



ROADMAP

Towards a Social and Progressive Europe

On 28 May 2015 I had the privilege to present to the members of the Presidency my plan for making the PES stronger, more relevant, efficient and visible and win the 2019 European Elections. Our lively, constructive and positive debate makes me confident that we are on the right track.

I believe that the debate on the future of the PES and the Europe we want ahead of the election of President needs to be an inclusive one, where all our members, activists and citizens can have their ideas and views taken into account. This is why I have set up my website and social media accounts to serve as transparent and interactive platforms for exchange of views, ideas and opinions. I would be glad to see more people engaging as I believe this will also contribute to the visibility of the PES Congress in Budapest on 12-13 June.

Let me outline here some key elements of my vision for the future of the PES.

Our achievements – an inspiration for improvement

The first thing I would like to tell you is ‘Thank you’ to all of you – from our party leaders to our passionate activists. I am grateful for the commitment and hard work for OUR PES and for our fight to change Europe – which is far from over.

We have achieved a lot together. And we should be proud of it. Sometimes we are too humble about our achievements. If we don’t cherish them, we shall never be trusted, respected and recognised to lead our countries and Europe.

Look at just few of our success stories and what they mean for the people:

- In 2011 we had 3 Heads of State or Government. Now they are 11. The excellent cooperation with them at the European Council preparation meetings makes our voice much stronger at EU level.
- Our idea for a Common Candidate empowered people and increased democracy at European level. This is a big political change we initiated, led and implemented, changing the process of institutional setup towards more democratic legitimacy and accountability.
- Our European Youth Guarantee campaign is by far the most successful campaign the PES has ever had. Because it produced a tangible result. Its 6 bln EUR scheme is changing lives, providing a better start in life for hundreds of thousands of young people who struggle to find employment in a crisis and austerity-devastated continent. We will continue to work hard to broaden its scope to people under 30 years of age and secure additional funding.



- Our 2014 European elections campaign was revolutionary, innovative and dynamic thanks to the great devotion of Martin Schulz, but also due to our hard work and the commitment of the national parties. Just imagine the scale – 11 000 activists, trained in 5 months, 12 million people reached directly across 28 Member States. That was a completely new experience for the PES: a challenge to handle but also an opportunity for further deepening the grass-roots foundations of our family.
- The 315 bln EUR Investment Plan is the first step towards new economic policy in Europe. For 5 long and devastating years we fought to turn the EU towards job creation and investment. Now it is gradually happening.

My political goal – PES to win the next European Elections

Does all that mean that I am satisfied with everything? Definitely not! The moment you are – you start sliding backwards. It is true that we did not win the 2014 European elections. But today we are stronger at European level and it's time we look ahead. My political goals are:

- to make the PES the largest political force in Europe;
- to win the next European elections;
- to have the largest number of Members in the European Parliament;
- to have the President of the European Commission from our political family;
- to have the largest number of EU Commissioners.

But first we need to win the trust of EU citizens. Only then we can bring a real change for Europe and its people. And we must start working on this goal immediately in order to develop all the tools needed to achieve it.

I have always been committed to PES as OUR common party – as national leader and as Prime Minister. And yet, during the last 3 years I learned so much more about our political family and about each individual party. Thanks to you! We are all different. The background, history, problems, political agenda – they vary a lot from country to country. Yet we are united by our fundamental values of freedom, solidarity, social justice and equality!



The PES is not structured as the national parties. It cannot and should not be some kind of Super-party, instructing and directing from above. However, it does need a strong leadership and sense of direction on all challenges Europe is facing. We can only win the next European elections if we provide added value and practical support to strengthen the Member Parties back home. All the innovations we introduced recently such as the Secretary Generals Network, Campaign Managers Network, Media Network and many others, serve this purpose. The PES is our common home and every member of the family must feel ownership, respect and support!

Having been the PES President for the past 3 years, I also know our weaknesses perfectly well. And that is exactly what motivates me in my will to overcome them. I believe in the tremendous potential we have. But it can only be achieved with our joint effort! This is why I need your support, ideas, advice and commitment – now and in the years to come. My ambition is to establish a strong team of dedicated people which will turn the PES into a strong, living and effective machine for the next European campaign.

PES – the right political tool for a progressive change in Europe

Politics is a narrative about the future. And the future of our precious European project is threatened

- from within: by growing poverty, inequality, divisions, lack of solidarity, lack of positive perspectives and optimism;
- from the outside: by instability, conflicts and chaos.

European social democracy is also challenged by populists from the left and from the right!

The way forward is not to compete on their ground, but to develop our inspiring and credible narrative about the Future, based on our values, which are on demand in Europe. We have to provide credible answers to all topical issues which matter to European citizens – from jobs, our social state and economic model, to climate change and our place in the world. But we should never forget that in the heart of our movement is the idea of human dignity and human rights! And we face so many offences to them today!



We are a political movement established for Change. In 2013 after a transparent, inspiring and inclusive debate, we adopted the new Fundamental Programme of PES. But the world and our societies are on the move. And we have to lead the political debate with our new ideas. In recent years the minds of European citizens associated the word ‘reforms’ only with social cuts, deprivation of rights and lack of perspectives. In order to highlight our alternative for a Europe of optimism, of democracy, prosperity, sustainable development and jobs, we created a high-level Working Group on ‘Progressive reform Agenda’.

We need an even broader public debate about the future of social democracy and Europe. I will count on all the parties and stakeholders, especially FEPS as our Foundation, to make this process transparent and fruitful. I intend to establish an Advisory Board of authoritative and respectful members of our family, who will steer the debate about our political direction.

However, the most important task is to turn the PES into a broader open platform for all people and organisations in Europe who share our values and vision about the future!

How to improve PES organisation and deliver results

We have changed a lot in our work but more remains to be done to increase the visibility, relevance and influence of the PES. But we are not starting from scratch. We have a solid basis to build on to improve efficiency, but improvements inevitably take time. Whoever says change can be achieved overnight is either naive, or not sincere.

On 6 May I extensively presented my vision, method and work plan in my motivation letter which is my Platform for action. Below is an outline of the milestones on our way to achieving our goals:

1. Strengthen and broaden our basis

- We need to continue to deepen and elaborate the tailor-made approach to our Member Parties, listening to their needs. Our support needs to be visible not only during campaigns. The PES has to engage in a more systemic way to constantly be in practical service to them;



- It is time to unite for the Progressive Europe we all want to live in. We need to build bridges and networks to all who think social – all progressive and democratic stakeholders, be it political actors, trade unions or civil society. The PES has to be the core of a broader alliance of forces for progressive direction of the Union. Our outreach towards traditional and potential social groups of our electoral strength should be extended. Our electorate tends to age and suffers lack of mobilisation in European elections. We have to put more efforts in involving and committing women, young people, workers and people representing small and medium sized business, by defending their specific interests publicly and organising thematic campaigns which bring tangible results corresponding to their needs;
- We must build on our success stories through result-oriented grass-roots campaigns with PES Women and YES – for example on women participation at the labour market or on the remaining inequalities and the gender pay gap;
- We have to invest more time and focused efforts in our future. The political role and the growth of our activists' network, which is the most extended one among all European political parties, must be reinforced. The PES Training Academy, established in 2014, should be turned into a large scale priority project in order to increase the knowledge, motivation, perspective and skills of the younger generation of PES leaders and activists.

2. Strengthen our political coordination

- Every initiative and effort of a member of our political family has to be multiplied by all in order to be successful. We need to overcome artificial borders between us and act together in one direction! I have always fought against this phenomenon which weakens the public and practical impact of our efforts;
- I intend to organise, on a six months basis, a PES Coordination Council for strategic political planning. In my view this mechanism should involve representatives of all stakeholders from our family at EU level. In this respect, the role and initiatives of our Commissioners need to be outlined and backed by the whole PES family;
- We need to further improve coordination with the S&D Group in the European Parliament. I have already discussed with Gianni Pittella the need for the PES President to address the Group to discuss the activities and policies of the Party and vice-versa: the President of the Group to address the PES Presidency;



- We have achieved impressive results in the coordination of the positions of our government representatives on European policies. In the past 3 years the PES extended the number of Ministerial Networks from 4 to 11. They turned into a platform for frank exchanges of views and for streamlining the positions of our members in the Council with growing involvement of the S&D Group as well as of parties from our family who are currently in opposition and therefore their representatives do not sit at EU Council meetings.

The underlying purpose of this extended coordination is political: to help outline our political alternative and help our parties both in government and in opposition.

3. Greater visibility of the PES

We often talk about visibility, but let's make it clear here – it's not about the personal visibility of the PES President, but about the visibility of our positions and stances, our achievements and success stories, our Prime Ministers, leaders and Commissioners.

There are many good examples of how we have achieved good visibility. All media metrics show that our Common Candidate Martin Schulz reached more European citizens and was more visible than the other candidates! This was due not only to his personal devotion and energy, but also to the hard work of our team which was transformed into a European Election Task Force, boosting also PES visibility during the campaign.

Media interest naturally tends towards power centres and topical events which produce headlines for the news. When our Heads of State or Government attend our European Council preparation meetings, we make the PES visible and influential. When we attend and deliver strong messages at big events in the focus of public interest, the PES gets to the top news stories. A good example was the civil rally a few weeks ago in Skopje, FYROM, when I addressed more than 40 000 people on behalf of the PES. Another example is our latest Leaders Conference in Madrid this year which attracted huge media interest in Spain and demonstrated our support to PSOE ahead of important regional and local elections..



However, a number of practical steps need to be made to further improve PES public standing:

- I intend to increase the impact of our Media Network to provide greater visibility of the PES in national media and the achievements of both our parties and other actors like social democratic Commissioners at EU level;
- The capacity of the PES Communication and Social Media Unit will be strengthened and we will invest more time and resources in that particular aspect of our work;
- PES Newsletter will be provided quarterly, with all our achievements and efforts as a family. Annual reports of our activities will give transparent assessment of all the political work of the PES community;
- The PES webpage has to serve as an interactive portal for our discussions and exchange of views so that all members are actively engaged.

4. PES as an active and influential factor on international issues

In the past years our party continued to be actively involved in international affairs in order to contribute to promoting peace, stability, democracy and justice within and beyond EU borders.

The international environment around the EU has substantially worsened. We are threatened by international terrorism imposing fear and hatred in our societies, undermining our core values of trust, solidarity, mobility, etc., as we unfortunately saw in Paris and Copenhagen. The Islamic State has a devastating impact in the whole MENA region. The conflict in Ukraine requires us to make difficult decisions in order to uphold our principles and values for peace and to work to support the Minsk-2 Agreement as the way to the political solution to the crisis.

In order to speak with one voice, we need to fully back and support the role and efforts of our comrade, Federica Mogherini, in her capacity as EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. She already delivered on a number of promises and made crucial contribution on issues such as the negotiations on the Iran nuclear programme and the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean.



To be effective in our international role we also need to continue to extend the network of our international partners in order to have influence on the political processes:

- I sincerely regret that in the last years the capacity of the Socialist International for fruitful initiatives diminished. Regardless of the many efforts since 2009 to reform the SI from within, there was not enough political will to go in this direction, which affected the cooperation with a number of our member parties, the S&D Group and the PES. We can't just wait for something to change. This is the reason we successfully develop and extend fruitful cooperation with the Progressive Alliance, which turns into an effective, open and dynamic platform for cooperation with progressive parties. Just in the last months we had two joint conferences and will proceed in this direction;
- The PES maintains an active dialogue with US Democrats on major international issues and especially on TTIP, which is in the focus of the attention of our citizens;
- Since 2011 the PES has had an active role in supporting social democratic forces in the Arab countries in close coordination with Arab Social Democratic Forum. Our recent Conference on the Mediterranean addressed major problems such as the refugee crisis and outlined the need for a more comprehensive approach to the humanitarian, security and economic challenges, based on solidarity;
- Together with our partners from the Labour party in Israel and FATAH in Palestine we continue to work for a lasting and fair two-state solution;
- The PES has always advocated for a credible European perspective for the Western Balkan countries. The latest PES Western Balkans conference, held in Sofia on 11 May 2015, agreed to extend the practical cooperation between the parties on the reform processes;
- Pending confirmation by the Congress, the latest PES Presidency meeting agreed on a number of upgrades of the membership status for some of our Associate and Observer parties, which opens new possibilities for cooperation and closer partnership, especially with parties from the EU Neighbourhood;
- Last year we extended the cooperation with Social democratic parties from Asia. This year marked the tenth anniversary of PES' regular and strategic dialogue with CPC.



Dear friends,

Leading the PES for the past 3 years proved to be one of the most inspiring times in my political career (and no less a challenge than being a Prime Minister or a national party leader!). I believe that the diverse and extended tasks of the PES President require a full-time commitment in order to achieve the best results.

As I feel that there is a lot more I can do in this capacity, last year I took the decision to run for a second mandate as PES President. My new role as a Member of the European Parliament provides the opportunity to strengthen the daily cooperation with the S&D Group. Furthermore, I am moving to Brussels now in order to have a much more 'hands-on' approach to the implementation of our priorities and to get more involved in the daily work of the Party together with the Secretariat.

In any case, the way to our victory in 2019 will not be easy. It will be hard, demanding our full commitment, full of challenges and small battles to win. However, I believe that with your support we can do it together! We can win the 2019 European Elections and bring the change towards the Progressive Europe we all want to see and live in.

Today I am asking for your support not to get the position of PES President, but to be entitled to do the job with all my heart, knowledge and energy!

I will appreciate your opinions, comments and questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sergei Stanishev'.

Sincerely,
Sergei Stanishev

For more detailed information on my platform you can visit:

stanishev@stanishev.eu

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