



Party of European Socialists
Manifesto for
the 1999 European Elections

21 Commitments for the 21th Century



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In June 1999, the peoples of Europe will elect a new European Parliament. This election gives us the opportunity to reform Europe; to improve its functioning, to bring it closer to the people and to give it the policies it needs to meet the challenges ahead.

This manifesto of the Party of European Socialists sets out our 21 commitments for a new beginning for the European Union in the 21st century. These commitments reflect our shared values as socialists and social democrats. Democracy, freedom and human rights. Solidarity, social justice and equal opportunity. Common civic rights and responsibilities, and respect for international law.



In this election the parties of the Left challenge those of the Right on two fronts. As social democrats we believe in equal opportunity for all and a fair deal for those who need the protection of society. We are committed to a modern economy that ensures growth, competitiveness and job creation. We reject the posture of the Right who would allow the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community to become the victims of market forces.

As internationalists we believe that we make each of our countries stronger by strengthening our partnership in the European Union. We are proud of our national cultures and identities, but reject the short-sighted focus of the Right on narrow national interest at the expense of our wider and deeper common interests.

For socialists and social democrats, a modern economy can only be developed in close cooperation with social partners. We know that economies are stronger when societies are just. The poverty of some diminishes the lives of all who live in a divided society. And the exclusion of any from access to education, employment, or to the skills and technology of the modern age weakens the economy to which they cannot contribute. That is why we say “yes” to a market economy, but “no” to a market society.

We believe that each individual has more opportunity and more security if their community invests in modern services of high standards in education, health, transport and welfare. We understand that our environment is an asset we hold in common with each other and with future generations, and that we promote our quality of life when we protect the quality of our envi-

ronment. We know that our society will only flourish if we eliminate discrimination in all its forms, allowing everyone to develop their talents and to live without fear of prejudice.

The European Union must belong to the people and must be driven by their priorities - on jobs, security and the environment. Decision-making within the European Union must be transparent and take place as close to the people as possible. We want a closer Union, but we also want reform to make the European Union more open, democratic and efficient.

Throughout the lifetime of the new European Parliament we will work to ensure that the European Union fulfills its commitments and responds to the major challenges ahead. The single currency is now a reality. It will become even more so with the introduction of Euro notes and coins. The European Union's institutions and policies will undergo reform and enlargement will begin to break down the remaining divisions between East and West. And Europe will need to respond effectively to the continuing challenges of globalisation.

We believe that by working together we can build a better Europe. We want a European Union that both respects the identity of each of our countries and promotes a closer union between our peoples. Our vision of Europe is an area of freedom, stability, prosperity and justice. Together, we can create a European Union that will play its full part on the world stage.

Parties of the Left and the Centre-Left are in government in most of the Member States. The citizens of Europe need a common strategy shared between the new European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and Member States. With a strong representation in the new European Parliament, the Party of European Socialists can build that partnership and provide the direction that Europe needs.

This manifesto of the Party of European Socialists and the 21 commitments it offers, together map out a Europe for the 21st Century: a Europe of jobs and growth; a Europe that puts citizens first; a strong Europe; and a Europe that works better. We ask the voters of Europe to give it their support and to open up the way to a Europe ready for the new millennium.

A EUROPE OF JOBS AND GROWTH

Our ambition for the future of Europe goes beyond the implementation of the Single Market. We must promote economic and social cohesion, and ensure that all citizens have a fair share of the fruits of our common prosperity.

1

PUTTING JOBS FIRST

Employment must be at the top of the European agenda. Social democrats will continue to lead the way with new ideas to create jobs, to help into jobs those without work and to provide training for those without the right skills. Europe cannot accept the economic and human waste, nor the social divisions caused by structural unemployment. The development of a European pact for employment is a priority. There are many positive ways to promote employment, including training, tax reform, the modernisation of welfare systems, the promotion of new enterprises and support for the non-market sector. This may include agreed reductions in working time negotiated between the social partners.

We commit ourselves to promote opportunities for employment for all those who are without work, and especially through programmes to help the young and long-term unemployed.



The Single Market means that the countries within it are more interdependent than ever before and must work together to promote sustainable growth and development. Each Member State has a better chance of achieving that growth if the economies of their neighbours are also growing in step. We must promote a European growth strategy which embraces sustainable growth in both demand and investment. We attach particular importance to the development of Trans-European Networks in transport and communications. The role of local and regional authorities in promoting employment opportunities and economic development needs to be better recognised and we support the work of the Committee of the Regions in this area. In view of the growth potential of the applicant countries the European Union must seek to work with them in developing its economic strategy.

We commit ourselves to closer economic co-ordination aimed at ensuring sustainable growth and high levels of employment.



3

PROMOTING A SOCIAL EUROPE

The skills and capacity for innovation of the workforce are our most important economic resource. It will only be possible to promote economic reform and sustain competitiveness if social rights are effectively protected and the informed participation of the workforce is ensured. We welcome the inclusion of the Social Chapter in the Treaty. Solidarity is one of our fundamental principles, including solidarity between generations.

We commit ourselves to modernising and strengthening the European social model, promoting dialogue between the social partners and tackling social exclusion.



MAKING THE EURO A SUCCESS

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The Euro should make a significant contribution to promoting sustainable growth, low inflation and high levels of employment. It is in the interests of all Member States, whether members of the single currency or not, that the Euro is a success. A sound Euro will protect Europe against the destabilising pressures of currency speculation, allow for lower interest rates and contribute to a reformed and more stable financial world system.

It will also reduce costs for business, improve competition, and increase the purchasing power of the consumer through greater price stability. The European Central Bank must work in close dialogue with the democratic institutions and economic policy making bodies of the Union.

We commit ourselves to ensuring that the single currency achieves a smooth introduction and provides growth, employment and stability.



5

COMPLETING THE SINGLE MARKET

A successful and fully-functioning single market, open to the world, is part of the foundation of the future prosperity of the Union and a condition for sustained growth and employment. Particular effort needs to be made to enable small and medium-sized enterprises and peripheral regions to take advantage of the wider market. Taxation should not distort economic decisions with regard to labour, capital and services, and should favour the creation of jobs and the protection of the environment. The introduction of the Euro requires an effective Code of Conduct and better policy coordination to prevent harmful tax competition in the form of unfair tax breaks and hidden subsidies. A successful Single Market will also operate in the interests of consumers by removing protectionism and widening informed choice.

We commit ourselves to completing the Single Market, ensuring that Europe's businesses have free and equal access across Europe's markets and boosting employment through increased trade.



PROMOTING EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY

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Our biggest investment must be in our greatest asset, our people and their skills. Europe can compete successfully by investing in education, modern skills and technology, not by lower wages and poorer working conditions.

We commit ourselves to promoting a Europe of knowledge based on life-long learning, to train the workforce in the most modern skills and European research programmes that open up and develop the technologies of the future.



A EUROPE THAT PUTS CITIZENS FIRST

Europe must enable its people to secure a better future and give priority to the issues that matter most to them.

7

PROMOTING CITIZEN'S RIGHTS

The European Union has extended the rights of its citizens, complementing the rights of national citizenship. A stronger civil society must be the foundation of a more democratic European Union which guarantees civil liberties. We attach special importance to the rights of people with disabilities. In order to develop a stronger European identity we propose that the fundamental civic, economic, social and cultural rights which have been won by citizens throughout the European Union, including access to public services, should be set out in a European Charter of rights. In carrying forward this work the European Union, and the European Parliament in particular, should initiate a wide-ranging consultation with citizens groups, the social partners and other non-governmental organisations.

We commit ourselves through this Charter to strengthening citizens' rights and building a Europe which is an area of freedom, security, justice and equal rights.

SUPPORTING YOUTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Young people are the future of Europe and Europe is their future. They are key agents for social, economic and technological progress and, as such, they are right to have high expectations and hopes of Europe. We must do all we can to ensure their full participation in society through education, employment, culture and democratic participation. Particular attention must be given to helping young people who are denied opportunity because of poverty, unemployment, or ethnic identity. European Union youth programmes must be reinforced to enable young people to develop their European identity and commitment.

We commit ourselves to improving opportunities for young women and men in a Europe that secures the well-being of future generations.



9

CREATING EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

The principle of equality of opportunity between women and men is fundamental to democracy. It must be applied in all aspects of society and form an integral part of social and economic policy. We warmly welcome the new commitment in the Treaty to achieve equity and combat all forms of discrimination. To exclude anyone from fair access to education, employment or democratic participation is to diminish society. Responsibility for family, society and work must be shared and domestic violence must be combated. Participation in political structures must be open equally to both genders.

We commit ourselves to ensuring equal opportunities for women and men across the European Union and promoting that principle in all the policies of the Union.



Discrimination in any form has no place in the modern society we want to build. A healthy society and democracy can only be based on mutual respect for the equal rights of all its people. The European Union and its Member States must take the lead in tackling racism by cooperating more closely together. Developing a society based on tolerance requires a European strategy to prevent illegal migration, to tackle at source the pressures of poverty and persecution which provoke migration, and to ensure respect for the rights of legal migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

We commit ourselves to fight all forms of discrimination, to tackle prejudice and to defeat racism and xenophobia, and to work for successful integration through action at the European and national level.



Creating a flourishing environment must be a priority for the European Union. We must achieve a better balance between urban and rural areas by improving the quality of life in our cities and suburbs, and by promoting sustainable development of the countryside. Pollution and acid rain do not respect national boundaries. We can only deliver a sound environment if we work together to raise common standards. Europe must also give a lead in protecting the global environment. We must make sustainable development a basic principle of both the internal and external policies of the European Union.

We commit ourselves to cut the emission of greenhouse gasses, to press for action to halt resource depletion, to preserve biodiversity, improve food safety, and to pursue the principle that the polluter must pay.



DEVELOPING STRENGTH THROUGH CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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We believe that Europe's diversity of culture is an asset. The people of Europe share a common project and have common interests which are best served by working together and strengthening their cultural identity. We treasure our different heritages and will seek to promote our thriving cultural industries. Culture and the arts have an essential role to play in promoting social cohesion, belief in one's own identity and respect for the customs of others.

The partnership between our peoples is stronger when they are confident of their cultural and historic identity.

We commit ourselves to preserving distinct cultures, to promoting understanding between them and to ensuring that all cultures can express themselves freely.



Security against crime is an issue of common concern for all European citizens. Improving the security of our communities must be a top priority for the governments of Europe. Cross-border crime, such as money laundering and trafficking in drugs and human beings, has a direct impact on peoples' lives. The countries of the European Union have a responsibility to work together to tackle organised crime, to improve the security of our external borders, and to ensure the success of the new police intelligence agency, Europol. Cooperation in the fight against crime should also be extended to include future Member States and other close neighbours.

We commit ourselves to fight crime by stepping up law enforcement cooperation within Europe and improving the effectiveness and democratic accountability of Europol.



BRINGING THE EUROPEAN UNION CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE

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We want a decentralised Europe that encourages regional initiative and local democracy. We must preserve the identity and independence of Member States in those matters that can be better resolved at the national, regional or local level. We must also build a closer union that can deal effectively with those issues that make us interdependent and require a European response. Information and decision-making must also be open and accessible for the citizen.

We commit ourselves to bring decisions in Europe as close to the people as possible and respect the principle of subsidiarity by ensuring integration wherever necessary and decentralisation wherever possible.



A STRONG EUROPE

Europe must be able to secure its common interests and promote its values of democracy, solidarity, justice and freedom on the global stage.

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MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALISATION

Globalisation has radically changed the worlds of business and government with major implications for work and society. In a larger and closer union the countries of Europe will be stronger and better able to meet these challenges. We must harness change and the dynamism of the new global economy while reinforcing the distinctive social models of the countries of Europe. We also need a reformed international financial system capable of tackling global crises and promoting economic progress, in the interests of developed and emerging economies alike.

We commit ourselves to work together to meet the challenge of globalisation and develop a more effective global governance through reformed international institutions and a better regulated international financial system.



We have an exciting opportunity to build a Europe that is united. We must not allow our continent to be divided between poverty and prosperity. A well prepared, comprehensive and inclusive enlargement process is in the best interests both of current European Union Member States and applicants. Enlargement will enhance the democracy and stability of our continent, strengthen Europe's voice in the world, and allow us to realise the potential of an enlarged Single Market. All applicants must be subject to the same objective political and economic criteria. The European Union must work to strengthen relations between all European countries, whether applicants or not.

We commit ourselves to taking the lead in the enlargement process based on thorough negotiations with a view to achieving the accession of new Member States as soon as possible.



Europe must act as one, as this makes each Member State better able to promote its interests in the world. We can secure a better deal in international negotiations on trade and other matters if we speak with one voice. We can make a bigger impact on world events and better promote international standards on social and human rights and the environment if we pursue an effective common foreign and security policy. And we can make a more effective contribution to international crisis management if we deepen cooperation in defence as envisaged in the Treaties. Further steps in the fields of arms control and disarmament will have a positive impact on stability and peace in Europe.

The European Union has a particular responsibility to build close and cooperative relations with its nearest neighbours like Russia and the Ukraine. Enlargement towards the east must be accompanied by a consistent development of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

We commit ourselves to building close and strong cooperation in foreign policy and to enhancing Europe's capacity and means to prevent conflicts and to respond to security crises.



PROMOTING SOLIDARITY WITH OTHER NATIONS

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Europe has a responsibility to cooperate with developing countries. Conflict, mass-migration, rapid population growth and the degradation of the environment often have their roots in poverty. The European Union must strengthen its development effort and focus more of its aid on helping the poorest people and the poorest countries. The European Union must also help to ensure that the benefits of globalisation are equitably shared and allow fairer access to its market for trade from poorer countries. The European Union should ensure consistency between its solidarity with developing countries and its other external policies. The European Union must also must promote respect for human rights, democracy and good governance which are essential to stability and development.

We commit ourselves to pursuing policies on aid, trade, investment and debt reduction which will reduce world poverty and contribute to the internationally agreed goal of halving the number of people living in abject poverty by 2015.



A DEMOCRATIC EUROPEAN UNION THAT WORKS BETTER

Europe must be able to adapt to meet new challenges. It must adopt the policies and carry out the institutional reforms needed to create an enlarged and inclusive Union that is more democratic and efficient.

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REFORMING THE EUROPEAN UNION'S POLICIES

We seek a modern Europe which serves its people effectively. But if we want that modern European Union we must continue to modernise its policies to ensure that they meet the needs of the citizen. The EU needs a reformed Common Agricultural Policy which reconciles the need for international competitiveness, the desire of consumers for produce of good quality and value, the protection of the environment and the promotion of balanced rural development. The EU also needs reformed structural funds which can address the reality of regional and social inequalities in the new enlarged European Union. These funds must be effectively targeted towards job creation, promoting solidarity and improving social and economic cohesion.

We commit ourselves to continue to reform the European Union's policies to make them relevant to the new century.



REFORMING THE EUROPEAN UNION'S BUDGET

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The European Union must have secure and sufficient funding which enables it to meet the demands we place upon it and takes account of enlargement and the need to promote growth and employment. The EU, while respecting budgetary discipline, must find imaginative new ways of financing investment such as public-private partnership and the use of the European Investment Bank's lending facilities. Waste, inefficiency and fraud must be eliminated.

We commit ourselves to develop new sources of investment, to maintain budget discipline, and to improve the efficiency of the European Union's financial management in order to respond to new priorities.



The European Union needs democratic and efficient institutions if it is to deliver effective policies which accommodate the larger Union of the next century. In particular the European Union must agree on the reforms left over from the Amsterdam Summit - on the size of the Commission, the weighting of votes and the application of qualified majority voting. The European Parliament must make full use of its increased powers of legislation and scrutiny and build a closer partnership with national parliaments. The European Commission needs to be better organised and more accountable. The European Council should set the strategic agenda for the European Union. The Council of Ministers must be better coordinated and its procedures must be made more transparent and efficient, including the increased use of qualified majority voting where desirable.

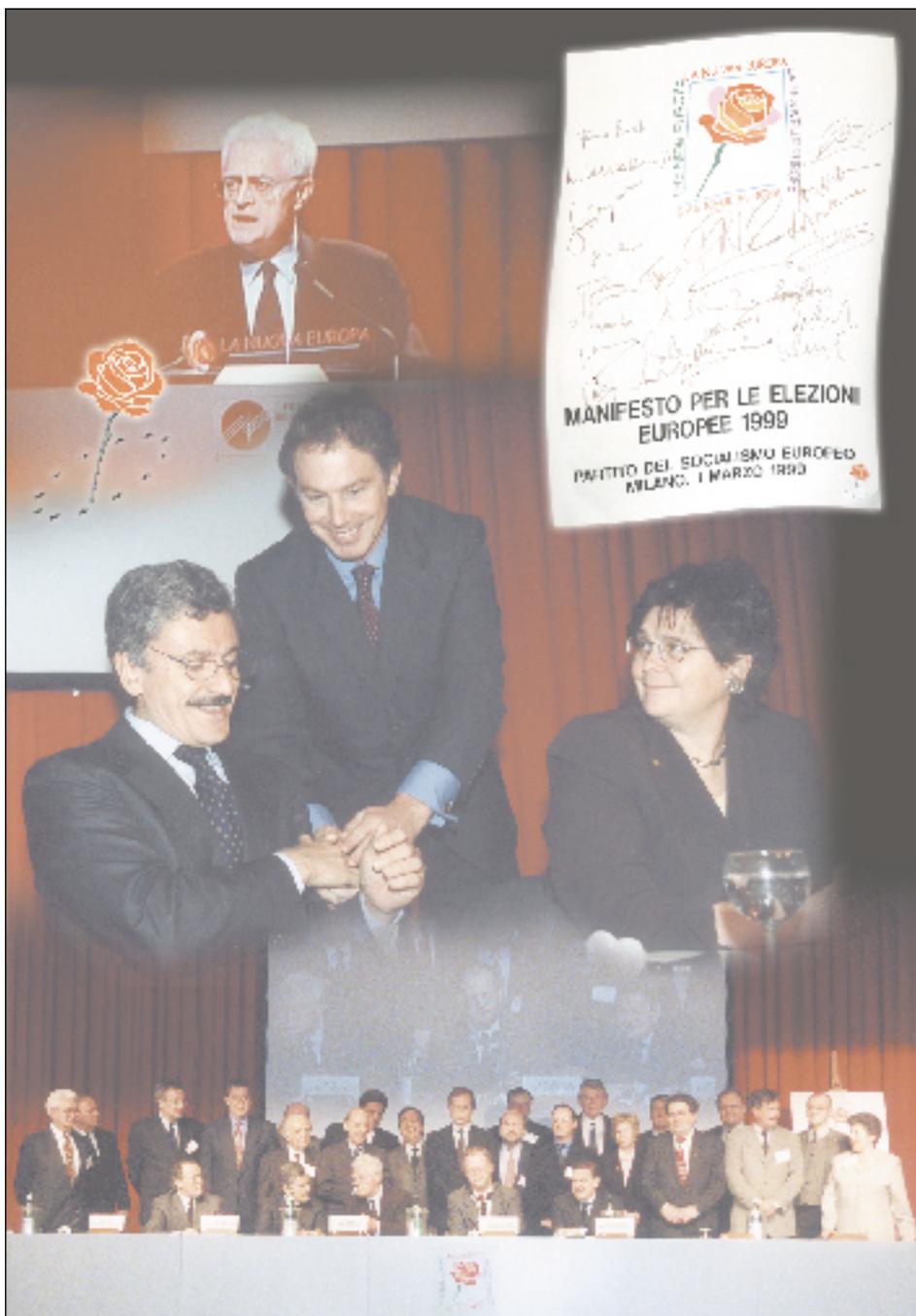
We commit ourselves, before enlargement, to reform the institutions of the European Union to make them more open, efficient and democratic.



Pictures of the PES Milan Congress

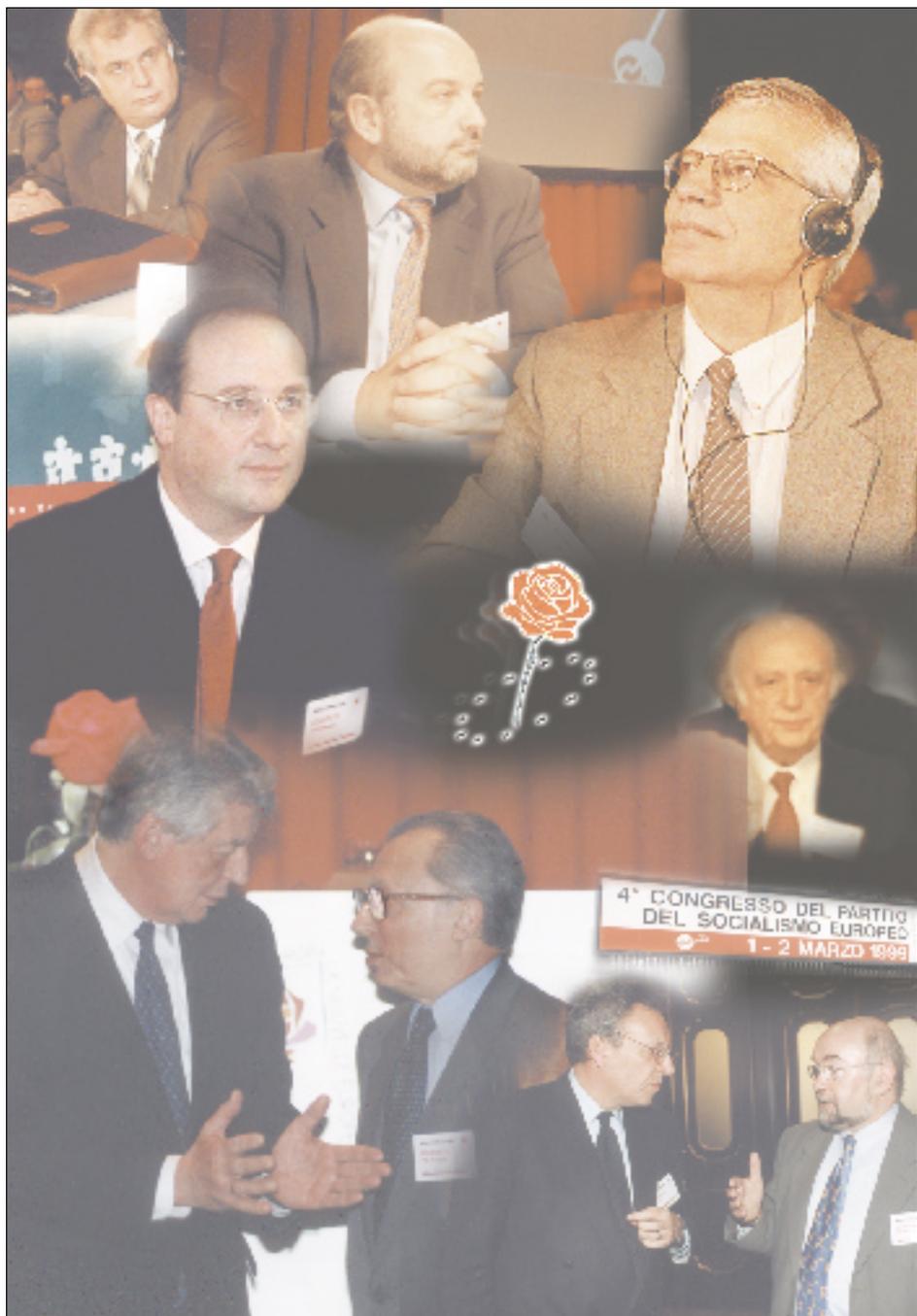
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PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS - PES



In the Party of European Socialists (PES) 20 Social Democratic, Democratic Socialist and Labour parties from the European Union, Norway and Cyprus coordinate their EU-policies and increasingly operate on the basis of a common strategy. The PES member parties closely cooperate with a further 19 associated and observer parties, especially those from countries aspiring to become EU Member States in the coming years.

11 out of 15 government leaders in the EU are currently from PES parties; 13 out of 15 governments have a PES party participation; 9 out of 20 Members of the European Commission are from PES parties and, last but not least, the Parliamentary Group of the PES with its 214 Members constitutes the biggest political group in the European Parliament.

* As far as the Danish Social Democratic Party is concerned the Declaration should be read in the light of the Edinburgh Agreement concluded at the European Council of December 1992.

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