

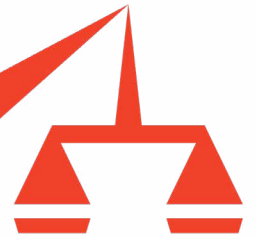
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FOUNDATION

2024

EU ELECTIONS MANIFESTO

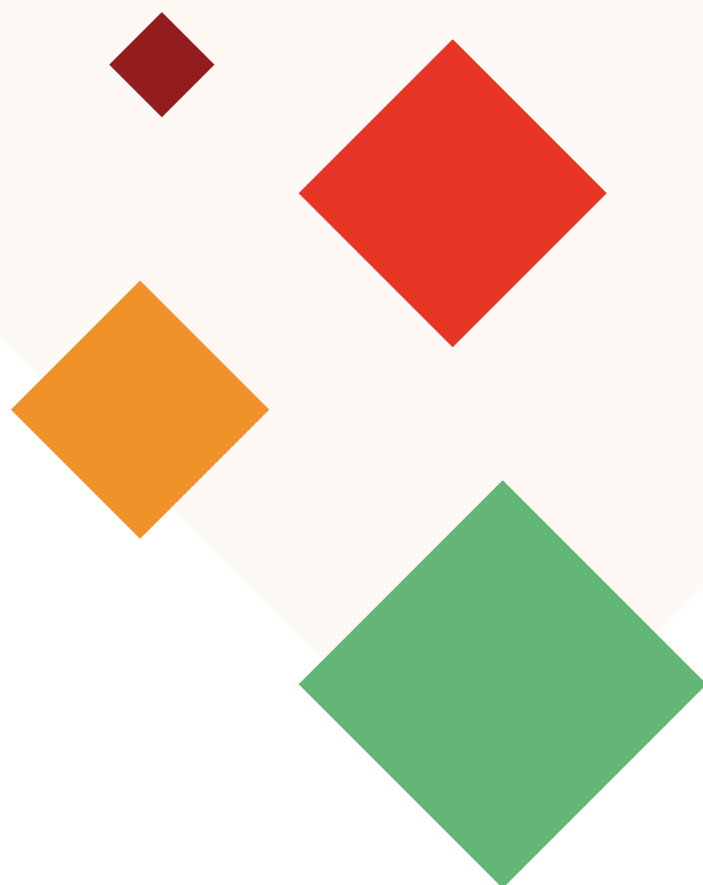
The 2024 European Parliament elections come at a historic moment. We are standing at a crossroads, and while the stakes are very high, they offer a way forward. We are convinced that we can turn the multiple crises we are currently living into an opportunity to reimagine our common future. We believe this moment in history gives us a chance to fundamentally change our societies and economies so that they work for both people and planet. It will require action right now, at all levels of society and from all actors, but it can be done. This fundamental change requires a Europe that will deepen and accelerate ecological transition, protect, and advance democracy, increase social justice, and promote alternatives to the market-centred, extractive, and exploitative economy that currently defines and is destroying our societies and the living world. As representatives of civil society, alongside trade unions and other progressive forces, we have a crucial role to play in the development, negotiation, and implementation of these changes.



War is once again ravaging Europe. The EU must remain united in its condemnation of Russia's aggression, its war crimes and brutality, and in its support for Ukraine. We call for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian troops from occupied areas, as a sign of Russia's readiness to initiate meaningful peace talks. There can be no peace without justice and no meaningful peace talks without concrete steps taken. In this dangerous situation, we call on Europe to position itself at the heart of a new international security order. The notion of common security, as established by the Palme Commission, and of human security, can only be achieved through a revitalized commitment to the prohibition of nuclear weapons, to mutual arms control and disarmament, as well as a collective undertaking to achieve sustainability and social justice through a just transition. Now that the impact of the war is being felt in Europe through increased social and economic instability and the crises in energy production and supply, leading to widening inequalities and detrimental climate and environmental effects, it is surely obvious that lasting peace and human security will not be won through a new arms race or ever-increasing military spending that dwarfs any efforts at winning the sustainable future we need.

Ours is indeed a time of crises – in climate and environment, health, socio-economic inequality, housing and the cost of living. Europe must show that we are able to respond to all of them at the same time. There is inspiration to be found in the unity, resolve and shared conviction that was shown in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the response to Russia's war of aggression, and for all its flaws, in the advances made so far towards a more social and greener Europe. But we are moving much too slowly and still doing far too little.

The next five-year term of the European Parliament and European Commission will be decisive for Europe and the world. These coming years are crucial, as the window of opportunity is closing rapidly and the changes need to be faster, bigger, and more systemic than ever before, directed at the root causes of these societal ills. However, we won't be able to do much at all if we do not win a progressive majority in the European Parliament. It is therefore imperative that we all, as progressive civil society, engage in these elections! We need to mobilize in a broad campaign that inspires people to vote in a way that will defend our values, our beliefs and our shared convictions; a campaign that explains why a just transition to a sustainable future is the only way in which we will be able to tackle the many ongoing emergencies, build our resilience, advance our dreams, and fulfil our progressive aspirations for a more just, equal, free, and democratic Europe!



WE NEED SYSTEMIC CHANGE!

Six progressive proposals to deliver a Just Transition

SOLIDAR wants to see a Europe that continues to lead the transition, an incoming Parliament and Commission that build on what has been achieved and that push for a faster and more ambitious shift in line with what science tells us is necessary. Towards a sustainable future, towards a Europe for all and with all, a Europe based on common and human security, human rights, and social justice. A Europe that transforms our societies by placing peace, people, and planet at the heart of our development.

We, a movement of more than 50 progressive civil society organizations across Europe and beyond, are calling for systemic change that deepens the transition through six main demands: a socially just transition, a redistributive and wellbeing centred economy, a rights and solidarity driven approach to migration, an inclusive and just digital revolution, a Europe united against racism, fascism, and totalitarian forces, and in favour of a thriving civic space in which civil society has a seat at the table through civil dialogue.

1. A socially just transition to carbon neutrality must be at the heart of all policies, with the aim of transforming our societies!


2. End the growing inequalities breaking our social contract – towards a redistributive and wellbeing social and economic system!

3. Migration defines our shared future – we need a rights and solidarity driven European response!

4. The digital revolution defines our lives and our future – we need investments and policies that guarantee freedom, rights and equality!

5. Reactionary, authoritarian, and racist movements are on the rise – we want a Europe for all and with all!

6. Civil society is the foundation of our democracies – protect civic space and guarantee civil dialogue!



1. A socially just transition to carbon neutrality must be at the heart of all policies, with the aim of transforming our societies!

For SOLIDAR, a “Just Transition” means something much more than a corrective measure for certain sectors in the form of cash support and the up- or re-skilling of workers. While these are important elements, a Just Transition for us is a more holistic and proactive concept, that should encompass all of society and all policies. A Just Transition guarantees that we all have a place in the transition and that the most vulnerable, poor, and marginalized are not sacrificed in the process. That no part of Europe or the world is left behind. That resilience and prosperity is built both inside and outside of our continent, so that burdens and costs are not shifted elsewhere, and systemic and historic injustices and inequalities are recognized and dealt with, failing which it will be impossible to deliver the promises of Agenda 2030. A Just Transition will provide: a fair and equal sharing of costs, with the biggest polluters and the wealthiest contributing most; decent work, guaranteed in a labour market that shifts the focus from labour to resource productivity; benefits and support that reach those with the highest needs, facing the highest risks; and social rights that are protected through the entire process.

In the coming years, Europe will re-negotiate the Green Deal, lay the ground for its long-term budget, discuss potential treaty changes, as well as its energy autonomy, housing innovations, transport policies, and many other important proposals and strategies to fight climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss. In all these processes it is essential that the European Pillar of Social Rights is fully implemented through concrete measures, that it is embedded in all policies aimed at transformation. We propose a *Just Transition*

Deal for Europe to guarantee this; that all policies aimed at guiding Europe through the crises towards a wellbeing economy and a socio-ecological welfare state are defined by this holistic approach. A Just Transition constitutes the guiding principle for our movement, recognizing that social and green policies are two sides of the same coin. Anything less than this dual approach is simply solution denialism – recognizing the magnitude of the problem but proposing insufficient and inadequate solutions.



2. End the growing inequalities breaking our social contract – towards a redistributive and wellbeing social and economic system!

It should be clear to everyone by now that we will not be able to get through these multiple crises by means of austerity measures or financial prudence, and that the status quo will not bring us the change we need. We need to rethink many old truths and be bolder and much more disruptive than before in the face of our new and threatening circumstances. We must rethink our growth model and design macro-economic policies that go beyond GDP as it is currently defined to create an economy that does not plunder people and planet purely for the sake of expansion, but is rooted in the living world, one that “thrives instead of grows”, to quote Kate Raworth. In a Just Transition the structural inequalities behind discrimination against women and other socially disadvantaged groups must be removed.

The external dimension of all policies must be considered from the understanding that there is no European solution to these crises. The economies in the North have only reached their current level of


development because the South has been held back by colonial relations of dependence from which they will never “catch-up”. A Just Transition therefore must lead to the development of a new system of internal and external relations and dynamics based on the reversal of today’s dominant capitalistic logic; our societies and economies can only thrive if our people and our planet do as well, not by commodifying everything, everywhere. We need massive private and public investments, progressive and redistributive taxation, a redefined regulatory and legal framework as well as ambitious and transformative welfare policies that guarantee decent work in line with the ILO Agenda, social protection, affordable housing, and lifelong learning as the basis for a new social contract. We must promote social economies based on solidarity, cooperatives and non-profits as models for our shared future, as people-centred alternatives to profit-based economic development, examples that build resilience and foster common solutions, instead of competition and mutual destruction. The wellbeing of our European citizens is crucial, and it goes hand in hand with the creation of the European Health Union, which can reduce the inequalities among Member States. We want a Europe that is defined by a wellbeing economy and a socio-ecological welfare state, and that uses its voice and place in global politics to reach this goal.



3. Migration defines our shared future – we need a rights and solidarity driven European response!

Migration has been a common feature throughout the history of humankind, and while flows are slightly increasing globally, most migration takes place within the same country or between countries from the Global South. Yet, migration to Europe is currently one of the main political battlefields, and one that is dominated by the narratives of the (far) right. SOLIDAR strongly opposes policies that are aimed at building ever higher walls, that externalize the management of EU borders to authoritarian states, that refuse to offer humanitarian relief to the many people who risk their life at sea or on land. Equally we reject the partisan approach linked to xenophobic and racist rhetoric that falsely blames migrants and migration for societal ills that are largely a result of the dismantling of our welfare states and our dysfunctional economies. Currently most European funds are spent on the securitization and militarization of our borders, rather than investing in the people who live in and come to Europe. When faced with the challenge of receiving millions of people fleeing Ukraine, however, we saw how much Europe can do when it wants to, and how strong we are when we focus on welcoming and integrating people. It should serve as an inspiration for migration policy and for rearticulating our proposals in the ongoing discussions and negotiations for a shared European approach.

We demand a common and comprehensive European migration policy based on human rights! One that seeks mutually beneficial solutions with third countries based on solidarity with people on the move as well as between countries. One that expands safe and regular pathways, aids migrants in need at Europe’s borders, supports long-term inclusion and participation, and promotes a positive narrative on migration and diversity!



4. The digital revolution defines our lives and our future – we need investments and policies that guarantee freedom, rights and equality!

The digital revolution continues to redefine our lives and realities in Europe, moving faster every year. The dramatic evolution of AI, robotics, and connectivity will define the coming years, as will the global power of a few tech giants. We need national and international binding instruments that stay ahead of this development to protect privacy, social and democratic rights, and that guarantee individual safety. We need regulation and taxation that bring the developments in these public spheres in line with public interest and needs, and redistribution policies that guarantee that profits are reinvested in the citizens they should be serving. We need to invest enough resources in tackling existing regional and socio-economic inequalities in skills and competences, as well as when dealing with the expected effects on the world of work. Digital Citizenship Education, the provision of basic and transversal digital competences, is even more essential for ensuring that the digital transition leads to further social justice instead of widening pre-existing inequalities and creating new ones. We should not move every service and aspect of society online, because for many people this would make it impossible to exercise and access their rights. When providing essential services, there must be a careful balancing act between the possibilities offered by digitalization and its inherent risks of exclusion.

We demand an entirely new approach to the digital sphere, treating it as a public good and a public space, that questions the very logic of database capitalism in which users are treated as merely currency and revenue. We call on the EU to be the global leader in the development of human,

social and economic rights in the digital era. We need a digital transformation that works for people and planet, that improves our societies, our democracies, and that serves to bridge existing and new inequalities!



5. Reactionary, authoritarian, and racist movements are on the rise – we want a Europe for all and with all!

Conservative, radical right-wing and racist forces are gaining momentum in Europe. Parties with fascist and neo-Nazi roots are winning elections and taking their seats in governments in several member states. This leads to backsliding, not just in relation to democratic rights and freedoms, but also in relation to climate and environmental, social, and inclusive policies, as well as an increased presence of revisionism and fake news. These forces are assisted by powerful media giants in many member states which target our open societies, our freedoms, our advances, and our progressive movements. Europe must do its utmost to protect women's rights over their own bodies, to fight gender-based violence, and do more to close the gender pay gap. More needs to be done in relation to misogynist policies and violence against women. We need Europe to stand firmly in defence of the rights and liberties we have fought hard to win over the past century. We need Europe to act against reactionary policies and radical agendas that dehumanize the other and foster hate crimes against LGBTQI+ and racialized communities. There is a real risk that the incoming European Parliament will be defined by a majority that is controlled by these anti-democratic forces. If so, as progressive civil society, we will fight back with everything we've got!

There can be no mistake here, this is the new frontline of European politics, and we must be ready. We join the call for an anti-fascist response, for a united civil society in defence of human rights and democratic freedoms! Our unified response as civil society and trade unions must be matched by a more frequent use of punitive measures against member states that do not live up to the democratic foundation of the Union, that fail to protect the rule of law and an independent judiciary, that attack civil society, trade unions and the free press, or engage in anti-democratic or hate speech.



6. Civil society is the foundation of our democracies – protect civic space and guarantee civil dialogue!

Civic space is threatened throughout Europe and the world, as civil society's role and place in society is increasingly questioned and persecuted in several countries. We see it in new legislation, funding cuts, and hostile political narratives and proposals. As a network of progressive civil society organizations promoting global active citizenship and representing millions of members across Europe, we find ourselves at the forefront of the fight to counter these threats. Our members empower citizenry individually and collectively at the local and national level, filling a crucial gap caused by cuts in public spending and neoliberal policies that starve the welfare state. The essential role that they play to promote social inclusion and cohesion daily as a vital part of our democratic fabric must be reflected in their involvement in policymaking processes.

There is now an opportunity to further the access of civil society to policymaking thanks to the growing interest at the EU level in models of deliberation

and citizen participation. This interest should result in the implementation of civil and social dialogue, co-determination, as well as in enhanced support for the provision of active citizenship education if we are to address the democratic deficit of the EU and follow up on the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe. It is imperative that there is an institutionalized place for committed and active citizens and residents in the EU to participate in and exert influence over all policies, and the EU's international agreements and partnerships, through structured, open, and transparent civil dialogue, along with social dialogue. If not, the policies and relationships will lack both quality and accuracy, fostering a neoliberal and elitist vision of the future of the EU.

The worrying backsliding in Europe and the world in terms of the civic space needed to guarantee the life and health of civil society and trade unions must be stopped. Europe must act decisively to protect and guarantee the voice of civil society and citizens in the ongoing transformation, to crack down on any further attempts to limit democratic rights and freedoms and continue to develop new forms of participation. We urge the EU to step up its commitment in this direction and develop a European civil society strategy to tackle these anti-democratic trends we are witnessing across Europe in a comprehensive and effective manner. We will work together with all political forces that are ready to stand with us in these demands for a vibrant civil society and for strong trade unions!

SOLIDAR

SOLIDAR FOUNDATION

ABOUT SOLIDAR AND THE NETWORK BEHIND THE MANIFESTO

SOLIDAR is a European and worldwide network of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working to advance social justice through a just transition in Europe and worldwide. Our over **50 member organisations** are based in 27 countries (19 of which are EU countries) and include national CSOs in Europe, as non-EU, EU-wide and organisations active at the international level. SOLIDAR represents and amplifies the voices and demands of its members at the European and international level. SOLIDAR organises its work for lifelong and life-wide learning through the SOLIDAR Foundation for progressive education and citizenry participation.

The network is brought together by its shared values of solidarity, equality and participation.

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