



Strong for the People

EPP Manifesto – European Elections 2009

For Europe 2009 is a year of unprecedented challenges. That is why the upcoming elections to the European Parliament are so important to our future. First and foremost, we are in a financial and economic crisis that requires competence, determination and far-sightedness, not ideology. Second, we have to secure Europe against the threats of terrorism and crime, effectively combat climate change and respond to the ageing of our societies, through smart solutions, not stopgap reactions. And in order to respond to the growing challenges of global instability together with our partners, we need a stronger, more efficient European Union, not a weak and inept one.

Europe has come a long way. The European People's Party has contributed more to the development of the European Union than any other political force. United Europe's founding fathers were Christian Democrats. Their achievements were built on deep convictions rooted in Judaeo-Christian civilisation and the Enlightenment, emphasising freedom as well as responsibility, and the dignity of the human being. On the basis of these values, over the last 50 years the men and women of the European People's Party have been at the forefront of improving and successively expanding the Union as well as introducing the Euro. All this has enabled us to live in peace, security and increasing prosperity over five decades. While others have talked, we have acted.

Facing the new challenges of 2009, we are well aware of what others are proposing. Socialists see the financial and economic crisis as a chance to push their age-old agenda of nationalisation, protectionism and permanent deficit spending. We, on the other hand, are acting in order to preserve a competitive Social Market Economy and make it more sustainable. Nationalists are using the crisis to advocate their well-known plans against a strong Europe that would quickly leave us unable to cope with the challenges of the 21st century. We, however, are determined to push ahead with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and with modernising and strengthening the Union. In other words, this election is about a fundamental choice: between the dangerous recipes of Socialists and nationalists, and a secure future based on values, responsibility, competence and coordinated action.

Creating Prosperity for Everyone

For the European People's Party, the economy is not an end in itself. It is at the service of the people. We believe in a society based on the individual and on freedom, solidarity and social cohesion. That is what a Social Market Economy means. There can be no social cohesion and political stability without sustainable economic development.

The current crisis was caused by short-sightedness and a lack of control in the global financial system. We must now redefine the role of regulation in financial markets and our economies in general. Moreover, we cannot let the financial sector walk away with the profits and leave the public to bear the losses. We don't want to move to Socialism—we want better and smarter regulation, not regulation for its own sake. But our position also clearly differs from the ideas of market fundamentalists who believe that markets alone should rule the world. Today's critical situation requires additional public spending, but it must be limited in time. We cannot live at the expense of future generations.

- The creation of new jobs remains our core priority. We need to continue reforms, investing in education, lifelong learning and employment in order to create opportunities for everyone.
- A global economic slump needs to be averted and protectionism must be prevented. European governments need to continue to better coordinate fiscal and monetary policies.
- The international financial architecture must be rebuilt. European regulations alone are not sufficient for global financial markets—we need to increase overall transparency and surveillance. Banks must again focus on their vital function to secure citizens' savings and provide liquidity for our economies.
- The current economic recession is an opportunity to increase our investments in green technologies. We want to position Europe as a world leader in this sector in order to boost our economic growth and create more jobs and at the same time make Europe less dependent on fossil fuels.

Making Europe a Safer Place

Terrorism, especially the totalitarian jihadist kind, threatens our fundamental values. Therefore the European Union must constantly improve cooperation and efficiency in the global struggle against terrorism, taking into account the fact that the old distinction between international and domestic has all but disappeared in this context. But a safer future for Europe also means better protection against organised crime, preventing illegal migration and safeguarding the supply as well as the quality of food.

- The EU's first security priority is counter-terrorism. The Union should build formal links of close cooperation between the Commissioner for Freedom, Justice and Security, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and Europol's Director, and improve the synchronisation between their work and the global activities of the EU and its Member States. Europol's operational capabilities have to be strongly improved.
- The fight against illegal immigration and human trafficking requires more coordinated action. This includes improving the operational capabilities and resources of the border control agency FRONTEX, applying a joint asylum policy, stepping up the implementation of a Blue Card system for legal immigration and establishing close partnerships with the countries of origin of illegal migration.
- A renewed agricultural policy must cope better with the volatility of markets and strike the right balance between a secure food supply, sustainability and competitiveness, while keeping food affordable and of good quality.

Combating Climate Change

Global warming is a reality. Humanity's future depends on our ability to develop more sustainable ways to deal with the earth's resources. Moreover, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions makes us less dependent on gas and oil imports. The EPP is committed to reducing greenhouse gases and promoting more carbon-free energy sources.

A courageous and rapid move towards the most modern and efficient technologies will be good not only for our climate and pave the way for a global solution, it will also be good for our economy because it will make Europe a world leader in new technologies. The financial and economic crisis should not be taken as an excuse to do nothing—to the contrary: we should take it as a wake-up call to modernise our economies and create new, sustainable jobs. Market mechanisms can and should be used to reduce emissions.

- Europe should become the market leader in green technology based on more and better research and development.
- The share of renewable energy must be increased to at least 20% of the energy mix by 2020.
- Nuclear energy should remain an option for Member States to reduce emissions.
- A functioning system of emissions trading as a market-based incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions needs to be put in place.

Tackling the Demographic Challenge

Europe is facing major changes in its demography with lower birth rates, a growing older population and higher life expectancy predicted in the future. The European Union therefore has to adopt and implement a new agenda of age-friendly employment, entrepreneurship, volunteering policies and practices. In this context the EPP sees families as the centre of our society and the guardian of our values and therefore special incentives have to be provided for them. Our ultimate aim is to create a better, more secure and prosperous Europe for our children and our children's children.

- National policy makers have to improve the viability of social security systems. Pension reforms in Europe must be undertaken so that the effective retirement age adapts to demographic developments. Private pension schemes should also be enhanced.
- Family policies have to be even more integrated into our national policies. Family-friendly policies that improve flexibility for working parents are urgently needed. Better childcare and housing have to be provided, family-friendly fiscal policies must be introduced and parental leave for both working parents should be encouraged.
- Education is crucial to our future growth and prosperity. Higher levels of education increase the employability of the unemployed. Life-long learning is essential in order to meet the new challenges posed by technological advancement and globalisation and as public sector costs increase, advantageous cooperation with the private sector should be explored.
- The EU has to adopt a long-term strategy in order to encourage and attract talented, qualified and skilled workers from the rest of the world so that Europe's economy can become more competitive, more dynamic and more knowledge driven. Language courses, entrepreneurial incentive schemes, vocational training and enhanced job placements are needed to assist legal migrants in integrating into the labour market and society.

Uniting Europe on the World Stage

Europe is today facing a more fractured and insecure global situation than at any time in the past 20 years. It is therefore in the European Union's best interest to enhance its role in the world. In 2009, it must improve its capabilities to act, renew its partnership with the United States, pay particular attention to its neighbourhood in the East and South, and reach out to partners worldwide, in order to safeguard peace and prosperity in Europe and help make the world a better place at the same time.

- Global institutions must be adapted to the new facts: This means improving the controls of worldwide financial markets in organisations like the International Monetary Fund and strengthening the United Nations.
- Stronger cooperation in defence is necessary, including a strategic agreement with the US and other allies, better pooling of resources in military structures as well as financing and research, and a common defence force with standardised conditions for intervention and rules of engagement for international missions.
- The EU should differentiate its neighbourhood policy in order to suit the specificities of different countries, while at the same time laying down common standards on human rights and the rule of law in a Neighbourhood Charter.

This is the choice before all of us: A European Union which is strong for the sake of its people, based on shared values and led by the strongest political family—or a weak Union with an insecure future, applying yesterday's solutions to today's problems. The European People's Party is ready to tackle this challenge. All we need is your vote.