

Pierre MAUROY  
Président

12, cité Malherbes  
75009 PARIS  
FRANCE

Téléphone: :  
Fax:

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To Party Leaders

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via email on u. 11/0.  
F: N.D.

Dear Comrade,

The Socialist International will have a particularly busy timetable in 1999. Firstly, as you know, our Congress will take place in Paris on the 8th, 9th and 10th of November.

The Congresses of the International are always privileged occasions of encounter, dialogue and decision-making which bear witness to the vitality of our organisation and to the continuing relevance of the values that unite the socialists and social democrats of the whole world. This year our Paris Congress will be even more exceptional, in uniting the greatest ever number of parties and demonstrating the wide influence and power of attraction of the Socialist International and the increasingly universal appeal of its message. As well as providing a rallying point for our movement, the Congress will also be called upon to adopt proposals, on both the ideological and organisational levels, which will allow the Socialist International to meet the great challenges of the twenty-first century and to remain the essential point of reference for all those who struggle for justice, solidarity and peace.

The Congress will also, of course, elect the members of its organs of leadership and accept new parties into membership.

It will be preceded by a meeting of the SI Council in Buenos Aires in Argentina, to be held on 25th-26th June. This meeting in Latin America reflects the importance we have always accorded to the continent, at a time when presidential elections are due to be held in several countries of the Southern Cone: in Argentina itself, in Chile and in Uruguay. The Council will consider documents prepared and discussed by our committees and by the González commission.

The committees will therefore have to meet before the Buenos Aires Council in order to prepare their proposals. Some have already met and established their programme of work in the run up to the Congress. The others will meet to do so in the coming weeks and months.

The Global Progress Commission under the chairmanship of Felipe González is also making progress in its work. A meeting specifically devoted to the possible reform of the International's organisational structure and its internal operation will be held in Bommersvik, Sweden, on the 19th, 20th and 21st of February. Furthermore, I have already received the introduction to Felipe's final report on the future of social democracy, which will soon be completed. As soon as we have received it in its entirety, it will of course be distributed to the parties for discussion.

We thus begin the year with a demanding but exciting programme of work, but I am sure that with the participation and good-will of all our member parties, our Paris Congress will enable us to further advance the cause of the Socialist International, to modernise its language and its methods while remaining faithful to our fundamental values. In doing this we shall be remaining faithful to the message of Willy Brandt, so as to make the Socialist International more truly international, more effective, and ever more influential.

With the most cordial greetings,

Pierre Mauroy  
President