

# MANIFESTO FROM TURIN

## A DEMOCRATIC UNION OF PEACE, PROSPERITY AND PROGRESS

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The “Renaissance for Europe” is a progressive statement of intent regarding the future direction of Europe. Having been inaugurated with a significant event in Paris in March 2012, in advance of the French Presidential elections, the initiative is now entering into its second phase. Henceforth, the encouraging pledge by European progressive leaders to build modern and effective economic governance for Europe will be incorporated into a debate on the primacy of democratic politics and its mission to serve European citizens.

- **This next step will therefore re-examine the fundamentals of *Political Europe*, aiming at consolidating and mobilising political will. Unity and active engagement on national and European levels are indispensable if things are to change. This will entail constructing an effective institutional architecture and empowering citizens. Progressives wish to acquire a popular political mandate to build a European Union of the future.**

The *Renaissance for Europe* deliberations take place within a dynamic context of ongoing electoral campaigns in Italy and Germany. These decisive votes will be followed in 2014 by European elections. Together they provide a hope that they will change the political tide and hence the logic that prevails in Europe.

Conservative and neo-liberal governments have destroyed the hope of progress and prosperity, which have always been the first objectives of integration. Their disastrous,

short-sided policies have gravely undermined solidarity and cooperation within the Union in general, and within the Eurozone in particular. They pit member states and their citizens against each other. They deplete the capacity of individuals, societies and states to make their own choices. Furthermore, the imposition of ruthless austerity drove people further into despair, resignation and frustration. Subsequently, the challenge is to devise a realistic alternative, which can restore a sense of purpose to the EU. It must signify a new opening in which there can be progress towards a more complete Union. The aim should be a true European polity that is fit to propose and adopt sustainable, future-oriented policies.

## Restoring Legitimacy: Empowering Europeans

The legitimacy of EU is at its weakest in its history. In the light of the crisis, the EU's citizens find Europe incapable of either managing or governing. The lack of consensus on fundamental matters, such as the budget, betrays an incapacity to steer Europe out of its present predicament. As a result, euro-scepticism reaches a historical pinnacle. It is compounded by a widespread, growing detachment of citizens from politics. People seem to see more impact in protests than in engagement in political processes, organisations or votes. This is the trend that endangers the fundamental democratic credentials of Europe and must be thoroughly addressed.

- **The challenge confronting progressives is to restore trust-based relations between politics and citizens. More specifically, they must focus on re-establishing the credibility of European politics. Therefore a clear, credible way out of the crisis must be paved. At the same time, it must be clear that the strength of the European Union's system of governance remains anchored in harmony with national, regional and local levels of democracy. The trustworthiness of European policy makers, both in communitarian and inter-governmental pillars, must be rebuilt.**

An extremely dangerous tendency emerging from the present crisis is protective nationalism. Within societies, it plays on people's insecurities, while they are confronted with the pains of austerity and the disempowerment caused by the deterioration of their socio-economic circumstances. Among politicians, it originates from an illusionary belief that the EU is still a combination of different national interests. It is for this reason that certain politicians have adopted an approach more anchored in narrowly defined priorities of member states than a common agenda. These developments corrode the spirit of solidarity upon which the European Communities have been constructed.

The current political climate fosters a tendency towards further fragmentation and predilection towards a multi-speed Europe. It obscures the communitarian method of enhanced cooperation, which instead should be perceived and used as a tool for constructive advancement of integration within Europe's multilayered structure. Hence there is a danger that a number of states would simply acquire a dominant position,



imposing a dynamic of further economic development through non-transparent, exclusive agreements. Another peril comes from those who constantly wave the threat of veto. Such a situation is incompatible with the principle of cooperation and democracy upon which the EU was founded.

- **The task is to mainstream thinking about Europe as a community, which needs solidarity and the joint, equal efforts of everyone according to their ability, in order to succeed in bringing prosperity from which all can benefit. Any further efforts to evade responsibility by placing excessive burdens on others must be resisted. Added to this, attempts by some to assume dominance will only further discredit the European promise of progress for all. In that specific sense, the instalment of the EU's emergency help for distressed sovereign debtors, in exchange for their unwavering efforts to improve government and adapt their economies should be welcomed as a fair solution. Tangible democratic supervision over the allocation of sufficient financial resources through adequate fair policies must be ensured.**

The restoration of the EU's democratic legitimacy is inextricably linked with revitalisation of the principle of subsidiarity. In this spirit, all levels of governance must be stronger. They must be complementary to each other in order to coherently and efficiently deal with the challenges ahead. Citizens must be given space and be enabled to engage in a deliberative process on all levels. The sense of responsibility coming from continuously nourished solidarity matched with democratic ownership may then help to incite them to take part in the European elections and grant trust to elected representatives.

- **This confirms the demand for bolder thinking about Europe's institutional architecture, with the full commitment and use of all the tools of empowerment outlined in the Lisbon Treaty. A new political effort is needed to inform citizens and convince them of this new approach. This should be embedded in a pan-European contractual thinking that brings about a proposal towards a new European deal. In a longer term perspective, it should lay fundamentals for a new, far-reaching debate that could result in framing a new Constitution for Europe.**

To restore the credibility of politics, it must be ensured that its processes truly mirror the will of the citizens. The vote of each and every citizen must matter on all levels – from the local to the European. The responsibility of the progressives is to ensure a possibility to make a choice on Europe's direction. Hence there is need for a distinctive, feasible alternative. Progressives should unite in its pursuit, both at community and intergovernmental levels of EU policy making. This is why mutual support in the national elections and unity behind a common European manifesto and a common top candidate at the European level are crucial. This last instrument offers a possibility to enter a new stage of partisan competition at European level. Furthermore, political consolidation of their political family should be a permanent concern of progressives in their European activities.

- There is a great need to restore and strengthen the community method, especially by placing the new structures of intergovernmental crisis-management in the appropriate community institutions and procedures. The focus on and commitment to community methods are crucial in ensuring that Europe can revive its promise of progress and prosperity for all, and that all the states and citizens' interests are fairly and equally represented.

## Reshaping the fundamentals: Developing democracy

The crisis has underlined the weakness of Eurozone governance. The introduction of a common currency has not been underpinned by the completion of a true economic union. Hence even though the euro became an important symbol of the progress of integration, it failed to become synonymous with European security, stability and scrutiny. The lack of appropriate institutional architecture meant that there has been a trade-off between intergovernmentalism and community methods. The first envisaged channelling financial aid from the member states through intergovernmental bodies. The second leaned towards stricter rules of fiscal discipline at the EU level and subsequent implementation of the austerity policies. This set-up has proven to be ineffective both politically and economically. It did not enhance financial stability and fiscal sustainability. Instead it has triggered a vicious circle of recession and worsening of public finances. The economic and above all social consequences of it are devastating.

The European Union must not be a technocratic invention, which deprives their citizens of the right of self-determination. This is true for all dimensions, including fiscal regulations. A sense of security has to be anchored in financial discipline and mechanisms, which are sustainable and not subjected to permanent negotiations within and between member states. Continuous bargaining only further undermines European solidarity. It incentivises a model of governance based on balance of power and a hierarchy based on wealth. This creates imbalances and contradictions. Paradoxically, the attempts to protect national sovereignty and to avoid fiscal transfers resulted in a temporary set-up, which is less effective and less respectful towards the autonomy of respective states. It is verging on being more costly for the taxpayers.

- **Progressives call for a shared sovereignty and stronger, democratic governance.** This entails a demand for a different model of governance to both complete and equip a genuine Economic and Monetary Union with the tools it needs. The implementation of the Growth and Stability Pact should be concluded in a balanced way, so that it reconciles fiscal responsibility with the agenda of growth and employment. It needs to safeguard a social agenda of public investment, while pursuing deficit and debt reduction.
- Economic policies at EU level should be more cohesive and better balanced, paving the way for new ways to strengthen and enhance EMU. The Member States



should uphold their respective responsibilities in terms of the implementation of economic policy guidelines. These should be co-decided at EU level. It should clearly link the national budgets within the boundaries of the EU fiscal framework.

- It is indispensable that economic policies are accompanied by a solid set of social policies, which become binding targets reflecting pledges of progress and prosperity for all. This is why a new Social Pact should be framed in such a way that it becomes a guarantee for all Europeans. The autonomy of social partners and their role must be safeguarded and strengthened, promoting the emergence of a European social dialogue.

- It is necessary to better conceptualise a comprehensive banking union. As such, there is a need to reshape the European Central Bank and its competences, so that it can ensure financial stability and oversee effective regulations of the financial markets. Such an arrangement would definitely serve as an incentive for long term investments and would mitigate excessive speculation.

- The European Union must be equipped with a solid budgetary capacity. This can be ensured only if it possesses its own resources. Their allocation should be focused on promoting growth and competitiveness. Specific regulatory functions should be connected to the Union's core competences. They should also address cyclical and structural imbalances, advancing with an agenda of a cohesive, inclusive Union. Furthermore, the EU should acquire a borrowing capacity, so that it can assist members in need and, in the process, embody a communitarian value of solidarity in the financial sphere.

The crisis, the emergency support and subsequent austerity measures harmed the EU not only by seriously retarding growth and prosperity, but above all by inducing a feeling that there was no alternative. Resignation and desperation are the dominant moods among significant portions of the European public. Progressives therefore seek a way to change these attitudes, which undermine both politics and democracy. A strong mandate for progressive reforms requires for new leaders be elected not only due to discontent and rejection of conservatives or liberals, but through mobilisation of popular support and the acquisition of true legitimacy. A strong popular mandate is indispensable to be able to implement the substantial reforms progressives have in mind.

- The elections to the European Parliament have to be seen not as mid-term tests for national parties in 28 member states, but should become a true pan-European, popular vote on the direction that Europe should take. Consistency in messages at national and European level is crucial to convince voters that there is an alternative and that progressives have the political will to unite in the name of this alternative at all levels of governance, whether they are in power or in opposition. Consolidation,

constructiveness and solidarity must distinguish their message. This is aimed not only at increasing the turnout in the elections, but above all at gaining legitimacy to lead the European political process towards a profound change in the way it operates.

- The Lisbon Treaty, which emerged from an institutional consensus, must be fully implemented, out of necessity, but above all out of respect towards the European people. At the same time, the crisis has shown that the current treaties remain insufficient to equip the EU with the tools it needs to govern politically, economically and socially. A genuine Economic and Monetary Union requires a Treaty change to be completed. This is why there is a need to call for a new departure. This could be a Convention during the next legislature that would eventually lead to a new Constitution for Europe. The results should be prepared by the swift and full use of existing treaties (from enhanced cooperation and the article 136 TFEU to the flexibility clause) and by a broad public debate involving civil society, social actors, political parties, the EP and the national parliaments. The progressive foundations will promote such a debate and offer their contributions and proposals for a genuine EMU in a democratic Union.

- Following the Lisbon Treaty, the Europarties should enter the European elections presenting candidates who, if successful, could assume the position of President of the European Commission. Through the politicisation of its President, the European Commission will lose its apolitical quality. Though it still has limitations, it must anticipate the acquisition of political responsibilities for strategic portfolios in the future. Progressives will therefore propose a clearer division of roles for the Commission, which will clarify its policy-making role in the institutional triangle.

- The Commission must also make sustained efforts to reinforce its proper position in the communitarian pillar instead of being reduced to a mere Secretariat of the Council. The ongoing and important task integrating the efforts and political commitment of the member states into a truly European public sphere could also benefit from consolidation of this sort.

- The European Parliament, which remains the only directly elected body of the EU, must be further strengthened, acquiring the right to supervise the implementation of policy. Tools for the empowerment of citizens, such as the European Citizens Initiative, must be further encouraged and developed with a view to strengthening the deliberative process within the still rather modest EU public sphere. The role of the civil society in enhancing such a sphere is significant, particularly regarding the mobilisation and articulation of citizens' views.

- The European Parliament and national Parliaments should be the driving forces and should fully cooperate, while taking responsibility for their competences at their respective levels, according to the principle that democratic legitimacy and



accountability must be ensured whenever a decision is taken and implemented.

## Reviving ambition: Providing hope

The future of Europe is a highly political issue and the debate must also be politicised. The progressive vision must go beyond crisis management and aim at addressing the challenges of present and future generations.

- **There is a need for European politics to be visionary. It must be liberated from its technocratic image by becoming effective in the fields of people's immediate concerns. Europarties and their members have a role to play in changing the language and terms in which the EU is currently discussed. This should also entail introducing new criteria bases for the evaluation of European politics in all its dimensions.**

There are many challenges at hand, all originating from a consciousness that the concerns and options of the post-crisis era will only emerge with time. Instead of waiting for it, progressives aim to pave this path according to their principles, policies and mandate so that they start regaining public confidence in popular elections. Gathered in Paris, Turin and Leipzig – progressives are fully aware of the responsibility to deliver externally and modernise internally. They propose to frame a new chapter in the history of Europe through a dialogue with citizens and the consolidation of political will.

- **European Democracy requires the courage to stretch the limits of current political imagination. But it also needs to be strengthened on the national and European levels. An EU wide public sphere must emerge with the full involvement of European civil society. In encouraging unity among the citizens of Europe, progressives fully respect and embrace the value of cultural pluralism and the diversity of national perspectives.**

- **Political actors can propose alternatives. In a European public sphere debates should show divergence according to political, and not national, lines. This can only be achieved through tangible steps at EU level in terms of organisational capacity. With this, there is a requirement for high standards in terms of how we evaluate European politics. Proper delivery of these measures can form the basis for a new discourse on the democratic ideal that the EU shall embody in the future. It will also lay the foundations for a new Constitution for Europe.**

- **Young people must be the driving force in the process leading to construction of a true European polity. Initiatives that are focused on equal and relevant opportunities, such as the European youth guarantee or Erasmus programme, should be seen as an investment in the Union's collective future. Progressives should cooperate to promote cross-border dialogue and exchange programmes, which would allow the sharing of**

best practices and national experiences, strengthening the European spirit and the progressive family. It is a way to restore the significance of partisanship and enrich it through adding a pan-European dimension to political activism. This could be realised by establishing a progressive partisan Erasmus, which through collective efforts of the European parties, would enable internships and exchanges of activists between national level organisations.

“Political Europe” is to emerge, restoring hope in Europe that security, progress and prosperity can be reached through progressive values-driven politics. The pledge is real, and progressives uniting in the promise of a “*Renaissance of Europe*” seek the return of these values to the mainstream at all level of governance, both European and national, and always remain at the service of the people.

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