The
703 fight against dictatorships and autocracy, the promotion of all forms of equality, and the equality
704 of all citizens is the motor that drives our political action. Today, the socialist and social-democratic
705 family must step up to defend fundamental values that ought to be taken for granted but are under
706 direct and indirect threats. We see the disregard for the rule of law by some right-wing EU
707 governments, a real backlash against women's rights and the rights of the LGBTI community, and
708 a willingness by some conservative powers to do away with the historical responsibility to keep
709 the far right out of power. Internationally, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a direct challenge to
710 the international order that must be based on the respect of sovereignty, multilateral
711 understandings, and the right of self-determination. At the same time, the evolution of our world
712 gives birth to new opportunities but also new threats to the good functioning of democratic
713 societies. The role, freedom, and independence of media, or the future of social media and the
714 regulation of artificial intelligence are key areas where politics must step up to secure plurality and

715 freedom as key elements of the democracy of the 21st century. The following objectives are our
716 guideline for a strong defence of democracy, in Europe and abroad:

717 **13. Maintain full support for Ukraine**

718 Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is not just a violation of sovereignty but a war on
719 European values. We will maintain our unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty within its
720 internationally recognised borders. The EU must continue to provide political, humanitarian,
721 financial and military support to Ukraine, remaining particularly vigilant to prevent women and
722 children from falling victim to sexual violence, trafficking, and exploitation, as conflict exacerbates
723 existing gender inequalities and disproportionately affects women.

724 Socialists and democrats must lead the EU in developing a reconstruction plan centred around
725 social fairness and inclusion, sustainability, good governance and local ownership, and
726 transparency and accountability, in line with Ukraine's commitments as an EU candidate country.
727 The EU must maintain support to the Republic of Moldova as it faces spillovers from Russia's war
728 in Ukraine and relative hybrid threats.

729 Women's empowerment is essential to the support for Ukraine. Meaningful participation of women
730 in conflict-related policies and post-conflict reconstruction increases the sustainability and
731 success and the resilience of local communities. Protection and support for women activists and
732 NGOs, educators and leaders in conflict zones must be a priority.

733 The international community must cooperate closely to secure justice for victims of war crimes
734 and hold the President of the Russian Federation and Russia's political and military leadership
735 accountable. The EU must continue looking into ways in which frozen Russian assets could be
736 made available for use in Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, in accordance with EU and
737 international law. Furthermore, the PES supports further sanctions on Russia and their stricter
738 enforcement until a just peace is re-established on Ukraine's terms.

739 The PES will stand for an EU that supports Ukraine's resistance while maintaining diplomatic
740 efforts to ease the humanitarian crisis created by Russia's war, in close coordination with Ukraine
741 and international allies. The EU should use all its economic and diplomatic influence to put
742 pressure on Russia's allies and be a key player in the construction of a new European peace and
743 security framework, based on strong security guarantees for Ukraine, the opening of a process of
744 EU membership and a close association with the NATO framework. The PES must be the leading
745 force behind this effort, placing the EU as a key actor – in close cooperation with the OSCE – to
746 shape a "new Helsinki" architecture around key security and peace guarantees based on the
747 principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and coupled with a strategic review of
748 the EU neighbourhood policy.

749 The PES stands with all regions of the world against the fallout from this war, especially the food
750 crisis that is harming the Global South. The EU is working at an unprecedented speed and scale
751 to mitigate the consequences and has already committed to providing EUR 8 billion for global
752 food security alone. The PES supports the extension of this aid and will push for change in the
753 world's food systems in favour of fair, sustainable, and resilient food chains.

754 Key proposals:

- 755 • *Support Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion by political, financial, humanitarian,*
756 *and military means.*
- 757 • *Support women and girls in Ukraine, particularly in conflict areas, including on gender-*
758 *based violence, on women empowerment, and within the entire rebuilding process.*
- 759 • *Ensure women's full and equal representation and meaningful participation in all levels and*
760 *all stages of conflict related policies and decision-making.*

- 761 • *Support displaced people by offering collective protection and improving efforts to fight*
- 762 *exploitation, particularly in the case of vulnerable groups.*
- 763 • *Support the development of a reconstruction plan for Ukraine centred around social*
- 764 *fairness and inclusion, sustainability, good governance and local ownership, strengthening*
- 765 *social dialogue and the involvement of trade unions, as well as facilitating the involvement*
- 766 *and integration of civil society organisations that are working in Ukraine and frontline*
- 767 *countries at all levels of this process.*
- 768 • *Maintain the pressure on Russia's capacity to pursue its aggression by implementing*
- 769 *severe sanctions and preventing their circumvention.*
- 770 • *Sanctions on luxury goods such as diamonds should be installed as soon as possible,*
- 771 *preferably within the context of the G7 to increase their effectiveness.*
- 772 • *Support the International Criminal Court and international investigations related to the*
- 773 *crime of aggression and war crimes.*
- 774 • *Support a stronger EU policy on the countries that help circumvent EU sanctions on Russia;*
- 775 *Continue looking into ways in which frozen Russian assets could be made available for*
- 776 *use in Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.*
- 777 • *Support EU Member States in facing the repercussions of the war, from rising energy and*
- 778 *food prices to providing support to Ukraine, Moldova and displaced people, to the*
- 779 *establishment of solidarity lanes for the export of Ukrainian agricultural products.*
- 780 • *Support the countries hit by the food crisis by providing immediate humanitarian relief and*
- 781 *including food security, resilience, and sustainability in long-term development aid*
- 782 *programmes.*

783 **14. Defending democracy and the rule of law**

784 We have seen serious challenges to the rule of law, media freedom and fundamental rights. The

785 rise of the far-right leads to attacks on the rights of women, the LGBTI community, migrants,

786 asylum seekers and refugees. We must protect the rights of the most vulnerable who are the most

787 affected by the far right and its policies. We must protect the independence of judicial systems

788 and judges, the right of everyone to a fair trial, the NGOs and activists and also safeguard freedom

789 of expression and a free press. The rule of law conditionality mechanism must be applied

790 comprehensively and resolutely. Any decision to lift a measure under the mechanism must be

791 based on reliable proof that the targeted Member State has thoroughly corrected the detected

792 systematic shortcomings. Granting European funding to Member States must always be

793 conditional on full respect for the fundamental democratic and human values on which we have

794 all agreed, and on the application of effective anti-corruption policies. Additionally, we must

795 empower the European Commission with more effective tools to safeguard our democracy and

796 strengthen the democratic role of the European Parliament, moving towards the right of initiative.

797 The PES condemns the rapprochement of some parties of the traditional right and liberals with

798 the far right, and their willingness to work with them at all levels. We must fight the normalisation

799 of the far right which contributes to their ascension and access to government. This normalisation

800 is also fuelled by those traditional right-wing parties that increasingly adopt far-right discourse and

801 policies, which contribute to their diffusion in society. Furthermore, several far-right movements

802 responsible for blocking the development of the European project are particularly close to the

803 interests expressed by Russia in its illegal war against Ukraine.

804 We encourage the involvement of civil society in shaping the future of our society and condemn

805 all governments and movements that threaten NGOs and activists but also journalists and whistle-

806 blowers for doing their work. Media freedom and pluralism are enshrined in the EU Charter of

807 Fundamental Rights because they are a fundamental pillar of any democracy. We will fight to

808 preserve and promote the pluralism and independence of media. In this context the adoption of a

809 strong European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) is crucial. We consider abusive court proceedings
810 aimed at silencing journalists, human rights defenders, academics and anyone carrying out acts
811 of public participation unacceptable, and therefore fully support the proposal for an anti-SLAPPs
812 (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) Directive, another achievement of our political
813 family. At the same time, it is clear that we must set clear rules to ensure that social media plays
814 a constructive, and not a destructive role for democracy. Narrow business interests of Big Tech
815 companies cannot be allowed to undermine democracy. Additionally, it is critical that strong
816 safeguards are put in place to prevent any malicious foreign interference and abuse. We are
817 looking forward to reviewing the European Commission proposal on the Defence of Democracy
818 Package, which is set to outline a comprehensive strategy on this topic before the European
819 elections 2024.

820 As socialists and democrats, we believe that transparency, accountability, and integrity are
821 essential principles within the EU institutions. Unethical individual behaviours must be prevented,
822 persecuted, and condemned as it undermines the credibility of the Union as a whole and is a
823 threat to democracy and public trust. It is therefore of the utmost importance to strengthen
824 confidence in the Union's decision-making and democracy if we are to prevent the far-right and
825 other regressive movements from seeking to undermine our principles, values and institutions.

826 Democracy is the cornerstone on which the EU is built and without it no society can be fully
827 inclusive, free, and equal. We want to promote democracy and active citizenship at the local,
828 regional, national, and European level. It is important for our democracy to consider and represent
829 all voices. Political participation and representation therefore need to be fully accessible and
830 inclusive. Democratic societies must give a real voice to all citizens not only during election time,
831 but by permanently empowering them through meaningful consultations and mechanisms such
832 as participatory budgets on national and local level.

833 Key proposals

- 834 • *Support the full exploitation of the Lisbon Treaty to ensure the best execution of European*
835 *policies and improving EU decision-making, including the activation of passerelle clauses*
836 *for extending Qualified Majority Voting in Council.*
- 837 • *Support the timely and full implementation of the rule of law conditionality mechanism*
838 *alongside other tools and mechanisms aimed at protecting the EU's financial interests.*
- 839 • *Support the full and consequent application of clear deadlines for recommendations in the*
840 *European Commission's annual rule of law report and establish clear links between the*
841 *report and other rule of law tools that could be triggered if Member States ignore*
842 *recommendations: be they the Article 7 procedure, infringement procedures or the*
843 *conditionality mechanism.*
- 844 • *Reform the Article 7 procedure, ensuring the Commission and Member States can act more*
845 *swiftly in cases of serious breaches of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights*
846 *within EU Member States.*
- 847 • *Fight the normalisation of the far-right parties and far-right discourse. Continue to defend*
848 *a "cordon sanitaire" of democratic and pro-EU political groups in the European Parliament*
849 *against far-right parties by creating our own progressive narrative.*
- 850 • *Addressing territorial neglect – which creates a geography of discontent and the rise of the*
851 *far-right – with place-based solutions to provide opportunities for all, invest in innovation*
852 *locally and promote public engagement at the local and regional level.*
- 853 • *Tackle economic inequality and insecurity, which are known to lead to a decline in*
854 *confidence in the democratic system and parties and increase the chance of driving them*
855 *into the arms of far-right parties.*

- 856 • *Empower the European Commission with more effective tools to safeguard our democracy*
857 *and play a driving role in making the forthcoming Defence of Democracy package*
858 *consistent with social democratic values.*
- 859 • *Promote active, participatory citizenship exercises recognising the value of partnering and*
860 *engaging with civil society at all levels and across all institutions.*
- 861 • *Protect journalists, whistle-blowers, civil society activists, and media freedom. Fully support*
862 *the proposal for an anti-SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) Directive.*
- 863 • *Set clear rules on the operation of social media, notably to avoid the spread of malicious*
864 *fake news.*
- 865 • *Take active protective measures against foreign interference in critical media, by stepping*
866 *up action with social media platforms to improve algorithms resistant to misinformation, by*
867 *creating effective digital and media literacy programmes that strengthen public resistance*
868 *to misinformation, and by supporting sanctions for major technology companies that fail to*
869 *tackle the problem.*
- 870 • *Achieve a strong European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) to protect media pluralism and*
871 *independence in the EU.*
- 872 • *Reversing the trend of shrinking civic space in the EU by strengthening the recognition,*
873 *protection and engagement of civil society actors.*
- 874 • *Encourage the EU institutions to strengthen and align their ethics and integrity frameworks,*
875 *including by ensuring effective monitoring, oversight and enforcement.*
- 876 • *Increase transparency and democratic scrutiny in the use of EU funds, and investigate and*
877 *prosecute individuals and organisations found guilty of fraud against EU funds with the*
878 *support of the EPPO and OLAF, which have to be empowered with the necessary powers*
879 *and provided with sufficient human and financial resources.*

880 **15. A Europe free from discrimination, where everyone is treated equally.**

881 Europe must not blink when it comes to defending human rights. Increasingly we are seeing
882 backlash and resistance to gender equality, women’s rights and LGBTI rights across Europe.
883 These attacks are inherently linked to de-democratisation and undermine European values and
884 fundamental rights. The PES calls for the implementation of an EU Women’s Rights Charter that
885 takes into consideration the intersectional inequalities that women face in all their diversity and
886 ensures women’s rights can never be revoked.

887 At every level, women must be equal participants in decision-making, negotiations, and solutions.
888 The feminist fight is central to our political family. The PES is fully committed to the Sustainable
889 Development Goal of achieving full gender equality by 2030. We are the ones behind the EU
890 Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, and the EU Care Strategy. We are proud that after 10 years
891 of fighting, our family secured the adoption of the Women on Boards Directive, pushed for the
892 adoption of a strong Pay Transparency Directive, and advocated for EU accession to the Istanbul
893 Convention. The EU is still far from being the Union of Equality that we want. We must close the
894 gender care gap and address the acute feminisation and undervaluing of informal care. We need
895 to make the “equal carer – equal earner” model a reality. It is imperative that women and others
896 who provide care are acknowledged accordingly to its value. We need a European feminist
897 economy that does not reinforce existing gender biases but tackles all kinds of discrimination.
898 Recognising the value of the care economy is one step in closing the gender pay and pension
899 gaps and gender inequalities in the labour market.

900 Gender is a cross-cutting issue that should be considered from the beginning and continuously
901 implemented throughout all policy-making processes. To achieve our goals of a European feminist
902 economy, gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and gender impact assessments should be
903 committed to in every financial decision at EU and national level, including the Multiannual

904 Financial Framework, particularly in economic transitions, as well as reallocating EU money to
905 promote gender equality measures. We are pushing for the EU to establish a formal Council
906 configuration for gender equality, diversity, and anti-discrimination and to adopt an intersectional
907 feminist foreign policy.

908 We will work to unblock the Anti-Discrimination Directive in the Council to ensure that the EU
909 offers comprehensive protection against discrimination in all areas of life, regardless of a person's
910 gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation. Racism, as
911 well as other forms of discrimination, remains a real problem in our societies, and we will continue
912 the fight for open and inclusive societies. Diversity is part of the wealth of our continent.

913 In a Union of Equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the right to free, safe
914 and legal abortion care and the availability of free, safe and modern contraception, has to be a
915 reality for every person in the EU, as they are not only a question of healthcare, but also of
916 fundamental rights. We want to include the right to free, safe and legal abortion care in the EU
917 Charter of Fundamental Rights. Furthermore, we want to make comprehensive education on
918 sexuality and relationships a right; we want easy, legal, safe, and affordable access to
919 contraception, abortion care, and menstrual hygiene. These rights must be equally extended to
920 the LGBTI community since all discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity has
921 no place in democracy.

922

923 Key proposals

- 924 • *Unblock the Anti-Discrimination Directive in the Council as a tool to fight racism and*
925 *discrimination.*
- 926 • *Strengthen and reinforce equality bodies and trade unions to successfully tackle structural*
927 *discrimination, including by collective redress.*
- 928 • *Take steps to close the gender pay and pension gaps by fully transposing the EU Women*
929 *on Boards Directive, EU Work-Life Balance and Pay Transparency Directives into national*
930 *law; and by monitoring implementation reports closely.*
- 931 • *Implement and enhance the European Care Strategy to a holistic "Care Deal for Europe".*
- 932 • *Fight gender stereotypes and the rise of anti-'gender ideology', anti-'feminist', anti-LGBTI*
933 *movements that undermine and resist gender equality, women's rights and LGBTI rights*
934 *by taking all necessary steps to develop and implement an EU Women's Rights Charter.*
- 935 • *Ensure gender-related commitments in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans are*
936 *fully implemented.*
- 937 • *Fight to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are fully respected.*
- 938 • *Include the right to abortion in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.*
- 939 • *Ensure easy, legal, safe and affordable access to contraception, abortion care, menstrual*
940 *hygiene and menopause care.*
- 941 • *All young people in Europe should have access to mandatory, age-appropriate, scientific,*
942 *and comprehensive sexuality education, including about healthy sexual relationships and*
943 *early intervention programmes that educate on doxing, revenge porn and exploitative*
944 *pornographic materials.*
- 945 • *Fight for the protection of LGBTI rights everywhere, with the implementation of the LGBTI*
946 *Equality Strategy.*
- 947 • *Adopt the Recognition of Parenthood Regulation aiming at strengthening the rights of*
948 *children in cross-border situations, which is particularly relevant for rainbow families.*
- 949 • *Implement the EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. To*
950 *support persons with disabilities and their families, all policies and practices must be*
951 *disability-mainstreamed.*

- 952 • *Introduce an ambitious EU-wide Disability Card, effectively guaranteeing the free*
- 953 *movement of persons with disabilities.*
- 954 • *Implement gender impact assessment, gender-mainstreaming and gender budgeting of all*
- 955 *European policies and governance, including economic transitions such as the green and*
- 956 *digital transitions.*
- 957 • *Establish a formal and permanent Council configuration for gender equality, diversity, and*
- 958 *anti-discrimination, and adopt an intersectional Feminist Foreign Policy.*
- 959 • *Integrate gender budgeting into the future 2027-2033 MFF.*
- 960 • *Fully assess the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and incorporate the results in a*
- 961 *Gender Equality Strategy 2.0 for 2025–2030 that includes a dedicated budget.*
- 962 • *Fully assess the LGBTI-Strategy 2020-2025 and incorporate the results in a LGBTI-*
- 963 *Strategy 2.0 for 2025–2030.*
- 964 • *Strengthen the European Institute for Gender Equality.*
- 965 • *Ensure gender parity in the College of Commissioners, as well as a Commissioner*
- 966 *dedicated to gender equality.*

967 **16. Eradicating gender-based violence.**

968 As part of the EU Gender Equality Strategy, we will push for the eradication of gender-based
 969 violence for all ages through tools like the EU Directive on combating violence against women
 970 and domestic violence and by adding gender-based violence to the list of EU crimes. We will
 971 closely monitor the quick and comprehensive ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU
 972 and continue to advocate for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by all EU Member States
 973 and all countries around the world. The EU must implement a dedicated framework tackling online
 974 violence and cybercrime which limit women’s right to express themselves equally, freely and
 975 without fear. We will push for dedicated frameworks that safeguard women of all ages against
 976 sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and online violence, including doxing, revenge porn,
 977 cyber harassment, or threatening behaviour.

978 Key proposals

- 979 • *Fight gender-based violence by adopting a comprehensive legal framework addressing the*
- 980 *continuum of violence against women and girls. Adopt a dedicated and enhanced directive*
- 981 *on violence against women and domestic violence that includes a consent-based definition*
- 982 *on rape, and provisions that criminalise all forms of sexual abuse (including verbal and*
- 983 *non-physical) and online violence against women and girls.*
- 984 • *Extend the list of EU crimes in accordance with Article 83(1) TFEU to introduce consent-*
- 985 *based rape and sexual assault legislation across the EU that follows a yes-means-yes*
- 986 *approach.*
- 987 • *Establish a unified EU definition of femicide and improve data collection on this issue and*
- 988 *on gender-based violence at national and EU-level.*
- 989 • *Implement a dedicated directive that specifically tackles online violence and cyber-violence*
- 990 *against women and girls.*
- 991 • *Call for the EU’s ratification and ascension to both the Convention on the Elimination of All*
- 992 *Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Labour*
- 993 *Organisation (ILO) Convention on combating violence and harassment in the world of work.*
- 994 • *Introduce mandatory gender-based violence prevention and sensitivity training for first*
- 995 *responders.*
- 996 • *Monitor the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU and promote the ratification of*
- 997 *the Istanbul Convention by all EU Member States.*
- 998 • *Recognise hate speech and hate crime as a form of violence by adding hate speech and*
- 999 *hate crime, including those committed against women and girls, to the list of EU Crimes.*

- 1000 • *Close the gaps in anti-discrimination and hate crime legislation to adequately cover sexual*
1001 *orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.*
1002 • *Introduce and support education-based prevention programmes in early childhood*
1003 *education, schools, and universities, to tackle gender-based violence.*

1004 **17. A Europe that works for its youth and children**

1005 We have made future generations a priority by initiating the European Child Guarantee and
1006 reinforcing the European Youth Guarantee, ensuring quality offers of employment and education
1007 for all young people in the EU, including those not in employment, education or training (NEETs).
1008 We will continue fighting for equal access to quality and inclusive early childhood education and
1009 care for all children in Europe, well-funded and inclusive schools, better working conditions for
1010 caregivers, educators, and teachers, and to reduce youth unemployment as we firmly believe in
1011 the transformative power of education. Free quality education at all levels and with the necessary
1012 financial support must be accessible to all, to reduce early school leaving and youth
1013 unemployment. We call for an effective and target-oriented implementation of the European
1014 Education Area by 2025, including through the automatic mutual recognition of degrees to make
1015 education and employment accessible across borders. We furthermore fight for the recognition of
1016 non-formal and informal learning experiences as well as reinforced youth work structures.
1017 Moreover, we call for the creation of an EU legal framework to allow for paid internships only. This
1018 should take into account the specificities of each Member State and the principle of subsidiarity.
1019 Everyone deserves fair pay for their work. Additionally, age constitutes a cross-cutting matter, so
1020 policies must cater to the needs of the youth and of all generations. We must ensure that the
1021 younger generations can always have a better future than their parents so as to ensure
1022 intergenerational equity and social progress.

1023 Key proposals

- 1024 • *Support the S&D-driven call of the European Parliament to allocate at least EUR 20 billion*
1025 *of funding to the European Child Guarantee and push for more ambitious child poverty*
1026 *reduction targets.*
- 1027 • *Promote the introduction of binding quality standards for offers under the Youth Guarantee,*
1028 *including fair remuneration and access to social protection.*
- 1029 • *Promote extended funding for the Youth Guarantee.*
- 1030 • *Promote and invest decisively in an inclusive and accessible vocational education and*
1031 *training (VET), its attractiveness and visibility.*
- 1032 • *All internships, traineeships and apprenticeships on the open labour market must be paid*
1033 *and exploitative practices prevented. An EU legislative initiative on Quality Traineeships,*
1034 *taking into account national specificities and the principle of subsidiarity, will benefit millions*
1035 *of young people all over Europe.*
- 1036 • *Commit to clear targets and measures to ensure the effective implementation of the*
1037 *European Education Area, to be achieved by 2025, such as the automatic mutual*
1038 *recognition of diplomas across the EU.*
- 1039 • *Also ensure the recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences and youth*
1040 *work.*
- 1041 • *Widen Erasmus+ so that it includes a large number of students from all levels and types of*
1042 *education, with a focus on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.*
- 1043 • *Introduce a “green Erasmus” to raise awareness of green jobs. Furthermore, facilitate the*
1044 *access of young people to green jobs by developing, together with social partners,*
1045 *education and skills strategies and active labour market policies.*
- 1046 • *Introduce the teaching of at least two foreign languages since early childhood education.*
1047 • *Guarantee that everyone has the means and knowledge to access digital services.*

- 1048 • *Call for a strengthening of the European Youth Dialogue Programme to ensure that young*
1049 *people and decision-makers exchange and cooperate with each other, while opening up*
1050 *new avenues for youth participation.*

1051 **18. Fostering intergenerational solidarity in Europe**

1052 Our political family works for intergenerational solidarity to be better able to face the challenges
1053 of the future and the ageing of the European population. We fight for citizens' rights at all ages.
1054 We want a Europe that ensures a life in dignity, including autonomy and wellbeing, at every point
1055 in life. We defend workers' rights at all ages, including decent working conditions and wages, and
1056 deploying lifelong learning. Pension systems must remain public sources of income for old age,
1057 be gender-responsive and must give fair consideration to career breaks. This also includes
1058 affordable care and healthcare services at all ages, investment in adapted housing as well as
1059 age-friendly communities. Our political family furthermore emphasises non-discrimination and the
1060 right to political and civic participation at all ages. We also want to ensure proper funding to
1061 preserve the sustainability of European cultural sectors. Culture, in all its diversity and forms, is a
1062 crucial part of the European identity. This includes spreading digital literacy whilst equally
1063 maintaining offline alternatives for administrative procedures. We must also make sure that
1064 transport networks are accessible and that pedestrian and cycling infrastructure are safe.

1065 Key proposals

- 1066 • *Invest in adapted housing, the public provision of assisted living and care homes. Assist*
1067 *local authorities in providing progressive initiatives in this regard such as intergenerational*
1068 *co-living and the concept of a life-resistant home.*
- 1069 • *Assist local authorities in providing age-friendly cities and communities, as promoted by*
1070 *the World Health Organisation, and secure relevant funding.*
- 1071 • *Provide guidelines and best-practice examples to EU Member States on how to prevent*
1072 *and combat ageism in different policy areas.*
- 1073 • *Introduce a White Paper on Ageing, proposing social and economic measures related to*
1074 *growing ageing in Europe such as in relation to the labour market, quality of work, active*
1075 *ageing, supply of care and healthcare, silver economy.*
- 1076 • *Continue to support lifelong learning as part of the European Education Area. Emphasise*
1077 *lifelong learning to cut across all ages as well as formal, informal and non-formal education*
1078 *of all types.*
- 1079 • *The EU should develop a European Education Plan to ensure quality education and lifelong*
1080 *learning across the Union and with sufficient financial means.*
- 1081 • *Support more structural and sustainable funding for culture and access to culture that is*
1082 *inclusive and cuts across all ages, amongst others by comprehensive support for youth*
1083 *centres and local cultural projects.*
- 1084 • *Safeguard the Creative Europe Programme to promote and protect both cultural sectors*
1085 *as well as cultural heritage and diversity.*
- 1086 • *Reflect Principle 15 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on old age income and pensions*
1087 *in the monitoring and policy guidance provided by the European Union to provide truly fair*
1088 *pensions for both women and men.*
- 1089 • *Continue to promote strong pension standards, allowing for decent life in old age across*
1090 *the EU.*
- 1091 • *Implement the Council Recommendation on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early*
1092 *childhood education and care.*
- 1093 • *Maintain offline options for administrative procedures.*
- 1094 • *The next Commission Work Programme should give a high priority to topics related to the*
1095 *young, the elderly, active ageing, and intergenerational solidarity.*

1096

1097 **19. A European coordinated asylum and migration policy**

1098 Migration is a structural feature of human societies and a component of globalisation. As such,
1099 migration requires a united, multilateral, and multilevel approach based on shared responsibility,
1100 respect for human rights and international law. It is our moral and legal duty to offer asylum,
1101 protection, and humane treatment to asylum seekers coming to the EU, irrespective of origin and
1102 any other consideration. We must continue the fight against the smugglers and traffickers who
1103 ruthlessly lead hundreds of people to their death. It is crucial to have a common predictable and
1104 reliable framework for search and rescue, including rapid disembarkation in a place of safety. Our
1105 political family has put forward a progressive Pact on Migration and Asylum, presenting an
1106 opportunity to move from an ad hoc, crisis-driven approach to a fair, safe, sustainable and
1107 predictable one. European co-legislators must make every effort to find an agreement on a Pact
1108 before the end of this political mandate. The Pact ensures high standards of protection for the
1109 people arriving at the EU borders while smoothing procedures. The common EU asylum and
1110 migration system must be based on true solidarity and shared responsibility, fair and effective
1111 procedures, humane reception conditions, partnerships on equal footing with third countries, legal
1112 pathways, and effective inclusion. No Member State nor individual region or city should shoulder
1113 a disproportionate responsibility. Only together and with the right policies we can turn challenges
1114 into opportunities.

1115 The unity with which EU countries and their citizens have welcomed the many Ukrainian refugees,
1116 and swiftly activated the Temporary Protection Directive, shows that with policies based on
1117 solidarity, we can deal with the biggest of crises. We are proud of the continued commitment of
1118 Europeans to offering asylum and protection. People, particularly women, children and LGBTI
1119 people, fleeing war and persecution are highly vulnerable and at risk of human smuggling,
1120 trafficking, sexual exploitation, gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. The
1121 EU must prevent and fight smugglers and traffickers through a strengthened Anti-Trafficking
1122 Directive, which includes criminalising the use of services obtained from victims of trafficking when
1123 the user knows that the person is a victim. It must strengthen the governance, responsibilities,
1124 transparency, and accountability of Frontex. We must have common, effective border
1125 management, while safeguarding fundamental rights. We must always act in the child's best
1126 interest and ensure strengthened rights including a reinforced right to family reunification,
1127 especially for minors. Children should never be detained or separated from their families. EU
1128 funds should not be used to build walls or fund externalisation.

1129 Mutually beneficial cooperation with third countries is essential, especially with African and Latin
1130 American countries. Special attention must be given to climate change-induced migration. We will
1131 push for the establishment of safe, humanitarian regular corridors for asylum seekers as well as
1132 effective regular avenues for labour migration. Member States must step up their resettlement
1133 pledges and establish complementary pathways through joint leadership.

1134 A common EU asylum and migration system must include a humane and dignified return policy,
1135 which respects the principle of non-refoulement and safeguards the fundamental rights of the
1136 people on the move. Voluntary return and reintegration must be prioritised.

1137 Migration has always existed, and it always will. We need to foster a progressive narrative on
1138 asylum and migration that applies to all migrants, people with a migration background and the
1139 welcoming society. Member States must implement the EU Action Plan on Inclusion and
1140 Integration. When managed well, migration can help strengthen the economy, generate new jobs,
1141 and maintain the welfare system for Europe's ageing societies. It can be a great source of

1142 innovation and opportunities for all. However, not well-managed migration leads to a series of
1143 difficulties, therefore we need everyone to participate.

1144 We need a feminist migration policy, taking into account the needs of migrant and asylum-seeking
1145 women and girls and their human rights by finally adopting a comprehensive migration and asylum
1146 framework that specifically addresses their experiences.

1147 Key proposals

- 1148 • *Finalise the adoption of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, for a fair, safe, sustainable, and*
1149 *predictable approach to asylum and migration, based on protecting the individual right to*
1150 *asylum ensuring safeguards of people's rights, high standards of protections and solidarity*
1151 *between Member States, particularly in the form of relocation.*
- 1152 • *Promote the need to tackle climate change-induced migration.*
- 1153 • *Establish safe and regular avenues for asylum and migration, alongside fair and humane*
1154 *return policies.*
- 1155 • *Finalise the adoption of the Single Permit Directive, ensuring strong safeguards against*
1156 *abuse and exploitation of workers.*
- 1157 • *Promote community sponsorship programmes for beneficiaries of international protection.*
- 1158 • *Ensure a common EU return policy for those who are not found in need of international*
1159 *protection, safeguarding human rights, international standards and prioritising voluntary*
1160 *return to safe countries of origin. The best interest of the child must always be a priority.*
- 1161 • *Protect migrants and asylum seekers from exploitation and trafficking by strengthening the*
1162 *Anti-Trafficking Directive and rules that prevent and combat trafficking in human beings.*
- 1163 • *Strengthen the EU Employers' Sanctions Directive.*
- 1164 • *Boost mutually beneficial cooperation with third countries, including a proposal on better*
1165 *recognition of third country nationals' qualifications and diploma and skills assessment.*
- 1166 • *Put forward a proposal on fair labour migration schemes for workers with different skills, or*
1167 *work experience guaranteeing strong protection against abuse and exploitation.*
- 1168 • *Encourage the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Inclusion and Integration.*
- 1169 • *Foster the creation of a fund to which municipalities could apply directly to receive support*
1170 *for integrating refugees, while also funding projects for local communities.*
- 1171 • *Revise the EU Directive on voting rights in municipal elections, to promote better*
1172 *representation of the voice of non-national residents.*

1173 **20. Strengthening citizens' rights online**

1174 The EU must play a leading role in promoting a digital transformation in line with our fundamental
1175 values and principles and that leaves no one behind.

1176 First, we need to ensure that non-digital alternatives for basic and essential services, including
1177 financial and banking services, must be available for everyone, notably for elderly citizens and
1178 people with disabilities. We must ensure that everyone has the means and knowledge to access
1179 digital services while continuing to protect the importance of human social interaction for a strong
1180 and equal society. We want to promote digital cohesion, recognising that access to decent digital
1181 infrastructures is a fundamental right. Furthermore, social media platforms must be regulated.

1182 Second, we must secure massive investments in European public digital infrastructure in order to
1183 ensure quality access to internet for all, support research and development and innovation
1184 projects, but also in privacy protection, security, child safety online and offline, media freedom,
1185 pluralism, independence, and cultural diversity. We must defend the principle of net-neutrality to
1186 promote diversity and competition in the digital sector. We are committed to this principle and
1187 advocate for connectivity regulation that ensures equitable and fair end-to-end access to the

1188 whole internet for all users and online services, where content, services and applications are not
1189 unjustifiably degraded or blocked and the access to online services remains affordable for all,
1190 particularly for those with low income.

1191 Third, while artificial intelligence (AI) is a transformative technology that can bring certain social
1192 benefits, it must always be human-centred and human-driven. The use of AI must be trustworthy,
1193 respect human dignity and serve societies and citizens without reproducing or exacerbating
1194 existing stereotypes and prejudices or create new forms of gender and intersectional inequalities.
1195 Bias may occur when using datasets for training a model, if those datasets poorly represent the
1196 people that the model will serve. That is why we must strive towards overcoming bias in datasets.
1197 We want the swift adoption of the European AI Act, taking these concerns into consideration.
1198 Furthermore, we need to ensure that if damage caused by AI arises, citizens are compensated
1199 accordingly. Hence, we recall the need to start negotiations on the Liability of AI Directive, as soon
1200 as the AI Act is adopted. Moreover, citizens should receive adequate training on AI and robotics,
1201 including about the opportunities and risks they present, and have all the necessary tools to evolve
1202 in the labour market.

1203 Fourth, what is illegal offline, should be illegal online. Everyone must be fully protected from
1204 cybercrime and online violence, including women, children, the elderly, journalists, and whistle-
1205 blowers, while simultaneously ensuring that security online is fully aligned with the protection of
1206 our fundamental rights.

1207 Finally, we need real participation of everyone, notably women and underrepresented people, in
1208 the digital age. It's vital that we provide the means for re-skilling and up-skilling for those who wish
1209 to enter the industry to ensure that no one is only a passive consumer or becomes a victim of
1210 increased digitalization. They must be leaders and actors in this industry – starting from education
1211 to top positions of leadership.

1212 Key proposals

- 1213 • *Protect citizens' privacy online. Work towards the adoption of the e-Privacy Regulation to*
1214 *strengthen the protection of the confidentiality of communications.*
- 1215 • *Promote digital cohesion across Europe by improving broadband connectivity and access*
1216 *in every region in Europe.*
- 1217 • *Promote gender equality in the digital sector and sphere, by increasing the involvement of*
1218 *women in STEM.*
- 1219 • *Provide non-digital alternatives for basic and essential services in a non-discriminatory*
1220 *way, available to all, including the elderly and disabled people.*
- 1221 • *Support for the EU accession to the Convention 108+ of the Council of Europe for the*
1222 *protection of individuals with regard to the automatic processing of personal data.*
- 1223 • *Ensure social media platforms' accountability and transparency and protection of*
1224 *fundamental rights of users online through the enforcement of the Digital Services Act*
1225 *(DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA).*
- 1226 • *Invest in European public digital infrastructure and research and development: support*
1227 *investments in e-government services and applications, accessibility, e-learning; e-Health,*
1228 *as well as accessible digital solutions for the elderly and the disabled.*
- 1229 • *Protect citizens from cybercrimes: support new legislation to enhance the cyber-resilience*
1230 *of the financial sector in the EU, namely through the recently adopted, Digital Operational*
1231 *Resilience Act (DORA).*
- 1232 • *Protect children from sexual abuse online through effective regulation and prevention.*
- 1233 • *Adopt a European Artificial Intelligence Act for an AI driven by ethical principles to ensure*
1234 *that the technology remains human-centred, human-driven, and respectful of human*
1235 *dignity.*

- 1236 • *Promptly start negotiations on the Liability of AI Directive.*
- 1237 • *Stricter management of EU research and development funds to prevent funding for the*
- 1238 *development and use of spyware. The use of spyware for law enforcement should be*
- 1239 *directly regulated through measures on judicial cooperation in criminal matters and by*
- 1240 *measures on import to the EU. There is a need for EU standards regulating the use of*
- 1241 *spyware by Member States. If authorities invoke national security for using spyware, they*
- 1242 *should demonstrate compliance with EU law and principles of proportionality, necessity,*
- 1243 *legitimacy, legality and adequacy.*
- 1244 • *Push for the inclusion of monitoring of spyware use in the Commission's annual rule of law*
- 1245 *reports in the EU Member States.*

1246 **21. Ensuring the security of all citizens**

1247 Everyone has a right to live in a secure and safe environment. We support measures that increase

1248 personal security while protecting individual and collective rights. In a world where new,

1249 borderless, and more sophisticated criminal threats are emerging – including cybercrime,

1250 counterfeiting, environmental crime, financial crime, human trafficking, and terrorism – it is

1251 essential that we act effectively and collectively against these crimes. These crimes seriously

1252 undermine not only our fundamental values, but also citizens' trust in our democracy and

1253 institutions. This is why we must continue to strengthen police and judiciary cooperation. It is

1254 important that Europol uses its tools to effectively coordinate and support fighting cross-border

1255 crime to truly become a joint EU agency supporting investigation and crime prevention. This needs

1256 to be matched by greater parliamentary oversight of Europol, both by the European Parliament

1257 and by national parliaments. We will also continue to encourage community-led crime prevention

1258 programmes and promote urban design that provides safe spaces for the community to gather

1259 and feel secure.

1260 Key proposals

- 1261 • *Strengthen European cooperation through Europol to fight cross-border crime to truly*
- 1262 *become a joint European crime prevention and investigation support agency, including by*
- 1263 *strengthening joint investigation teams. Such development must be matched by*
- 1264 *strengthened parliamentary scrutiny.*
- 1265 • *Promote community-driven crime prevention through environmental and urban design*
- 1266 *programs designed to create safe spaces for everyone, taking into account the specific*
- 1267 *needs of women, children and older persons in that respect.*
- 1268 • *Protect EU citizens against organised crime by strengthening EU's rules on anti-money*
- 1269 *laundering.*
- 1270 • *Support measures that increase personal security while protecting individual and collective*
- 1271 *rights.*
- 1272 • *Support the revision of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive to effectively prevent and fight*
- 1273 *trafficking in human beings.*
- 1274 • *Reinforce the work against firearms-trafficking and make it a priority for the EU's work*
- 1275 *against organised crime.*
- 1276 • *Insist on a fully independent EU Child Centre to help coordinate and facilitate the fight*
- 1277 *against Child Sexual Abuse and obligations to report and remove material. This should be*
- 1278 *done in accordance with the DSA, in full respect of fundamental rights in particular the right*
- 1279 *to privacy, data protection and by protecting end-to-end encryption.*

1280 **III. Securing Europe's position in the world**

1281 Europe is one of the richest continents, having one of the best systems of welfare states and

1282 protection of working people. As Party of European Socialists, we remain convinced that the

1283 European social model is the key to thriving and equal societies that work for the wellbeing of all
1284 their citizens. In order to continue and thrive, and in order to maintain the high level of social
1285 protection that we know and cherish, Europe needs to adapt to the changes that are taking place
1286 in our continent and in the world. From the way in which we engage with our international partners,
1287 to the way in which our Union operates, we want to drive a process of adaptation that is based on
1288 the fundamental values of our political family, such as equality, democracy and progress.
1289 International trade should be organised in a fair and sustainable way without contributing to
1290 deforestation, biodiversity loss or breaches of human rights and labour rights. In order to lead
1291 Europe in the world, we want to focus on the following priorities:

1292 **22. Promote strategic investments and innovation**

1293 Our family has brought a paradigm shift in Europe by rehabilitating the role of public investment.
1294 In sharp contrast with the austerity approach of the conservative majority after the 2008 financial
1295 crisis, we responded to the Covid-19 crisis with Next Generation EU. This shows how much we
1296 can do when we invest in our future, pool our resources and act with unity and solidarity. Next
1297 Generation EU is the biggest investment scheme the EU has ever had, of which our political family
1298 is a proud proponent. We therefore continue to stand for a permanent long-term EU investment
1299 capacity with real European solidarity to finance the green and digital transition, to form part of a
1300 broader Investment Plan for the Green and Digital Transitions coordinated with the Member
1301 States.

1302 The changes ahead of us require large-scale investments both public and private: in sustainable
1303 energy alternatives, in the promotion of a circular economy, notably for critical raw materials, and
1304 in the EU regaining a leading role in the digital transition. If we want Europe to be an international
1305 hub for innovation and technology, we must invest in that goal. We must invest in a model of
1306 economic development that put the people's wellbeing at the centre, a model that protects the
1307 environment, and looks beyond GDP as the sole measure of success.

1308 The war and the pandemic made it clear that we cannot rely entirely on external trade for strategic
1309 goods such as energy, food, clean technologies, microchips, batteries, raw materials, and
1310 medicines and health products. The EU needs to diversify and de-risk its supply chain for essential
1311 goods and critical commodities and achieve genuine open strategic autonomy in key sectors.
1312 New collaborative European investments must be made to build sovereignty in strategic sectors.
1313 At the same time, the union's competition policy and state aid framework must ensure that the
1314 internal market remains open, fair and competitive also in the future. The exposure of our
1315 continent to the microchip shortage a few months ago is a clear warning that Europe must invest
1316 in its ability to stand on its own feet. We must support building a European battery industry,
1317 extracting and recycling rare earth materials, and similar initiatives that will further that goal. Like
1318 the Biden administration did with the US Inflation Reduction Act, public investment and support
1319 should include social and environmental goals. We must also be ready to intervene with a
1320 European rescue framework to protect firms from unfair foreign competition, provided they abide
1321 by ambitious social and employment standards.

1322 The EU needs massive investments to strengthen our resilience and ability to protect our citizens
1323 in times of crisis, which is why the PES calls for a "Made in Europe" strategy by 2030, to level the
1324 playing field for European industry in compliance with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

1325 Key proposals

- 1326 • *Put forward a new Investment Plan for the Green and Digital Transitions.*
- 1327 • *Endow the EU budget with the means necessary to attain its objectives and carry through*
1328 *its policies, though a revised and ambitious Multiannual Financial Framework consistent*

- 1329 *with gender-responsive budgeting principles and sustainability targets, which also should*
1330 *be considered in the context of enhanced own resources.*
- 1331 • *Continue to stand for a permanent long-term EU investment capacity with real European*
1332 *solidarity.*
 - 1333 • *Explore new sources of revenue to allow the EU budget to support investment in all*
1334 *Member States.*
 - 1335 • *Promote a European rescue framework to protect firms from unfair foreign competition.*
 - 1336 • *Engage the discussion on the establishment of European Public Goods.*
 - 1337 • *Develop a “Made in Europe” 2030 strategy to reduce European dependencies and increase*
1338 *our production capacities in strategic sectors and to level the playing field for European*
1339 *industry in compliance with WTO rules.*
 - 1340 • *Develop an ambitious, sustainable and open EU trade agenda based on common values*
1341 *and respect of social, environmental, consumer protection and human rights.*
 - 1342 • *Use the Critical Raw Materials Act to set ambitious reuse and recycling targets for*
1343 *circularity of critical raw materials.*
 - 1344 • *Introduce a Critical Medicines Act to improve the EU's security of medicines supply and*
1345 *reduce dependencies from non-EU countries.*
 - 1346 • *Fraud with EU funds must be prosecuted more severely.*
 - 1347 • *Looking beyond GDP alone, also develop objective indicators to better include*
1348 *environmental and social aspects of progress.*

1349 **23. Support international partnerships.**

1350 Russia's invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally hampered an already unstable geopolitical
1351 landscape and has threatened the rules-based international order. The EU will need to reshape
1352 its role in a multipolar, disorderly global environment. We are being challenged in the ongoing
1353 battle of narratives on universal democratic values. The EU needs to resolutely reach out to
1354 reliable and like-minded partners to conclude mutually beneficial partnership agreements. These
1355 partnerships should be mutually beneficial by addressing concrete needs in the partner countries
1356 and allowing the EU to diversify and de-risk its current supply chains. The EU must work with its
1357 partners to eradicate poverty and promote universal respect for human rights and fundamental
1358 freedoms, fair global trade rules and respect for international commitments on social rights,
1359 gender equality, climate change, and protecting children, in a world of challenging alternative
1360 narratives by authoritarian countries. We praise the work of human rights defenders worldwide
1361 and call for countering the shrinking space for civil society globally.

1362 The PES wants constructive relations with the United States to continue our dialogue towards a
1363 common progressive agenda on social and environmental standards. We also support an
1364 enhanced dialogue with China to cooperate on issues, such as climate change, global security,
1365 and reforming international institutions. However, any consistent and ambitious EU-China
1366 Strategy must uphold human rights and democracy.

1367 We will continue to support strong relations with our partners in Latin America through an
1368 ambitious trade, cooperation, partnership and investment agenda. We will also step up the Africa-
1369 EU partnership to address common challenges, promote sustainable growth, and accelerate the
1370 green and digital transitions. Europe must ensure that Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the
1371 multiple impacts of the war, do not put a wedge in the relations between the EU and our friends
1372 and partners in the Global South. Regarding our neighbourhood, we support EU actions that
1373 promote economic ties and support human rights, democracy, peace, and stability. Europe must
1374 likewise promote stability in the Arctic and work to prevent military escalation and exploitation of
1375 natural resources.

1376 The PES supports strengthened cooperation with the United Nations to reform and reinforce the
1377 multilateral system. The EU must speak with a single voice in the UN fora and use rotating and
1378 permanent seats of Member States in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to bring on a
1379 rules- and human rights-based agenda. The EU must promote and deliver on the UN Sustainable
1380 Development Goals, the commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement and the EU Global Health
1381 Strategy. The EU must play a strong role in global rules-based non-proliferation efforts, with the
1382 aim of a world free of nuclear weapons.

1383 Key proposals:

- 1384 • *Restore and strengthen the rules-based multilateral order in cooperation with our*
1385 *international partners.*
- 1386 • *Reform the WTO to make it fit for the challenges of the 21st century, the green transition,*
1387 *and the digital revolution, ensuring a level playing field.*
- 1388 • *Set up an EU comprehensive strategy for the implementation of Sustainable Development*
1389 *Goals and their realisation by 2030, accompanied by a financing plan.*
- 1390 • *Address the shortcomings of the EU Global Gateway, ensuring a clear development*
1391 *mandate and transparent, democratic, and effective public scrutiny.*
- 1392 • *Establish equal partnerships rooted in democratic values, human rights safeguard and*
1393 *social, environmental and governance standards, to diversify and de-risk EU current supply*
1394 *chains.*
- 1395 • *Increase EU support to human rights defenders and civil society worldwide.*
- 1396 • *Reassess the current trade and development portfolio of the EU in light of the impact of the*
1397 *war in Ukraine, investing in our good relations with third countries.*
- 1398 • *Renew the dialogue with the African Union on migration, development, trade, security and*
1399 *climate change.*
- 1400 • *Invest diplomatic and technical capital to develop an ambitious trade agenda with Latin*
1401 *America.*
- 1402 • *Strengthen the relationship between the EU and Latin American countries to deepen our*
1403 *political, economic and trade relations and build a common progressive agenda rooted in*
1404 *our shared principles, values and interests.*
- 1405 • *Revise and implement a strategy for EU-China relations to ensure cooperation on global*
1406 *challenges such as climate change, rebalance trade and economic relationships, uphold*
1407 *human rights, and strengthen multilateralism while being rooted in the three pillars of the*
1408 *current strategy: China as a partner, a competitor and a rival.*
- 1409 • *Strengthen further EU cooperation within the United Nations, promote an ambitious UN*
1410 *reform in favour of transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, and fully commit to the*
1411 *agenda 2030 and the development of an ambitious and effective successor.*

1412 **24. A forward-looking EU: ready to improve its functioning and meet international**
1413 **challenges**

1414 The debate on the modernization of the EU's architecture and decision-making processes is
1415 influenced by the new geopolitical reality and a world plagued by war and characterized by
1416 increasing fragmentation. The prospect of an enlarged EU has been accelerated lately. That is
1417 why changes in the rules and functioning of our institutions are necessary for the EU to act
1418 efficiently, decisively, and with unity. A serious assessment is needed to determine what Treaty
1419 changes are necessary to achieve European sovereignty, promote social justice, make Europe
1420 more sustainable, and foster European democracy and its influence in the world. Majority rules in
1421 certain policy areas, including certain common foreign policy fields, are necessary to ensure more
1422 democratic decision-making processes and a well-functioning EU, and to build a strong EU with
1423 strategic independence.

1424 The PES remains at the forefront of supporting accession negotiations, provided that all potential
1425 future Member States fully respect EU standards on rule of law, democracy, and fundamental EU
1426 values. No country can be considered to become a Member State without having implemented
1427 all necessary commitments and reforms.

1428 The PES welcomes the decision to grant candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova and supports
1429 the inclusion of Georgia once they have met the conditions identified by the European
1430 Commission. We call for the rapid start of EU accession negotiations with Ukraine and the
1431 Republic of Moldova once they have met all accession criteria set by the European Commission's
1432 recommendation. We also welcome the opening of negotiations with Albania and North
1433 Macedonia and the decision to grant candidate status to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We continue
1434 supporting accession negotiations with Montenegro. We agree to advance accession negotiations
1435 with Serbia only if the Vučić government aligns with EU sanctions against Russia, makes
1436 significant progress on its EU-related reforms, and refrains from sabotaging the Belgrade-Pristina
1437 dialogue through provocations or any other means. Following Kosovo's application for EU
1438 membership, which reflects the continued pro-European orientation of its citizens and its clear
1439 geopolitical strategic choice, we call for Belgrade and Pristina to achieve a permanent solution
1440 under the facilitation of EU High Representative/EC Vice President Josep Borrell. We welcome
1441 the adoption of visa liberalization for Kosovo. We regret that the EU accession process of Türkiye
1442 has stalled for several years as a result of the direction taken by the Turkish government. In the
1443 absence of a drastic change of course by the Turkish government, Türkiye's EU accession
1444 process cannot be resumed in the current circumstances. Furthermore, we support a rapid
1445 deepening of Switzerland's integration into the EU when a mutually beneficial framework is
1446 agreed on.

1447 We stress our continuous support for all efforts towards resolving the long-standing Cyprus
1448 problem, within the UN framework, in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions, and in line
1449 with the principles on which the EU is founded and the *acquis*. We condemn any action or
1450 occupation that violates the integrity and sovereignty of nations anywhere in the world, including
1451 in Cyprus.

1452 More Europe also entails protecting and strengthening one of the European Union's greatest
1453 achievements: the Schengen Agreement. That is why we call for Romania and Bulgaria to be
1454 allowed into the Schengen area immediately, as both countries meet all the criteria. The PES also
1455 supports a rapid modernization of Schengen visa applications to deepen the EU's relations with
1456 Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland and simplify travels for business and tourism.

1457 Key proposals

- 1458 • *Finalise without any further delay the full inclusion of Romania and Bulgaria in the*
1459 *Schengen area.*
- 1460 • *Modernise European architecture to adapt it to the new realities, including by extending*
1461 *qualified majority voting to certain critical sectors.*
- 1462 • *In the context of enlargement, we need to engage in a debate and assess whether the*
1463 *treaties and the functioning of our institutions are well-adapted, and what changes are*
1464 *necessary, to achieve real European sovereignty, to promote social justice and our*
1465 *European values, to make Europe more sustainable and more equal, and to promote the*
1466 *role of the EU in the world. This is necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the EU.*
- 1467 • *Continue supporting the enlargement process through targeted financial and technical*
1468 *support to reforms in candidate countries.*
- 1469 • *Increase regional cooperation with candidate countries and potential candidates on*
1470 *security, energy and migration.*

- 1471 • *Strengthen the democratic role of the European Parliament, moving towards the right of*
1472 *initiative.*
1473 • *Ensure democratic accountability of new crisis management bodies.*

1474 **25. Strengthen European cooperation on security and defence.**

1475 The EU must act faster and more assertively in an increasingly unpredictable geopolitical climate.
1476 The Strategic Compass presented by our political family provides the necessary framework to
1477 strengthen the EU's role as a reliable partner and security provider, as well as to enhance our
1478 ability to independently defend and promote our fundamental values. The PES welcomes the
1479 ongoing process of bolstering our Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) while respecting
1480 the specific security and defence policies of each EU Member State.

1481 The PES supports a Common Security and Defence Policy that complements NATO through
1482 collaborative development and procurement, coordinated and smarter defence spending, sharing
1483 and pooling of capacities, countering hybrid threats, cyberattacks and disinformation, boosting
1484 EU intelligence cooperation and the EU defence industrial sector. The EU must promote
1485 investments on innovative technologies that can reduce the environmental impact of military
1486 operations and advance the EU's position as a leader in green and cutting-edge technologies.
1487 Defence investments are critical and should not be made at the expense of development,
1488 cohesion and social funds. We also stress the need to incorporate a gender and an intersectional
1489 perspective in our CSDP. EU foreign and security policy must be a feminist one with gender
1490 equality as one of the overarching goals. Equal representation of women and girls in foreign policy
1491 actions is key, as they are disproportionately affected by violence, poverty, armed conflicts, and the
1492 impact of climate, health and other emergencies.

1493 Key proposals:

- 1494 • *Implement the Strategic Compass ensuring synergies with all the policies and priorities of*
1495 *the European Commission.*
1496 • *Strengthen the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.*
1497 • *Increase cooperation with NATO to ensure effective procurement and spending, avoid*
1498 *repetitions, and improve intelligence coordination.*
1499 • *Address the challenges faced by the European defence industry, such as significant*
1500 *fragmentation, lack of cross-border cooperation, limited international competitiveness and*
1501 *the lack of common standards and regulations, while promoting transparency,*
1502 *accountability and ethical standards in the production and trade of defence products.*
1503 • *Work towards decarbonising the military industry to reconcile the expansion of EU*
1504 *investments in the defence sector with the commitments of the European Green Deal and*
1505 *the targets of the European Climate Law.*
1506 • *Strengthen European defence cooperation and integration, including through increased*
1507 *joint procurement of defence products, providing adequate support to European defence*
1508 *industry SMEs, greater cross-border and further investment in joint research and*
1509 *development projects, including dual-use products.*
1510 • *Incorporate a gender and an intersectional perspective in CSDP operations and missions,*
1511 *in line with the EU's longstanding commitment to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.*
1512
1513

1514 **IV. Conclusion**

1515 As the European elections are approaching, we are proud that our political family has supported
1516 people through very challenging years at every political level. We have been at the forefront of

1517 making Europe stronger, more resilient, and better prepared to tackle the challenges of today and
1518 tomorrow.

1519 Rooted in our values, we are ready to fight for democracy, for the wellbeing of our citizens through
1520 the various transitions of our societies, and for Europe's role in the world. With these objectives
1521 in mind, we will continue our efforts to drive progress, foster equality and unity in our pursuit of a
1522 Europe that is more inclusive, just, and democratic.