



For a European Union that puts people and planet first.

Manifesto

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I. Introduction

Today, the European Union stands at a crossroads.

One of the EU's overarching objectives was to generate economic prosperity. To a large extent, this was pursued by promoting productivity and consumption, which was expected to increase social cohesion, stimulate employment, reduce poverty and advance environmental protection.

But economic growth and competitiveness became objectives in themselves, rather than means to an end, as articulated in the refocused 'Lisbon Strategy' launched in 2005, which emphasised deregulation. Although progress was made in some areas, social and environmental policies proved too weak to achieve their goals and failed to prevent deepening ecological degradation and increasing inequality in our societies. On top of this, the EU is today facing an unprecedented economic downturn.

The lesson from these events is clear: we urgently need a major shift in the EU's strategic direction. This year will bring a new Commission and a newly-elected Parliament, and in 2010 we'll see the adoption of a new strategy for the EU by its Heads of State. The time to influence the strategic direction of the EU is now. We have a unique opportunity to ensure that the EU puts the economy at the service of its people and the planet – instead of the other way round.

The Spring Alliance has been formed to do exactly this. It is a joint campaign initiated by four leading European civil society organisations: the European Environmental Bureau, the European Trade Union Confederation, Social Platform and Concord. The Spring Alliance Manifesto is also supported by organisations from all corners of civil society and beyond, including Fair Trade movement, anti-poverty and health campaigners, consumer organisations and representatives from the research community.

This Manifesto outlines 17 proposals for an EU that puts people and the planet first. We explain why these recommendations should be taken, and list concrete steps that illustrate how decision makers can turn our proposals into reality.

If you'd like to help steer the EU onto a course that benefits its people and the planet, join us! Please see our website at www.springalliance.eu for information on how you can support the campaign.

2. Challenges

The following five trends reflect the reality of today's European Union.

i. Our climate is changing and we are witnessing an unprecedented rapid and partly irreversible loss of biodiversity and natural resources

Years of climate policy and environmental protection have done little to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions, and globally they continue to rise. The impact of these emissions on the Earth is much more serious today than scientists thought a decade ago, and their effects on humankind will be irreversible.

Over-consumption of natural resources has caused the diversity of plant and animal life on our planet to decline. The EU's ecological footprint, which measures the human impact on natural resources, is more than twice EU's capacity. The EU holds considerable responsibility for the swift depletion of the Earth's resources.

ii. Global inequalities between North and South are growing, and fundamental rights violations remain widespread

The EU's economic policies have seriously impacted¹ the livelihood of local communities everywhere in the world. Policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries, extractive industries, environment and migration, among others, have impeded on the opportunities of these communities to achieve sustainable development: in the last year, the number of those going hungry in the world rose by another 40 million to a total of almost one billion².

These policies contributed to increasing poverty and inequality, global inequity, and environmental catastrophe long before the current economic crisis, which is hitting developing countries hard³. Africa, for example, will suffer a drop in income that's predicted to reach US\$49 billion⁴.

Despite the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the number of human rights violations is growing. In the EU, the law does not yet give full protection from discrimination in all areas of life, such as healthcare. We are also seeing increasingly restrictive and intrusive migration policies and employment strategies in several Member States that limit and deny fundamental rights to those seeking to move to and around the EU. Meanwhile, each year thousands of people die trying to reach the EU in search of a better life.

¹ EU Coherence project

² Hunger Free Campaign and FAO

³ World Bank, March 2009

⁴ Action Aid, March 2009

iii. The EU's focus on competitiveness and deregulation has failed to serve the public good

Since 2005, the EU has made a push to increase the deregulation of its markets, including its labour market, in accordance with its “Lisbon” growth and jobs strategy. This had a detrimental effect on European society, causing a rise in low-quality work and failing to reduce poverty. The Lisbon strategy, with its strong emphasis on competitiveness, also had an adverse effect in the environmental domain, by halting or slowing down the adoption of legislation, including in the area of climate change.

In addition to these trends, today we're facing a global economic crisis that has been triggered by the same philosophy of deregulation, which gave rise to irresponsible lending and negligence on the part of weak regulatory bodies. As a consequence, unemployment is now rising, and public debt is increasing.

iv. Inequalities in wealth distribution are increasing, putting the cohesion of our societies at risk

79 million people in the EU are living in poverty⁵, affecting one child out of five. Although many of these people have full-time jobs or receive pensions or benefits, their income is still too low to stop them from falling into poverty⁶.

This in turn raises the risk of these people being excluded from society. Meanwhile, the wealth of the EU's richest people is increasing and inequalities continue to grow⁷, resulting in a loss of social cohesion, increased ill-health and important differences in the access to and use of resources between social categories and between countries.

Additionally, despite the EU's commitment to gender equality and while progress is being made, the gap in pay between women and men persists – on average, men in the EU earn 17% more than women⁸.

v. The gap is widening between the EU and its citizens

The majority of the EU population feels disconnected from EU decision-making processes. National politicians often consider “Brussels” as an external power, and sometimes use it as scapegoat for unpopular decisions. This further undermines the EU's credibility and its capacity to lead its citizens through difficult times.

⁵ Joint report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, European Commission, 2009

⁶ Social Protection and Social Inclusion Indicators, European Commission, 2008

⁷ “Growing Unequal”, OECD Report, 2008

⁸ “Equal Pay” campaign, European Commission, 2009

At the same time, the people of the EU are increasingly becoming self-organised to make their voices heard, most notably through civil society organisations and grassroots movements. However, the EU has yet to put in place an effective strategy to engage civil society in decision-making.

These five challenges *can* be addressed – and the EU can take the lead

The EU can move from being part of the problem to part of the solution. Although we are currently suffering the worst economic crisis since 1929, it also presents us with an opportunity to change, specifically because:

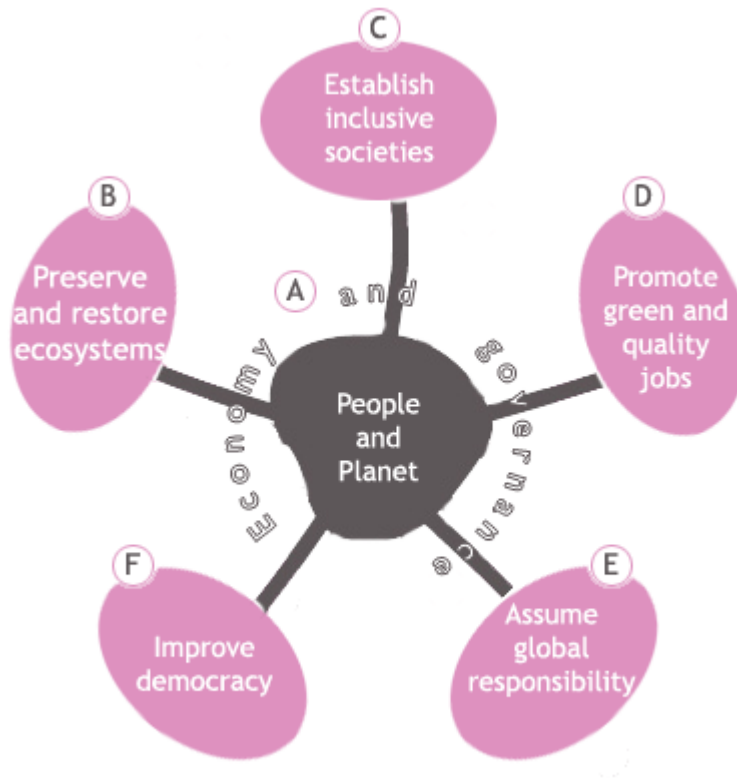
- There is an increased support for a new global architecture with more regulation of markets (particularly financial markets)
- There is an increased awareness of the need to take urgent action to confront ecological and social challenges
- Civil society movements and entrepreneurs are active in developing alternative solutions to these challenges
- Large investment programmes are being put in place to cope with the crisis, and these can be designed to promote sustainable developments

The EU is the world's biggest economy and has powerful instruments to set environmental targets, reduce inequalities, and regulate the market. What's needed now is the political will to make a sustainable and fairer EU a reality, with the support of the strong civil society movements that exist.

Read on for our recommendations to achieve this.

3. Our proposals

The EU needs to reverse its current economic policies and put its people and the planet at the centre of its policy-making. The economy should become a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. We propose the following five objectives:



In our proposed architecture, a new economic and governance strategy (section A) serves the five objectives above (sections B to F).

A. Establish economic and governance policies that serve people and the planet

EU policies have failed to eradicate poverty and unemployment in the EU, and have contributed to the collapse of the ecosystem. Long before the current economic crisis, there was a social and ecological crisis. We need to refocus the EU's economic and market policies to put people and planet first.



I. Put in place a new economic strategy

Why?

The EU's neoliberal growth and competitiveness-based economic strategy has not delivered enough quality jobs, equality, prosperity or sustainability.

How?

- Adopt a new common economic strategy based on the article 3(3) of the Treaty of Lisbon that is at the service of societal objectives and environmental objectives, investing in people, eco-efficient innovation, social cohesion and the environment
- Use indicators that go beyond GDP, including multiple indicators on well-being, the eradication of poverty, gender equality, equality for all (between the regions and rich and poor), and energy, natural resource use and ecosystem pressures
- Prioritise investment in:
 - A transformative programme, coordinated with the Economic Recovery Plans, which delivers new industrial policies and an economy based on less carbon, less energy use, less resource use, with more and better jobs, and services contributing to sustainable development.
 - Strong social protection systems and reinforced public services, and encourage countries to promote progressive redistributory mechanisms
- Revise the public revenue basis. Specifically:
 - Work towards EU harmonisation of capital gains taxation, including corporate and other business taxes, to avoid fiscal, social and environmental dumping . This requires that minimum taxation rates for capital gains be fixed (e.g. corporate taxes) and that additional taxation systems be developed on capital gains (e.g. tax on financial speculation or tax on super dividends payouts, taxes on high fortunes, or flat taxes regimes)
 - Achieve by 2020 a shift of at least 10% of the revenue or tax-base away from labour to environmental pressures, resource use and capital, by applying the Open Method of Coordination combined with Enhanced Cooperation. This would encourage more efficient resource use, taxing what we want less (resource depletion and pollution) instead of taxing what we want more (income and employment)
- Refocus major EU programmes. Specifically:



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- Cut off or redirect any funding that harms the EU's environmental and social objectives, including global impacts, or increases EU's energy and resource use. Review the rules of EU institutions to this end
- Refocus EU structural and cohesion funds on tackling poverty and social exclusion by investing in local social infrastructures, and shifting them to sustainable transport and energy systems
- Target social economy enterprises driven primarily by social benefit motives
- Reform the Research and Development programme to ensure it contributes to deliver social progress and environmental objectives
- Revise the EU financial policies. Specifically:
 - Adopt directives to oblige companies to link gains from shareholding and bonuses to long term economic successes instead of short term stock value changes
 - Establish a single European-level regulator of financial markets and a European credit rating agency
 - Adopt binding regulations on hedge funds and private equity, mandatory registration and supervision of credit rating agencies
 - Create a European supervisory body and financial products safety committee to ensure the effective monitoring, supervision and regulation of non-regulated financial markets

2. Revise the Better Regulation Agenda

Why?

The current economic crisis reveals the shortcomings of global and European economic governance structures. Sound economic policy-making requires decision makers to better assess the potential economic, social and environmental consequences of their actions.

How?

- Reorient the Better Regulation Agenda to the overarching goals of sustainable development
- Strengthen compulsory sustainability assessments on environment, social, gender and equality objectives and assess costs of action and inaction
- Improve qualitative methodologies, so social and environmental impacts are fully taken into account (even if they cannot always be monetised)
- Ensure that assessments are made before decisions are taken but make sure that the final decision, in particular on trade-offs, remains in the political domain
- Improve civil society consultations in such assessments and make methodologies and assumptions more transparent
- Provide regular evaluation of the social and environmental impacts of existing policies (e.g. single market and liberalisation, state aid, public procurement). If the impact is negative, revise policies to strengthen their social and environmental objectives

B. Preserve and restore ecosystems

We are living beyond our means, consuming more than double what the EU's bio-capacity can regenerate. Continuing as before is not an option. If the EU addresses consumption and commits to an absolute reduction in energy, land, water and resource use, by setting targets and aligning budgets to those priorities, it can stay within a fair share of the Earth's capacities and create quality jobs.



3. Reduce resource use and energy consumption

Why?

Although the EU has increased the efficiency of using energy and resources in production and consumption, no net savings have been achieved. This is due to increasing consumption and production, which have led to an increasing ecological deficit and ecosystem collapse.

How?

- Measure the EU's overall resource use, including the use of material, water and land, as well as greenhouse gas emissions, whether occurring inside or outside the EU
- Set EU resource use reduction targets by 2011, and cut the EU's waste by setting waste prevention targets by 2012, to move the EU towards a globally equitable and sustainable share of the Earth's resources
- Set binding EU targets in 2010 for reducing overall primary energy consumption by at least 20% in the coming decade and commit to further reductions to support achieving greenhouse gas emission targets to help prevent dangerous climate change
- Significantly reduce energy and water consumption in the domestic sector. Specifically:
 - Set an EU-wide minimum standard for all new housing to be energy passive or positive by 2015
 - Launch a renovation programme for the total housing stock which rapidly and significantly decreases energy consumption for heating and cooling, and ensures professional training and retraining of builders and installers, while providing targeted support to housing for people in poverty and promoting compact cities
 - Set and enforce dynamic EU-wide minimum energy efficiency requirements for space cooling and heating equipment and systems, and expand the scope of respective EU policies to set minimum water efficiency requirements. In addition, apply the "top runner approach" to these and other energy related products

4. Prevent dangerous climate change

Why?

Global warming and climate change is happening faster, and is more serious, than expected. It will threaten the security, wealth and wellbeing of the EU within the coming decades. Although climate change has primarily been caused by the consumption and industrial practices of the developed world, it is the poorest regions and people, as well as future generations, who will be hit hardest.

How?

- Invest substantially higher percentages of the national investment budgets, including economic recovery plans and structural funds, into reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Reinforce domestic EU greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to reflect the scientific assessment endorsed at the Bali preparatory climate conference in 2007: that industrialised countries need to make reductions of between 25% and 40% by 2020. The 20% target for 2020 agreed in December 2008 is an important first step but is insufficient and is undermined by generous Clean Development Mechanism allowances
- Set a specific target for the transport sector and include aviation and shipping in the post-2012 climate agreement. Complement this with further EU domestic actions and ensure the sustainability of fuels
- Set a mandatory share of at least 35 % of renewables in electricity supply EU-wide by 2020 and promote decentralised production and consumption of electricity and heating and cooling. Specifically:
 - Remove barriers to renewable energy development, including market operation practices
 - Put in place strategic planning to avoid negative environmental and social impacts
 - Explicitly support local generation and use of renewable energies, including 'net metering'
 - Put in place a regulatory and financial framework to promote the development of smart grid capacity to save energy and for the optimal integration of renewable energy, decentralised production and combined heat and power
- Secure predictable financing needed for climate action in developing countries, likely to be a minimum of 35 billion EUR each year by 2020 in addition to overall Official Development Aid (ODA) commitments and any purchasing of carbon credits that offset EU emissions.

5. Make agriculture and fisheries sustainable

Why?

Currently EU policies on agriculture and fisheries are not sustainable, as evidenced by the loss of biodiversity, the collapse of fish stocks⁹, the degradation of land, disproportionate subsidies to large firms, the dramatic reduction of agricultural enterprises, social dumping practices and the exploitation of migrant workers. EU-subsidised agricultural export, and some imports like genetically modified proteins, cause social and environmental problems and contribute to the global food crisis.

How?

- Adopt a comprehensive reform of the Common Agriculture Policy by 2013, making it a coherent policy to secure a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable agriculture sector. Specifically:
 - Integrate strong social and environmental standards in the CAP
 - Give priority to certified organic farming and ensure organic products are cheaper than conventional products
 - Reward farmers and workers for the delivery of ‘intangible public goods’, such as social cohesion and employment in rural areas, protection of ecosystems, and healthy food
 - Introduce concrete measures to help move farming away from industrial practices based on agro chemicals and GMOs towards sustainability, reducing water use by 40%, using less fossil fuels, conserving soils and carbon, and restoring biodiversity. Support these measures by establishing obligatory Environmental Priority Areas at farm level to compensate for the loss of set-aside, as a key climate change adaptation measure and to reduce fragmentation of the landscape
 - Establish a hierarchy of uses for agriculture products. Give priority to food production for a healthy diet before materials and energy products based on regional EU production
 - Phase out export subsidies
 - Address price volatility to ensure fair farming income and help sustain vital rural communities, avoiding repeating the mistakes of the past that led to overproduction and associated problems
- Protect and rebuild wild fish stocks by eliminating overfishing under a revised Common Fisheries Policy in 2012. Specifically:
 - Set catch limits for target and non-target species in line with the biological limits of the marine ecosystem and the precautionary principle.
 - Ban destructive fishing practices and ensure that environmentally and socially sustainable practices are given priority access to fisheries resources

⁹

Green Paper on the Reform of the CFP, European Commission, 2009



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- Ensure that the capacity of the EU fleet does not exceed the biological capacity of the stocks, and respects fishing grounds in non-EU countries
- Reform EU fisheries into a certified, more regionally oriented sector, providing local employment and social cohesion
- Integrate strong social and environmental standards in the Common Fisheries Policy

6. Adopt a “Biodiversity Rescue Plan”

Why?

The EU is losing biodiversity; it is losing the ecosystems and the natural services they provide, like clean water and food. This in turn reduces our ability to adapt to climate change and requires replacing these services by expensive and risky technologies – if they are replaceable at all. The loss of ecosystems alone is estimated to be worth around 7% of world GDP¹⁰ by 2050.

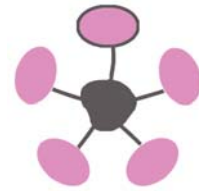
How?

- Propose a “Biodiversity Rescue Strategy” by 2010 to restore ecosystems, closely integrated with climate change policies. Specifically:
 - Set up ambitious new biodiversity targets to be met by 2020 and a baseline to measure progress with interim targets
 - Ensure full implementation and enforcement of the Birds/Habitats, Water Framework, Marine and Environmental Impact Assessments, and Strategic Environmental Assessments Directives, developing a ‘green infrastructure’ and supported by sufficient EU and Member State funding
 - Establish new legislation on soils and Invasive Alien Species, including phytosanitary controls on EU borders and transport corridors
 - Ensure “ecosystem proofing” of sectoral policies, like transport, energy and agriculture, and spatial planning
 - Set up an international scientific panel for biodiversity similar to the International Panel on Climate Change and invite all countries to join it

¹⁰ “The Cost of Policy Inaction” (COP), European Commission study, 2008

C. Establish inclusive societies

The contradiction between increasing inequalities and economic growth questions the ability of the current system to redistribute wealth fairly and effectively, and to promote social cohesion and well-being for all, both inside and outside the EU. Social protection systems, access to public services, gender equality, redistribution of wealth and combating discrimination are concrete political responses to putting European values and fundamental rights into practice.



7. Reduce inequalities and eradicate poverty

Why?

Although they inhabit the richest economic area on the planet, 79 million people in the EU live in poverty today¹¹, 20% of whom are children. Despite the European Council's commitment in 2000 "to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty", the level of poverty in the EU has not decreased and inequalities have continued to grow¹².

How?

- Adopt a Directive on guaranteeing adequate minimum income for all, following up the implementation of the 1992 Recommendation and the 2008 Active Inclusion Recommendation
- Establish ambitious quantified European and national targets on poverty eradication accompanied by effective policy measures, such as reducing child poverty by 50% by 2012 and ending street homelessness of children, youth and adults alike by 2015 as called for by the European Parliament in May 2009. Make these and other specific targets part of a broader effort to eradicate poverty
- In the "post Lisbon Strategy", establish an explicit EU goal to reduce social exclusion and inequality and make the open method of coordination on social protection and social inclusion (the "social OMC") a central tool of the Strategy
- Together with civil society, develop and disseminate guidelines and benchmarks for Member States on how to strengthen the governance of the OMC at national level, and on how to more effectively involve national parliaments and the European Parliament
- Establish national surveillance systems to monitor health inequalities in Member States, specifically indicators of poor health (including sexual and reproductive health needs), and act on the results
- Implement the European Pact for Mental Health and well-being at both EU and national level

¹¹ Joint report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, European Commission, 2009

¹² "Growing Unequal", OECD Report, 2008

8. Guarantee universal access to public services

Why?

Accessing public services is a fundamental right¹³ and a pillar of the European model of society¹⁴. Social cohesion and respect of human dignity can only be achieved if people have access to quality public services that respond to their needs, particularly social and health services.

There is a growing demand for these services due to the ageing population and evolving family patterns such as single-parent units. However, these services are not always available; they are sometime too expensive or are poorly adapted to people's changing needs. The EU needs to invest in these services; this will also provide more and better jobs for its people.

How?

- Ensure that the EU internal market and competition legislation does not negatively impact on the provision of or access to quality public services, and that it takes into account the specificities of public services. Specifically:
 - Revise as necessary EU internal market and competition legislations to ensure universal access to public services. This could be done by adopting a Framework Directive on Services of General Interest
 - Enforce the implementation of the requirement for universal and affordable access to services in existing EU sectoral directives, e.g. by adding a provision on the access to a minimum supply of energy and water for households
 - Amend EU Public Procurement rules to require mandatory quality criteria for the public tendering of social services
 - Evaluate and revise as necessary regulation on State Aid that adversely affects the development and provision of social services provided by non-governmental, non-profit actors
 - Implement the European Parliament request for an independent assessment of the impact of liberalisation and privatisation on essential services, involving all stakeholders but particularly users
- Earmark European Social Fund and European Regional Development Funds for investment in education, social housing, social and health services, particularly for the most disadvantaged
- Develop an EU action plan outlining how EU macroeconomic policies can increase support to individuals with caring responsibilities (e.g. to children or older parents) and recognise the economic value of care services provided by family members.
- Renew the commitments to achieve the Barcelona targets on childcare provision that aim to lift the barriers and disincentives for the participation of women in the labour market

¹³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948

¹⁴ White Paper on Services of General Interest, European Commission, 2004



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- Implement the EU Energy Package requirements to develop National Action Plans and reduce energy poverty, and coordinate them with the National Action Plans for social inclusion and social protection
- Provide an appropriate EU financial and legislative framework to support social economy activities in the provision of public services, particularly social services
- Adopt a directive on financial inclusion to establish universal access to a bank account and to fair and sustainable credit and loan facilities for all

9. Combat discrimination and racism; guarantee gender equality and respect for migrants' rights

Why?

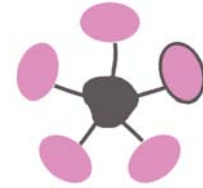
The EU today is composed of people with diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnic origins, people with disabilities, different sexual orientations, and different ages and religions. While this diversity is increasingly recognised and valued, many people still suffer from discrimination, and women and men are not treated equally. This reality goes against the basic principle of equal treatment in the EU's current Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

How?

- Adopt and implement a comprehensive EU anti-discrimination Directive providing protection against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination listed in Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Prioritise developing indicators to chart the discrimination of specific groups and the progress made in respecting their rights
- Adopt a new policy framework for the realisation of equality between women and men to follow on the European Roadmap for Gender Equality (2006-2010), including measures for gender equality in decision-making and to fight all forms of violence against women.
- Prioritise the EU policy commitment to advance gender equality at all levels, from policy design to implementation, and back it up with adequate financial and human resources
- Implement a new multi-annual justice and home affairs policy programme (Stockholm) that puts respect for migrants and fundamental rights at its core
- Pursue stringent policies to combat the trafficking in human beings, for the purpose of sexual exploitation, particularly women and children

D. Promote green and quality jobs

Policies and investments are needed to provide more and better jobs, while responding to the need for public services, social inclusion and a better environment.



10. Reinforce quality jobs and improve access for all

Why?

People can often face multiple barriers to employment, especially those furthest from the labour market like people with disabilities, those who have been unemployed for a long time, or homeless people. These people risk being permanently excluded from the labour market.

In addition, people are increasingly forced to take on low-quality jobs, which do not provide a guaranteed route to a decent life. Lastly, the free movement of workers can damage collective rights and can lead to social dumping if not applied with social clauses.

How?

- Set targets for quality jobs, including adequate income, equal pay for equal work, good social protection systems and the fight against discrimination
- Ensure that multinational companies respect human rights and the norms of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Establish and implement national strategies to develop lifelong learning and vocational training policies, taking into account volunteering and non-formal education. Recognise and validate the skills acquired by people through these systems, and implement outreach programmes to ensure that all have access to high-quality education and training opportunities
- Use Community Funds to develop green and quality jobs and support the implementation of integrated Active Inclusion strategies
- Establish and implement Active Inclusion roadmaps for people furthest from the labour market and establish priority targets, at European and national level, with the three pillars of guaranteeing adequate minimum income, access to quality services and access to quality jobs. Subsequently, develop a new European Employment Guideline on Active Inclusion
- Incorporate addressing the gender pay gap into EU macroeconomic policies, and adopt a gender pay gap indicator and targets to increase women's access to quality jobs

II. Ensure a just transition to quality jobs, and help workers move into new emerging activities

Why?

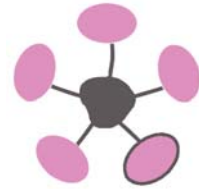
There is already a gap between the qualifications the workforce has today and those it will need in the future, due to societal and environmental demands and the restructuring of existing sectors of work. To ensure a socially sustainable outcome of all these changes, a just transition framework towards quality jobs for all is needed.

How?

- Develop transition programmes to anticipated changes in employment patterns, together with stakeholders
- Provide training opportunities to develop new sustainable industries and services, as well as strengthening commitments to spend 3% of GDP on research and development, with at least one third of this amount coming from public sources
- Enlarge the Globalisation Adjustment Fund to limit the negative consequences for workers of measures to combat climate change or other global environmental problems and support for the provision of alternative employment and income protection for displaced workers
- Invest in key sectors like transport, housing, social, health, care services, as well as 'energy savings' services that provide energy advice and investment to reduce energy consumption, ensuring that jobs created are quality jobs
- Develop a European framework by 2011 that ensures the adaptation of education curricula and programmes to the existing environmental and social challenges. The framework should also ensure training for the entire chain of providers, installers and suppliers in energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Promote quality jobs and sustainable enterprises through public procurement that rewards companies that uphold social, labour and environmental policies

E. Assume global responsibility

This is a critical moment for global social and economic development and justice. There needs to be decisive action from the European Union to address the basic problems of unequal and unsustainable development at global level, and ensure a coherent EU approach to achieving an equitable globalisation strategy.



12. Reform global economic and financial governance

Why?

Current economic and financial policies and institutions have managed an economic system which has prioritised high economic growth, benefiting primarily corporations and the wealthy instead of leading the world firmly towards a shared, sustainable prosperity. This model contributed to increasing poverty and inequality, lack of decent work, global inequity and an environmental catastrophe long before the current economic crisis.

How?

- Reform the global economic and financial architecture to allow developing countries to retain the domestic resources they need, which now flow from South to North as illicit financial flows
- Contribute to the continuing development of a global approach to financial management, if possible at the UN level, taking into account the recommendations of the Stiglitz commission to establish Global Financial Governance mechanisms which are democratic and put interests of people before the market
- Implement fundamental governance reform of the International Finance Institutions and the World Trade Organisation to ensure they are democratised, made fully transparent, and respect international standards on human rights, including gender equality, the environment and labour. Give a leading role and the associated financial means to the UN and the International Labour Organisation
- Agree to commitments on the reform of the international tax system to eliminate tax havens. Govern financial centres by establishing satisfactory and transparent mechanisms for automatic, on-request and spontaneous exchanges of information on the European level
- Put in place strict regulations on information disclosure, and implement new accounting standards to put an end to tax competition. Oblige European multinational corporations to report all their transactions on a country-by-country basis to reveal profits, losses and taxes paid in each country of their operation, without exception for any jurisdiction
- Promote a Tobin-style Financial Transaction Tax to curb excessive speculation and to promote longer-term investing. Although it is desirable that the tax is implemented globally, it can also be implemented unilaterally at EU level

13. Guarantee policy coherence to achieve sustainable development

Why?

Trade, agriculture, fisheries, environment and many other European policies have an impact¹⁵ on developing countries. Yet these policies have not sufficiently and directly contributed¹⁶ to poverty eradication and sustainable development in the EU as well as globally. Sustainable development cannot be achieved when the rights to development of large parts of the global population are being denied. Additionally, policies that are inconsistent with development goals are costly and can overshadow the money spent on development aid.

How?

- Apply a new procedure for trade mandates based on independent studies and broad stakeholder debate and consultation to evaluate the real impact of existing policies on employment, the economy, poverty, gender, human rights and the environment, both within the EU and in the globalised world
- Negotiate trade agreements and investment treaties that respect the sovereignty and the economic and social cohesion policies of developing countries (including their rights to impose levies and taxes to multinational companies) and drop all unilateral demands for the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and provisions. Require EU-based multinational corporations to apply home-state environmental and social regulations when operating in developing countries, challenging the current EU 'Global the EU – competing in the world' strategy
- Introduce Corporate Accountability, starting with allocating resources for this and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the EU institutions and Member States in relation to it. By 2014, implement mandatory social and environmental reporting and binding rules to ensure lobbying transparency. Establish a clear path to implementing Direct Liability of parent companies for abuses by their subsidiaries, Duty of Care of EU-based companies for their sphere of influence and unrestricted access to justice for victims of corporate abuses in the long term. Include in Corporate Accountability the requirement to respect EU standards on social and environmental behaviour when working in developing countries
- Develop fisheries partnership agreements together with the fisheries community which do not include access to fishing grounds, to stop the plundering of these grounds in the Exclusive Economic Zone of non-EU countries. Ensure that fish imported from outside the EU meet the same standards of sustainability that the EU sets for its own producers.
- Reform internal and external agricultural policies so they respect the right of developing countries to protect their own agricultural markets and their food security. Reform the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) to put an end to the dumping of agricultural goods and export-led agricultural models. **Drop** biofuels targets, which lead to the overuse of scarce land resources for agricultural production

¹⁵ European Commission, 2007

¹⁶ EU Coherence project / Aprodev

14. Increase and improve finance for development

Why?

The European Union provides most of the development aid¹⁷ in the world, which gives it a crucial responsibility in the fight against global poverty. The EU has made a clear commitment¹⁸ to both further increase the volume and quality of its aid, but it has not yet fully delivered. Development aid is more important than ever, since the financial crisis has shrunk other sources¹⁹ such as private capital flows, remittances and export revenues to developing countries. The realisation of human rights also plays an essential role in the eradication of poverty.

How?

- Deliver at least 0.7% of Gross National Income in Official Development Aid (ODA) by 2015 at the latest, and agree annual and binding timetables to reach this target. Dedicate at least 20% of all Community assistance to the basic social services, such as health and education, as repeatedly called for by the European Parliament.
- Cancel the illegitimate debt of developing countries
- Phase out all economic or trade policy conditionality attached to development aid and loans
- Report annually on the progress made in the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action Commitments to improve the quality of development aid
- Deliver the EU Gender Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment in External affairs by 2010 through an inclusive process involving permanent and structured policy dialogue with all stakeholders.
- Promote a human rights based approach to development policies, so resources are used to address not just the symptoms but also the root causes of poverty.

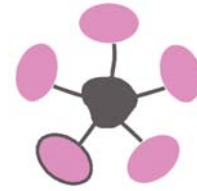
¹⁷ European Commission, April 2009

¹⁸ European Consensus on Development, November 2005

¹⁹ World Bank, 2009

F. Improve democracy

In a democratic system, the method to reach a decision is as important as the result: decisions are taken for the people, by the people and with the people. The EU has yet to demonstrate that this is the case at EU level. It needs to advance its democratic governance by improving its accountability to citizens, improving access to and scrutiny of decision-making, investing in dialogue with European citizens, civil society, and trade unions and strengthening the governance of its strategies.



15. Invest in dialogue with European citizens, trade unions and civil society

Why?

95% of Europeans participate in either voluntary or informal organisations, or both²⁰. At a time when an increasing number of citizens feel disengaged from European politics, as demonstrated by the 40% turnout in the recent EU elections, these organisations are a clear asset in making sure people are active in shaping their society.

The value of these organisations is also recognised by the EU in its Treaty of Lisbon, which considers participatory democracy to be a fundamental democratic principle of the EU and proposes ways to organise dialogue with “representative associations and civil society”.

How?

- Agree on an EU regulation for the implementation of the people’s initiative and civil dialogue provisions, irrespective of when the Lisbon Treaty enters into force
- Adopt practical guidelines for civil dialogue and revise the minimum standards for consultation to expand the timing of consultations and dialogue to 16 weeks, and provide feedback
- In the Council and for each presidency of the EU, appoint a high level official in charge of developing the collaboration with civil society during the preparation, implementation and follow-up of each presidency
- Establish Commission cross-sectoral minimum standards on funding for civil society organisations
- Reinforce social dialogue and collectively-bargained agreements, starting from dialogue within companies up to the EU level

²⁰ Quality of Life Survey, Eurofound, 2006

16. Improve access to and scrutiny of decision-making

Why?

Transparency and public accessibility are basic principles of democracy, allowing citizens to understand who takes what decisions on their behalf. For a democratic debate to take place, information and documents in different languages must be publicly accessible and public authorities should not withhold information that is necessary to participate in decision making.

How?

- Make all stakeholder consultations and lobbying efforts public and transparent
- Limit the use of the exceptions provided by the Access to Documents Regulation to the minimum
- Make public preparatory working groups of the Council of Ministers and meetings of the College of Commissioners
- Introduce a mandatory register of lobbyists for all EU institutions

17. Strengthen the governance of EU strategies and of the Open Method of Coordination

Why?

Based on voluntary commitments from Member States, EU strategies like “growth and jobs”, the ‘Bologna process’ or the Open Method of Coordination are the most popular EU tools to advance common EU objectives in fields with limited European competences, like the economy, employment, education, social protection and social inclusion. While they should only be used in areas where common legislation is not possible, these “soft instruments” need political support, visibility at national level and the active participation of social partners and civil society organisations to deliver on agreed objectives.

How?

- Set up a regular European Parliament report and national parliament debates/reports to ensure that people elected by citizens have a say on the European strategies and their delivery.
- Together with social partners and civil society organisations, develop specific principles, guidelines and benchmarks on how to strengthen the governance of EU strategies and promote a more effective participation of social partners and representative of civil society actors.