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BUILDING
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SOCIETIES**



ORGANISING
**INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY**

Manifesto for Social Justice in Europe

Europe finds itself at a historical junction. Since the establishment of the first common institutions, the continent has seen peace, prosperity and progress. However, the very foundations of our common project have come into question by raising populism and nationalism. This is not merely a European matter, also on a world-wide scale inclusive sustainable development has been tossed aside in favour of short-term crisis management, bringing about increasing inequalities and precarious living and working conditions.

The next European elections, coming up in less than 100 days, will determine the future of the European Union. Citizens will go to the polls against a backdrop of deep-rooted changes.

SOLIDAR as a progressive civil society network has a different vision for our common future which guides our European and global engagements with members, partners and allies.

The recent obsession with austerity, with eradicating economic, social and cultural rights, with reducing social development expenditure and continuing investment for the benefit of the happy few rather than communities at large has had a devastating effect on people's trust in democracy, deliberative decision making and established institutions, including the European institutions.

People feel abandoned by States and Governments, with their daily concerns of decent work, social protection, access to education, housing, health care, social and public services ignored. They perceive a lack of social investment and real integration policies. There is a need for change and protection in uncertain times. Nationalists are abusing these feelings to gain support and to step back from our common future, locking people into the rhetoric of fear, targeting scapegoats instead of delivering solutions.

Tools such as Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Pillar of Social Rights were designed by the EU institutions and approved by governments. Now their implementation has to follow in order to deliver again peace, well-being and progress. Synergies have to be identified as a way to achieve more equal, healthier, more sustainable and

inclusive societies.

Policy making at all levels must be coherent and positively reinforcing to ultimately accomplish a true paradigm shift towards social justice.

In order to achieve sustainability at all levels, SOLIDAR and SOLIDAR Foundation call for the next work plan of the EU Commission to be centered on sustainability through social investment. This is crucial for the EU to be able to combat climate change and tackle its social consequences, as much as to embrace a humanitarian solution that will finally manage migration flows.

SOLIDAR and SOLIDAR Foundation also call for a better recognition of the contribution and role of CSOs through a legal framework and relevant funding schemes which can facilitate participatory structures such as non-formal education, social inclusion, and can assist communities that want to organize themselves for the common good in times of desperate individualism.

Civic and citizenship education are fundamental in order to promote the European vision, and therefore should be included in the political agenda at all levels to make sure citizens become active and involved in and beyond the May 2019 elections.

Making this happen will depend on the mobilization of voters and their understanding that their vote counts. The day after the elections the trust and confidence of citizens will depend on the priorities set out in a work plan which is to be adopted. This is why SOLIDAR will work with the progressive forces in the EP, the Unions and European CSOs to elaborate a forward-looking work plan which will deliver social justice instead of increasing inequality.

Engaging voters, especially young people, is essential to ensure that our priorities are represented in the Parliament. Thus we are pleased also to be a partner of the European Parliament's [This Time I'm voting](#) project, an online community of supporters of the importance of voting in EU elections.

It is time to re-envision the European project as a truly fair and sustainable structure that has as its core the protection and well-being of all its citizens. At stake is the democratic majority in the European Parliament. Organised civil society across Europe is ready to put up a fight!