

30 June 1997



**DECLARATION OF THE MEETING OF THE
SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, SICEE**

Rome, Italy, 27-28 June 1997

Dear Comrade,

I am pleased to send herewith, for your information, the Declaration adopted by the Socialist International Committee for Central and Eastern Europe, SICEE, following its discussions at its meeting in Rome last Friday and Saturday 27-28 June.

The meeting, which was hosted by the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) of Italy, discussed an agenda which included the perspectives on the process of integration of the countries of this region in multilateral institutions, received reports on the national situations and decided on its future programme of activities.

I also enclose the list of participants at our meeting, which was chaired by the Co-Chairs of SICEE, Piero Fassino, of the PDS, Italy, and Lázsló Kovács, of the Hungarian Socialist Party, MSzP.

Fraternal regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Luis Ayala', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Luis Ayala
Secretary General

ROME DECLARATION

1. Central and Eastern Europe has seen a transition to democracy and the market economy which has enabled most of these countries to undergo a major modernisation.

This is particularly true in some Central and Eastern European countries - namely Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and the Baltic states - where there are high growth rates.

However, we have also witnessed acute social inequalities and imbalances which are all the more reason for us to advocate policies aimed at a greater balance between modernity and solidarity, between the rules of the market and the redistribution of wealth.

Moreover, strong economic dynamism has not always been accompanied by adequate overall democratic development.

Social democratic and progressive forces are therefore faced with the task of bringing to completion the political and economic transition in these countries, with the objectives of social progress, equality and democracy.

2. A crucial step in tying the countries of the region into this process will be through their integration into the European Union, to which all of Central and Eastern Europe's countries look as a means of supporting their democratic stability while favouring the completion of their economic and social modernisation.

Launching the negotiations on the Union's enlargement according to the established time frame, within the first months of 1998, is crucial, as is the need to conduct the negotiations in a way which assures equal opportunity for all of the candidate countries.

Concurrently, through Cooperation Agreements and through the further use of the instrument of "association", the European Union is called on also to offer prospects for strengthened cooperation and integration for countries which are not today candidates for membership.

3. The security and stability which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe rightly desire can best be achieved through economic, social, environmental and political means. At the same time, peace and stability throughout the entire continent are possible if there is a common responsibility for implementing a new architecture of security. The Act signed in Paris by the members of NATO and Russia, and the bilateral accords signed by the Ukraine with NATO and Russia are a step in this direction.

- the setting up of a new educational curriculum free from ideological oppression;
- the re-organisation of each social system in a way which, while refusing the statist logic of the past, does not however jeopardise fundamental social, individual and collective rights;
- the recognition of minority rights and implementation of policies capable of guaranteeing multi-cultural and multi-ethnic principles.
- policies which ensure sustainable development.

The Council of Europe can provide an important contribution to achieving these objectives.

6. Stability in the Balkans is an absolute priority for the security of the entire continent. The international community- and in particular the European Union - must assume a common responsibility for helping the countries of the region whose transition, for historical reasons, is slower and more difficult.

The reformist policies launched by Romania's new government - to which the Social Democratic Union contributes - prove that within the process of integration there is a real possibility to recover from the delays in the economic and political situation inherited from the past.

The recent elections in Bulgaria, although characterised by the victory of the centre-right forces, have opened up the road to stable institutions capable of promoting a period of reform.

It is also important to pursue concerted action aimed at guaranteeing stability in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which underlines its important contribution to peace and stability in the Balkans.

After the success of the opposition in the local elections, the next elections in Serbia and Montenegro should give the opportunity for a democratic evolution which overcomes the limits and the obstacles to a full implementation of democratic pluralism in the Yugoslav Federation. The international community should act to ensure that the elections are free and fair, and take place with open and pluralistic media.

Turkey's political evolution and democratic stability are crucial for the security of the entire region. For this reason, there is a need for political action which, while keeping Turkey firmly tied to the Euro-Atlantic institutions, favours the full recognition of civil rights and democratic principles.

7. It is of decisive importance to safeguard and consolidate the Dayton Accords which, thanks to the presence of IFOR/SFOR, guarantee peace in Bosnia. The consolidation of peace requires secure state structures and civil society.

10. The Caucasian Republics, where there are still unresolved conflicts and a difficult transition to democracy which are delaying economic and social development, require the elaboration of a strategy for cooperation.

The pursuit of a cooperation strategy with the Eurasian nations and the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is equally important. The international community must extend relations with and opportunities for these countries.

11. The role of the forces of social democracy in achieving these objectives is crucial. All the more so today, when the SI has member parties in all of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe and where several of these are in government.

The SI and its parties feel a responsibility to respond, with constant political initiatives and adequate programmes, to the demand for democracy, integration and development coming from public opinion in those countries.

At the same time, the SI sees an urgent need to favour the growth of a social democratic presence in Russia and in the other states of the CIS. To this end, it intends to establish a special action programme.

FINLAND

Finnish Social Democratic Party, SDP

Markus Aaltonen

FRANCE

Socialist Party, PS

Sonia Mink

GEORGIA

Citizens' Union of Georgia, CUG

Michael Machavariani

GERMANY

Social Democratic Party of Germany,
SPD

Michael Hofmann

GREAT BRITAIN

Labour Party

Nick Sigler

GREECE

Panhellenic Socialist Movement,
PASOK

Dimitris Batzelis

HUNGARY

Hungarian Socialist Party, MSzP

Vilmos Szabó
György Hegyi

ISRAEL

Israel Labour Party

Dov Peer

ITALY

Democratic Party of the Left, PDS

Umberto Ranieri
Roberto Cuillo
Graziano Cioni
Giorgio Rossetti
Enzo Lavarra
Giovanni Magnolini

SLOVAK REPUBLIC**Slovak Social Democratic Party, SDSS****Jaroslav Riha
Vladimir Drozda
Jozef Mozolík****SLOVENIA****United List, ZL****Natasa Kovac****SPAIN****Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE****Raimon Obiols
María Solanas****SWEDEN****Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP****Jerry Wiklund****FRATERNAL ORGANISATIONS****International Union of Socialist Youth,
IUSY****Nicola Zingaretti
Francesco Anghelone****Socialist International Women, SIW****Zita Gurmai****ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS****Parliamentary Group of the PES****Nadia Van Hamme****Party of European Socialists, PES****Jean-François Vallin**