

## Appeal to the European Electorate (15 January 1979)

**Caption:** During a meeting held in Brussels from 10 to 15 January 1979, the Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community adopts unopposed its appeal to the electorate regarding the upcoming direct elections to the European Parliament.

**Source:** Confederation of the Socialists Parties of the European Community (Ed.). European Programmes. Brussels: Confederation of the Socialists Parties of the European Community, [s.d.]. 220 p. (Collection of the European Socialists Programmes).

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## Appeal to the European Electorate (15 January 1979)

To the European Electorate,

1. For the first time in history, the citizens of nine European countries, representing a single electorate of some 140 million voters, will directly elect their representatives to the Assembly of the European Community (the European Parliament).
2. For democratic Socialists, these elections are not an end in themselves. They are to be considered as an additional means to promote progress towards a society freed from oppression and exploitation. We share a common goal of a new world order based on democratic Socialist principles. Thus the voters will have the opportunity of directly influencing progress in that direction.
3. In shaping this European Community, the logic of the capitalist market system, namely the pursuit of private commercial and financial interests, has for too long prevailed over the search for commonly defined social and human objectives. Obviously a directly elected European Parliament will not automatically solve all the challenging problems of our times. Each country will have to continue to introduce indispensable social and economic changes by its own efforts and with its own means, including legislation. But we are deeply convinced that action undertaken in common could, in various fields, accelerate the progress towards these goals to the greater benefit of each of them.
4. Our parties have inherited different experiences down the years. They operate in countries where the level of economic development, the intensity of social struggle, cultural traditions, awareness of social problems and the interplay of internal political alliances profoundly differ. Yet we share a common goal of a more human and egalitarian Europe for all our citizens.
5. We note with concern:
  - the inability of our present social structure to solve the grave problem of unemployment;
  - a trend towards less equality and solidarity as seen in the ever-widening gulf between the rich and the poor throughout the world and within the European Community;
  - that uncontrolled growth in production and consumption, especially in the wealthier regions of the world, is being achieved at the cost of exhausting and polluting the environment, and of declining living and working conditions for millions of workers - something which Socialists cannot permit.
6. Therefore, the democratic Socialist parties herewith present the following commonly agreed principles:
  - to ensure the right to work for all and in particular for youth;
  - to bring economic and social development under democratic control;
  - to fight pollution;
  - to end discrimination, in particular against women;
  - to protect the consumer;
  - to promote peace, security and cooperation;
  - to extend and defend human rights and civil liberties.

### **A. Ensuring the right to work**

7. Unemployment results from the crisis of the present economic system. It increases inequality among individuals, it limits women's rights to work, it demoralizes young people unable to find a job, it contributes to despair and disillusionment in society.
8. Socialists will seek to ensure that all members of the European Community contribute to the solution of the problems of underemployment through reorientation and better control of the economy as well as

through more active employment and education policies. The market economy will not lead automatically to social justice. Until such time as there is real economic democracy, living and working conditions cannot become more humane. The demand of the Conservatives for the subordination of labour to capital must be rejected. In particular Socialists shall strive to ensure that further economic growth will benefit those with the lowest incomes.

9. The right to work is and will remain one of the basic aims of Socialism. It is a fundamental human right for men and women. The principle tasks of the European Community and its member countries must therefore be to combat unemployment. In this connection Socialists place greatest emphasis not only on a policy of full employment but also on a policy aimed at creating better working conditions.

10. Our fight for a society in which available resources are distributed fairly demands that we shape and guide social and economic development. The conventional economic policy instruments have proved inadequate; and active employment policy and the planning of the economy will be necessary to reduce unemployment. We also seek a fairer distribution of available work with an important place being given to a shorter working day, a 35-hour working week, and a systematic policy of vocational training and retraining. Here we must take particular account of those groups which face the greatest difficulties on the labour market; young people, women, older workers, the disabled and foreign workers.

11. The best way to achieve these conditions is through common policies agreed between the main industrial nations. Such policies can be achieved only in close cooperation with all trade union organizations, particularly the European Trade Union Confederation. The ETUC must be more involved at Community level in the preparation of, and the procedure for, making decisions. Our parties also intend to work out their proposals, where possible, in collaboration with the trade union movement.

12. We realize that the fight against unemployment also requires longer-term structural reforms and economic planning involving a key role in certain sectors for public enterprises.

## **B. Keeping economic and social developments under democratic control**

13. Economic policy must be based on a type of economic growth more respectful of human needs, avoiding the waste of scarce natural resources, the pollution of the environment, and promoting solidarity between regions.

14. To meet these demands, we call for close scientific and technological cooperation between countries in order to modernize older industries and to create new ones. We advocate structural reforms, economic planning and effective controls on multinational undertakings and major industrial and financial groups. Steps will be taken to guide investment, particularly in the branches of industry with a strong international involvement. More means than at present available should be provided for regional and social policies aiming at reducing the big inequalities between regions and groups of the population.

15. Therefore, we shall strive:

- to create efficient and democratic economic structures and economic stability;
- to ensure the democratisation of industry at all levels in ways adapted to the specific circumstances of each individual country and in cooperation with the trade union organizations;
- to ensure public control of big industrial and financial concentrations and multinational companies;
- to develop workers' cooperatives and similar publicly useful companies;
- to stimulate small and medium-sized firms.

16. The Common Agricultural Policy must be adapted so as to achieve a better balance between production and consumption, more stable prices and an equitable development of agricultural incomes through greater efficiency and better structural policies. The consumer interest must be taken fully into account in the evolution of the C.A.P.

### **C. Fighting pollution**

17. The combined efforts of the countries of the European Community should be given a strong lead to ensure that a worldwide effort will be made to maintain ecological balance.

18. The improvement of the quality of life in the cities and the countryside and the fight against pollution cannot be limited to the boundaries of one single country. Only close cooperation among our countries can provide the required protection for the people through commonly agreed and implemented measures.

19. Concerning energy, we propose:

- that an effective programme should be set up by the European Community for energy saving and the development of alternative sources of energy;
- that no further development and use of nuclear energy will be acceptable unless control and management is in public hands and unless clearly effective safeguards are provided against dangers to public safety, health and the environment.

### **D. Ending discrimination, in particular against women**

20. Socialism stands for equality and rejects all discrimination based on sex, race, religion and political and philosophical opinions. This means that we reject exclusion from government service solely on the grounds of political beliefs. Equality also means special protection for the old, the handicapped and social outcasts. Men and women should be in a position to make their mark to the same extent on the development of society at all levels, at work and at home, in public and private life.

Similar conditions for men and women should be required for access to education, to the labour market, to social benefits, to public life, etc.

21. In order to reach these goals we particularly stress that:

- the content of education should be modified in order to meet the needs of women;
- institutions taking care of children should be accessible to all;
- a general spirit of tolerance and comradeship should be actively promoted throughout the European Community;

### **E. Protecting the consumer**

22. In our consumption-orientated society special care should be given to the protection of the consumer against aggressive and misleading publicity and the abuse of goods detrimental to the health of the individual and which encourage the waste of valuable resources. Collective needs are often disregarded in the pursuit of increased consumption of useless products encouraged by the interests of producers and advertisers.

23. We therefore propose:

- to favour objective information and the right to counteract misleading publicity;
- to encourage democratic consumers' associations and to reinforce their rights to introduce legal actions against abuse by producers;
- to enlarge the responsibility of producers for the quality of the goods that they produce.

### **F. Promoting peace, security and cooperation**

24. Freedom, justice and solidarity are not only principles applicable in our different countries but are also our guidelines for the new democratic world order that we are seeking to establish.

Socialists in Europe will therefore contribute to the pursuit of detente between East and West.

We are working for the full implementation of the Helsinki agreements and for worldwide peace and security. In the meantime, the maximum effort should be made to halt the arms race, especially in the nuclear field, and to bring sales of arms under international control. Satisfactory measures must be found to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Socialists will not be a party to the supply of arms to fascist or racist regimes.

25. In the medium and long-term the prosperous countries will have to accept a slower increase in their material affluence in order to overcome the North-South conflict. Only if Europe proves its active solidarity with the poorer regions of the world will it be in a position to contribute effectively to a lasting peace.

26. This is why we would also intensify European cooperation with the developing countries. The basic principles of this cooperation are the following:

- commitment of the Community to the overall advancement of the developing countries;
- full recognition of the independence of the developing countries and their right to freedom from intervention, whether politically or commercially motivated;
- greater benefit to the developing countries through trade relations;
- scientific and technical cooperation designed to benefit everyone;
- the conclusion of an agreement on joint action with a view to imposing at world level, effective and equitable rules for the monetary system and economic transactions.

27. The Lomé Convention is to be welcomed as an important step in the right direction. But much remains to be done in the field of development assistance and cooperation.

Our programme in this field can be summarized briefly as follows:

- Aid should be concentrated on the poorest countries and on those countries that follow a social policy aiming at the improvement of the conditions of the poorest sections of their population;
- Official development aid with no strings attached should be increased up to 1 % of the GNP of the European Community;
- The Community should extend its financial aid to non-associated developing countries;
- the UNCTAD IV integrated programme on raw materials should be encouraged;
- The European Community should adopt and implement the UN Charter on economic rights and obligations of states.

### **G. Extending and defending human rights and civil liberties**

28. Human rights derive from the most basic human needs. The message which Socialists are seeking to propagate is that the only sure approach to the attainment of basic human rights lies in the creation of a free and democratic political, economic and social system. The promotion of human rights must be genuine and in no sense an instrument of political advantage.

29. Therefore we will demand in the Community's Assembly (the European Parliament) :

- that all the Member States of the Community implement in full the European Convention on Human Rights;
- that the European Community should be in the frontline of the fight for the realisation of human rights throughout the world.

30. As far as the rights of the citizens of the Community are concerned we will strive for :

- The eradication of all legal and political discrimination affecting citizens of each country wherever they may live in the Community;

- Fundamental economic and social rights should be part of these Community rights, including the right to work. All discrimination against foreigners must be eliminated.
- The highest standards of political and legal rights should be extended to all Community citizens.

31. We welcome the re-establishment of democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal; we strongly support the accession of these countries to the Community. Moreover, we believe that democratic Europe has an urgent responsibility to contribute to the strengthening of democracy in these countries and must demonstrate its solidarity with the working people of the countries concerned.

We know that the economic and social structures of these countries and the particular products concerned make it necessary to have certain arrangements for adaptation and an appropriate timetable of transitional periods, in order to respect the legitimate interests of all people - both in the Community and in Greece, Portugal and Spain.

The enlargement of the Community must become a source of new strength and dynamism for Europe.

32. We do not see the European Community as an end in itself. Neither can it be considered as the whole of Europe. The tendency to use the word "Europe" as a description of the Community is to be deplored since it obscures the fact that the majority of European states and peoples are not part of the Community. We believe that in fighting for international Socialism we go beyond the confines of the Community.

33. The directly elected European Parliament must initially develop within the framework of the existing treaties. We recognize that any further transfer of powers from national governments to the Community institutions or from national parliaments to the European Parliament can take place only with the clear and direct assent of the national governments and parliaments.

34. In each of the nine countries belonging to the Community the democratic Socialists represent an important and coherent political force.

All these proposals have been approved by the democratic Socialist parties of the European Community. In each of these countries we will defend them.

35. The progressive policies of the Socialist parties are now more relevant than ever to the need of Europe's people since it is manifest that capitalism cannot solve the problems which exist.

Work for the solution of today's problems must proceed at both national and Community level and can be facilitated by actions based on closer European cooperation.

For successful action in the interests of all the people, the voice of the Socialist movement must be strong, in the directly elected European Parliament and in the parliaments of the Member States.