



## Why European socialists and social democrats support the EU Constitution

### PES Network on the European Constitution

#### What are the practical advantages of the constitution?

##### More rights

1. The adoption of the objective of a "social market economy" ensures that high social standards and a policy aiming at full employment are at the heart of European policies – if the electorate supports parties of the left.
2. The constitution gives more rights to individuals:
  - a. social rights, enforceable by courts
  - b. more direct democracy, i.e. the right to call for a referendum
  - c. better democratic control by national parliaments
3. The right to fair and just working conditions can be enforced in all parts of the wider Europe Union. This makes sure that there will not be a race to the bottom.

##### More protection

4. The sheer size of the European market protects industry, labour and services against the negative effects of globalization.
5. Europe is an open market, but its citizens have the power to control it with political decisions.
6. The European Union sets standards with regard to environment protection. This is a good example how successful regulation can be when it is politically supported in civil society.

##### More security

7. Europe can give an example that economic development and social security can go together.
8. Europe's weight as the number one economy on this planet can be used to enforce at least minimum standards of protection and social rights for all human beings.
9. Europe can be a counterweight to the United States in international politics. The constitution creates the institutions, which can bring about a common European foreign and security policy.
10. With this constitution Europe has accepted its responsibility for peaceful solutions of international conflicts.

### Why do European Socialist and Social Democrats support the European Constitution?

The vast majority of European socialist and social democratic parties support the European Constitution. In member states where a referendum will take place socialist and social democratic parties opt for a 'yes' for the European Constitution. They support the kind of society in which we all want to live: a peace-loving, democratic, pluralistic and free society, a prosperous and socially just society.

With a 'yes' vote, European women and men will be voting for change and for democratic and social progress, and demonstrating the conviction with which we build Europe, one of our most cherished democratic ideals. They vote for a Europe based on the equality of the men and women who form it, and that works to achieve full employment through environmentally respectful and sustainable economic and social development.

#### Europe to regulate globalisation

Citizens all over Europe are invited to vote for a Constitution that will help the Union to effectively deal with globalization, to make it more democratic and socially aware; working for peace by building a just and democratic international order that prevents conflicts and does away with poverty, while rapidly and adequately responding to the day-to-day expectations of its citizens.

With this Constitution we are voting for more and better research, education and culture, and confirmation of the enrichment brought by linguistic pluralism.

The Constitution, which will enable Europe to strengthen its political union, is a victory of Europeanism over Euro-scepticism; of Europe as a political space over the Europe conceived

only as a marketplace; of Europe as a respected global power working for peace and cooperation over a dependent Europe; of a strengthened, rather than dismantled European social model.

#### **The European Constitution is based on our values**

Europe's Socialist and Social Democratic parties have played an active role in drafting a Constitution for the European Union of 25. The draft Constitution sets out our common values and provides a solid basis for the European model of society. Due to the work of Socialists, the value of solidarity and the goal of full employment are both enshrined in the Constitution. It incorporates the Charter of Fundamental Rights and recognises the social market economy in the aims of the Union as well as full employment and the fight against inequality.

#### **The Constitution safeguards the European Social Model**

The Constitution secures the legal basis for the role of the social partners and social dialogue. The promotion of a social market economy, of full employment, of the fight against social exclusion, of the promotion of justice and social protection, and of solidarity between generations will be among the objectives of the Union. Social policy and economic, social and regional cohesion will belong to the list of competences shared between the Union and the Member States. The experience shows that this will promote harmonisation of social standards on a high level. This is a great success for socialists and social democrats. Due to our efforts the European Union will be more than just an open market. The European Constitution provides a legal basis for the provision of services of general interest all over Europe.

#### **The Constitution help Europe fight poverty and promote equality**

Full employment calls for a comprehensive economic approach. The Constitution provides the legal basis for that. European institutions will be able to coordinate employment policies with economic policies under the new Constitution. It includes new options for the coordination of social policies as well. Yet, social policy is not all. Only a dynamic economy creates a sufficient number of jobs. With the Lisbon strategy Europe's socialists and social democrats have promoted the kind of comprehensive approach necessary to create a successful and at the same time dynamic social market economy all over Europe. The new Constitution will help create more and better jobs.

#### **Promoting Peace**

The desire to overcome a long history of warfare and power struggle stands at the beginning of the economic and political integration of Europe. Consequently, in international politics the mission of the old continent is to support peaceful solutions of conflicts. European Socialists and Social Democrats have a long tradition of promoting a peaceful and cooperative world. Today, this calls for a broad concept of security policy. Causes like ethnic and religious conflicts, terrorism associated with nationalism and fundamentalism, organised crime and drug trafficking, the lack of democracy as well as the degradation of the environment and water issues leads to armed conflicts. The answer to these new challenges has a military dimension. Yet, it must not be defined in those terms alone. Concepts, policies and strategies that are non-military have to be developed and to be given at minimum the same priority as is currently given to the military dimension. The European Constitution defines Europe's peaceful role in the world. With it Europe accepts its responsibility, in line with the UN Charter, for promoting peace, respect for international law and human rights, particularly those of children, for sustainable development, fair trade, and the abolition of poverty. The Constitution strengthens Europe's role in conflict prevention and disarmament.

#### **Promoting international responsibility**

The Constitution outlines a common foreign and security policy for the European Union. As far as policies are concerned, the creation of a foreign affairs minister for the Union and the possibility of cooperation on defence are an advance in common foreign and security matters. The Constitution sets a firm ground for Europe as a responsible international factor of peace and security.

With the addition among the objectives of the Union's foreign policy of sustainable development, of fair trade, of the protection of fundamental rights and the rights of children and of respect for international law, Europe aims at the root causes of many international conflicts.

#### **Strengthening Democracy and making Europe work**

The Constitution is a step towards more democratic and more effective European institutions.

- The European Parliament's election of the Commission president, taking into account the European Parliament election results, is also democratic progress.

- The Union will acquire a full-time President of the European Council, who will be able to coordinate the European policy of governments more efficiently.
- The Union will acquire its own foreign minister, who will be able to instil greater solidarity within the foreign, security and defence policy.
- The Council's decision-making capacity is increased with the extension of qualified majority voting to 40 new areas. The continuity and cohesion of its work is strengthened.
- The apportioning of responsibilities between the EU and Member States will be arranged more clearly.
- The adoption of all EU legislation will be subject to the prior scrutiny of national Parliaments and the double approval of both national governments and directly elected MEPs. This procedure will help to draw national policies and European political horizons more closely together.
- The Parliament will rule, jointly with the Commission, on over 95 per cent of EU laws: this is more than double the figure contained in the current treaties.
- The EU's legal capacity in the areas of asylum and migration and in the battle against international crime and terrorism has been significantly strengthened.
- Decision-making procedures will be greatly simplified, with their number reduced from 15 down to four. European decision-making procedures will become more democratic and more transparent.

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