



TOMORROW'S ANSWERS START TODAY

YEPP's Main Political Program 2007-2009

adopted at the YEPP Congress Stockholm 12 May 2007



TABLE OF CONTENT

Table of content	2
Challenges and YEPP Values	3
0. Economy and Innovation	5
1. Employment and Education	7
2. Energy	10
3. Home Affairs	12
4. Foreign Policy and Neighbourhood Policy	15
5. Social and Societal Issues	18
6. Environment	22
7. EU Institutions and Decision Making	24

CHALLENGES AND YEPP VALUES

Challenges ahead

For 50 years the European Union has been a huge success, helping to spread freedom, peace, prosperity, democracy and security across much of the European continent. We must not underestimate the historical significance of the European integration process. What started 50 years ago with 6 countries has today grown in no time to a European Union of 27 member states. What was less than 20 years ago a politically and militarily divided continent, is now an ever closer union spreading out from West to East, from North to South. Once the EU started to expand it became increasingly diverse. We, as Youth of the European People's Party, believe that the common approach of the challenges ahead lies at the European level. And the challenges Europe has to face in the 21st century are huge; globalization, the ageing of the population, global warming and the growing inequality to name the most important.

On its own every European country is too weak to successfully tackle the global challenges we face. That is why there can only be one answer: we must not act alone but together in a united Europe.
(Angela Merkel, 25 March 2007)

- Europe must act together to shape **globalization** in a way that we efficiently use the splendid opportunities of a global market and global competition while preserving social and environmental standards. If tackled positively, globalization will benefit the vast majority of our citizens. We need to reform and modernize our economic and social systems to make them sustainable for the future.
- The increase of life expectancy represents a significant progress for European citizens. However, **demographic imbalances** can cause tensions at social and economic level. Therefore we have to reform our social systems in a timely manner to make sure that they will be able to meet the demographic challenges.
- Winning the battle against climate change and **global warming**, will give us the opportunity of leaving our green planet livable for our children and grandchildren. The European Union is absolutely key to helping the world make the changes it must.
- We can't accept a tolerance of **growing inequality**. One of Europe's core values is based on solidarity between peoples, between nations and between individuals. Genuine equality of opportunity for all is a value we consider as paramount important. At the same time we stress our belief in the self-responsibility of the individual.

Belief in Europe

Just because we believe in the added value of an ever closer European Union, we call upon European politicians – whether they are active on the local, regional, national or supranational level – to believe in the common European project, to take up European leadership, to unite all European citizens in a common, inspiring project. Only a form of multilevel governance, only joint action by the member states and European institutions can reform the Union and rebuild its credibility with the peoples of Europe. We underline that important starting points for each EU policy are subsidiarity and proportionality.

Values

Political decision-making is all about values and principles. The value base of the Youth of European People's Party, adopted at the IVth YEPP Congress (March 2005, Paris) emphasizes

- respect of human dignity and of minorities in our common European space;
- the importance of family and close communities;
- the inseparable links between the economic and social policy;

- the promotion of democracy and the rule of law;
- the protection of the environment;
- a strong belief in the European integration process;
- subsidiarity and participation;

0. ECONOMY AND INNOVATION

1.0. The Lisbon strategy to make the EU "the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment by 2010" was adopted by the European Council in 2000. Drawing on lessons learnt from the first five years since the launching of the Lisbon strategy, the European Council decided in March 2005 on a fundamental re-launch. Priorities were refocused on jobs and growth, ensuring that knowledge and innovation are the beating heart of European sustainable growth, ensuring that Europe is an attractive area in which to invest and work and shaping the policies allowing our businesses to create more and better jobs.

Reaching all Lisbon objectives would increase GDP in the long run by between 12 and 23%.

1.1. Governance of the Lisbon Agenda

The relaunch of the Lisbon Agenda in 2005 has strengthened the governance by introducing a three-years-cycle and by putting a strong emphasis on partnership and ownership. Yet, implementation of the necessary Lisbon challenges by the member states is still insufficient. The use of best practices and peer pressure has not lived up to expectations in all areas. We call upon the EU institutions and the EU Council to ensure more effective follow-up of economic policy recommendations to which Member States agreed. Governments have to fulfill their promises. The Commission should name and shame the governments which fail to deliver.

1.2 Knowledge and Innovation

Under the influence of increasing globalization, the European Union must increasingly transform to an innovation-driven economy, with countries and regions competing on basis of quality, innovation and creativity. Companies, universities and research institutes with unique strategies at the level of R&D, marketing, logistics and networking are an important link in this, as well as the institutional environment which is characterized by an ever-higher quality (see 1.3.).

The European Union, as a whole, invests too little in research and development. In 2003, total R&D spending in the EU-25 averaged just under 2% of GDP, compared with 2,6% in the US and 3,2% in Japan. Despite the lofty goals of the Lisbon Agenda, growth of R&D investment in the EU slowed since 2000. We urge the EU and the member states not to miss the innovation boat.

Above this, public funding for research must focus on the link between universities / research centers and business, strengthening the knowledge triangle: research, education and innovation. By funding business-universities collaborations, governments can give an efficient answer to the innovation paradox (Europe has excellent track record in research and teaching, while all of this not being transferred to industrial and societal applications).

After all, Europe, more than other parts in the world, depends on the brains and the creativity of its people. It is that creativity, combined with an entrepreneurial spirit, which will produce new goods, new services and new jobs in highly competitive global company. The building of a knowledge based economy is a goal that Europeans, and particular us as a young generation, can identify with and adhere to.

1.3. The euro

The euro currency is the most visible success of the EU, both economically and symbolically. Some EU member states have an opt-out from the euro, while the new member states are obliged to join the eurozone once they fulfill convergence criteria on inflation, interest rates, currency stability and public finances. However, over-night enlargement of the eurozone could endanger its health. As a consequence, the European Central Bank and the European Commission have to play an important role in

overviewing the performance of future adherent member states to the eurozone. A stricter governance of the Stability and Growth pact, underpinning the euro, must lead to a growing credibility of the euro. Moreover, the spending of EU funds on national level should be fully transparent and as well monitored by the national courts of auditors. To the young generation in Europe it is of particular importance that the goal of balanced public budgets is achieved at all levels of government and that the burden of public debt is reduced.

1.4. Taxation

In 2005 the total amount of taxes and social contributions in the EU27 stood at 40.8% of GDP. In the euro zone the respective revenue was 41.2% of GDP. We believe that a policy of a lower level of taxation for the European Countries, in the respect of the public budgets and the Stability Pact, giving to companies and to families additional economic resources, can produce new investments and consumption for the growth and development of our economies and markets. A virtuous circle than in turn will produce further fiscal income. We support simplified fiscal systems in the EU member states and a transparent communication of the public administrations to the citizens on the effective fiscal level and on the allocation of internal revenue between debt reduction and expenditure for public services.

1.5. Business environment

Overall we call for a European economy, based on the principle of a social market economy which is competitive and attractive to invest in, to do business in and ultimately to create prosperity. An attractive and competitive base will be valuable for the strong industrial sector, as well as for the small and medium-sized business. Despite a lot of good initiatives in different member states, business climate can still be improved within the European Union, e.g. in improving access to risk capital and a reduction in time, costs and administrative burden when setting up and running a company.

The single market was explicitly created as a means to stimulate competition and dynamism in the European economy, to the benefit of all EU countries. A large internal market where goods, services, capital and labour are allowed to circulate freely is a big improvement on the fragmented markets that used to prevail in Europe. Firms selling in the single market know they have unrestricted access to more than 450 million consumers in the European Union – enabling them to achieve economies and efficiencies of scale, which in turn translate into lower prices and higher real income for households. Completing the single market still requires further activity at EU level, for example in transposing the Community's Internal Market Directives into national legislation. There must be no "feet-dragging" in key areas of reform, such as in the services and financial markets.

1. EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

2.0. Higher levels of employment and a skilled workforce are a key driver for sustained growth, but are also key factors affecting individual people's living standards. The value of participation through being employed or a self made entrepreneur, or in other way being allowed to take part in constructive activities, is also essential to all citizens feeling of appreciation.

Despite the fact that the EU member-states have centralized the co-ordination of national policies on employment issues under the umbrella of the Lisbon Strategy, we perceive that the fundamental problems that cause structural unemployment have not been dealt yet and that the sought policies do not achieve the results expected. To this extent while the productivity of workforce in terms of GDP per worker has an average increase of 1,9% in the European states since 2004, it still increases slower in comparison to the evolution achieved in the USA (3,3%) and Japan (2,5%); and despite the fact that the average unemployment rates in the European Union show a lowering tendency (9% in 2004; 8,6% in 2005; 8,3% in 2006) long-term unemployment increased by 3,4% up to 4,1% during the same period (2004 - 2006).

The youth unemployment rate in the EU-25 amounted in 2005 to 18,6%, which stands for almost 5 million youngsters (age 15-24) without a job.

2.1. Tackling unemployment

Stimulating employment means equipping people throughout their lives with the skills they need and ensuring that the national tax and benefit systems help people to enter the workforce and offer the right incentives for them to remain there. We support the ambitious employment targets of the European Council, set in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy:

- an overall employment rate of 70% in 2010 (67% in 2005);
- a female employment rate of 60% in 2010 (57% in 2005);
- an older workers (55+) employment rate of 50% in 2010.

We consider that for effective planning and concretisation of active policy making on employment issues the EU should bear in mind four core priorities:

- A greater focus within the social security systems on an activating labour market policy.
- Employment flexibility in direct affinity and optimum balance with employment security in order to guarantee employees losing their jobs (flexicurity,)
- Attracting and maintaining as many employees as possible in the labour markets and mainly encouraging the inter-European mobility among the workforce
- Aiming to qualitative workforce by increasing public investments for education and research projects

2.2. Flexicurity

The basic difference when referring to the issue of labour flexibility derives from comparing both job replacement rates and the flexibility of employment legislative acts between the European Union and the United States. The differences in Europe condense in the particularly strict regulations applied in the labour market circulation as part of the provided social protection models. However, lowering the strict standards on the current legislative provisions, will not necessarily lead to a deterioration of labour terms, in the context of social security. We consider that it may be feasible to combine at the same time both flexibility in labour markets and securing labour rights in an ideal level, to safeguard the better operation of markets (flexicurity). Thus smoothing the legal framework on job protection could be combined with higher unemployment benefits -

under the strict condition that unemployed should actively search and be guided towards vacancies in labour markets.

2.3. The Youth Pact

The European Youth Pact (adopted by the European Council of 22-23 February 2005), which made young people a key part of the renewed Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs, focuses on the integration of young people in the labour market, the fight against youth unemployment and quality education. YEPP subscribes this approach without reservation and supports the Council's call on the Member States to undertake action to endeavour to increase employment of young people, to encourage young people to develop entrepreneurship and to invite employers and businesses to display social responsibility in the area of vocational training of young people.

2.4 Life Long Learning as a Dynamic Factor of European Markets

Any structural measures aiming to reform labour markets will not provide positive outcome unless combined with strong initiatives to extend the education background of the workforce, due to the fact that contemporary labour criteria are based on expertise and high standards in specialization and scientific knowledge. We consider that the future of European employment policy is based on the creation and maintenance of new jobs providing goods and services that will incorporate innovation as their distinct competitive advantage, thus ensuring European competitiveness in the years to come. Of course, in order to achieve these goals we believe that the European work force needs life long learning initiatives and extended funding for training programs. In this context we consider that it is not enough to simply shift existing funding programs or raise new funds in order to promote education and research projects. European labour force should be provided with flexible labour terms in proper working environments in order to undertake and follow training programs aiming towards economic evolution in terms of productivity and competitiveness.

2.5. Higher Education

Education is the key to building a knowledge economy that will make the EU globally competitive (see Lisbon Strategy in Chapter 1). Therefore access to the educational and training systems should be ensured for all young Europeans. It is of utmost importance that diplomas are fully recognized and have the same value around the EU. In order to enhance mobility and ensure labour opportunities. However, the overall performance of Europe's higher education has declined in recent years and the battle for keeping and gaining the best brains in Europe seems to be lost. Europe has too few world-class research universities. European universities need to modernize their archaic governance structures and make a better job of seeking private finance to supplement state funds. We believe that initiatives of the Commission, such as the European Research Council, as an incentive for the frontier and basic research, and the European Institute of Technology, as a network of independent organisations, contributes greatly to the knowledge based economy of the EU.

2.6. Mobility

Free mobility of goods, services, capital and people is a founding principle of the European Union. In particular the mobility of people is essential for breaking down barriers between Europeans. This will enable us to live in a more tolerant, harmonized and effective society. Through opening up the member countries and letting people with other nationalities backgrounds and cultures the acceptance and the understanding for what is unknown or experienced as different increases. We believe that mobility (in the educational and labour sector) will influence the integration positively.

In order to foster a European identity and to strengthen the European spirit in all segments of society we believe that exchange programmes should be extended so that the mobility within Europe becomes a custom more than an exception. Exchange programmes, such as Erasmus, Socrates and Leonardo, have benefited hundreds of thousands of higher education students. An extension to these programmes should be

directed to students with high sporting or technical abilities. Above this, the EU should expand the Erasmus Mundus programme, which brings students from other parts of the world to European universities and vice versa. All secondary school students in Europe should take part in a short term school exchange programme within the EU. The positive and inspiring experience of such exchanges should not be reserved to a small percentage of the school student population. The European Union and the member states are called upon to provide for the institutional and financial framework for the implementation of this policy.

2. ENERGY

3.0. At the beginning of the twenty-first century Europe faces a number of complex policy choices in the energy and environmental fields - challenges that can benefit from a common European response. The European energy situation is characterised by a growing demand and tightening supplies. Current trends indicate that the EU will import 70% of its energy by 2030 compared to 50% today. Increasing energy consumption in Asia and the United States, the decreasing availability of resources in Europe and the Middle East, fear to use energy supply as a geo-political matter and foreign policy instrument by several major players – all these factors have made energy security a top priority not only for Europe. Meaning that the EU should strive for energy independence and a stable energy supply.

In 2003 only 12,7% of the overall EU-25 electricity consumption was produced from renewable energy sources.

3.1. Diversification of the gas supply sources

As a neighbouring country Russia is a natural partner in energy supply. However, Europe must diversify its energy mix, as well as the sources and transport routes for imported natural gas, in order to prevent monopolising attempts. It is high time to develop a deeper cooperation with the Caspian Basin and Central Asian States. Turkmenistan in particular is important as it has one of very large gas reserves. But as well some states of the Middle East represent an opportunity for the EU to diversify supply sources. However, just as in the Caspian region, the EU must act quickly to ensure that these valuable energy producers are not drawn into the Russian sphere of influence. The EU should especially emphasize on promoting transport routes for Caspian gas which are not controlled by Russia. With the monopolization of the energy sector, restrictions on foreign investment, inefficiency of national energy companies and the failure to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty, Russia cause new challenges for the EU. We believe, a new international energy agreement could be a breakthrough in relations with Russia.

3.2. Nuclear Energy

Special attention should be paid to nuclear energy, both for reasons of security of supply and climate change. Europe is currently the world leader in nuclear technologies. Whereas nuclear energy represents approximately 16% of the global electricity production, 31% of the electricity in the EU comes from nuclear energy. Therefore to replace the existing nuclear capacity with any other source of energy would be a hard task. The EU countries have a different approach on this issue; the debate on nuclear energy is one of the most controversial for Europe. While some European countries speak about closing nuclear power stations, Russia, India and China are planning the construction of 100 nuclear reactors. The reconstruction of the nuclear energy industry in the United States demonstrates the renewed interest in nuclear energy in the Western world. For the development of the nuclear power industry we need the consent of the population. Therefore we urge European governments to organize open debates on this issue, to provide long-term public education, starting with the younger generation, particularly in those countries where skepticism of nuclear power is widespread. To improve upon the existing methods of dealing with nuclear waste, and to enhance nuclear safety, the European Union should invest more in research and development of relevant technologies. The existing Euratom Agency should be the platform for this.

3.3. One EU Voice on Energy

The European Union needs to develop effective solidarity mechanisms to deal with any energy supply crisis. Taking into account that regulated solidarity mechanisms will cut the incentive for each member state to take actions in order to prevent an energy crisis

and to build up e.g. own storage capacities we believe that these mechanisms have to be based on market mechanisms. The EU should actively develop a credible EU external energy policy to increasingly "speak with one voice" with third countries and defend the EU's energy interests like other leading countries do. While it is to politics to support for EU companies a favorable general framework for foreign upstream investments and important contracts politics should leave it to private companies to decide where, when and under which conditions to invest. Although energy markets are global, much of the world's gas and oil reserves lie in unstable and often undemocratic parts of the world. Thus, it is very important that our energy needs will not limit our ability to push wider foreign policy objectives, especially in the field of human rights, democracy and good governance.

3.4. EU Energy Policy

We welcome the creation of a coherent, cost efficient, reliable, competitive and ecologically clean energy policy. Therefore we support the proposals put forward by the European Commission – aimed at transforming Europe into an even more energy-efficient and low-CO2 energy economy. It is high time to concentrate thoroughly on investment into energy research, especially on efficiency and alternatives to hydrocarbons.

3.5. EU's Governments Energy Policy

We are convinced that the government policy action is required in the following areas:

- to promote energy investment;
- to encourage energy efficiency;
- to stimulate the development and the higher share of renewable energies;
- to continue and to strengthen Europe's leadership role in international climate negotiation processes;
- to advocate multi-lateral approach to open energy markets;
- to diversify energy imports by product, country and transport routes;
- to secure short-term emergency storages with obligatory capacity goals for each member state according to resource consumption structure;
- to provide European actors with the legal, technical and informational infrastructure to participate fully in global energy markets.

3. HOME AFFAIRS

4.0. Public Security in general affects all aspects of human living, but shows its value most strikingly by imagining a life without any security. Economic prosperity, freedom of movement and life in general would be impossible in a society without any public security. It has to be a paramount objective for political leaders and all political forces to protect the European citizens and the economy against all sorts of crime and terrorism. In consequence all efforts undertaken regarding a strong prevention against illegal activities have to be supported by political leaders as well as by the citizens themselves.

4.1. Human Rights & Data protection

Strong prevention against crime and terrorism as a special sort of crime has as well an influence of the privacy of those, which should be protected. While doing all efforts to prevent crime in the EU, human rights as our common basic values have to be respected and safeguarded. Private data, which are secured mostly by national rules, should be handled carefully by state authorities; meaning that as well legal interventions in private interests must be covered by a prior evaluation of the more valuable legal interest. We condemn all measures not respecting those basic values.

4.2. Internationally organized crime

Global organized crime does not care of any state borders, national prosecutions and national police authorities. Europe has to find common theoretical but also operational answers towards these forms of threat to the public security. Europol is nowadays mostly doing analysis and helps in setting up joint investigation teams, but has no sort of operational role in the fight against organised crime. In that context it has to be analysed carefully whether Europol's competences should be enlarged with as well operational tasks.

We underline that a European answer to global forms of crime have to be found; we urge that the discussion of enlarged Europol competences should not end up in a debate of power and competences, but in an analysis how Europe can fight organized crime best.

4.3. Terrorism

All acts causing death or serious harm intentionally to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any acts are by definition terrorist acts. Unfortunately this most barbarian phenomenon has shown its tremendous inhumanity during last couple of years. The bombings in London and Madrid as well as the plot of the backpack-bombings in Germany have shown that terrorism is not a threat to a specific group of people living in a specific part of Europe. Terrorism is a global problem that requires transnational action.

New types of terrorism are clearly emerging: terrorism has become a transnational and transcultural phenomenon. Terrorists are no longer only recruited and operating in countries outside of Europe. "Home-grown" terrorism has unfortunately emerged in several countries.

A key factor in the fight against terrorism is to create a less radicalized climate by sanctioning both violent separatist movements rooted in European countries, and religious leaders or organizations – home-grown or brought into Europe from the outside – whose discourses incite hatred against other religions and against the values of the European society.

The cooperation of security services in Europe should be enhanced based on European legislative in order to guarantee that all available information is shared with all concerned partners in Europe. Moreover security services should have access to all available and necessary data in order to enrich their opportunities in the fight against terrorism.

We condemn all sorts of terrorism and we welcome all efforts done in the fight against terrorism in line with human rights. We underline the necessity of a strong data protection authority.

4.4. Schengen Enlargement

We welcome the project of enlarging the Schengen area, which foresees the opening of the internal borders to the new member states once the criteria and conditions are fulfilled. In consequence EU's external border will be moving to the East, so that the EU shares a common borderline with Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Croatia. Although this project will provide freedom for people living in the enlarged areas, this means also that current Schengen states will have to build up a new sort of confidence. As it is the duty of all new states to fulfil the premises and the responsibility the Schengen Treaty sets regarding certain security standards for the external borders it is as well the duty of the old members to help by establishing common twinning programs, in their own interest. We warmly welcome this step towards more freedom of movement while providing a high standard of public security.

4.5. Asylum & Migration

We suggest four central objectives in immigration policy:

1. Europe needs to take a more sustainable approach to immigration, taking into consideration its capacity to absorb immigration.
2. Recognize the humanitarian responsibilities of the European Union and its Member States.
3. Steer immigration by considering national policies under a European perspective.
4. Determine the number and profile of immigrants in a way that the integration objectives can be reached. This is the role of member states.

Immigration policy of the European Union must be sustainable because Europe has been and will be one of the main destinations of legal and illegal immigration and the absorbing capacity has reached its limit in a lot of areas. Immigration is closely linked to the issue of integration. The objective of integration must already be considered in the design of the immigration process.

Politically persecuted persons have the right of political asylum in the Member States of the EU. The process of granting asylum has to be accelerated. A consequent and swift repatriation of rejected asylum seekers has to be guaranteed. Asylum-seekers and refugees should be spread over the EU Member States in a responsible way.

The European Union has to focus on the source areas and the motivation of immigration through a strong and coherent development policy. The European Union and its Member States must reach the target of 0.7% of their GDP for development aid. At the same time development policy has to be made more efficient and brought better into line with immigration policy.

Measures concerning family reunification should be adopted in conformity with the obligation to protect the family and respect family life. However, they have to be tightened up against abuse for immigration purposes and should reflect the objective of integration.

Labour migration policy should be conducted under the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. member states must have full discretion on labour migration. We suggest to introduce a blue card system to attract the immigration of skilled labour into the EU Member States according to the needs of the national or regional labour markets.

A successful integration policy is an indispensable part of any immigration. Integration means the involvement in the social, economic, cultural and legal framework of the host country without giving up your own cultural identity. Successful integration will mean an enrichment of the host society by cultural diversity and more international competitiveness. Failed integration will lead to segmentation and "parallel societies".

The acceptance of cultural diversity does not include the rejection of fundamental values of the European Treaties and the constitutions of the Member States like democracy, the rule of law, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and equality between man and

woman. Living together within the European Union cannot be based on multicultural arbitrariness but must be based on the values of the Christian-occidental culture which were shaped by Christianity, Judaism, ancient Greek philosophy, Roman law and the enlightenment. Successful integration requires that this set of values is accepted. Integration is no one-way-street. It requires offers and resources of integration from the host country. It requires efforts and a positive attitude of the immigrants towards the host society.

4. FOREIGN POLICY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

5.0. International developments in the past 20 years have shown that history has by no means come to an end. International relations are more complex than ever before. On the one hand, globalization brings about opportunities for better relations between people and peoples as well as for their well being. On the other hand, recent developments include a series of challenges individual European nations cannot meet on their own. International terrorism is just one example. Moreover, the demographic and economic developments of Europe also require a joint European approach in foreign and security policy. Essential to success is a combined strategy that includes civilian and military means. The EU has already developed some instruments in this regard, but still needs to go a long way in order to play a significant role in the international arena in the future.

5.1. European Foreign, Security, Defence and Development Aid Policy

ESDP must always be based on European values such as peace, human rights, democracy and freedom. Wherever these values are in danger, Europe must take a firm stand. This is even more necessary within Europe itself, e.g. Belarus. The EU needs an integrated security strategy including the security of supply of both energy and raw materials. The EU must be able to speak with one voice; words must be followed by action if necessary. The foreign minister of the EU who is supported by a genuine EU diplomatic service should represent Europe's one voice. In this respect, the common foreign and security policy of today still needs to be strengthened. The development cooperation must correspond to the principles of conditionality and focus on "helping to enable self-help".

5.2. Strengthening the role of the EU in the world

Strengthen the political identity of the EU, and having the EU play a significant role on the international scene go hand in hand. The EU must dare to present itself on the international scene as the "civilian power" it is, and promote in its international relations the political principles it carries at the core of its own project: the EU can play a major global role in horizontal issues such as human rights, good governance and democracy, the fight against climate change, social welfare, etc. A strong voice in these issues in the global forums will put the EU back on the international map, and help it strengthen the other aspects of its foreign policies inherently

5.3. The Role of the Armed Forces in an Integrated Security Architecture

The armed forces in Europe must be structured in a way that they can guarantee the protection of the EU, its member states and its population. This requires the specialization of national armed forces and sharing capabilities. Member states must fulfil their commitments. All efforts should not duplicate NATO. We need a European Defence including clauses of mutual assistance complementary to NATO. We work for the further integration of national troop units into European security structures. In the medium term, we call for the creation of genuine European troops under the command of the European Council. These units should specialize in rapid reaction missions. We need an integrated national security architecture including a functioning cooperation of civilian and military structures.

5.4. Strengthening the EU role in the United Nations

We want to advance the further development of international law. We want a permanent seat for the EU when reforming the Security Council.

5.5. Transatlantic Partnership as a Prerequisite to Cope with International Challenges

We work for trustful relations with our transatlantic partners. The Americans have to be willing to engage in a multilateral approach and we have to be willing to strive for effective action. We propose a Transatlantic Partnership Agreement that covers all essential political fields. Economic co-operation between the EU and North America should lead to an Atlantic Free Trade Zone.

5.6. Making Russia a Reliable Partner

Europe have a great interest in good political and economic relations with Russia and its civil society as well as in a successful Russian reform policy. Today democratic values are not respected to a full extent in Russia. We call for a dialogue on the development and the rule of law in Russia and the Russian role in Europe. Only then, Russia can be a reliable partner including energy relations.

5.7. Belarus

We stand up for a democratic and independent Belarus that is free from any limitations in the field of social, economical and political life. We encourage the European Union to be more involved in the process of democratization in its very close neighbourhood. We are ready to provide our input.

5.7. Peace and Security for the Middle East

We defend the right of existence of Israel and a viable state for the Palestinians. We strive for reviving the Middle East peace process on the basis of the "road map". We want to strengthen existing democratic movements in the Arab world, without forcing them on taking over the western point of view on society and politics.

5.8. Cooperation with New Powers - China and India, as well as Mexico, Brazil and South Africa

We must ensure that these rising countries live up to their global responsibility. This includes international crisis management, environment, business as well as human rights and democracy. Trade agreements should intensify the co-operation, but requires the rule of law and fair regulations. More power should lead to more responsibility for a cautious use of natural resources, for the global climate and for the environment as a whole.

5.9. To Intensify the Cooperation with Africa

Some countries have already achieved considerable progress. There are, however, still grave deficiencies in terms of democracy and the rule of law, as well as poverty, diseases and a lack of education. The Millennium Development Goals will only be achieved in Africa, if the African countries themselves implement reforms. EU development cooperation should focus on supporting good governance.

5.10. EU Enlargement, Partnerships and Neighbourhood Policy

By enlarging the EU in 2004 and 2007, stability and economical strength were spread across the European continent. The EU cannot adopt further states after Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, before the Constitutional Treaty or its institutional rules are implemented. The EU must be capable to absorb a new candidate before its accession, and that candidate must meet all accession criteria without any reservations (any candidate country must comply with the Copenhagen Criteria and must implement the *acquis* before they are given a date for accession). In this respect, we support e.g. the future accession negotiations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Accession negotiations are led with Turkey whose result is open. We believe that a privileged partnership between the European Union and Turkey is the right solution.

The European perspective is important to the Western Balkan and Eastern Europe. Therefore we want individually fitting neighbourhood agreements of the EU with the

countries in the direct vicinity of the EU, but disconnected to the process of enlargement. The EU should work to strengthen its European Neighbourhood Policy in developing specific programs for the related countries. Action plans need to be established on trade and the internal market, justice and home affairs, energy and transport. These plans should be based on the common vision on values as human rights, good governance and sustainable development.

5. SOCIAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES

6.0 *European institutions are all about achieving inclusion, solidarity and peaceful ways of developing our countries and continent together. Realisation and protection of human dignity; freedom and security; sustainability and prosperity are amongst the very core ambitions of our European political project. Although a lot has been accomplished, we still observe severe intolerances throughout the social, ethnical and geographical diversities within our region.. Millions of people have to cope with problems like poverty, long-term unemployment, lack of treatment or support to illnesses or handicaps and racism or xenophobia. All this and many other factors contribute to social exclusion.*

By 2040, two people between 20 and 65 need to support one pensioner compared by four people nowadays in the EU.

6.1 Social Europe

Among the key topics of public debate all over Europe one find sustaining welfare and pensions, increasing social protection and avoiding exclusion, most importantly by providing more jobs (see chapter 2). Employment will always be a key to participation and integration.

In the Social area the Constitutional Treaty recognises combating social exclusion as one of the major objectives of the Union. This is done by the integration of the Charter of Fundamental Rights; by the recognition of the role of civil dialogue; and by the adoption of clauses reinforcing policy co-operation in the areas of social inclusion, social protection, health and education, based on the experience of the open method of co-ordination.

The EU is a project, based on common values, freedoms, rights and responsibilities. It encompasses social justice, social responsibility, and solidarity; even beyond this it is about embracing high living standards, high levels of employment and social protection, improved working conditions, the promotion of social dialogue, equality between women and men and the combating of discrimination within a competitive economic context.

Aspiring more by working collectively doesn't have to mean moving every pressing issue to be regulated by European institutions. Much responsibility lies upon citizen's alike and local, regional and national governments alike. There is also clearly an opportunity to do more in cooperation, on the European level. We also realise the irreplaceable role of civil society partners in all aspects of fighting poverty and social exclusion.

There is not such a thing of a single "European Social Model". But while there is a lot of diversity amongst the member states, all social models do have a set of common features. All models involve government interventions, which reduce poverty and social exclusion, achieve a fairer distribution of income, provide social insurance and promote equality of opportunity.

The basic pillars of our social models are pensions, health and long-term care, social protection for the poor or disabled, and the redistributive function of taxation. Broadening the picture slightly, we perceive welfare states as "enabling welfare states", giving incentives to people that are state dependent. To integrate them in the labour force again and to invest in human capital in general. On average, the 25 EU Member States devote 27% of GDP to public expenditure on social protection, as compared with 15% in the USA and 17% in Japan.

We are proud of the achievements of the European social policies, as they have recorded notable successes in reducing income inequality and poverty compared with other countries. But despite these positive features, there are shortcomings and new challenges to be tackled.

- We want to promote policies that can deal more efficient with common threats and challenges. The role of the EU is not to substitute national or local authorities in the design or implementation of social policy, but by giving

direction to common efforts and by promoting the exchange of good practice across Europe.

- We only promote the adoption of joint EU policy in areas where we believe this could help us better tackle our problems jointly. Consequently we support sharing of best practices as an important tool for European institutions in this field, since much of the action connected to social policy must be seen locally and nationally, and not Europe wide.
- We strongly recommend the EU and the member states to start a thorough debate on redesigning and implementing labour markets and welfare state reforms, in order to guarantee the long-term sustainability of public finances.

6.2. Intergenerational justice

More long-term thinking in management of our society's resources is fundamental to the idea of sustainability. In order to raise awareness of the consequences of decisions today for future generations, we are calling for the introduction of what we would call a *generation account*. Adding this to the law making and budgeting will show the medium and long-term effects of policy decisions. Every item of expenditure that implies an increase in public debt should be examined, justified and explained. The generation account should become a basic part of politics in the EU and all its member states. This would shift the long-term consequences of current decisions to the centre of attention.

Because of the demographic developments taking place, Europe needs systems of provision for old age, to which the following principles should apply. These systems:

- Should include all groups in society comprehensively.
- Should cover the risk of poverty in old age for all in future.
- Must offer strong incentives for people to provide for themselves.
- Must be organised in a spirit of solidarity and reflect the contributions paid in.
- Must be conducive to economic growth.
- Strongly encourage people to continue in the workplace as long as they feel able to contribute, irrespective of old age. We do not see old age as a barrier to work and propose the ending of mandatory retirement ages.

Undoubtedly, the necessary economic and social policy reforms can still offset some of the problems caused by the ageing and shrinking of the European population over the short and medium term, but they will not overcome these difficulties over the long term. One of the most important possibilities to challenge the future is that more children will be born in Europe.

6.3. Families

Every euro invested in favour of families with children is an investment in the future of Europe. The taxation and social welfare system should generously reflect the burden placed on families of raising children, and the value these children will add to society in future generations.

We recognize that family policy is a crucial pillar of social policy and a means of safeguarding our future as well. The family is the nucleus of social life. The family passes on values, promotes social skills, creates the foundations for democratic consciousness and so contributes a great deal to the development of our children into responsible members of our polity.

We want that people can combine family and career. Particularly at a time when we face a foreseeable lack of qualified workers, conditions need to be created under which parents no longer have to make a decision between career and children, but it is possible to combine both.

6.4 Health

Together with education and income, health constitutes the very basis of people's freedoms and opportunities. We therefore want to address health, and especially broad-based public health, as an issue relevant to European Social Integration. The EU has a

role in protecting and promoting citizens' health interests and in ensuring proper consumer protection.

While being young most of one's lifestyles are chosen and set, often with strong permanence for the rest of the life. Early interventions that can prevent unhealthy or risky habits might bring much better success to the overall public health agenda than repairs of lifestyle related diseases. We therefore call for a special youth dimension to the local, national and European public health strategies.

6.4.1 Combating abuse of alcohol and drugs

Abuse and addiction of alcohol and drugs represent one of Europe's greatest social problems. Alcohol and drug problems intensify and cause many other serious social problems like crime, unsafe environments for children, poverty, marital problems, vandalism, accidents etc. A reduction in alcohol- and drug-related problems will therefore be beneficial in several areas, both for the individual in particular and for society at large.

All commercial businesses involved in the trade of alcohol and pharmaceuticals (legal drugs) must be called upon to take on shared responsibility and help prevent the potential negative effects of their products. We defend the freedom to exercise national pricing and availability policies to regulate the distribution of alcohol and legal drugs. We also welcome open debates about regulations of the commercial promotion of items such as alcohol, pharmaceuticals and tobacco due to the severe public health risks attached to wrong or high level consumption of these substances.

6.4.2 Sexual and reproductive health and rights

The need to promote safer sex life and safer pregnancies is highly relevant to the overall social and economic development in Europe. The responsibility for issues related to sexual and reproductive health concerning prevention, service delivery and treatment rests up on local and national governments. However the promotion of openness and sharing of knowledge and good practises makes European focus relevant.

The spreading of sexually transmittable diseases (STD) combined with unwanted pregnancies and abortions highlights the link between youth and sexual health. The teenagers are a period in life where health risks can be quite high and the vulnerability rather constant. Therefore access to relevant information and knowledge about the proper use of contraceptives, and promotion of good attitudes to sexuality, and especially girls rights, alongside with efficient and high quality services for counselling or treatment is crucial.

We believe that the best method of reducing the numbers of abortions is by avoiding unwanted pregnancies. This demands better and secure access to contraceptives, and knowledge of their proper use. We underline that abortion never is to be promoted as a method of family planning. Decisions about access to abortion services rest upon the national legislators.

We believe that all individuals should be accepted and have the same human rights, independent of how they choose to live their lives. All European countries should actively combat discrimination on basis of sexual preferences.

6.6 Fighting poverty and social exclusion

We support a comprehensive view on the fight against poverty and other forms of social exclusion. This is also true to the Lisbon goals, aiming at creating a more dynamic and prosperous Europe at the service of all its citizens. Development of sustainable economies and social welfare for all must go hand by hand. In this respect, we recognise social welfare policy and social cohesion as a productive tool and not simply an item of expenditure.

To effectively address the various social problems and poverty trends and situations, current services and benefits must be better tailored to the people at risk. Our policies must be knowledge-based, and more investments should be provided for relevant research. We also call for systematic reviews of the functioning of our welfare systems. This means full over haul, in many countries, of public employment services, social

security services and other kinds of social assistance services. In all social policies the fundamental idea of personal responsibility should be strengthened. Social security systems must be limited to assistance that is really necessary. Claims on the wider community must remain at a low level.

Improving living conditions of the most vulnerable people demands a strategic approach and concrete actions. First of all these actions should come locally and nationally. We therefore call upon all members to take full account of those who are worse-off and in greater need of solidarity when setting their budget priorities, including the EU Structural Funds.

6.7. Value of cultures and religion

The European Union is a community of values; unity in diversity. These values are rooted in the cultural and religious heritage of Europe. Therefore it is paramount to promote cultural diversity and support it actively. European policy should respect local traditions and protect and acknowledge the richness of all languages. Thereby countering the worrying trend cultural convergence due to globalisation.

To let the European citizen experience the positive contribution of European integration, the Day of Europe on the Ninth of May ought to become a free European holiday.

Freedom of religion is central to values of the European Union. Religion has played and still plays an important role in shaping Europe's cultural and philosophical heritage. That is why the Union should recognize the fact that our common values are irrevocably linked to the Christian, Judaic and Humanist traditions. The Union should invest in an institutionalised dialogue with all religions represented in the various national societies. Europe should welcome the contributions paid by other religions to society and stimulate interreligious dialogue in order to promote tolerance, respect and understanding amongst people of different faiths.

6. ENVIRONMENT

7.0. Creating peace and better conditions for reconstructing a war torn continent were the main motivations for European cooperation after the 2nd World War. Naturally peace and prosperity remain fundamental, but for the years to come it is evident that preserving the environment both within and beyond European borders will become one of Europe's main challenges. Most fundamental for the ambition of Environmental Europe is to tackle our own contributions to global climate change, pollution of the air, water and soil and unsustainable consumption and loss of biodiversity.

There is broad unity among scientists that global warming is affected by Man. Emissions must be brought down with 60-80 % within 2050 in order to avoid drastic climate changes, according to UN panel of climate researchers.

7.1. A long-term plan

We call for a long-term plan to be made, reducing European climate emissions. It is obvious that the global climate is changing and disregarding a human impact on this is not only ignorant but also dangerous. As so many challenges before, the one of climate change also affects those most vulnerable. For people living today and for generations to come the challenges to curb climate change – at least the dangerous effects of it – remains an issue of solidarity.

While we get ever more evidence of Man's contribution to global warming, we also know that it is possible to limit our contributions to climate change. Despite this, one of the toughest obstacles for realising a vision of Low-Emission Europe is the need for long term policy measures. As a consequence, all responsible political forces should seek to unite around a compact composed of targeted interventions for this vision:

- ⇒ That CO₂-emissions are reduced by at least 50 percent within 2050, compared to the levels in 1990. Within 2020 the reduction target must be at least 30 percent. Furthermore that Europe assumes a global leadership position in promoting a new global accord for reduced climate emissions, as a follow up the Kyoto agreement that is running out in 2012.

These ambitious EU goals will only have a meaningful global impact if all G8+5 countries commit to similarly ambitious GHG reduction targets.

Further to this agenda we advocate action within the following sectors:

7.2. Energy

- Massive emphasis and investment on research and development of new, renewable energy and environmentally friendly technologies coupled with stimulation of economically sustainable zero emission solutions to any carbon-based energy production.
- Introduction of energy efficiency criteria for all public buildings and stimulation of research and the construction of CO₂ neutral buildings
- Tax-deductions or grants, or a mix of such, should be given to households changing from carbon-based heat and ventilation systems to environmentally friendly alternatives.
- Excess heat from industry should be used to heating.
- Grid networks all over Europe should be modernised. The 'Smart Grid' project of the EU is a revolutionary technology platform to integrate diverse and decentralized sources of electricity into the grid without destabilizing it. 'Smart Grid' must become an integral part of the EU electricity market strategy.
- Strict energy efficiency standards for lighting in the EU by 2009.
- To forbid electrical equipment with a standby function that consumes more than a certain fixed amount of Watt in standby.

7.3. Transportation

- Continued development of high speed railroads between major cities in Europe
- Increased support for research and development of bio-fuels and other alternatives to carbon fuels, and for the accelerated implementation of these fuel types.
- Significantly reduce the CO₂ emission of cars, trucks and buses while safeguarding the competitiveness of European industry. Support the commercialization of zero-emission vehicles
- Make the airline and shipping industry part of the Carbon trading system.

7.4. Cross-sectoral

- The precautionary principle and the ideals of quality of live focused and low-emission societies should be favoured through public policy and planning.
- Prices on goods and services should reflect their environmental cost and regulation and taxation should help stimulate environmental friendly choices in all areas.
- Any business providing emissions or use of supply that does so should be subject to reporting on a climate account in their annual reports.
- Rewarding mechanisms should be introduced for any level of authority, private or public (such as a municipality), that chooses to become climate-friendly.
- The use of packaging should be reduced and companies ought to be made responsible for the amount of waste they cause.
- Europe must in international forums and through its own regulations ensure conservation and proper protection of rainforests.

7. EU INSTITUTIONS AND DECISION MAKING

This year the European Union celebrates the 50th birthday of the founding EU treaties of Rome. On the 25th of March, European heads of state and government signed the solemn Berlin declaration on the realizations and the future of the Union.

This declaration must have been the stepping-stone out of the deadlock, in which the Union was ended after the negative referenda on the Constitutional Treaty. The deadlock was caused by the unwillingness and/or the powerlessness to make the Union fit and strengthened to adjust to the quick and massive enlargement with 12 new member-states. We had hoped that the European leaders

would have had the courage to make the European Union ready to tackle all the important challenges of our time (see therefore Chapter 0 – challenges ahead). The Berlin declaration ended up only with vague intentions, sweet nothings.

Although we keep our strong belief in the draft Constitutional Treaty, it seems a lost cause. The treaty must be adopted unanimously, and this will not happen. The hard core of resistance is too strong. We feel very disappointed on this. Our future lies not in a weaker but in a stronger European co-operation.

The question of today is the road ahead; an alternative for the Constitution in its current shape.

Crucial for the European integration process are the conditions, upon which the current treaties are to be modified in order to make the working and the decision-making of the EU more efficient, more transparent and more democratic (i.e. the third chapter of the draft constitution). It concerns these conditions that strengthen the policy capacity in a couple of important competences, as the energy policy, the common foreign and security policy (a European minister of foreign affairs, etc...), the common foreign trade policy (in the framework of the WTO) and Justice and Home Affairs (in particular the cooperation of police and justice services and the migration policy). These and other conditions allow the European Union to act with more flexibility in the Council and with more supervision of the European Parliament. These conditions may not get lost in future treaty negotiations.

We also advocate to

- Enlarge the field of decisions by qualified majority in disadvantage of the unanimity decision-making
- Strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the European Commission, by respecting the outcome of the European elections in electing (by the European Parliament) or appointing the new European Commission and its President.
- Include the conditions of new membership in the treaty.

The Union must – without hesitation – make progress in three priority domains: the Lisbon Strategy to save our economic and social model; the Climate Policy, to save our planet, and the foreign policy to save our position in the world.

For that reason we must always renew the political shape of Europe in keeping with the times. That is why today, 50 years after the signing of the Treaties of Rome, we are united in our aim of placing the European Union on a renewed common basis before the European Parliament elections in 2009. (Berlin Declaration, 25 March 2007)