

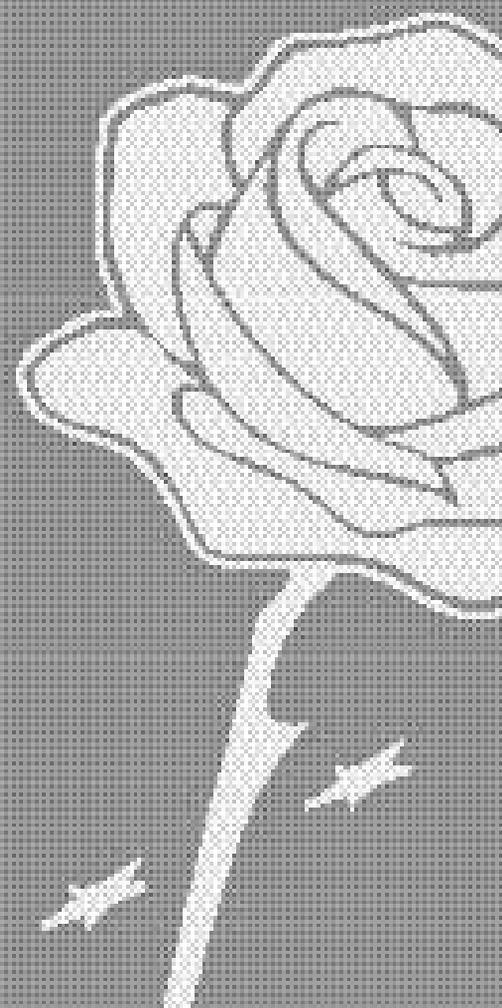
Shaping a Vision

A History of the Party
of European Socialists

1957 - 2002

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It is my pleasure to mark the 10th anniversary of the Party of European Socialists by presenting this history of cooperation between socialist and social democratic parties in Europe over the last 45 years. We hope that it will be a useful reference work for party representatives, journalists and academics.

Demand for information about our roots and development has increased considerably since publication of the first edition of the history of the Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community – later, the Party of European Socialists – in 1995.

This update of our history is set out in two parts:

- 1957 – 1994 by Simon Hix, PES trainee and student at the European University Institute Florence: Brussels 1995
- 1945 – 2002 by Urs Lesse, PES trainee and student at the University of Aachen: Brussels, 2002

Both authors spent many months in the PES secretariat researching their material. However, their work is in no way an ‘official’ or ‘authorised’ interpretation of the development of PES party cooperation over the years. The views expressed are first and foremost those of the authors themselves, who had the necessary freedom to interpret the information they gathered.

The character of each contribution is different but together they give a picture of the remarkable development of the Confederation and later the PES over recent decades. PES party cooperation is still too weak in the light of political integration within the European Union. Yet the analysis makes clear that the PES has been able to make its mark on EU development.

After a period of electoral weakness in a number of EU countries – offset to some extent by our strength in candidate countries – victories in Sweden and Germany have given us renewed confidence in the justice of our principles and the power of our message. We embark on policy renewal determined to reinforce our collective power base and to mobilise our political will and organisational strength with closer cooperation and integration of our parties and parliamentarians in our European Party.

Speaking with one voice while making full use of the PES is a basic need for promotion of a European Union based on social democratic values and policies.



Antony Beumer
PES Secretary General
August 2002

Archive pictures from the PES Collection, used to illustrate this history, are not presented in historical order.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

1. Evolution within the Socialist International, 1950 – 1957 page 9
2. Development of the Liaison Bureau, 1957- 1969 page 11
3. A new era of socialist party cooperation, 1969 –1974 page 17
4. The Socialist Confederation and the first European Elections, 1974 – 1979 page 25
5. In search of a role for the Confederation, 1979 – 1988 page 32
6. Leaders’ Summits and socialist policy coordination, 1988 – 1990 page 43
7. Towards the European Union and a ‘Party at the European level’, 1990 – 1991 page 50
8. Birth of the Party of European Socialists, 1991 – 1992 page 56
9. Development of a PES programme for Europe, 1992 – 1994 page 61

Chapter 2 • 1994-2002

1. Political context page 73
2. PES membership and Eastern Enlargement page 77
3. PES Policies page 81
4. Widening the PES scope into more EU institutions page 89
5. Internal developments page 94
6. Campaigning for a European political parties’ statute and funding page 101

Annexes

- I. Member parties page 109
- II. Presidents page 111
- III. Vice-Presidents page 111
- IV. Secretaries-General page 113
- V. Congresses page 113
- VI. Party Leaders’ summits page 115
- VII. Programmes, manifestos and declarations page 118

**A History of the Party
of European Socialists**

Chapter 1

1957 - 1994

1. Evolution within the Socialist International, 1950-1957

The history of cooperation between socialist parties in Europe began in 1864, with the founding of the First International. Only after the Second World War, however, with initial steps towards European economic and political integration, was there a real political imperative for 'transnational party cooperation' in Europe. Official contact between European socialists began within the structures of the Socialist International, which was re-established in 1950. Embedded in the foundation of the new Socialist International was the principle that:

'Democratic socialism is international because it recognises that no nation can solve all its economic and social problems in isolation. Absolute national sovereignty must be transcended'. (From *The Aims and Tasks of Democratic Socialism*, adopted by the Socialist International at the Frankfurt Conference, 1951)

Hence, if not yet practised in most national European socialist parties, from the outset of the post-war period the official principle of transnational socialist activity was international economic and political integration.

In 1950, Robert Schuman proposed his famous plan for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The Schuman Plan was discussed at an intergovernmental convention in Paris between 1950 and 1952. In preparation for this convention, the Socialist International set up a Study Group on European Unity representing the member parties of the six countries participating in the talks – the first institutionalised cooperation between European socialist parties concentrating on the specific question of European integration. After a series of meetings between July 1951 and August 1952, the Special Commission agreed a 10-point policy on a European Coal and Steel Community. This constitutes the first statement of transnational socialist party policy on European integration.

Consequently, by the time the European Coal and Steel Community came into being in July 1952, the basis of a special form of cooperation between its socialist parties had already been established. In the light of this experience, and the similar pattern of behaviour in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, a Socialist Group was formed in the new Common Assembly of





the ECSC in September 1952 by the national parties of the six member states. Within a year, the Socialist Group set up a bureau and a permanent secretariat in Luxembourg, the seat of the Common Assembly. Guy Mollet was elected President of the Group.

While the bureau and the secretariat coordinated the activities of socialist parties within the ECSC Assembly, the Western European section of the Socialist International continued to be the umbrella for extra-parliamentary cooperation. As a result, the initial Study Group on European Unity was transformed into a European Committee to coordinate liaison between the Socialist Groups in the ECSC and Council of Europe Assemblies and the international sections of the national parties. This arrangement remained the basis of socialist party cooperation in Europe until 1957, partly because of the faltering of the process of European integration after the collapse of plans for a European Defence Community in 1954.

However, in the late 50s European integration entered a new phase. In June 1955 the Messina Conference launched negotiations for two new European treaties, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

In January 1957, the socialist parties of the ECSC member states held their first inter-party Congress in Luxembourg. The Congress concentrated on two main themes: the EEC and EAEC negotiations, and the proposal of the Dutch Labour Party, PvdA, for closer cooperation between socialist parties outside the Common Assembly. This Dutch initiative was to be repeated on several occasions over the next 35 years.

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

On the basis of the PvdA proposal, the Congress decided to establish a firm basis for their relations with the Socialist Group of the Common Assembly by:

- ▶ creating a bureau of liaison, consisting of one delegate from each party, which should meet the bureau of the group at least twice a year;
- ▶ holding biannual congresses of the six parties; and
- ▶ instructing the bureau of liaison to suggest special meetings whenever necessary.

The Congress also established that the purpose of this new framework, which from then on was known as the *Liaison Bureau of the Socialist Parties of the European Community*, was to agree common positions on the emerging European institutions.

2. Development of the Liaison Bureau, 1957-1969

The first meeting of the liaison bureau was held on 1 April 1957 in Luxembourg. Six parties were represented:

- ▶ Parti Socialiste Belge / Belgische Socialistische Partij (PS/SP);
- ▶ Section Française International Ouvriere (SFIO);
- ▶ Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD);
- ▶ Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano (PSDI);
- ▶ Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Luxembourgeois / Letzeburger Sozialistische Arbechter Partei (POSL/LSAP); and
- ▶ Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA).



The meeting agreed to elect Pierre Comin, acting general secretary of the SFIO, as first chairman of the liaison bureau, and Fernand Georges of the POSL as first secretary. The parties also decided to convene a second conference of the EC Socialist parties in June 1957 to decide how to approach the establishment of the EEC and the EAEC.

After ratification of the Treaties of Rome in March 1957, the EEC and the EAEC came into existence on 1 January 1958.

Among a number of institutional changes, the new treaties replaced the Common Assembly of the ECSC with a new European Parliamentary Assembly (EPA) to be involved in decision-making in all three communities.

At the second Congress of socialist parties of the EC in June 1957, the parties agreed that national party delegates to the EPA would sit in a single Socialist Group, as they had done in the ECSC Assembly.



However, the content of socialist policies for the new European institutions was not discussed in detail until the third Congress in October 1958 in Strasbourg. This conference adopted two key resolutions – on the free trade area and on agricultural policy – which set out guidelines for European policy-making in the early years. On free trade, the EC socialist parties advocated the abolition of trade barriers in Europe but with guarantees of protection for European workers. On agriculture, the Congress supported plans to ensure European self-sufficiency in farm produce.

The Congress also adopted a resolution on methods of cooperation between EC socialist parties, setting out new and more precise rules for the operation of the liaison bureau. The resolution stated that:

‘The aim of this cooperation is to strengthen relations between the parties and to freely reach common agreement in particular on the problems arising from the existence of the European Communities’.

The resolution also established that the liaison bureau would now be composed of two officials from each national party and observer representatives from the Socialist International and the Socialist Group in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. The officers of the liaison bureau – the chairman, vice-chairman and secretary – would now be elected for a term of two years. The Congress also proposed that meetings of the liaison bureau be held jointly with the

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

bureau of the Socialist Group in the European Parliamentary Assembly. Finally, new rules were set out for approving and fixing the budget of the organisation and the level of fees for the affiliate parties.

The resolution established new rules of procedure for the Congress of EC Socialist Parties. The Congress was to consist of the following delegates:

- ▶ the members of the liaison bureau;
- ▶ ten delegates from the parties of Germany, France, and Italy, and six delegates from the parties of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; and
- ▶ the members of the Socialist Group in the European Parliamentary Assembly.

Observers could also be invited by the liaison bureau from other parties affiliated to the Socialist International, and the resolutions and reports of the Congress would be circulated to all member parties of the SI. The resolution thus established the general practice of combining national party and European parliamentary delegates in a single conference and institutionalised ways that the EC socialist parties could communicate and integrate other parties in the new arrangements, through special conference invitations and circulation of documents.

After the third Congress, the liaison bureau set about organising a series of European congresses of labour in an effort to initiate a discussion on social and employment policies in the European institutions. These labour congresses involved the leaders of the six EC socialist parties and leaders from most of the free trades unions of the member states of the community. The first of the congresses was held in Paris in the summer of 1959 and several more were held up to the beginning of 1960. The outcome of these congresses influenced the agenda of the liaison bureau, which now turned to the development of a European socialist programme.

This programme was the main topic of the fourth Congress of the EC socialist parties, held in Strasbourg in May 1960. The Congress agreed that:

‘The socialist parties of the member countries of the European Communities consider that in the present stage of European integration, it is necessary that the socialist parties...work out a common European programme; that this programme should define the principles that must serve as a guiding line to the socialist parties and to the Socialist Group in the European Parliamentary Assembly in the formulation of their opinions regarding the problems of European integration’.

The Congress instructed the liaison bureau to draft this programme, canvassing the opinions of the European trade unions, and to submit it to the national member parties and the Socialist



Group in the EPA, for adoption at the fifth Congress. In a second resolution, the Congress also proposed the election of the EPA 'by direct universal suffrage'.

While the liaison bureau was preparing the programme, two major developments in European integration altered the evolution of socialist party cooperation. First, in August 1961 the British, Irish and Danish governments applied for membership of the European Communities, and in May 1962 the Norwegian government followed suit. The EC socialist parties and the EPA Group immediately began consultations with the British Labour Party and the Danish Socialdemokratiet on whether they should support the applications. Second, a new set of intergovernmental negotiations resulted in the presentation of the Fouchet Plan in November 1961. The plan envisaged a new 'European Union of States, with common foreign and defence policies and competences in science and culture. In response, a joint meeting of the liaison bureau and the Socialist Group in the EPA in December 1961 agreed to support the Fouchet Plan, but only under certain conditions: that it would not weaken the existing Community organs, would not undermine NATO, should include a

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

Convention on Human Rights, that the EPA should be directly elected, and that the EPA should fix the Union's budget.

Consequently, while the fifth Congress of socialist parties of the EC met in Paris on 5 and 6 November 1962, the Fouchet Plan and the question of EC enlargement overshadowed the planned European socialist programme. The British Labour Party, the Danish Socialdemokratiet and the Norwegian Arbeiderpartiet were present at the Congress as 'observers'. Despite some reservations among the observer parties, the Congress approved a resolution expressing the hope that:

'negotiations with those states that are in a position to accept the political and economic obligations resulting from the Paris and Rome treaties may lead as soon as possible to the geographical extension of the European Community'.

And on the question of the Fouchet Plan, the Congress unanimously supported a resolution stating that European socialist parties believe that:

'European integration... has a political goal which is the ultimate creation of a 'United States of Europe'; and consider that: the Paris and Rome Treaties should be superseded by a single treaty providing common institutions...; only the democratisation of the European Community, giving the European Parliament a decisive vote in European legislative affairs, can prevent the supremacy of a European technocracy going hand in hand with the holders of economic power... The Congress of socialist parties of the EC welcomes the presentation by the EEC Commission of a programme whose implementation might help to bring about a true economic and social union'.

The statement on the Fouchet Plan also went on to include much of the liaison bureau draft 'Common Programme of Action for the Socialist Parties of the European Community'. As the resolution stated, European socialist parties:

'deem it specially urgent to introduce efficient economic planning on a Europe-wide scale; to introduce an incomes policy which will ensure a fair division of wealth; to substitute gradually the present coordinated currency policies of the member states with a Community currency policy and a federal European currency organisation; [and] to establish a common market and a common commercial policy in the energy sector'.

Finally, the Congress altered the rules of procedure, to ensure that the liaison bureau should meet four times a year rather than twice. Consequently, by the end of 1962, the EC socialist parties

had established a regular system of cooperation around a common political agenda which combined strong advocacy of further European integration and enlargement of the community with socialist principles of economic and social justice.

However, with the stubbornness of President de Gaulle, these socialist aims were put on hold for the next seven years. First, de Gaulle adamantly opposed British membership of the EC, which he first vetoed in January 1963 and again in November 1967. Second, on the question of integration of fundamental social and economic policies, de Gaulle provoked an institutional crisis in June 1965 by boycotting EC Council of Ministers' meetings in protest at the use of majority voting on agriculture questions and the powers of the European Parliament. On both occasions, the liaison bureau called a joint meeting with the Socialist Group in the European Parliament and condemned de Gaulle's actions. At the sixth Congress of the socialist parties of the EC on 17 and 18 September 1964 in Rome, the socialist parties reasserted the aims of the fifth Congress: enlargement of the community, political integration with increased powers for the European Parliament, and majority decision-making in vital areas of economic and social policy. However, regardless of the unity of pur-



Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

pose of the EC socialist parties, a socialist agenda for Europe could not possibly be implemented while de Gaulle was able to block any institutional changes. This situation was confirmed after the January 1966 agreement in the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg to allow any member state to veto proposals involving a vital national interest.

Frustrated by these developments, at the seventh Congress, on 17 and 18 November in Berlin, the EC socialist parties turned their attention to the internal evolution of party coordination. The Congress called for greater cooperation between the national parties on economic and social policy and for the establishment of regular contacts between the national party research bodies on these questions. The liaison bureau was instructed:

‘to make a study of a possible revision of its present structure, designed to enable it to give a positive lead to socialist policy at a community level... and to present a report to the next Congress on the studies which it has made’.

However, there was no imperative for national parties to be interested in more party cooperation until there was further political integration in the European Communities – and this could not be achieved while de Gaulle was determined to test European enlargement. However, after de Gaulle resigned in April 1969, the process of European integration and the development of a transnational Socialist organisation entered a new era.

3. A new era of socialist party cooperation, 1969-1974

A few days before de Gaulle’s resignation, the liaison bureau held a special meeting in Brussels with the bureau of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, the Socialist members of the European Commission and several leading national party figures. This meeting agreed that with de Gaulle’s pending resignation European socialists should pursue a two-pronged strategy: the democratisation of the European Communities; and a new set of structures for transnational party cooperation.

In 1968, Henk Vredeling and several other leading members of the Dutch PvdA had already set up a ‘European Political Action Group’ to work for the creation of a Progressive European Party (PEP) to align all socialist and non-socialist progressive forces under a common European agenda. Although not wholeheartedly supportive of Vredeling’s initiative, the socialist Commissioners Sicco Mansholt (PvdA) and Lionello Levi-Sandri (PSI) also advocated the formation of a European Socialist Party. These leading socialist figures argued that at this stage, without direct elections to the European Parliament in the immediate future, the democratisation of the European Community would only come about through the creation of a ‘Common Market of Political Parties’.



In 1969, these ideas began to be taken up by the liaison bureau. At a meeting of the Socialist Group of the EPA in Amalfi in October 1969, Lucien Radoux, chairman of the liaison bureau, and Francis Vals, chairman of the EPA Group, presented a joint working paper on the reform of the liaison bureau. The paper pointed out that 'certain members of the liaison bureau no longer have confidence in the present methods of cooperation'. They went on to propose a reform that from 1 January 1970, the Liaison Bureau should fix dates annually for:

- ▶ a European socialist assembly to replace the former biannual Congress;
- ▶ a conference of socialist women;
- ▶ a conference of the chairmen of the socialist parliamentary groups;
- ▶ a conference of socialist youth; and
- ▶ periodic meetings of those in charge of public relations in the national parties.

The working paper also proposed a more modern name for the liaison bureau, such as the European Socialist Centre and the establishment of a separate secretariat in Brussels. Until this time the liaison bureau was using the offices and staff of the Socialist Group in Luxembourg. These proposals would be discussed at the next Congress of the socialist parties of the EC, which was by now well overdue.

However, at the next meeting of the liaison bureau, in November 1969, the Radoux-Vals paper received short shrift from the national party representatives. The national parties were not ready for fundamental reform of the structures of transnational party cooperation. For example, the SPD, which had discussed the Vredeling proposals for a PEP in its national executive, insisted that any European level structure could only be an extension of national party organisations. Now in government in Germany, the SPD was not prepared to transfer authority to a European party organisation that would constrain its behaviour in the Council of Ministers. The liaison bureau consequently rejected the proposals to change the biannual conference into an annual assembly and insisted that 'its decisions will definitely not be binding on any member party'. Nevertheless, at the insistence of the chairman of the liaison bureau and the socialist Commissioners, the EC socialist parties agreed to hold six meetings of the bureau in 1970 'to assure better cooperation', rather than the statutory four per year.

However, the argument that Europe was not ready for transnational political parties was challenged by the decisions of the Hague summit in December 1969. This meeting of the EC heads of government was one of the most significant in the course of European integration, opening the way for enlargement, insisting on the need for policy cooperation in new areas, agreeing to examine the question of direct elections to the European Parliament, and renewing the commitment to European political integration that had withered away in the early 60s.

In the wake of this new enthusiasm for Europe, the increasing pressure for direct elections, and the prospect of EC enlargement, the EC socialist parties held their long overdue eighth Congress in Brussels from 28 to 30 June 1971. On the question of enlargement, the Congress:

‘welcomed the conclusion of the negotiations for the entry of Great Britain... in the belief that the social democratic parties in the European Community declare their conviction that the cause of democratic socialism will be greatly advanced by British membership of the Community... [and] hope that equally satisfactory terms will be negotiated for the membership of other applicant countries’.

However, to appease concerns in some of the member parties, notably the Dutch and the Italians, that the British and Danish socialist parties would campaign to halt the process of European integration, the Congress decided to:

‘strongly reaffirm the conviction that the integration process ...must be continued through the economic and monetary union to its ultimate completion in the *United States of Europe* in the form of a federal state ...and reject any form of integration aiming merely at a confederation of states’.

Finally, on the organisational side, the Congress decided to reform the liaison bureau. Harking back to the Vredeling and Radoux proposals, the EC socialist parties stated that ‘a democratic structure for a united Europe accompanied by fuller economic, social, monetary and political integration cannot be achieved without a supranational structure for the social democratic forces’. The Congress thus decided to change the name of the liaison bureau to the *Office of the Social Democratic Parties of the European Community* and instructed the Dutch Socialist Alfred Mozer to draft a report outlining a plan for a reform of the structures of transnational cooperation between the EC socialist parties.

The Mozer Report was completed in time for the ninth Congress of EC socialist parties held in Bonn on 26 and 27 April 1973. However, with the enlargement of the community on 1 January 1973, the focus of the Congress was the immediate need to integrate the Danish and British parties into the transnational party organisation. This could not be achieved through the launch of a reform package which the two new parties would not be willing to support or through the reassertion of the pro-federalist principles of the previous Congress, which would have driven a deep wedge between the original member parties and the new affiliates. Instead, the new Office of EC Socialist Parties drafted a detailed Congress resolution on social policy: the issue that by definition could unite all European Socialist parties.

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

The ninth Congress consequently approved a 22-page document entitled *Towards a Social Europe*. The main planks of the Bonn document were:

- ▶ the development of the social dimension of the European Community;
- ▶ the right to work, through safeguarding full employment and equality of opportunity, and a Community industrial policy;
- ▶ a more human environment, through common health and safety standards;
- ▶ social security in Europe, through the standardisation of social benefits;
- ▶ the democratisation of the European economy, through the common provisions for worker participation; and
- ▶ income distribution and asset utilisation, through a Community incomes policy.

Most of these issues were unanimously supported by the EC socialist parties. However, on the question of workers participation, the Italian PSI and the French PS insisted that they would not be bound by the Congress resolution, arguing that worker 'participation' only serves to place workers in a subordinate position and cannot serve as a replacement for 'real worker supervision and democratic planning'.

The Bonn conference thus set two important precedents in the development of socialist party cooperation in Europe. First, a high degree of unity between the national parties had been achieved because the Congress had concentrated on a common programme based exclusively on socialist principles and policies, rather than on the question of European integration. Second, the Congress for the first time incorporated the EC 'footnote practice' into transnational socialist party business, which allowed certain par-





ties to 'opt-out' of any binding provisions if they contradicted national party commitments. Consequently, despite the fact that the ninth Congress had not resolved the question of the internal reform of transnational party structures, these two precedents were fundamentally important in helping national parties support new levels of socialist party cooperation.

In the autumn of 1973, the liaison bureau returned to the proposals of the Mozer Report and agreed to set up a new working party to draw up concrete plans for 'a new structuring of cooperation between European socialist parties'. The working party was personally chaired by

the head of the liaison bureau, the Belgian socialist Lucien Radoux, and included representatives from the PvdA, the French PS, the PSI, the Danish SD and the German SPD, as well as the secretary general of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament. The report of the working party was circulated to the national parties for comment and was redrafted by an *ad hoc* working group before the national parties were prepared to adopt it. Finally, on 5 April 1974 in Luxembourg, the bureau approved the Radoux Report and the *Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community* (CSPEC) was inaugurated.

The first difference between the CSPEC and the Office of EC Socialist Parties was the stature of the officers of the new organisation. The first President of the CSPEC was Wilhelm Dröscher, member of the Central Committee of the SPD, and the first vice-presidents were Sicco Mansholt, the Dutch Socialist and former President of the Commission of the European Communities, Robert Pontillon, international secretary of the French Socialist Party, and Ivar Norgaard of the Danish Social Democrats.

However, the institutional structure of the Office of EC Socialist Parties was largely maintained, with some small changes. The voting members in the new bureau were two members from each of the 10 affiliated parties and the President of the Socialist Group in the EP. Non-voting members of the bureau were the socialist EC Commissioners, the bureau of the Socialist Group in the EP, and a representative each from the Socialist International and the Socialist Group in the Assembly of the Council of Europe. The Bureau was required to meet at least four times a year, and to:

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

- ▶ appoint up to four vice-presidents, a general secretary and two auditors;
- ▶ discuss matters arising in connection with the activities of the EC;
- ▶ make recommendations to the affiliated parties;
- ▶ organise the exchange of information between member parties;
- ▶ convene Congresses, fix their agenda and decide where they would be held;
- ▶ make recommendations to Congress;
- ▶ nominate a president of the Confederation, to be elected by the Congress;
- ▶ execute the decisions of Congress; and
- ▶ approve the budget and fix the membership fees of the affiliated parties.

In an important departure from previous practice, the new rules of procedure provided for decisions of the bureau to be taken by majority vote.

The new Congress consisted of:

- ▶ 18 delegates each from Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy (nine each from the PSI and the PSDI);
- ▶ seven delegates each from Belgium and the Netherlands;
- ▶ five delegates each from Denmark and Ireland;
- ▶ three delegates from Luxembourg;
- ▶ the members of the Bureau;
- ▶ a number of delegates equal to the number of members of the European Parliament from each party; and
- ▶ in a non-voting capacity, members of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, representatives of other member parties of the Socialist International, and representatives of the Socialist Group in the Assembly of the Council of Europe.





Furthermore, under certain conditions, the Congress would be able to force the national parties to abide by its decisions. As the rules of procedure stated:

'The Congress can adopt with a simple majority recommendations to the parties. A party, which considers itself unable to implement a recommendation, is to indicate the reason to the Bureau. Acting on a unanimous proposal of the Bureau, the Congress can adopt a decision binding on the parties. Such a decision requires a

two-thirds majority of the Congress. A proposal for a decision which obtains a majority short of two-thirds majority is transformed into a recommendation'.

Finally, the seat of the Confederation was transferred from Luxembourg to Brussels and it was decided to set up a small CSPEC Secretariat, in a separate office from the Secretariat of the Group in the European Parliament.

Despite these new procedures, many of the changes were cosmetic, and from the outset it was clear that the Confederation was not the transnational party that Vredeling, Mansholt or Mozer had envisaged. As Wilhelm Dröscher pointed out:

'It must be quite clearly noted that the development of a European Socialist Party is not a realistic possibility in the near future. This would create insoluble problems for the national parties. But it is essential that in this transition stage the member parties of this Confederation should be united in a 'family of parties', which in a spirit of mutual understanding, constant dialogue and common resolve sees to it that the policy of democratic socialism does not remain a dead letter in the European Community, but in a common spirit of valiant endeavour points the way to transnational progress on important questions'.

The reference to family of parties' clearly indicated that the new organisation was closer to the traditional type of cooperation under the Socialist International than to any truly supranational party organisation. Moreover, the varying attitudes of the national parties towards this new organisation were reflected in the different translations of the name. The Dutch *Federatie* implied a more integrated organisation than the German *Bund* or French Union, whereas the English Confederation, Italian *Confederazione* and Danish *Samenslutningen* suggested a much weaker structure altogether. Nevertheless, with the perceived establishment of a fundamentally new transnational structure, most national parties acknowledged that socialist party cooperation in Europe had entered a new phase. This was immediately reflected in the fact that the affiliated parties saw the Confederation as the appropriate body to draft and adopt a common electoral manifesto for the first direct elections to the European Parliament.

4. The Socialist Confederation and the first European Elections, 1974-1989

At the Paris Summit in December 1974, the EC Heads of Government finally confirmed that there would be direct elections to the European Parliament 'in or after 1978'. In November 1974, the Confederation bureau had already proposed the drafting of a new Common Programme, to replace the one adopted at the 1962 Congress. It was now decided that this programme would be the basis of a common election manifesto in the European elections. This decision was endorsed at the first official party leaders' conference of the Confederation in the Hague in November 1974. Sicco Mansholt was asked to compare the member parties' programmes, statements of principle and election manifestos with a view to preparing a Common European Socialist Programme. At the Hague meeting, the EC socialist leaders stressed that:

'...the guiding principle [in the drafting of the programme] must not be the lowest common denominator but everything that already unites democratic socialists and can unite them in the future'.

The launch of the first European socialist election manifesto thus began on an optimistic note. However, it soon became clear that reconciling the diverse histories and domestic situations of the national parties in a single document to be presented to the European electorate was not going to be as easy as the leaders had originally hoped.

In February 1975, the Bureau established a working group, chaired by Wilhelm Dröscher, to develop Mansholt's initial work. The working group decided that the draft programme should have a short ideological preamble, followed by a list of socialist proposals for EC action. The national parties were asked to submit proposals. However, each national party had a different list of issues and



topics it wanted to see addressed in the common programme. As a result, in September 1975, the working group decided a change of strategy: it proposed a list of 15 topics for further study and asked the Bureau to set up several sub-groups to share the burden of the increasing work load. Frustrated by the lack of progress, in December 1975 the bureau suspended work on a common programme and agreed to launch a new set of working groups for the seemingly more straightforward task of drafting a short election platform.

The decision of the bureau was endorsed by the party leaders at a meeting in Helsingor in January 1976, when they agreed to establish a new Steering Committee, chaired by Wilhelm Dröscher, to coordinate the activities of four subgroups on the following topics: economic policy, chaired by Michel Rocard (PS-F); social policy, chaired by Lionello Levi-Sandri (PSI); democracy and institutions, chaired by Schelto Patijn (PvdA); and external relations, chaired by Bruno Friedrich (SPD). This method of using smaller sub-groups rather than a single large working group has since been used in the preparation of all major programmes and manifestos of the EC socialist parties. This compartmentalised approach to policy formulation allows for different national party interests to be accommodated in a single document, such as French PS or German SPD concerns for economic policy specificity or the Dutch PvdA's special interest in institutional reform. In contrast, a single working group with a single chairperson increases the likelihood that at least one party is completely dissatisfied with the results. Despite this new arrangement, and regardless of the 'Yes' vote in the British referendum on EC membership in June 1975, the British Labour Party representatives at the Helsingor meeting made it clear that although the party was prepared to send observers to the working parties, they refused to take part officially in their work.

The working groups drafted their proposals throughout 1976 and the first part of 1977, and special meetings of the Bureau were held on different topics in Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris, Munich, London, Rome, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Finally, at a meeting in Luxembourg on 6 June 1977, the Bureau agreed to combine four working group reports in a single 30-page draft election manifesto. The draft was circulated to the national parties for amendments to be proposed by the end of November 1977. The Bureau also proposed to hold the 10th Congress of EC socialist parties in March 1978 to launch the final election manifesto in time for the proposed June 1978 European elections.

By the end of 1978, however, the bureau's plans were in disarray. Most national parties objected to the wording of the manifesto. The SPD and the PvdA alone had together proposed over sixty



amendments. Moreover, many national parties had already drafted their own programmes for the elections. With the possibility of using the European elections as a first ever ‘nationwide referendum’ on the performance of the governments of the EC member states, most national parties were more concerned with domestic party commitments and ambitions than a vague transnational party manifesto that hardly addressed the concerns of their voters. All in all, only the POSL wholeheartedly accepted the bureau’s proposals.

Fortunately for the bureau, however, at the Copenhagen Summit in April 1978, the EC heads of government proposed to postpone the European elections until June 1979. This gave the bureau vital time to salvage the situation and rescue the credibility of the Confederation. The bureau promptly rescheduled the 10th Congress for January 1978 and called for a summit of socialist party leaders in June 1978. The bureau had recognised that only the national party leaders possessed the authority to make a binding commitment to a transnational manifesto. Again, this was an important precedent, which began the institutionalisation of the socialist leaders’ summits as the main decision-making body in the Confederation – as the European Council summits had also begun to be in the EC.

The bureau also decided that the national party leaders should be presented with a shorter document than the ill-fated manifesto. Four new working groups were hurriedly established:

- ▶ employment, chaired by Joop Den Uyl (PvdA);
- ▶ human rights, chaired by Willy Dondelinger (POSL) and Ole Espersen (SD); -
- ▶ enlargement, chaired by Karel Van Miert (PS/SP); and
- ▶ women’s rights, chaired by Karel Dahlerup (SD).

Finally, in April 1978, the Bureau established an Election Committee, chaired by Bruno Friedrich (SPD), to coordinate the national parties’ campaigns. The initial papers from these working groups were brought together into a draft ‘Political Declaration’ by Sicco Mansholt a much watered down (and shorter) version of the draft manifesto. The final touches were put to the document at a meeting in London immediately prior to the leaders’ summit, where for the first time the British Labour Party publicly supported the notion of a common electoral declaration.

The leaders’ summit was convened on 23 and 24 June 1978, at the Palais d’Egmont in Brussels. The meeting was attended by:

- ▶ Robert Pontillon (PS-F), who had succeeded Dröscher as President of the CSPEC;
- ▶ the four vice-presidents - Sicco Mansholt (PvdA), Karel Van Miert (SP/PS), Bruno Friedrich (SDP) and Karen Dahlerup (SD);
- ▶ all the national party leaders (except from the British Labour Party) - André Cools (SP/PS),

Anker Jorgensen (SD), Willy Brandt (SPD), François Mitterrand (PS-F), Ian Mikardo (LP-GB), Frank Cluskey (LP-Ireland), Bettino Craxi (PSI), Pier Luigi Romita (PSDI), Lydie Schmit (POSL), Joop Den Uyl (PvdA) and Gerry Fitt (SDLP);

- ▶ Mario Soares from the Portuguese Socialists and Felipé González from the Spanish PSOE;
- ▶ Bernt Carlsson, the Swedish Socialist and President of the Socialist International; and
- ▶ all four socialist EC Commissioners - Roy Jenkins (LP-GB), Henk Vredeling (PvdA), Antonio Giolotti (PSI), and Claude Cheysson (PS-F).

For the first time in the history of socialist cooperation in Europe, all the national party leaders had shown a personal interest in transnational party business. If for nothing else, this was to save face in the European elections, where the European People's Party (the Federation of EC Christian Democratic Parties) and the Federation of EC Liberal and Democratic Parties had both agreed common manifestos.

The party leaders duly signed the 31-point Political Declaration and presented it to an impressive array of European journalists. The party leaders agreed that the Political Declaration would be a general framework and a statement of basic principles, but that each party would be allowed to propose a national election manifesto in parallel. In the opening paragraph of the Declaration, the EC Socialist Parties restated that they share 'commitment to the pursuit of common goals of freedom, social justice, equality and harmonious economic development'. The socialist leaders' declaration also criticised the EC for simply achieving 'free trade with little regional and social balance' and backed the eight common economic policy aims that had formed the core of the draft manifesto (many of which had originally been proposed in the 1962 Common Programme):



- ▶ full employment;
- ▶ stability;
- ▶ fairer distribution of income and wealth;
- ▶ an effective and democratic economic structure;
- ▶ economic democracy;

- ▶ improved social security;
- ▶ better living and working conditions; and
- ▶ improved educational opportunities.

However, most press and academic commentators were quick to point out that the Declaration was a truly lowest common denominator agreement: a vague summary of socialist principles with hardly a single proposal for concrete EC policies. To remedy this situation, the bureau was instructed to draft another new document, an 'Appeal to the Electorate'. The Bureau approved the draft Appeal in early January 1979, and subsequently presented it to the 10th Congress of the CSPEC the very next day.

Almost four years overdue, the 10th Congress of EC socialist parties, the first Congress of the Confederation, was held from 10 to 12 January 1979 in Brussels. On the instruction of their national party leaders, Congress delegates unanimously adopted the Appeal. The Appeal covered much of the ground of the Political Declaration, but broke the issues down into the following seven aims:

- ▶ to ensure the right to work, through common policies agreed between the main industrialised nations;
- ▶ to keep economic and social developments under democratic control, through modernising older industries and the development of new ones, and democratic control of public enterprises and multinational companies;
- ▶ to fight pollution, through the development of alternative sources of energy, and no further development and use of nuclear energy;
- ▶ to end discrimination, in particular against women, through the reform of education and the provision of child care;
- ▶ to protect the consumer, through rules for objective information and enlarging the responsibility of producers;
- ▶ to promote peace, security and cooperation, through greater aid to developing countries, and an agreement on equitable rules for international economic transaction; and
- ▶ to extend and defend human rights and civil liberties, through the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights in the EC.

In the election campaign, the Appeal was used by all the national parties except the Labour Party, either adding it as an appendix to their national manifestos or publishing it separately as an official party document. Meanwhile, the bureau sought to coordinate the national campaigns through a series of conferences and events hosted by all of the national parties, except the British and Belgians, which culminated in a demonstration of party activists at the foot of the Eiffel Tower

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

two weeks before the elections (see Table 1). The Campaign Committee helped organise European socialist speakers – Commissioners, MEN or officers of the CSPEC – for each of these conferences. Furthermore, to keep the national parties up to date with the campaign in the other member states, the CSPEC secretariat organised a Press and Information Service which produced a weekly bulletin between January and June 1979.

Table 1: Timetable of CSPEC Conferences leading up to the First Direct Elections

Host Party	Venue	Dates	Subject
PvdA	Amsterdam	14-15 December 1978	Employment
SPD	Ludwigshaven	1-2 March 1979	Humanity and Cultural Democracy
POSL	Luxembourg	22-23 March 1979	Equality of Women
PSDI	Bologna	28 March 1979	Social Europe
SD	Copenhagen	5-6 April 1979	Economic Democracy
PS-F	Paris	19-20 April 1979	The New Industrial Revolution
SDLP	Belfast	21 April 1979	Regional Policy
POSL	Luxembourg	26-27 April 1979	Candidates Meeting
PSI	Rome	3-4 May 1979	Economic and Employment Policy
LP-Ireland	Dublin	6 May 1979	Election Meeting
PS-F	Paris	25 May 1979	Final 'Manifestation'

Over 200 candidates and many party leaders attended the candidates' meeting in Luxembourg and almost 20,000 attended the 'Springtime of European Socialism' rally in Paris in May. However, at a joint press conference of party leaders, the fundamental divisions between the EC socialist parties were revealed. The recently defeated British Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan warned that each party must be free to pursue its own economic and political strategy. In contrast, François Mitterrand (PS-F) and Willy Brandt (SPD) expressed the hope that the new European Parliament would become 'one of the two chambers of Europe' and the centre of a transnational party system.

The European elections were held between 7 and 10 June 1979. From the initial decision to draft a Common Programme in 1974, these elections marked the end of almost five years of often bitter wrangles between the EC socialist parties and had led to some serious questions about the role of a transnational socialist party organisation. However, the Confederation of Socialist Parties had also learnt some important lessons from the process. The EC socialist parties now understood that



a real common programme could only come about as a result of a gradual convergence of national parties positions on Europe. For this to be achieved, the Confederation would need to be a vehicle for substantial joint policy coordination and development. Moreover, it was now clear that direct elections, primarily fought by national parties on national issues, would not by themselves produce a European socialist party as many had argued. Finally, the existence of a Socialist Group in the European Parliament which was largely independent from the national parties, and had a substantial amount of organisational resources, was likely to reduce the national parties' influence in the Confederation. After the experience of the elections, there was thus a need for the Confederation to redefine its role.

5. In search of a role for the Confederation, 1979-1988

Preparations for this new phase of internal reform had already begun in December 1978 when the bureau was presented with a PvdA motion calling for 'an examination of the functions and structure of the Confederation in the aftermath of the direct election of the European Parliament', and for the holding of an extraordinary Congress to discuss this topic. The motion was considered by the member parties and adopted at the 10th Congress of the CSPEC in January 1979. Instructed by the Congress to proceed with the examination, the bureau nevertheless decided that a fundamental revision of the role of the Confederation would need to be endorsed by the party leaders. The bureau subsequently asked Oscar Debunne, the international secretary of the Belgian SP, to prepare a preliminary note to be presented to the parties leaders' summit immedi-

ately after the EP elections, on 29 June 1979. Debunne suggested that as a result of the direct elections, there was:

‘a need to provide a counterbalance to the European Parliamentary Socialist Group ...and a need for the socialist parties to seek common positions with a view to strengthening the cohesion of the Socialist Group and facilitating its work in the Parliament’

In summarising the note, CSPEC Secretary-General Manfred Michel also suggested that there was a fundamental question the national party leaders’ must ask themselves: ‘Are the member parties prepared to entrust the Confederation with greater powers? Are they prepared to cede part of their sovereignty to the Confederation?’ However, the question was perhaps best phrased by Dick Toornstra, the Secretary-General of the CSPEC, when he told the international secretaries of the member parties prior to the leaders’ summit that:

‘the Confederation has reached a crucial moment. Parties are finally called upon to make their choice, whether they want a Confederation with some political power or just a European Socialist Post Office box’.

The party leaders were not yet ready to answer these questions, but agreed that Debunne should begin negotiating with the new EP Group with a view to the establishment of a mutually acceptable financial and decision-making structure, to be adopted at the next Congress, at the beginning of 1980.

The 11th Congress of the CSPEC was held in Luxembourg, on 2 and 3 March 1980. Apart from the question of the reform of the role of the Confederation, the national parties had decided that the theme of the Congress should be ‘Socialists Against the Right’. This theme was meant to unite southern and northern European parties against a common enemy: the last vestiges of the dictatorial regimes in Spain, Portugal and Greece, and the emerging New Right in Britain, France, Germany and Scandinavia. The Congress elected Joop Den Uyl (PvdA) as the new President of the Confederation, who immediately insisted that:

‘Socialists can and must resist the new wave of egoism which is seeking to stifle the influence of the state directed though it has been and still is at protecting the weaker sections of society’.



As early as 1980, the EC socialist parties realised that the ‘social democratic consensus’ of the 50s and 60s had come to an end. However, few had yet realised the importance of European-level cooperation between the parties and in the structure of the EC for overcoming crisis.

Nevertheless, the 11th Congress approved the final draft of the Debunne Report, which had been adopted by the bureau in February 1980. There were three main points in the final report:

- ▶ The main *function* of the Confederation would be to coordinate the development and rejuvenation of national party policy, in a difficult period of economic and social change for socialist parties, through the organisation of two ‘special conferences’ (on different areas of policy making) every year.
- ▶ The *structure* of the Confederation would be reformed to develop the role of the secretariat in the coordination of relations with the new group in the European Parliament and in the drafting of a new biannual Activities’ Report of the CSPEC, and to institutionalise an annual party leaders’ conference which should ‘lay down the goals and priorities for the following year’.
- ▶ Finally, the Confederation would have a programme of activities.

These were novel changes, but much less radical than the initial Debunne ideas, which included a transfer of 20 per cent of the EP Group’s funds and staff to the Confederation secretariat and the establishment of a European Socialist Research Centre to oversee European socialist policy development at the national and European levels. The Congress resolution also made clear that:

‘The Confederation is not, and has no intention of becoming, a European super-party, nor will it ask the member parties to relinquish part of their sovereignty for its benefit’.

Nevertheless, for the first time the Confederation had a set of statutes, rather than simply some general rules of procedure, and a clear organisational goal: the coordination of national party policy and the establishment of guidelines for the work of the EP Group. This was thus not the goal of a European-level party, which classically would have been the placement of socialist party representatives in the key governmental offices (this was still left to the national governments to decide). However, the new role of the Confederation was far superior to the vague aim of ‘jointly defining freely agreed positions on problems raised by the existence of the European Community’ – the single official aim of the liaison bureau and the Office of EC Socialist Parties, and of the first rules of the Confederation.

In the next two years, this new role was put into practice, with the holding of four ‘special conferences’. On 6 to 8 March 1981 in London, the first special conference of the CSPEC was held on the

question of energy. Almost 100 representatives from the Socialist Group in the EP and the member parties of the CSPEC attended the conference and voted on resolutions ranging from sources of renewable energy to energy-saving measures and the use of nuclear power. It was clear, however, that on many of these crucial questions the national parties were deeply divided. This was also the situation at the second special conference, on security and disarmament, in Paris on 19 and 20 March 1981.

The national party divisions were highlighted by the presence of many national party leaders at the conference including Den Uyl (PvdA), Mitterrand (PS-F), Brandt (SPD), Foot (LP-GB), Spitaels (PS-B), Van Miert (SP-B), Papandreou (PASOK), González (PSOE), Craxi (PSI), Longo (PSDI), Palme (SAP) and Kalevi Sorsa (SSDP) – which drew the attention of the national media.

Brandt and Den Uyl emphasised that the main theme for socialists should be peace and disarmament, within the structure of NATO. However, Mitterrand argued that NATO was not the appropriate framework and that Europe should develop an independent security identity ‘between the power-blocs’. However, the EC socialist parties were more united at the last two special conferences of the early 80s: on enlargement, in Madrid on 27 and 28 November 1981; and on Mediterranean policy, in Marseilles on 25 and 26 June 1982. With the involvement of the Greek, Spanish and Portuguese parties in the work of the Confederation since the end of the 70s, the EC socialist parties had consistently argued that the European Community structures should be used to strengthen democracy and economic stability in these countries.

Many of these topics also surfaced at the first party leaders’ conference under the new statutory provisions, in Amsterdam on 28 April 1981. The party leaders adopted two resolutions.



First, on ‘The Economic Crisis’, they rejected the monetarist approach of Reagan in the United States and argued that Europe should follow a fundamentally different path using national and European-level industrial and employment strategies, such as the reduction of working time and job-sharing.

Second, on ‘The Political Role of Europe in the World’, the socialist leaders supported the Genscher, Carrington and Colombo initiatives for a common European foreign policy, ‘independent of the world powers, but not with Europe as a third superpower’.

Finally, the party leaders also awarded the Wilhelm Dröscher Prize to Felipe González, the leader of the Spanish PSOE, in recognition of his contribution to freedom and democracy in Spain. The prize was established after the death of Wilhelm Dröscher, the first President of the CSPEC, in 1977, and was first awarded to Sicco Mansholt, the Dutch Socialist EC Commissioner, in 1979.

The economic crisis of the early 80s continued to dominate the agenda of the CSPEC. The European socialist parties decided that ‘*Socialists and European Revival*’ should be the theme of the 12th CSPEC Congress, which was held in Paris on 12 and 13 November 1982. Joop Den Uyl, the CSPEC President, opened the Congress by summing up the challenge facing the transnational socialist organisation: ‘The economic crisis is exerting heavy pressure on the European institutions to which the existence of the Confederation is tied’. However, Den Uyl went on to argue that:

‘...no national solutions exist. We are on the verge of reverting to economic nationalism which played a fatal role in the thirties... Let us treat with caution the instruments that are available in the European Community, however imperfect they are. Let us use those instruments to defend the foundations of the welfare state and to protect the rights of millions to work and to income’.

Piet Dankert (PvdA), the Socialist President of the EP, took up this theme and urged the socialist leaders to use the 1984 elections to the European Parliament as a chance to present the electorate with a European recovery plan.

Following the Paris Congress, the CSPEC Bureau immediately began work on a common manifesto. In the next 18 months, attention turned away from the coordination of national party policy and back to the question of the role of a transnational socialist body in the European elections. Learning from the previous experience, one of the first Confederation campaign decisions was to leave the organisation of campaign conferences to the discretion of the national parties – which were subsequently only held by the PS-F, the PvdA, the PSI and the PSDI – and to use the framework of the CSPEC to concentrate all efforts on the adoption of the first European socialist election manifesto.



In February 1983, the CSPEC set up an election campaign committee, chaired by Karel Van Miert (SP-B) and a manifesto working group chaired by Jacques Huntzinger (PS-F). More than 40 leading national party figures were invited to participate in four sub-committees, each responsible for drafting a section of the manifesto on: employment and economic policy, chaired by Willy Claes (SP-B); socialism and society, chaired by Sabine Adler (SPD); Europe's place in the world, chaired by Jacques Huntzinger, and the common agricultural policy, chaired by Bernard Thareau (PS-F).

The results of the sub-committees were presented to the 13th CSPEC Congress in Luxembourg on 8 and 9 March 1984. At the Congress, Huntzinger urged the delegates to approve the manifesto, arguing that:

'The European socialists' manifesto is not a simple platform, a catalogue of principles or generous or utopian ideas... This manifesto proposes a socialist remedy to the crisis by establishing a link between industrial production, the protection of jobs, the protection of fundamental social advantages and the fight for a new quality of life.'

The first manifesto of the CSPEC was subsequently unanimously adopted on 9 March 1984. The aims of the manifesto were summarised in a declaration of the EC socialist leaders at a summit in Brussels prior to the European election, on 1 June 1984.

The key points of the 1984 socialist manifesto and the socialist leaders' declaration were:

- ▶ an economic plan for a 'European Way out of the Crisis', comprising the coordination of public investment, an EC research and industrial policy, EC rules for the reduction of working time, an EC policy on environmental protection, and the increased coordination of national monetary policies in the European Monetary System (EMS);
- ▶ a reform of the common agricultural policy, comprising a new pricing policy to eliminate structural surpluses and EC structural policies to aid rural development;
- ▶ a common European foreign and security framework 'for peace, justice and freedom in the world', through EC enlargement, increased EC aid to the Third World, and 'a more independent security policy for Europe vis-à-vis the United States ...within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance'; and
- ▶ a reform of the EC institutions, primarily through increased powers of the European Parliament and more efficient financing and decision-making.



The very existence of the socialist manifesto was a reflection of the convergence of the EC socialist parties' policies on Europe, in part as a result of the specialised conferences of the early 80s. Nevertheless, several national parties refused to sign-up to some aspects of the manifesto and announced their opposition in a series of footnotes. For example, the British and Danish parties opposed the sections on EC monetary policy coordination and increased powers of the EP, and the Italian PSI and PSDI unilaterally declared that their election campaigns would be organised around their support for the European Parliament's draft 'European Union Treaty'.

The second direct elections to the European Parliament were held on 14 and 17 June 1984. As the results came in, and the fall in turnout was revealed, Gaston Thorn, the EC Commission President and President of the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties in the EC, pronounced them a 'catastrophe' for those who had hoped the elections would lead to an EC party system'.

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

It was clear, perhaps even more than during the novelty of the first elections, that the European public was not enthusiastic about EC politics. However, the status of the CSPEC had not been as damaged by these elections as it had been by the experience of 1979.

First, the aims of the Confederation for these elections had been reduced: the socialist parties had not set out with the ambition of fighting a truly supranational campaign that would secure a mandate for the Group in the Parliament.

Second, the socialists had agreed for the first time on a common election manifesto – although the national parties did not use it much.

Furthermore, in the aftermath of the second elections, the agenda of the EC and of Europe's socialist parties had already moved on with the launch at the June 1984 Fountainsbleau Summit of an intergovernmental conference (IGC) to reform the EC Treaties.

The drive for EC institutional reform had begun anew with the 1983 'Solemn Declaration on European Union' by the EC heads of government and was concluded with the signing of the Single European Act in February 1986. This established European Political Cooperation, granted new powers to the EP and set 31 December 1992 as the deadline for the completion of the Single Market.

During this process, the EC socialist parties began to use the framework of the CSPEC to coordinate national party policies towards EC institutional reform and to influence the agenda of the European debate. During the French Presidency of the EC Council, which set the agenda for the IGC, EC socialist leaders held a special meeting with François Mitterrand in Paris on 25 May 1984. The socialist leaders agreed that they should support the plan for a Single Market, but that there must be a parallel 'Social Dimension' — a body of EC social policy and health and safety legislation.

In addition, in 1985 the CSPEC set up a special committee on institutional policy chaired by Helga Köhnen (SPD) to draft a common position on EC institutional reform. The report of the institutional committee of the CSPEC was presented to the intergovernmental conference in November 1985.

The report argued for: 'A single institutional system valid for two treaties: the European Community and the European Union... [where] the European Parliament would have power of co-decision with the Council... and could have the right to initiate legislation, along with the Commission, and suggest to the Member States ways of developing common actions and activities'.





However, the British Labour Party and the Danish Social Democrats refused to sign the final report of the committee, arguing that it contradicted the statements in the 1984 Election manifesto. Eventually, the divisions between the EC socialist leaders at a conference on 'More Democratic and Efficient Institutions for the European Union' in Rome in June 1985 prevented the CSPEC from backing the position of the Socialist Group in the EP, which had supported the Spinelli plan for a federal-type European Union.

With the impossibility of agreeing a policy on the structure of the EC institutions, in the mid-80s the EC socialist parties decided to concentrate on issues where the national party leaders could agree: EC enlargement, and socialist policies *within* the EC institutions. It was to this end that the CSPEC agreed to convene its next statutory Congresses in Spain and Lisbon and established a new framework for policy development.

The 14th Congress of the CSPEC was held on 9 and 10 April in Madrid. The first resolution of the Congress stated:

'The enlargement of the EC is a political act of fundamental importance for Europe and the world. The entry of Spain and Portugal will strengthen Europe and democracy... The selection of Madrid as the location for this Congress is a fitting measure of the importance attaching to the entry of Spain and Portugal'.

Two further resolutions, on 'One Europe, United in Solidarity' and 'A Strong and Open Europe', went on to outline a socialist position on the new phase of European integration. At the Madrid Congress, the EC socialist parties recognised the significance of the Single Market project and agreed to establish new working parties to begin drafting a European socialist programme, based on the 1984 election manifesto and the Congress resolutions. With the attendance of all the socialist leaders at the Congress and a high level of harmony expressed in the speeches of the national delegates, Joop Den Uyl stated in correspondence with the national parties in May 1985 that: 'The Congress in Madrid has been the best and most successful Congress we have ever had'.

The Madrid Congress had also adopted the report of the CSPEC economic policy committee on 'More Jobs for Europe', and asked the bureau to produce a more detailed document to serve as a new socialist programme for the EC, to be adopted at the next statutory Congress. Consequently,

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994



in April 1985, the CSPEC bureau established a new network of committees, on the environment, immigration, culture, Europe and the Third World, peace and security and one on a CSPEC information campaign. However, the most important policy development was conducted within the ongoing committee on economic policy, chaired by Willy Claes, and its four sub-committees on employment policy, revival policy, regional policy, and work for Europe.

After almost 21 months of negotiations, the CSPEC committees produced a series of reports which were presented to the 15th CSPEC Congress in Cascais, near Lisbon, on 4 and 5 May 1987. Each report subsequently comprised a section of the final Congress resolution, a 20-page dossier entitled 'Unity in Europe for Peace and Jobs'. It contained two main chapters describing the general goals of the CSPEC and a third chapter outlining the specific EC policies advocated by socialists:

- ▶ the first chapter, on *Jobs for Europe*, prioritised 'employment and the defence of the welfare state' as the goals of the CSPEC, which should be pursued through an EC growth strategy, increased monetary policy cooperation, EC industrial and social policies, an EC environmental policy, an EC regional policy, and an overall reorganisation of work;

- ▶ the second chapter, on *Europe in the World*, set ‘peace, justice and freedom in the world’ as the goals of the CSPEC, which should be pursued through common foreign and security policies to exert a European influence in international disarmament, security and Third World aid decisions;
- ▶ the final chapter, on *Priorities for the Community*, outlined a set of socialist policies for the EC, which included completion of the Single Market, economic and social cohesion, reform of the common agricultural policy, increasing the EC budget, strengthening the European monetary system, establishment of an EC social dimension, and democratising the EC institutions.

Finally, at the Lisbon Congress, Vitor Constancio, the Secretary-General of the Portuguese PS, was elected to replace Joop Den Uyl as the President of the Confederation. The new President of the Confederation subsequently convened a summit of national party leaders, in Paris on 23 October 1987. Following the entry into force of the Single European Act in July 1987, Constancio argued that



there was no escaping the reality that EC decisions would directly affect European citizens and national party politics. On a proposal from the new CSPEC President, the national party leaders agreed that from now on socialist leaders’ summits should take place twice a year, and the discussions in the meetings should parallel the agenda of the EC summit meetings. This sentiment was echoed in the leaders’ statement from the summit, which stressed that:

‘On the eve of the European Council in Copenhagen ...socialists and social democrats must take the initiative to ensure that progress towards the building of Europe leads to the creation of a more just society’.

Also in attendance at the Paris leaders’ summit was the socialist President of the

European Commission, Jacques Delors, who was to be instrumental in the development of the community in the next five years and who would actively participate in every major meeting of the EC socialist leaders.

The Paris leaders’ conference at the end of 1987 thus closed a difficult period for socialist cooperation in Europe. After the first elections to the EP in 1979, when it was clear that the Confederation would not be able to operate as a supranational overseer of the Group in the

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

Parliament, the CSPEC had sought a new role through the coordination of national party policies on Europe. Through the 80s, socialist parties had conducted a detailed debate, particularly in the ongoing CSPEC committee on economic policy, on what exactly socialists should want from the EC. However, the experience of the IGC on the Single European Act had revealed that coordination of national party policies was insufficient alone to shape the direction of EC politics. Through the institutionalisation of party leaders' summits, however, the CSPEC had discovered a new mechanism, which provided a way of directly linking socialist objectives to the EC policy agenda.

6. Leaders' summits and socialist policy coordination, 1988-1990

Following the Paris leaders' summit, the CSPEC bureau called for the next gathering of party leaders to be held before the European Council under the German Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The German Presidency had successfully negotiated reform of the EC financial and budgetary arrangements in February 1988, including doubling the size of the EC social and regional funds, which had been supported by the socialist leaders in Paris. However, Helmut Kohl, the Christian Democrat German Chancellor, had greater ambitions for the EC and at the Hannover European Council in June 1988 he secured an agreement for the establishment of a committee of national experts to write a report on the prospects of economic and monetary union (EMU) in the EC, under the chairmanship of Jacques Delors.

Prior to this agreement, a CSPEC leaders' summit had been held in Rome on 10 June 1988. On the agenda of the meeting was a discussion on the work of the CSPEC manifesto committee, which had been set up in October 1987 under the chairmanship of Enrique Barón (PSOE) to draft the manifesto for the 1989 elections to the EP. A sign of the changing role and agenda of the Confederation was the limited time spent on this subject, as compared to the similar pre-election periods in 1978 and 1983. The socialist leaders were more interested in developments under the German Presidency and the pressing need for a socialist policy on the question of EMU. To this end, the leaders' declaration of June 1988 stated that:



‘As far as monetary policy is concerned, the priority is to define international rules to eliminate the negative effects on growth and employment of the erratic behaviour of exchange rates between strong currencies. The time has now come to bring to fruition the institutional progress which the European Monetary System has achieved by working towards a European financial area’.

A further indication that the EC socialist leaders were thinking about the long-term shape of the European project was the decision that the next CSPEC Summit should be held jointly with the leaders of the socialist parties in the EFTA countries.

In the early stages of the drafting of the Delors Report on EMU, the CSPEC arranged a number of special meetings and conferences in an effort to keep European socialists informed on the growing debate on the future of the EC. In January 1988 in Brussels, and March 1988 in Paris, two inaugural meetings were held under the auspices of the CSPEC between the leaders of the socialist groups in the European and national parliaments. On 24 and 25 June 1988 in Lisbon, the CSPEC held a special conference on the environment, involving the socialist chair of the environment committee in the EP, the socialist EC Commissioner for the environment and national party spokespeople on environmental policy. Moreover, on 5 December 1988, the CSPEC brought together the socialist ministers and opposition spokespeople on employment and social affairs, the EC Commissioner for social affairs, several members of the Socialist Group in the EP, and representatives from the European Trade Union Confederation to discuss how to implement a social dimension to the EC.

The first joint meeting of the socialist leaders from the EC and EFTA countries was held on 6 and 7 November 1988 in Berlin. Almost all of the CSPEC leaders were present, as well as Jacques Delors, the Commission President, and Franz Vranitsky, the President of the Austrian SPÖ, Pertti Paasio, the Leader of the Finnish SDP, Ingvar Carlsson, the Leader of the Swedish SAP, Jon Hannibalson, the Chairman of the Icelandic social democrats, Thorbjorn Jagland, the Secretary-General of the Norwegian DNA, and Helmut Hubacher, the President of the Swiss SPS/PSS.

There were two main issues at the meeting: future cooperation between EC and EFTA socialist parties; and the socialist commitment to wider cooperation in Europe, including the further enlargement of the Community.

On the first question, a commitment was made on the extension of full membership of the Socialist Confederation to non-EC parties, where the nation-state of the party had applied for EC membership and received a favourable opinion from the EC Commission. Franz Vranitsky also invited the EC and EFTA socialist leaders to a follow-up meeting in Vienna in 1989 or 1990. However, the leaders’ declaration from the summit, entitled ‘EC/EFTA – Common Future 1992’, was devoted to the second issue – highlighting areas for policy cooperation between the EC and EFTA countries, particularly in the fields of social affairs and the environment.

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

On the question of Scandinavian and Alpine neutrality in the EC, however, the leaders' declaration warned that: 'This may limit the scope for cooperation on issues related to security', which the EC socialist leaders had been advocating for many years. Finally, the EC party leaders agreed that these issues should be debated at the next CSPEC Congress, which had been called for the beginning of 1989 to adopt the manifesto for the 1989 European elections.

In the meantime, in January 1989 the bureau was presented with a proposal from the Dutch PvdA to set up a working party on reform of the internal structures of the CSPEC. The PvdA presented a formal proposal to the bureau on 9 February 1989, on the eve of the CSPEC Congress. The bureau subsequently agreed to establish a working group, under the chairmanship of Wim Kok, the Leader of the PvdA, to draft a report on 'Strengthening of the Cooperation Within the Confederation'. Kok suggested that the report be prepared in two stages, beginning with an inventory of ideas from every national party and concluding with a proposal for a reform of the statutes to be presented to the bureau and the Congress. A letter from Gro Harlem Brundtland (DNA), Ingvar Carlsson (SAP) and Sven Auken (SD) reminded the bureau of commitments on EC-EFTA party cooperation at the Vienna leaders' summit and requested that the EFTA parties be included in the Kok committee.

These decisions allowed the 16th Congress of the CSPEC on 10 February 1989 in Brussels to concentrate on the adoption and launch of the socialist manifesto for the 1989 elections to the European Parliament. Presenting the manifesto to the Congress, Enrique Barón (PSOE), the chair of the manifesto committee, outlined the six key aims of the socialist platform:

- ▶ 'a United Europe', with an internal market and increased cooperation on monetary and foreign affairs;
- ▶ 'a Prosperous Europe', through policies for coordinated development, economic diversity and selective measures against unemployment;
- ▶ 'a Community which Displays Solidarity', through minimum social standards and policies to support economic and social cohesion between rich and poor regions;
- ▶ 'a Community fit to live in', through new policies for environmental protection;
- ▶ 'a democratic Community', with increased powers for the European Parliament and the accountability of Council and Commission decisions to Europe's citizens; and
- ▶ 'a Europe with an active role in the world', through common foreign and security policies which emphasise human rights, peace, security and disarmament.

Perhaps the most important intervention at the Congress was by Jacques Delors, the EC Commission President. In the knowledge that his Committee would soon be presenting its proposals for EMU, he emphasised the need for a clear socialist position in the coming stage of reflec-



tion on the future of Europe. The Congress also formally elected Guy Spitaels, the leader of the Belgian PS, as President of the CSPEC, having taken over from Vitor Constancio in January 1989, and accepted the Greek party PASOK as a full member of the Confederation.

The June 1989 European elections saw the socialists returned as the largest Group in the EP. The new cooperation procedure had increased the powers of the Parliament. With the long-term EC agenda ultimately set at European Council meetings, however, the Confederation and the socialist leaders were more concerned with the outcomes of these meetings than with the deliberations of the Socialist Group. This became particularly important after the presentation of the Delors Report to the Madrid Council, and the subsequent decision to convene an intergovernmental conference (IGC) on EMU to reform the EC Treaties at the end of 1990. The future shape of Europe would again be decided by the EC heads of government and the national ministers.

The CSPEC took the first opportunity to make a statement on these developments. At the leaders' summit on 29 June 1989, organised in Paris to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, the socialist leaders declared that they 'support the objectives of the Delors Report on the creation of economic and monetary union'. Even the British Labour Party, which in all previous declarations had insisted in a footnote that it opposed EMU, signed up to this commitment. The socialist leaders also:

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

‘... called on the heads of state and government to decide definitively at the next meeting of the European Council, if necessary by a majority, a programme of action involving the adoption of a Charter for Fundamental Social Rights guaranteed by binding instruments’.

Supported by the Commission President, and backed by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Social Charter was now one of the central elements of socialist policy in the EC – the first real EC policy issue which was unequivocally supported by all the member parties of the Confederation.

Immediately prior to the Paris leaders’ summit, the bureau had been presented with a progress report on the consultation stage of the Kok committee. The CSPEC agenda for the second half of 1989 would now be dominated by the proceedings of the committee. In September 1989, Jan Marinus Wiersma, the International Secretary of the PvdA, presented an introductory statement and proposed a set of working methods. Working parties submitted texts to the committee on the following themes: programmatic cooperation and decision-making, by Luis Planas (PSOE) and Julian Eccles (LP-GB); the future tasks of the Confederation secretariat, by Bernard Tuyttens (SP-B), Raymond Becker (POSL) and Tony Brown (LP-Ire); cooperation with the EFTA and Eastern European parties, by Wiersma; the reform of the Confederation budget, by Raymond Becker (POSL); relations with the trade union movement, by Mario Dido (PSI); and relations with the Socialist Group in the EP, by Ove Fich (SD) and Eisso Woltjer (from the EP Group). Finally, the Bureau also asked Joao Cravinho (PS-P) to draft a report under the auspices of the Kok committee on ‘The Future of European Socialism’. Cravinho’s report did not form part of the final Kok Report, but addressed a topic which became increasingly salient for Europe’s socialist parties following the ‘fall’ of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.



On 14 November 1989, three days after the breach of the Berlin Wall, a socialist leaders’ summit was held in Lisbon. The socialist leaders welcomed the opening of the Wall, announcing that the next Congress of the CSPEC would be held in Berlin and that ‘the common future of Europe will be one of the main items for discussion’. The leaders’ declaration also reaffirmed the newly established role of the Confederation – of linking national party aims to EC decisions by organising around the EC summits:



‘As we approach the summit of heads of state and government in Strasbourg, the CSPEC reiterates the main objectives of its political campaign, which constitutes an extension, at the Community level, of the national campaigns of the member parties’.

Moreover, echoing the position of the Socialist Group in the EP, the socialist leaders argued that the forthcoming IGC should not simply be limited to a discussion of EMU but must also consider the political and institutional changes needed for democratic accountability and the implementation of the Social Charter and environmental policies. The commitment for a second IGC on political union was to subsequently be taken up by Mitterrand and Delors.

The 17th Congress of the CSPEC was held on 8 and 9 February 1990. On the eve of the Congress, Gérard Fuchs (PS-F), one of the CSPEC vice-presidents, also highlighted the new method of socialist party cooperation when he told the bureau that the Confederation agenda would now be ‘organised in order to apply maximum political pressure on the basis of the EC institutional calendar’. The Berlin Congress was to put this into practice, calling on the Commission and the Council to take precise policy decisions in two key areas:

- ▶ on *the Social Dimension of the European Community*, the Congress asked the Commission to ‘use all the potential of the Treaty, especially Article 100a and 118a’ to ensure the implementation of the Social Charter, and
- ▶ on *the EC and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe*, the Congress called for an ‘active Community ostpolitik’, comprising political and economic aid to the emerging democracies.

Most of the Congress agenda, however, was taken up with the question of the internal reform of the Confederation, following the presentation of the Kok committee report on ‘Strengthening the Confederation’. On the recommendations of the report, the Congress made a commitment to implement the following:

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

- ▶ to make the ‘central organisational goal’ of the Confederation the ‘continual programmatic and political coordination’, and to set up a steering committee for policy development;
- ▶ to formally reopen the debate on the statute at the beginning of 1991, and to focus the discussions on ‘the question whether decision-making by unanimity as a general rule could be complemented by the introduction of majority decisions’;
- ▶ to strengthen the role of the party leaders’ summits, to meet more regularly and ‘in direct connection with the European Council summits’;
- ▶ to introduce a new status of associate membership for the EFTA parties, with a right of initiative in all Confederation bodies, and to make the Austrian SPÖ the first non-EC party to become a full member of any of the transnational party federations;
- ▶ to increase cooperation with the sister parties in central and eastern Europe, including the introduction of an aid programme for party infrastructure development;
- ▶ to increase the numbers of meetings between the CSPEC bureau and the bureau of the ETUC, between national party spokespeople on specific EC policy questions, and to introduce ‘coordinated planning’ between the secretariats of the CSPEC and the Socialist Group in the EP; and
- ▶ to reorganise the CSPEC secretariat, increasing its staff, establishing a documentation centre and a trainee fund and publishing a monthly bulletin of Confederation activities.

Guy Spitaels, the Confederation President, agreed that he would present a report to the next Congress on the implementation of these proposals.

A month after the Berlin Congress, the second joint EC-EFTA leaders’ summit was held in Vienna, on 23 and 24 March 1990. At the Vienna meeting, the EC and EFTA socialist leaders adopted two key resolutions:

- ▶ the first, on ‘The EC and EFTA: Constituent Elements of a United Europe’, argued that the EC and EFTA must together establish a ‘European Economic and Social Space’, to be pursued in parallel to the forthcoming IGC on internal EC reform; and
- ▶ the second, on ‘Relations with Central and Eastern Europe’, emphasised that EC policy should facilitate the establishment of democratic institutions, systems of environmental and social protection, and disarmament in the new democracies.

Finally, the socialist leaders presented an ‘Appeal to the European Council in Dublin on 28 April 1990’, calling for a reaffirmation of EC priorities ‘in the current context of the acceleration of historical events’.

Meeting on the eve of the summit, the bureau implemented several of the Berlin Congress reforms: establishing provisions for the inclusion of representatives from the associate and observer parties in all Confederation meetings except the CSPEC leaders' conferences; and launching the Joop Den Uyl Trainee Fund, named after the previous president of the Confederation, who had died in December 1987. The Bureau also set up five working groups for programmatic coordination on the main issues on the EC agenda: economic and monetary union, chaired by Thijs Wöltgens (PvdA); political union, chaired by Gérard Fuchs (PS-F); social affairs, chaired by Elena Florès (PSOE); the environment, a joint committee of EC-EFTA parties chaired by Heinke Salisch (SPD); and relations with central and eastern Europe, a joint committee of EC-EFTA parties chaired by Roy Hattersley (LP-GB). The work of these groups was to be supplemented by the holding of two 'specialised conferences' of the EC socialist parties in 1991; on women, in Brussels, and on the environment, in Copenhagen.

With these 'standing' working parties following developments in EC politics and preparing policy statements for the CSPEC executive bodies, the bureau and the leaders' summits, this was a clear illustration of how the Confederation had begun to operate as a real party at the European level. Through the monitoring of EC business and the organisation of the leaders' summits, the CSPEC had begun to mobilise political forces in the EC around 'party political' and ideological divisions, instead of around the usual 'national' conflicts between the EC member states. The negotiation and ratification of the European Union Treaty and the subsequent reforms of the Confederation statutes were to reinforce this development.

7. Towards the European Union and a 'Party at the European level', 1990-1991

The socialist leaders next met on 5 June 1990 in Dublin, between the first and second Dublin European Councils which were preparing the agenda for the IGCs. Following a joint letter by François Mitterrand, the Socialist French President, and Helmut Kohl, the Christian Democrat German Chancellor, the EC heads of government had decided to convene a second IGC on political union. Consequently, the socialist leaders' declaration from the Dublin CSPEC summit set out the initial socialist positions on EMU and Political Union, which had been drafted by the CSPEC working groups:

- ▶ on *Economic and Monetary*, the socialist leaders supported EMU but emphasised that 'steps forward in the field of Economic and Monetary Union must be designed to achieve a stronger socio-economic cohesion and be linked to policies ensuring social rights and environmental protection'; and
- ▶ on *Political Union*, the socialist leaders argued for new EC competences on social and environmental policy, decision-making on these issues by qualified majorities, greater 'co-decision' powers for the EP and reinforcing cooperation on foreign and security policies.

These positions were to serve as the basis for socialist policy during the EC institutional reform process, which was formally launched at a European Council in Rome in December 1990.

Four days before the launch of the IGCs, the socialist leaders met again, on 10 December 1990, in Madrid. The first Rome European Council, in October 1990, had set a timetable for EMU, with stage two of the process to begin in January 1994, and had established a single currency and a European Central Bank as the key goals of the EMU IGC. The socialists now needed a more precise agenda for the IGCs. As the Madrid leaders' summit declaration pointed out:

'The IGCs on EMU and political union present an exceptional opportunity to include proposals of socialists in the shaping of the future European Union'.

The socialist leaders went on to outline a 14-point socialist plan for the IGCs. On economic and monetary union, the socialist plan called for:

- ▶ EMU to improve economic policy management;
- ▶ parallel development of EMU and social and environmental protection;
- ▶ a democratically accountable European Central Bank to ensure price stability but which takes account of broader economic policy goals;
- ▶ general rules for the financing of budget deficits;
- ▶ coordination of economic policy through 'multilateral surveillance';
- ▶ the possible introduction of binding minimum tax rates to counteract fiscal competition between states; and
- ▶ a European strategy for reform of the global financial system.

On political union, the socialist leaders advocated:

- ▶ European citizenship with political and social rights;
- ▶ full implementation of the EC Social Charter,
- ▶ new instruments in the field of environmental protection;
- ▶ the use of 'qualified majority voting' in the Council of Ministers in the fields of social and environmental policy;
- ▶ co-decision powers for the European Parliament, and the right to initiate legislation;
- ▶ the clearer definition of the EC executive, with more accountable decision-making in the European Council and the EC Commission; and
- ▶ the implementation of a Common Foreign and Security Policy.



The broad goals of the Dublin declaration had thus been transformed into a clear socialist strategy for the IGCs.

While the EC and the CSPEC were concentrating on European Union (EU) reforms, Iraq had invaded Kuwait in August 1990, and in January 1991 the Gulf War began. In an effort to unite the EC socialist parties, Guy Spitaels called an extraordinary leaders' summit in Brussels on 20 January 1990. At the Madrid Summit, the leaders had adopted a declaration supporting the United Nations' resolutions. The outbreak of war, however, produced serious divisions within and between the CSPEC member parties. Because of these problems, Spitaels did not ask the socialist leaders to go through the painful process of agreeing a common declaration on the Gulf War. Instead, the socialist 'Gulf Crisis' summit was treated as an opportunity to discuss in private at the highest political level socialist strategy on a divisive political issue. This was a new development in transnational

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

socialist cooperation, which would now supplement the policy-making role of the normal leaders' summits.

With the increased salience of international affairs on the agenda of the EC, and the negotiations on a common foreign and security policy in the IGC on political union, in February 1991, the CSPEC bureau decided to set up a sixth working group to cover external relations and security, jointly chaired by Gérard Fuchs (PS-F) and Karsten Voigt (SPD). At the same meeting, Spitaels presented an interim report on implementation of the Berlin Congress decisions on the Kok Report. In a discussion on the paper, Cravinho emphasised that as Europe moved towards economic and political union the Confederation should reassess the ideological basis of its programme. Jan Marinus Wiersma, the Dutch international secretary, also suggested that because of the new stage of European integration there was a need for the CSPEC to 'go beyond the Kok report': moving from a reform of the methods of policy coordination, the basis of the Kok proposals, to a reassessment of the decision-making structures of the Confederation. It was thus emerging that the next stage in the development of socialist cooperation in Europe would be the dual reform of transnational socialist policy and organisation. For the rest of 1991, however, the member parties were eager to concentrate on the negotiation of the European Union Treaty, which would have to be ratified in each of the national parliaments.

To this end, the Luxembourg Presidency of the EC had prepared a Consolidated Draft Treaty on European Union, which was the focus of the next socialist leaders' summit, on 3 June 1991 in Luxembourg.

The socialist leaders' 'Luxembourg Declaration' welcomed the aspects of the Luxembourg draft that had been part of the Madrid leaders' summit proposals, such as provisions on EC citizenship and extension of majority voting in the Council of Ministers. However, the CSPEC leaders expressed their concern on the following areas:

- ▶ the lack of progress on the Social Action Programme of the Community;
- ▶ the lack of agreement on the provisions for Parliament/Council co-decision;
- ▶ the need for 'parallelism' between EMU and economic and social cohesion;
- ▶ the need to include social standards and employment levels in the 'convergence criteria' for EMU;
- ▶ the necessity for democratic control of the European Central Bank in the Council of economic and finance Ministers; and
- ▶ the need for an environment charter.

The Luxembourg Declaration also raised the question of enlargement of the community to the EFTA countries and the need for new agreements with the states of central and eastern Europe.



An additional topic at the Luxembourg leaders' summit, which was not included in the official declaration, was the question of a 'European Socialist Party'.

Björn Engholm, the SPD Leader, argued that the CSPEC should be transformed into a truly supranational party – a proposal that had previously been vetoed at the 1990 Berlin Congress. This was the beginning of the debate that culminated in the creation of the Party of European Socialists. In September 1991 in Strasbourg, at an informal meeting on the 'Evolution of the Confederation', a consensus of the national party representatives emerged on two important points: that the name of the Confederation should be changed; and that majority voting could be introduced in the Confederation on issues where the EC Council uses majority voting. At the next bureau meeting, in October 1991 in

Strasbourg, there was a heated exchange on the question of 'A European Socialist Party', which culminated in a decision to remove the topic from the agenda of the next leaders' summit in favour of a more in-depth discussion at the first leaders' meeting in 1992.

Meanwhile, the question of the status of the transnational party federations in the European Union had been raised in the IGCs by Wilfred Martens, the Belgian Prime Minister and President of the European People's Party, the Federation of the Christian Democratic Parties of the EC (EPP).

In September 1990, Martens had invited Spitaels and Willy De Clercq, the President of the Federation of European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Parties (ELDR), to re-establish regular joint meetings of the leaders of the three main European political families. Between 1976 and 1980, the socialist presidents, Dröscher, Pontillon and Den Uyl had met six times with Leo Tindemans (EPP) and Gaston Thorn (ELDR), in an effort to establish a legal framework and a common means of financing the transnational party organisations. Whereas these initial efforts produced little results, the reform of the IGCs on political union and the parallel process of internal reform in each of the federations provided an ideal opportunity to renew the cause. Three more meetings between Spitaels, Martens and De Clercq were held in December 1990, June 1991 and October 1991,

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

which contributed to the last minute insertion in the Dutch Presidency's final Draft Treaty on European Union of an article on 'Parties at the European Level'.

A few days before the Maastricht Summit was due to conclude the IGCs, a socialist leaders' summit was held in Brussels on 3 and 4 December 1991. On the eve of the final negotiations, the socialists reasserted their positions on political union and EMU. On political union, the Brussels Declaration called for:

- ▶ improved democratic legitimacy through the principle of subsidiarity, majority voting to ensure the adoption of social and environmental policies, and the right of the European Parliament to take part in the choice of the Commission President and to initiate legislation;
- ▶ a social dimension, by ensuring that the objective of economic and social cohesion is encompassed in all EC policies, and the implementation of a Social Action Programme on job creation, working conditions and employment practices, positive action for women, social security, industrial democracy and equal opportunities for ethnic minorities and people with disabilities; and
- ▶ a common foreign and security policy which allows the community to contribute to better working of internal economic and security systems.

On economic and monetary union,

'The leaders called on the member states to agree a progressive transition process to EMU, which is democratically accountable, that avoids a two-speed Europe and promotes balanced development, sustainable and non-inflationary growth that respects the environment, economic convergence, full employment, quality of life, cohesion and equitable international financial relations'.

The socialist leaders concluded the meeting with a declaration 'against the resurgence of nationalism, xenophobia and racism'. In October 1991, the CSPEC Bureau had met with representatives from socialist parties from the Maghreb countries and made a commitment to fight racism against recent immigrants to the EC from these countries.

The process of institutional reform of the EC in 1991 and 1991 thus acted as a catalyst for the further development of transnational socialist policy and organisation. At the end of 1991, each European socialist party had an almost identical policy on European monetary and political union, based on the Madrid and Luxembourg leaders' declarations. Moreover, the debate on the need for democratic institutions in the European Union re-launched calls for the reform of the CSPEC statutes and the creation of a European socialist party.



8. Birth of the Party of European Socialists, 1991-1992

The EC heads of government finally agreed the reform of the EC Treaties at the Maastricht European Council on 11 December 1991. An annex to the Maastricht agreement proposed the insertion of an article in the final version of the treaty making reference to ‘parties at the European level’, as the party federation presidents had proposed. Consequently, when the Treaty on European Union was formally signed, on 7 February 1992, article 138a stated that:

‘Political Parties at the European level are an important factor for integration within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union’.

It was not clear what this party article would mean in concrete legal terms. At the very least, however, it was an invitation to the party federations to reform their internal structures and attempt to establish a more formal role in the EC decision-making framework.

In February 1992, the CSPEC Bureau adopted the work programme for 1992. Two new policy working groups were set up: ‘The Architecture of the New Europe’, chaired by Gérard Fuchs (PS-F) and ‘Economic and Social Cohesion’, chaired by Elena Florès. In response to the Maastricht article on parties, and in accordance with the Berlin Congress decision, the bureau formally launched a new process of internal reform with the establishment of a working group on ‘Strengthening of the Confederation’, chaired by Ben Fayot (POSL) and Thijs Wöltgens (PvdA). Fayot immediately proposed

that there should be a significant reform of the statutes, including: a change of the name to incorporate the word party, the introduction of majority voting in executive decisions, the adoption of positions binding on the member parties, the election of Congress delegates from rank-and-file party members and a new role for parties from central and eastern Europe. The final report would be presented to the next Congress, which was set for November 1992 in the Hague.

On the subject of the socialist parties in central and eastern Europe, the Confederation had held a four-day dialogue with these parties at the end of January 1992. The conference was jointly sponsored by the Confederation, the US National Institute for International Affairs, and the European Studies Centre of the Institute for East/West Studies. The conference workshops discussed many of the key questions relating to party democracy, such as the development of party organisations, the emergence of party systems, parties and parliaments, and parties and government. However, at this stage, the formal inclusion of these parties in the work of the Confederation was complicated by two factors: the question of the links of some of these parties to the governing parties of the old regimes, and the reluctance by most progressive forces in eastern and central Europe to be associated with a 'socialist' organisation.

On the question of the 'party article', however, Spitaels met the EPP President, Martens, and the ELDR President, De Clercq in March 1992. Also present were the President of the European Parliament, Egon Klepsch, and the presidents of the EP Socialist Group and the Christian Democrat Group, Jean-Pierre Cot and Leo Tindemans. The six EC party leaders instructed the three secretaries-general of the federations, Axel Hanisch (CSPEC), Thomas Jansen (EPP) and Christian Ehlers (ELDR), to draft a working paper on the 'Political Follow-Up to Article 138a', to be presented to President of the EC Commission and the EC heads of government and foreign ministers.

The secretaries-general presented the working paper to the presidents of the party federations at their next joint meeting on 1 June 1992. The paper outlined a 'Statute of European Political Parties', which would establish:

'...a binding framework for the activities of European parties'... and lay down rules for providing financial support to European parties from public (European Community) funds'.

The working paper proposed that a European Political Party Statute should include five main items:

- ▶ *Definitions* - that European parties shall be federative unions of national (or regional) parties, campaign for a democratic European Union, have a presence in a majority of the member states, and at least 2.3 or 5 per cent of the vote in the last European elections;

- ▶ *Constitution* - that European parties shall have written fixed constitutions laying down provisions governing the name and seat, membership and powers of a Congress and executive body, rights and duties of members, conditions for membership, operating procedures, and financial regulations;
- ▶ *Duties* - that European parties shall contribute to the broadening and deepening of European consciousness and consensus-building in the European Union, draft a programme for the future shape of the Union and its policies and seek to exert influence on the Council and the Commission on the basis of EP election manifestos;
- ▶ *Financing* - that European parties shall be financed by contributions from member parties and individual members, and directly from the EU budget; and
- ▶ *Recognition* - that an independent interinstitutional body or the Council or the Commission shall decide what organisations are covered by the Statute.



Meanwhile, the implications of Article 138a for the internal structures of the CSPEC were discussed at the Confederation bureau meeting in May 1992. Ben Fayot proposed to draw up a questionnaire to each of the national parties for their reactions to the possible creation of a 'European Socialist Party'. An interim report from the working group on economic and social cohesion proposed that a European Socialist Party should play a role in the negotiations between European employers and workers, which was institutionalised in the Maastricht Treaty. The Bureau also discussed two other important topics for the future of the Confederation: the resignation of the CSPEC President, Guy Spitaels, and the nomination of Neil

Kinnock, the ex-leader of the British Labour Party; and the final report of the Cravinho committee on programmatic renewal. The agenda of the forthcoming socialist leaders' summit, prior to the Portuguese European Council, would have to address all these issues.

When the party leaders met in Lisbon on 15 and 16 June 1992, however, they were forced to focus on a different problem. On 1 June 1992, the Danish people had rejected the Maastricht Treaty in a referendum. This served as a chilling reminder that the establishment of a European Socialist Party, under a European Party Statute, ultimately depended on the ratification of the Treaty on European Union. After a divisive debate on the significance of the referendum result, the socialist leaders, with the exception of the Danish Social Democrat Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, declared that:

‘the process of ratification of the Treaty should continue and that European Political Union and Economic and Monetary Union can be implemented as soon as possible. They hope that Denmark will be able to join in this new phase of European construction’.

The subsequent European Council made a similar commitment. Because of the influence of the CSPEC in the negotiation process, the treaty contained many elements advocated by the EC socialist parties. A notable exception, however, was the British ‘opt-out’ of the ‘Social Protocol’: the chapter of the treaty on the implementation of the social charter. Nevertheless, each socialist party leader, with some reservations from the British and Danish leaders, agreed to go back to their national parliament and support the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, regardless of whether they were in government or opposition. In the Lisbon Declaration, the socialist leaders also re-emphasised that one of the central European policy aims for socialists and social democrats is economic and social cohesion – the reduction of social and economic imbalances between northern and southern Europe. Finally, after Neil Kinnock withdrew his candidacy, the socialist leaders proposed that Willy Claes, the Flemish Belgian foreign minister, should take over the CSPEC presidency at the Hague Congress.

The next bureau meeting, in July 1992, which was held alongside the French Socialist Party Congress in Bordeaux, returned to the question of the consequences of the Maastricht party article. Fayot and Wöltgens announced that they would present their final report to the next bureau meeting in October in time for a recommendation to be made to the Congress.

The main sticking point in the working group was the question of the name – “where to put ‘Europe’, where to put ‘Socialist’, and where to put ‘Party’”, as one bureau member jested. The British Labour Party suggested that brandishing the idea of a supranational ‘European Party’ in the middle of the Maastricht ratification process could provoke a backlash from anti-Maastricht forces, such as the British tabloid press. A possible solution to the issue, however, was the use of the principle of ‘subsidiarity’: which would allow for a different name to be used in each language.

Before the bureau could take a final decision, an extraordinary leaders’ summit was held on 10 October 1992. This was five days prior to the extraordinary European Council in Birmingham. Top of the agenda at both these meetings was the ratification of Maastricht, particularly in the light of the September 1992 crisis in the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM) and the very close vote in the French referendum.

The declaration of the socialist leaders and government ministers thus highlighted the following main points for the EC summit:

- ▶ concern for economic instability in Europe and confirmation of monetary stability as an essential prerequisite for sustainable growth and a high level of employment;

- ▶ the need to adopt the Delors II package of budgetary reforms, providing for significant economic transfers for economic and social cohesion.
- ▶ the need to prevent Denmark's isolation; and
- ▶ clarification of Maastricht Treaty provisions on subsidiarity and the openness and accountability of decision-making.

Many of these points were subsequently contained in the Birmingham European Council declaration on 'A Community Close to its Citizens'.

After nine months of deliberations since the publication of the party article at the Hague Congress on 9 and 10 November 1992, the Fayot- Wöltgens proposals were adopted and the Party of European Socialists (PES) was born. The members of the new transnational socialist organisation were the parties of the old Confederation, plus the Swedish SAP, the Finnish SDP, and the Italian PDS. Willy Claes was confirmed as the first President of the PES, and Elena Florès (PSOE), Gérard Fuchs (PSF), Thijs Wöltgens (PvdA), Jack Cunningham (LP-GB), Mario Dido (PSI), and Heinz Fischer (SPO) were elected as the first vice-presidents. Also present at the first PES Congress were representatives from nine central and east European parties and four north African parties.

At a bureau meeting in October, Fayot proposed that the compromise 'Party of European Socialists' should be used (rather than the initial plan for a European Socialist Party) since it contained the unitary concept of a 'party' but also conveyed the notion of a plurality. Moreover, the use of the principle of subsidiarity allowed several national parties to use different variants of the name: in English, French, Spanish and Greek the new transnational Socialist organisation was the 'Party of European Socialists'; in Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish, it was the 'Party of European Social Democrats'; in German, as an extension of the federal structure of the regional and national SPD, it was the 'Social Democratic Party'; in Portuguese, it was the European Socialist Party'; and in Italian, it was the 'Party of European Socialism'.

The new statutes of the Party of European Socialists also contained some important changes from the previous statutes of the CSPEC:

- ▶ article three introduced two important new aims – 'to prepare structures for an ever closer collaboration between European socialist and social-democratic parties' and 'to adopt a common electoral programme for European parliamentary elections';
- ▶ a new article seven stated that 'the Party is committed to balanced representation of men and women in its bodies and meetings';
- ▶ article eight formally installed the party leaders' conference as an organ of the transnational socialist organisation;

- ▶ article nine established a set of nine rules for majority and unanimous decision-making, stating that (9.3) ‘decisions regarding policy areas subject to majority voting decision-making within the EC Council can be taken on the basis of a qualified majority’, but that (9.4) ‘if a party declares that it is unable to implement a specific decision taken by qualified majority, it can declare itself not to be bound by such a decision provided it indicates this intention before a vote is taken’, and that (9.6) ‘decisions on political matters subject to qualified majority decision-making are made by weighted voted. The allocation of votes is determined by the Congress’ and (9.7) ‘A qualified majority is based on more than 75 per cent of the votes cast’;
- ▶ article 10 provided for associate parties and the Socialist Group in the EP to have a right of initiative at meetings of the Party, and for observer parties to make recommendations to the bureau;
- ▶ articles 16, 17 and 18 established rules for party leaders’ conferences which were to be convened at least twice a year, and
- ▶ article 25 established a new role for the vice-presidents who were now to be elected by the Congress.

The provisions for the organisation and function of the Congress, the bureau and the secretariat remained the same.

Since many of the statutory changes were formal confirmations of existing practice, such as the status and organisation of the leaders’ summits, the development from a ‘Confederation’ to a Party of European Socialists was somewhat cosmetic. Nevertheless, the fact that the national EC socialist parties had not only authorised but actively promoted the establishment of a ‘party at the European level’ was an indication of the changing nature of politics in the EC. At the end of 1992, almost every socialist party openly recognised that their political programme could be implemented only through common action and organisation in the national and European arenas.

9. Development of a PES Programme for Europe, 1992-1994

A further important decision of the first PES Congress was the adoption of the Hague declaration on ‘Europe: Our Common Future’. This document set out a 10-point programme for the PES:

- ▶ *A Common Strategy for Employment in the 1990s*, through a concerted and coordinated effort to re-launch the European economy;
- ▶ *Economic and Social Cohesion*, to avoid the economic distortions of Economic and Monetary Union;



- ▶ *A Social Europe*, with European policies on job creation, working conditions, positive action, industrial democracy, and social cohesion;
- ▶ *An Environmental Europe*, through the adoption and effective implementation of common environmental standards;
- ▶ *A Democratic Europe*, with full co-decision powers in the EP where Council decisions are taken by a majority and a role of the European and national parliaments in the next IGCs;
- ▶ *A Tolerant Europe*, with a commitment to fight racism and xenophobia, and a convergence of European immigration policies and conditions for political asylum;
- ▶ *A People's Europe*, through the evolution of a European citizenship with full political, economic, and social rights under EU law;

Chapter 1 • 1957-1994

- ▶ *Adequate Funding for the Union*, through budgetary reform to allow for increased economic redistribution;
- ▶ *A Common Foreign and Security Policy* which seeks an active role for Europe to enhance peace, security and human rights in the world; and
- ▶ *Community Enlargement*, to include those EFTA countries in the Union who wish to join, and for new arrangements to promote economic and social development in central and eastern Europe and the Mediterranean basin.

The Hague declaration also contained a resolution on women and for the first time set out a socialist policy on a European immigration and asylum policy. The resolution on women recognised that 'the feminist movement is a driving force for democratic and progressive policies' and called for European policies to promote equal opportunities and increased access to child care, education and health and social services. The PES bureau also agreed to look at the possibility of establishing a women's section' of the party. The socialist declaration on immigration pointed out that pressure of immigration will continue to be felt in the 21st century, argued for a distinction between four categories of immigrants and set out a socialist policy in each area. The four categories were: economic migrants, those seeking family reunification, political asylum seekers and refugees from war and disaster.

The further development of the PES programme was one of the main topics at the first PES party leaders' conference, on 9 and 10 December 1992, in Edinburgh. Meeting the day before the Edinburgh European Council, the PES summit received a lot of publicity in the national television and newspaper media. In front of a large press gathering, the PES leaders presented a statement urging the EC heads of government to confirm their intention to ratify the Maastricht Treaty, make a commitment to open up EC decision-making, launch a European recovery programme, adopt the Delors II Package of budgetary reforms and agree a common policy on the situation in the former Yugoslavia. The Edinburgh European Council backed all of these proposals, except the call for a European recovery programme. This would now become the focus of the PES in the build-up to the 1994 European elections.

The PES bureau, meeting on 9 December 1992, had already agreed the procedure for adopting the first PES election manifesto. Gerd Walter, SPD minister for European affairs in the region of Schleswig-Holstein, was given the responsibility of drafting the manifesto. Work began in January 1993 in five committees on: the Future of Europe and the Role of European Socialists, chaired by Heinz Fischer (SPO) and Thijs Wöltgens (PvdA); Joint Campaigns and Publicity, chaired by Ben Fayot (POSL) and Jan Marinus Wiersma (PvdA); International Relations, chaired by Elena Florès (PSOE) and Jack Cunningham (LB-GB); Economic and Social Policy, chaired by Gérard Fuchs (PS-F) and Mario Dido (PSI); and Public Safety and Internal Policy, chaired by Conny Fredriksson (SAP).

The first draft of the manifesto was presented to the bureau at the beginning of March 1993, where a timetable for the rest of the drafting process was agreed. The end of April 1993 was set as the deadline for amendments from the national parties, to be considered by the bureau in May. The final text would be adopted at an extraordinary Congress of the PES in November.

Meanwhile, in February 1993, the PES member parties submitted their replies to the questionnaire on article 138a. The questionnaire contained 30 questions on the significance of the party article, ranging from the general interpretation by national delegations to opinions on a possible financial and legal framework for European parties. After examining the national responses, Willy Claes held his first joint meeting with Martens and De Clercq on 3 March 1993. The three party federation presidents agreed to instruct the secretaries-general to consult with legal experts and prepare a detailed draft statute to be presented to the EC heads of government.

Returning to the socialist proposal for a European recovery programme, on 2 May 1993 the PES participated in a European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) Day of Action. A joint ETUC-PES statement was issued calling for the next European Council to focus on the question of unemployment. The statement outlined a four-point strategy for jobs: the establishment of a European initiative for growth, increased industrial competition through a European industrial policy and organised international commerce, concentration on the creation of jobs that are socially and environmentally useful and a legal framework to encourage job-sharing. These issues were taken up at the next PES leaders' conference, the day before the Copenhagen European Council.

The PES Leaders met on 19 and 20 June 1993 in Copenhagen, and adopted a declaration which argued that:

'Coordinated and vigorous action is necessary to improve employment prospects across the community. The high number of unemployed is unacceptable both economically and socially, and the implementation of new joint initiatives to create more jobs is imperative both at the community level and national level'.

The declaration also outlined 10 EC policy measures to create more jobs, which included: coordination of national economic policies to stimulate collective recovery, an active EC industrial policy, projects to clean-up the environment, projects for housing and urban renewal, investment in communication and infrastructure, investment in education and skills training, and the establishment of equitable rules for international trade. A further 'Declaration on Racial Violence and Xenophobia' urged the EC Council, the Commission and EP to adopt measures against racial discrimination and to encourage positive action and the development of multicultural societies.

The development of socialist policies for the 1990s was also the focus of the next meeting of the PES leaders, on 4 and 5 September 1993 in Arrábida, in Portugal. In order to allow for an open and

frank exchange of views in this period of reflection, the leaders decided to meet in conclave. This meant that the party leaders would meet without their advisors and without the pressure of having to adopt a common declaration. The institutionalisation of the leaders' meetings in the previous two years had meant that the ordinary PES summits had evolved into mini congresses, with the presence of over 50 socialist officials, including national party leaders, spokespeople and advisors, Commissioners and MEPs and representatives from other European and socialist organisations. In a smaller gathering and behind closed doors,



the party leaders could more openly criticise and compliment one another and discuss the problems facing their parties and movements. The leaders listened to a presentation from Gérard Fuchs, chair of the PES working group on the economy, on the need to redefine state-economy relations in the new Europe, and agreed to establish a working group to analyse these questions, chaired by Allan Larsson, the former social democratic employment and finance minister of Sweden. Larsson was instructed to consult with the leaders' personal representatives rather than party policy officials and to report directly to the party leaders. By involving decision-makers at the highest political level, the Larsson Report could serve as a basis for policy at all levels of party action. The PES had thus taken a further step towards becoming a fully-fledged European political party with a common policy and strategy. The success of the Arrábida meeting also meant that from now on there would be a leaders' conclave at least once every year.

Meanwhile, the PES manifesto for the 1994 European elections was completed and presented to the second (extraordinary) Congress of the PES, on 5 and 6 November 1993 in Brussels. With the final ratification of the Maastricht Treaty by the German Constitutional Court ruling in October, the Treaty on European Union had entered into force on 1 November 1993. The PES manifesto thus set out a programme of action for socialists in the new European Union, in seven areas:

- ▶ *Creating Jobs, Safeguarding Social Progress and Encouraging Cohesion*, through the development of the structural funds and the cohesion fund, the pursuit of an EU programme for

jobs, and the implementation of a guaranteed minimum wage and minimum working conditions;

- ▶ *Equality for Women and Men*, through equal treatment in social security systems, increased access to child care and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of society, the economy and politics;
- ▶ *Protecting the Environment and the Consumer*, through further EC measures to promote waste prevention and recycling, and higher product safety standards for consumer protection;
- ▶ *Creating Peace and Security Through Cooperation*, by concentrating on reducing the imbalance between North and South, East and West, and rich and poor,
- ▶ *Regulating Immigration Together and Fighting Racism*, through common immigration and asylum policies and guarantees for equality of opportunity regardless of race, religion or beliefs;
- ▶ *Fighting Organised Crime*, through closer cooperation between the member states' police authorities and stricter measures against money laundering and economic crime; and
- ▶ *Working for Democracy*, with full powers of co-decision for the European Parliament, majority voting in the Council as the norm and with decision-making as close to Europe's citizens as possible.

The Brussels Congress also confirmed that 'The emblem of the PES is a red rose with a green stem in a circle of twelve stars' and ratified the full membership of the Norwegian Labour Party in the PES.

The second main plank of the socialist programme for the European Union was the Larsson group report. At the end of 1993, a second Brussels European Council was set to discuss the Commission President's white paper on employment. The day before the Council, on 9 December 1993, the socialist leaders adopted the Larsson report as a declaration on 'The European Employment Initiative'. The 20-page report was the most extensive statement of European socialist economic policy to date. The main focus of the report was a 12-point action programme entitled 'Put Europe Back to Work', which proposed action in the following areas:

- ▶ *human resources*, such as education and training;
- ▶ *re-organisation of work*, including reduction of working time;
- ▶ *equal opportunities*, using new taxation and social security measures;
- ▶ *new productive capacity*, through a new public-private partnership;
- ▶ *improved infrastructure*, coordinating European and national plans;
- ▶ *social infrastructure*, such as housing and care for the elderly and children;



- ▶ *ecological survival*, using tax reform to encourage ecological employment;
- ▶ *research and development*, increasing spending to two to three per cent of GDP;
- ▶ *regional development and cohesion*, using the EU structural and cohesion funds;
- ▶ *East-West integration*, by opening markets and encouraging investment;
- ▶ *effective employment service*, to bridge the gap between supply and demand; and
- ▶ *confidence and cooperation*, through collaboration between employers and unions.

The party leaders also proposed that the Fischer-Wöltgens report on 'The Future of Europe', the third pillar of the socialist agenda for Europe, should be adopted at the next ordinary PES Congress. This report would thus set out a socialist policy for the next intergovernmental conference on EC institutional reform, which under the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty would be launched in 1996.

In the first half of 1994, however, the PES and the member parties turned their attention to the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament. In February 1994, Fayot presented a report on

the PES working party on the election campaign, setting out the procedures for the coordination of national campaigns and for the exchange of speakers. However, with a majority of the EC socialist parties in opposition in the member states, most of the PES members were more eager to fight the European elections on the performance of the national government than on the issue of Europe. The PES campaign working party was thus left to provide extra materials for the national campaigns and to organise a post-election analysis to assess the results from a transnational perspective.

These issues were also raised at the bureau meeting in April 1994, which was to prepare the agenda of an extraordinary leaders' summit on the European elections, to be held on 19 May. The leaders were set to adopt a revised version of the Larsson report, which had been amended to take account of the December 1993 party leaders' decisions on macroeconomic policy coordination and preventing currency speculation as well as current events, such as the conclusion of the GATT world trade agreement and the G7 summit. However, the British Labour Party expressed concern about the report's commitments for a reduction in working hours, which had been heavily criticised in the British press. Jack Cunningham (LP-GB) suggested that with over 50 people in attendance, the leaders' summits were not capable of making a proper decision about detailed policy commitments. For the summits to have a central policy-making role, there would need to be a reform of their procedures. A further discussion of the Cypriot socialist party's full membership of the PES also highlighted the need for detailed clarification of the statute provisions on PES membership and associate and observer status. Finally, the Bureau discussed the situation in Italy, where the inclusion of the MSI in Berlusconi's cabinet would mean the presence of neo-fascist ministers in EC Council meetings. The Bureau agreed that the party leaders should make a statement on this issue.

However, the extraordinary leaders' summit was cancelled after the sudden death of John Smith, the Leader of the British Labour Party. Michel Rocard, the PS-F leader, was visiting John Smith in an informal capacity the evening before his death. Almost all the PES leaders attended John's funeral in Scotland, on 20 May 1994, as a mark of respect to their comrade. On the day of the funeral, the PES leaders took the opportunity to meet informally in Edinburgh, in order to discuss the work of the PES and the European elections. At this meeting, the party leaders also exchanged views on the forthcoming Greek European Council and the pending decision on who would take over from Jacques Delors as EC Commission President. These developments revealed the increased importance of informal contacts at the highest political level in PES business – as in the daily behaviour of national political parties.

The fourth direct elections to the EP were held on 9 and 12 June 1994. On 31 May, PES President Willy Claes presented an 'Appeal to the Electorate' summarising the PES manifesto and urging people to vote. However, the level of voter-turnout decreased from the 1989 figure. Although the socialists would be the largest and most coherent group in the new Parliament, for many PES member

parties the results were disappointing. Within a few days of the elections, two PES party leaders resigned – Occhetto (PDS) and Del Turco (PSI). Nevertheless, when the party leaders next met, they emphasised that socialists were still the strongest force in Europe and highlighted the clear divisions between the right-wing parties and governments – with the pro-European Christian Democrats now under pressure from large eurosceptic forces in Britain, France and Italy.

However, the election results were not the only issue on the agenda of the Corfu Leaders' Summit, on 22 and 23 June 1994. The party leaders were meeting the day before the European Council that was to adopt the Delors white paper, finalise the EU enlargement agreements with Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway and name the next President of the European Commission. On each of these issues, the party leaders urged the EC heads of government to act: to adopt fully Delors' proposals to fight unemployment; to complete the enlargement process swiftly; and to nominate a Commission President who would pursue 'a strategy to fight mass unemployment in Europe'.

The socialist leaders also stated that they 'will not accept a nomination of a neo-fascist Commissioner', and insisted that 'The European Parliament must be... involved in the preparatory group for the 1996 IGC along with the member states and on a par with the Commission'. In addition, the party leaders decided to suspend the PES membership of the Italian PSDI, pending a decision by the SI, for its support of the Berlusconi government. Finally, at the Corfu PES summit, the party leaders agreed to hold a second leaders' conclave in Kriekenberg, in Germany. In preparation for this meeting and for the next stage of the socialist programme for the EC, a second leaders' working group was set up, on the model of the Larsson Group, chaired by Sven Auken (SD). Proposed by the Danish party leader, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the new group would draft a detailed report on environment policy.

Since the birth of the PES at the Hague Congress, the new transnational socialist organisation had established a place in the EC political system. For the national party leaders, the PES summits were now a regular event in their busy timetables. Moreover, the national party leaders were increasingly used to their role as the central decision-making body in the PES. Above all, however, the PES had become one of the main institutional forces in the setting of the political agenda of the EC. Nevertheless, to maintain its dynamism, and to face the challenge of the next stage of institutional reform in the EU, the PES would need to continue its evolution towards the creation of a real European Socialist Party.

**A History of the Party
of European Socialists**

Chapter 2
1994 - 2002

1. Political Context

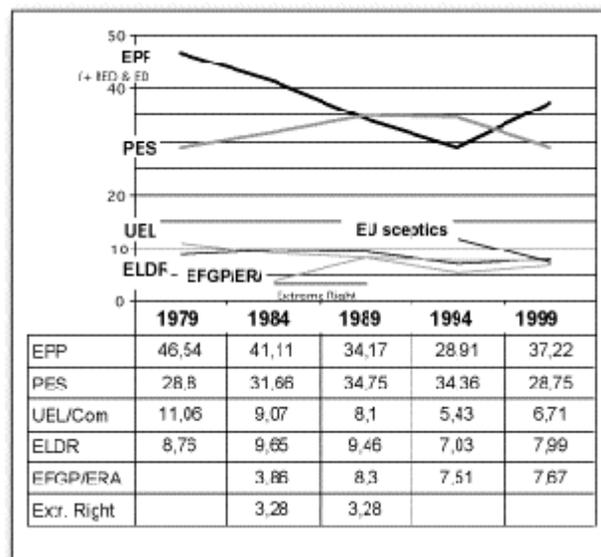
‘Our meetings are like funerals.’

Thus spoke a Prime Minister addressing a large European Party. All Prime Ministers are not members of the PES and this was not said by one of ours. We intend to do even better.’

(from: PES ‘Fax Info’ 24 February 1999, presumably quoting Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, EPP)

The 90s saw an unprecedented wave of social democrats entering the European Union’s national governments. The era of centre-right governments, which had begun with the British general election of May 1979, came to an end in almost all member states of the Union in the course of the 90s. The European elections established themselves as a kind of a foreshadowing event while the 1989 vote had seen the Socialist Group on top of the poll for the first time, the 1994 elections confirmed the trend and saw the centre-right share of the vote decreasing for the third time in a row. However, it was the small and medium-sized member states that turned social democratic first: the ‘Big Four’ (France, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany) waited longer for a return of social democrats to office (1996-1998). The election of Massimo D’Alema and Gerhard Schröder as heads of government in Italy and Germany marked the peak of social democratic power in the EU, increasing the number of governments headed by PES Prime Ministers to 11, with two further governments including PES ministers and only Spain and Ireland without PES governmental representation.

Table 1: European Elections 1979-1999 (share of EP seats)



The reasons for the electoral rise of the centre-left are disputed even within its own ranks. On the one hand, the economic situation in the first half of the 90s could not match the growth which many EU countries had seen in the second half of the 80s. Whilst having succeeded in tackling inflation, centre-right governments did not seem able to tackle unemployment. The enormous economic task of Germany's unification also affected its neighbours, some of whose economies had suffered quite badly from high interest rates since 1990. Having just recovered from the early 90s recession, the member states' social situation then experienced a new challenge: austerity policies to prepare for the most ambitious integration project since customs union – economic and monetary union (EMU). Protests such as the 1995 strikes in France or the mass demonstration in Germany in 1996 revealed the scale of unease with policies aimed at implementing the convergence criteria set up in the Maastricht Treaty.

Discontent with centre-right governments, which had gradually accumulated since the end of the 80s, grew ever stronger and finally contributed to sweeping aside even the longest-serving Conservative governments of Britain and Germany in 1997 and 1998 – despite the fact that EMU was supported by all PES member parties in the EU.

Most PES member parties had seen a continuous process of policy changes during the same period. After three successive electoral defeats, the British Labour Party set up an official process of 'Policy Review' to find its way back to the centre ground of the electorate. Other parties underwent similar political adaptation. The core of this process of 'modernisation' was an increasing distance from the 70s' policies of demand-management and deficit-spending as well as a change of paradigms in social policy towards a 'welfare to work' approach.

However, the socialist electoral advance came to an early halt again at the beginning of the next decade. In hindsight, the fact that the EPP 'won' the European Elections in June 1999, becoming the strongest group for the first time in 10 years, as well as the defeat of the Austrian social democrats in late 1999, foreshadowed a trend that would be confirmed in succeeding elections in Italy, Denmark, Portugal, the Netherlands and France. After 30 years of governmental office, the SPÖ went to the opposition benches while a coalition of the EPP member party ÖVP and Jörg Haider's



Chapter 2 • 1994-2002

far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) took over. This tendency was confirmed in several following elections, most prominently in Italy, France and the Netherlands. While the origin of the new rise of the Right could not be attributed to one single common reason, it was evident that the political agenda in electoral campaigns had shifted towards topics traditionally regarded as favourable for the right: immigration and security. By its 10th anniversary in 2002, the PES saw itself once again in opposition in half of the member states, facing a return not just of its traditional centre-right opponents, but also of populist and extreme right parties, into governments.

Equivocal development of the political landscape in central and eastern Europe

The course of events in central and eastern Europe (CEE) was ambiguous. In Visegrad countries like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, the period immediately after the fall of the Warsaw Pact at the beginning of the 90s saw the rise of centre-right governments in an electoral move to get rid of communist one party rule. In south eastern Europe, the development was much slower, even more complex, with post-communists being able to secure government office in the immediate post 1990 period. In addition, the post-communists' political transformation turned out to be a much trickier process here.

Disappointment and discontent with rising unemployment, privatisation and welfare cuts paved the way for a first wave of post-communist parties returning to the governments of Poland and Hungary in the middle of the 90s, while the Czech social democrats' coming into government marks a rare example of a 'historic' social democracy being able to regain the role of the major centre-left force.

However, the return of reform-communists and social democrats into central Europe's governments did not lead to renunciation of their centre-right governments' measures. Post-communists had come to terms with pro-market policies quite quickly and often continued the process of privatisation and adaptation to the requirements of a liberalised market. The Hungarian and Polish post-communist governments of the mid-90s failed to be re-elected, just like their centre-right predecessors, not having been able to overcome the returning disillusionment at the polls.

Elections in 2001 and 2002 saw a new swing back giving both the Polish SLD (in alliance with Unia Pracy, made up of social democratic trade unionists from 'Solidarity') as well as the Hungarian MSZP a second chance, and returning the Czech social democrats to office. Surprisingly, CEE centre-left and post-communist parties enjoyed their new rise just as the west European centre-left suffered a series of defeats in national elections. The electoral cycles in central and eastern Europe and the EU had not yet fallen into line.

The PES confronted by a changing EPP

The late 80s and the 90s saw a gradual change in the European political parties' stances on European integration. Whilst the integration project had been launched in 1957 by six centre-right prime ministers of whom five were christian democrats, succeeding enlargements confronted the christian democrats with an ever growing problem. Of the nine countries that entered between 1973 and 1995, eight did not have a sizeable christian democratic party as the major centre-right party. In addition, the 90s saw many traditional christian democrats (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy) stuck in crisis, scandals or even dissolution, demoting them from former 'natural parties of government' to opposition or even marginalisation for most of the decade. Meanwhile, PES member parties, their centre-left opponents, enjoyed an unprecedented rise in national elections especially in the second half of the decade.

As a consequence, the originally christian democrat dominated European People's Party (EPP) experienced more and more pressure to open itself up to Conservative parties in order to hold its place as an equal opponent of the PES. CDU leader and German chancellor Helmut Kohl was one of the driving forces behind this strategy. However, the gradual inclusion in the EPP of non-christian democratic centre-right parties from Scandinavia, Greece, Spain, France and (restricted to the EPP group in the EP) Great Britain, left deep marks on the EPP position on European integration. While the predominantly Catholic christian democrats from the founding states had been the most vigorous proponents of a federal Europe, perhaps even to supplant Europe's existing nation states, the Protestant parties from northern Europe had a much more eurosceptic stance. The gap between christian democratic and Conservative European policy – which now became a gap *inside* the EPP – was bigger than European policy differences between the EPP in its previous (christian democratic) composition and the European Liberal, Democratic and Reform Party (ELDR) or the PES. As a consequence, EPP unity came under heavy pressure that resulted in a severe watering down of the EPP's pro-integrationist stance, when the 2001 EPP Congress replaced the aim of 'a United States of Europe' by the much more blurred one of 'a federal European Union'.

Meanwhile, more and more of those PES member parties that had once displayed quite a reluctant, sometimes even hostile, attitude towards the European Community shifted position. (This reluctance had been especially evident in the second half of the 70s and for most of the 80s, with the British Labour Party even campaigning for UK withdrawal from the EC in its 1983 manifesto.) They moved towards a more neutral and often moderately positive position on closer European integration. Eventually all major PES full member parties in the middle of the 90s approved the process of European integration in principle. The British Labour Party was the most illustrative example of the changing attitude to European integration which many PES member parties had undergone during the 80s and 90s. While in 1992, the idea of having a former Labour leader as first PES President was still ruled out by several member parties who questioned Labour's commitment

to the 'European cause', Robin Cook was not only able to draft jointly with Henri Nallet (PS-F) the PES election manifesto in 1999 (work boycotted by Labour in the late 70s) but also to become the first British PES President in 2001.

Against this background one might more easily understand why the behaviour of the EPP towards the PES shifted from the former period of cooperation in the EP (in the aftermath of the institutional pressures of the SEA) to a more conflictual strategy towards the end of the 90s. With the European elections having made the EPP the strongest party group in parliament for the first time in years, the EPP formed a voting alliance with the Liberal ELDR group in the inaugural session of the new parliament in June 1999 to push through its Presidency candidate Nicole Fontaine on an EPP-ELDR slate. Part of the agreement was the succeeding election of Pat Cox, leader of the ELDR group, as Fontaine's successor in the EP Presidency in the middle of the 1999-2004 Parliament. The break-up of the habitual EPP-PES voting alliance found the PES unprepared and – enjoying the peak of PES governmental representation in the member states – complacent, having expected a continuation of the distribution of the EP Presidency among both groups as in the previous 10 years. This EPP strategy against the PES might be explained by the need to unite an EPP group that was much more divided on European policies than in previous parliaments. Hans-Gert Pöttering as new EPP group leader obviously stuck to the well-known advice that in order to unite one needs an enemy – which, in this case, was the PES group.

A more politicised, more polarised manner of parliamentary work could also be found in the 1999 inaugural process of the European Commission. The Commission under President Romano Prodi included 10 Commissioners from PES member parties, one Green Commissioner and only six from the EPP as well as one from the ELDR. In the course of the Commission hearings in the EP, the EPP group argued that this composition did not properly reflect the changed balance of the new parliament. However, the EP did not withhold its approval of the Prodi Commission in the end.

2. PES Membership and Eastern Enlargement

The fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989 and the collapse of one communist government after another in central and eastern Europe from 1990 onwards confronted all European political parties with an unprecedented challenge. The transformation of party systems in CEE was to last longer than the whole of the 90s and, in many of these countries, was still far from ended by the beginning of the new decade. For the PES, it soon emerged that it had to deal with the tricky question of who should be the social democratic partners in CEE.

While some PES full member parties turned their attention quite early to the communist state parties that were just about to start their own internal political and organisational reform processes, others emphasised the historic heritage of pre-communist social democratic parties and urged

links with these ‘historic’ social democrats rather than with the relabelled communists. The PES saw itself confronted by two contradictory arguments right from the outset. On the one hand, the self-reforming post-communists were able to keep a lot of organisational experience and stability



as well as significant electoral support. (Although these so-called ‘successor parties’ were voted out of government in many of the immediate post-1990 elections, they were still the biggest left-wing political party in many CEE countries while almost all new or re-founded social democratic parties were not able to achieve a share of the vote that made them more than a fringe party). On the other hand, post-communists seemed almost fatally burdened with the communist legacy – i.e. violation of human rights, especially the suppression of any opposition, the rundown of their countries’ economic and social situation, and, last but not least, the de facto abolition of national sovereignty under Soviet rule. It was often the re-founded ‘historic’ social democrats in CEE that displayed the most hostile attitude towards the successor parties.

For the PES there was hardly any other choice than giving the party political transformation process enough time before judging which new or historic social democrats would be able to secure a relevant electoral position and which successor parties underwent a real political, organisational and personal transformation.

The Forum and other platforms for PES contacts beyond the EU

In January 1993, the PES supported the establishment of the ‘Forum for Democracy and Solidarity’ to set the activities of western European socialist and social democratic parties in central and eastern Europe on a permanent base. The Forum promoted and organised regular contacts of PES full member parties and like-minded foundations with a broad range of centre-left political parties and organisations as well as the development of civil society and especially its social democratic parts in CEE countries. While the Forum had its main office in the PES Brussels secretariat, it also established offices in Stockholm, Amsterdam and Budapest. Associate member parties from the Czech and the Slovak Republics, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia deepened their cooperation in a ‘PES Central European Forum’ from 1997. Later, when it had become evident that south east European candidate countries as well as their centre-left parties would need more time before



admission to the EU, a special forum for PES associate and observer parties from that region was established, too. This step also made it possible to prepare parties from former Yugoslav republics for approaching the PES. The PES had dealt on many occasions with the situation in the Balkans, with two major Balkans conferences hosted by PASOK, both held in Thessaloniki in 1997 and 1999 as well as a conference in Vienna hosted by the SPÖ and the PES Group in July 1999.

The establishment of regional forums for centre-left parties was not unprecedented. In Scandinavia, PES member parties as well as like-minded trade unions and non-governmental organisations have their own regional cooperation framework SAMAK. However, SAMAK has a history that precedes the founding of the PES and always had the Nordic Council of Scandinavian states as an institutional point of reference.

Gradual inclusion of CEE parties into PES work

Not until 1995 were the first six CEE sister parties accepted as observer parties by the PES Barcelona Congress in March and the bureau in June. Among them were only two clear historic social democratic parties, from the Czech and the Slovak republics, but already four successor parties, namely Gyula Horn's Hungarian MSZP as well as Slovak, Slovenian and Polish post-communists.

Poland's Unia Pracy, a new party founded by social democratic parts of the former Solidarity, was granted observer status in the following year.

A second wave of CEE sister parties was granted observer status in March 1998, when the PES bureau admitted three Baltic and two Romanian parties to its ranks. The continuing transformation of CEE party systems made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between successor and historic social democratic parties. Elections in the 90s were marked by various re-groupings and the foundation of new parties. Sometimes successor parties teamed up with newly-founded social democrats, often to save themselves from sinking into electoral irrelevance.

All these 12 CEE socialist and social democratic parties were 'upgraded' to associate party status by the PES Milan Congress of March 1999. After that, no

new CEE parties were taken in. This is mainly due to the wish of the PES to allow for more 'observation time' in more complex cases such as the Bulgarian socialists. An enduring process of a re-



Chapter 2 • 1994-2002

grouping of some smaller centre-left parties around the Bulgarian successor party still needed time to let a clear profile of the party system become visible. In contrast, the Albanian socialists were regarded as the clearest case of a successor party unacceptable for admission to PES ranks. It still needed indefinite time for policy changes.

The general policy on granting full membership of the PES was formulated in the course of the March 1995 bureau, stating that 'the status of full member could only be given when [each country's] accession was scheduled for a foreseeable date'. With the actual enlargement closer in sight, the PES Presidency clarified in January 2002 that actual granting of full member status would not be dealt with collectively, but only on a case-by-case basis. There would be no automatic 'upgrade' of PES associate parties to full member status once their countries became EU members.

3. PES policies

While there was still considerable disagreement among PES member parties on the issue of European integration, the late 80s and early 90s nevertheless saw the PES developing stronger convergence on this issue. Against the background of the Labour Party's anti-EC stand in the early 80s, one could state that by the beginning of the 90s, almost all PES member parties in the EU had shifted towards a pragmatically pro-European stance.

Moreover, the field of socio-economic policy, traditionally the 'battleground' between the party groups in the European Parliament, had for long seen the PES displaying stronger agreement than the EPP, not to mention the ELDR with its traditional rift between economic Liberals and Radicals.

However, the PES still had to overcome some differences on economic policy in the 90s before it was able to influence the EU economic policy agenda on IGC and European Council level. As the British Labour Party and the French socialists came into office at almost the same time in mid-1997, the international press speculated about the assumed contrast between, on the one hand, Blair's 'Third Way' of liberalised labour markets and its emphasis on competitiveness and, on the other hand, Jospin's seemingly more statist socialist approach, including the reduction of working time and an extension of public sector employment.

Ad-hoc Working Groups

Even before social democrats took over the governments of the big four member states of Italy, United Kingdom, France and Germany between 1996 and 1998, the PES had begun to widen its activities into the framework of the Council. In 1996, the party began to convene meetings of PES economic and finance ministers as well as spokespersons of PES member parties in opposition to coordinate activities in the EcoFin Council. The organisation of ministerial meetings was preceded and accompanied by a series of working groups of senior PES politicians in the field of socio-eco-

conomic policy. The work which had been started by the Larsson report in 1993 was continued by several working groups. Following former general secretary Axel Hanisch's recommendation during the 1995 Barcelona Congress, working groups were no longer designed as standing, but as ad hoc working parties, set up only for a limited time in order to create PES policy in their fields. In the main, this meant that working groups convened three times before delivering a policy paper. Working groups also involved coordinators from the PES parliamentary group.

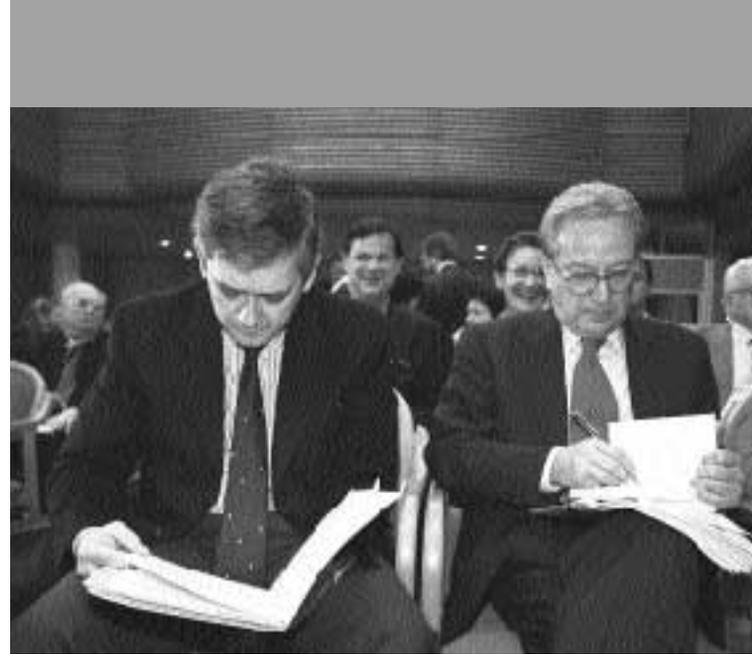
Table 2: PES Working Groups 1994-2002 (selection)

Subject	Chair	Year(s)	Document
Employment Environment	Svend Auken / Anna Lindh	1994-95	'A fair deal for Employment, Environment and Equality'
EMU and Employment	Franz Vranitzky	1995-96	'On the Social Compatibility of the Economic and Monetary Union'
IGC and Enlargement	Gérard Fuchs / Jan Marinus Wiersma	1995	
Information and Communication		1995-99	
Public Services	Claude Desama	1996	'Thoughts on the Future of Public Services in Europe'
	Jacques Delors	1996-97	'Thoughts and Proposals on a New Model of Development'
Employment	Mady Delvaux / Robert Goebbels	1997	'Employment'
Tax Policy	Philippe Busquin	1997/98	'A strategy for Solidarity. Report on Taxation' resp. 'Re-balancing taxation for growth, investment and employment', re-written version submitted to PES EcoFin Ministers
Employment	Antonio Guterres	1999	'A European Employment Pact for a New European Way', adopted by 1999 Milan Congress
Sustainable Development	Göran Persson	2001-02	'Social Democrats – bearer of a Modern Social Vision of Sustainable Development'

Chapter 2 • 1994-2002

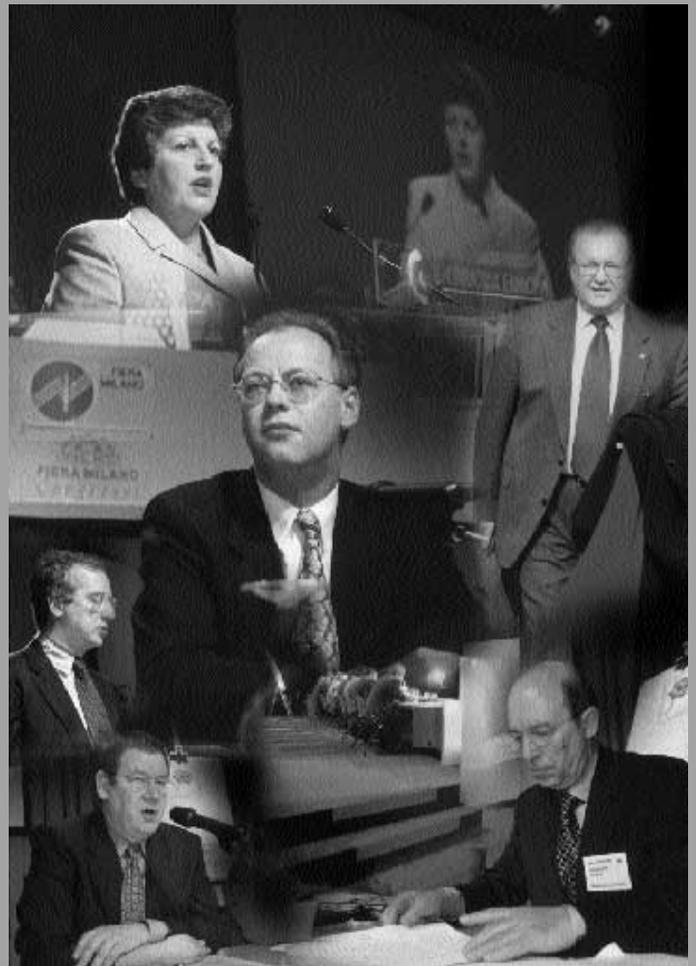
Smooth passage of the manifesto

While drafting socialist manifestos for European elections had been an arduous task in earlier days – with the first attempt having even failed completely in 1979 – the fifth direct elections in 1999 saw the drafting of the PES manifesto having virtually become a routine. For the first time, the PES did without subdividing the manifesto working group into several policy area sub-groups. Instead, the manifesto group received specialised input from a series of round tables in the second half of 1998, organised by the PES in cooperation with its parliamentary group as well as its member parties all of which hosted one round table. Input for the manifesto was also drawn from the working parties held since 1994, among which ‘The New European Way’ involving the PES EcoFin ministers’ group caught the most media attention. Antonio Guterres, Portuguese Prime Minister, drafted an additional paper on ‘A European Employment Pact for a New European Way’ in the run-up to the 1999 Milan Congress. Once again, the Manifesto was accompanied by a ‘Leaders’ Appeal to the Electorate’, drafted by Jan Marinus Wiersma (PvdA).



Against the background of earlier experiences, the smooth passage of 1999 demonstrated that the PES had drawn some conclusions about its manifesto drafting methods. Robin Cook (LP-GB) and Henri Nallet (PS-F), given the task of chairing the manifesto group as president and vice-president by the London leaders’ conclave in April 1998, developed a strict formal framework for the draft manifesto. A first draft was presented to the bureau in October 1998. The manifesto finally adopted by the Milan Congress in March 1999 contained ‘21 Commitments for the 21st Century, summarised in four parts:

- ▶ A Europe of Jobs and Growth: Putting Jobs First, Working for Growth, Promoting a Social Europe, Making the Euro a Success, Completing the Single Market, Promoting Education, Skills and Technology
- ▶ *A Europe that puts Citizens first*: Promoting Citizens’ Rights, Supporting Youth in the 21st Century, Creating Equality between Women and Men, Combating Racism and Managing Migration, Ensuring a Healthy Environment, Developing Strength through Cultural Diversity, Strengthening Security and Fighting Crime, Bringing the European Union Closer to the People
- ▶ *A Strong Europe*: Meeting the Challenge of Globalisation, Uniting Europe, Acting Together for Peace and Security in the World, Promoting Solidarity with other Nations



- ▶ *A Democratic European Union that works better: Reforming the European Union's Policies, Reforming the European Union's Budget, Reforming the European Union's Institutions*

Among the proposals listed in the manifesto, 'Promoting Citizens' Rights' called for a European Charter of Rights, foreshadowing the actual process of drafting a European Charter of Fundamental Rights which began in late 1999:

'...we propose that the fundamental civic, economic, social and cultural rights which have been won by citizens throughout the European Union, including access to public services, should be set out in a European Charter of rights. In carrying forward this work the European Union, and the European Parliament in particular, should initiate a wide-ranging consultation with citizens groups, the social partners and other non-governmental organisations.

We commit ourselves through this Charter to strengthening citizens' rights and building a Europe which is an area of freedom, security, justice and equal rights.'

In line with past experience, the bureau emphasised the need for a decentralised campaign. In order to exchange information on good practices in political campaigning as well as on modern political party management, a working group called 'Network Europe' was set up. The working group met several times and kept working after the European elections as well, holding a seminar on 'Modern methods of party organisation' in Oslo in March 2000.

Round Tables

Apart from the congresses that had begun to draw unprecedented media attention especially since the 1997 Malmö Congress (held immediately after the electoral successes of Tony Blair and Lionel Jospin in May and June 1997), the PES still remained barely visible to wider publics in Europe. Measures by which the party tried to improve the link with its member parties as well as a wider public between the congresses were two round table seasons in the second half of 1998 and 2000/01, which were organised and funded in close cooperation with the Parliamentary Group of the PES. These round tables, which were hosted by almost every full member party of the PES, covered almost the whole range of EU politics. The first series was held in the second half of 1998, thus producing input for the manifesto for the 1999 European elections.

Table 3: PES Round Tables 1998

Host Party	Venue	Dates	Subject
SAP	Bommersvik	11-12 June 1998	Employment
SPÖ	Vienna	27-29 June 1998	Cultural Policies in Europe
PS-P	Lisbon	11 September 1998	Environment
PS-F	Paris	3 October 1998	Europe for Employment
DS	Bologna	10 October 1998	Education
LP-Ireland	Cork	16 October 1998	Structural Funds
POSL	Luxembourg	4-5 November 1998	North-South Relations and Development Policy
SDI	Rome	5-6 November 1998	Migration
PvdA	The Hague	6-7 November 1998	Enlargement
SP/PS-B	Brussels	25 November 1998	Taxation
PSOE	Barcelona	26-27 November 1998	EU Foreign Policy
SDP	Helsinki	30 November 1998	EU-Russia relations
SPD	Saarbrücken	7 December 1998	Bringing Europe closer to the Citizen

As well as producing a policy input for the manifesto, the round tables also served to strengthen the links of the PES with its member parties. All events were organised in cooperation with the host member party, so making the PES better known not just to each member party's Eurospecialists, but to a wider party and public audience in the area where the round table was held. The positive experience with the first round table series led the PES to launch a second series in 2000 and 2001.

Table 4: Timetable of PES Round Tables 2000-01

Host Party	Venue	Dates	Subject
LP-GB	London	17 March 2000	Social Democracy in the 21 st Century
CSSD	Prague	5 May 2000	Enlargement
SP/PS-S	Bern	26 June 2000	Right-wing Populism
PS-F	Paris	1 July 2000	What Europe for Future Generations

Chapter 2 • 1994-2002

SPÖ	Vienna	21 October 2000	Rights and Values in 21st Century Europe
DS	Milan	27-28 October 2000	Media and Democracy
PvdA	Amsterdam	17-18 November 2000	Modern Economy and Modern Welfare State
SAP	Stockholm	2 December 2000	Globalisation and the Future of Welfare
PSOE	Zaragoza	16-17 February 2001	Migration and Cultural Identity
PASOK	Athens	23-24 February 2001	Knowledge Economy, Education and Employment
SP/PS-B	Mons & Antwerp	6 March 2001	New Economy – New social Challenges

The PES and the Lisbon Process

Over the course of the various PES working parties held in the 90s, there was a gradual shift in socio-economic policy. The arrival of PES member parties in national governments brought with it a growing distance from deficit-spending and interventionist economic policies in favour of a policy mix of supply-side as well as demand-side measures. This shift was sometimes motivated by a major change in parties' policies to appeal to the centre ground of the electorate, but in many parties it was mainly because of the constraints that EMU and the convergence criteria set on economic policy. So social democrats in the 90s tried to mark the dividing line between them and the centre-right no longer as between Keynesian and supply-side policies, but by Lionel Jospin's much-used slogan 'Yes to a market economy, no to a market society'.

Antonio Guterres in particular tried to re-profile social democratic economic policies at the end of the 90s. His employment paper, which the leaders' summit at the end of January 1999 had asked him to draft and which was adopted by the Milan Congress in March 1999, foreshadowed the 'Lisbon Process' agreed upon during the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union in the second half of 1999. Its main elements were an economic policy mix for sustainable growth, improved conditions for investment, an increased emphasis on socio-economic dialogue and a boost in computer literacy in order to improve the skills level of the European labour force:

'A European Initiative for the Information Society should be launched in June 1999, ambitious enough to close the gap with the US and to create the basic infrastructure of the future.'

The Lisbon Process launched in the course of the Portuguese EU Presidency in the first half of 2000 aimed at introducing a new, European approach to stimulating growth and employment. Beyond isolated national economic policy as well as creating new economic policy competences for

the Commission, the open coordination method tried to apply the coordination framework as first created for the stability pact to the field of growth and employment. It pushed for setting common employment targets and for increased exchange of best (national) practices in creating employment instead of a homogenised supranational economic policy. Thus, it aimed at speeding up economic policy *convergence* rather than harmonisation.

A changing political agenda and the impact of '9/11' challenge the PES

Whilst PES governments in EU member states enjoyed a buoyant economic situation in the second half of the 90s, fear and resentment over immigration and unease about increasingly 'multi-cultural' societies did not vanish. In the course of the 1999 Milan Congress, all PES member parties signed the 'Charter of European political parties for a non-racist society', an initiative stemming from the 1997 'European Year against Racism' campaign. However, the beginning of the new century saw the first signs of economic slow-down which contributed to a revival of far right and populist right parties in several member states. Traditional right-wing forces like Haider's FPÖ in Austria or Le Pen's National Front in France as well as new populist movements like the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn were able to exploit fears and worries and played a decisive part in the electoral defeats of PES parties after 2000.

The terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 had a deep impact on the political agenda both for the European Union and for the PES. The centre-left emphasised the need for fairer distribution of the fruits of globalisation and intensified cross-cultural exchange and understanding. PES President Robin Cook convened the Presidency for an extraordinary meeting on 20 September 2001. The Presidency decided to open a 'Euro-Muslim dialogue' with sister parties and like-minded organisations from the Arab and wider Islamic world. The first step was a meeting with European Muslim representatives in the immediate run-up to the 30 October 2001 Presidency. In addition, the first PES Winter University was held in Granada to continue the dialogue in early 2002. The 9/11 shock as well as the new intifada renewed PES member parties' attention to the situation in Middle East. The debate continued in 2002 with member parties raising strong criticism of the Israeli Labour Party's continued participation in the Sharon government.

In contrast, well-known theses from the 90s such as Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' also enjoyed a revival in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the US. They further accelerated an existing shift of the political agenda from socio-economic to security and immigration issues.

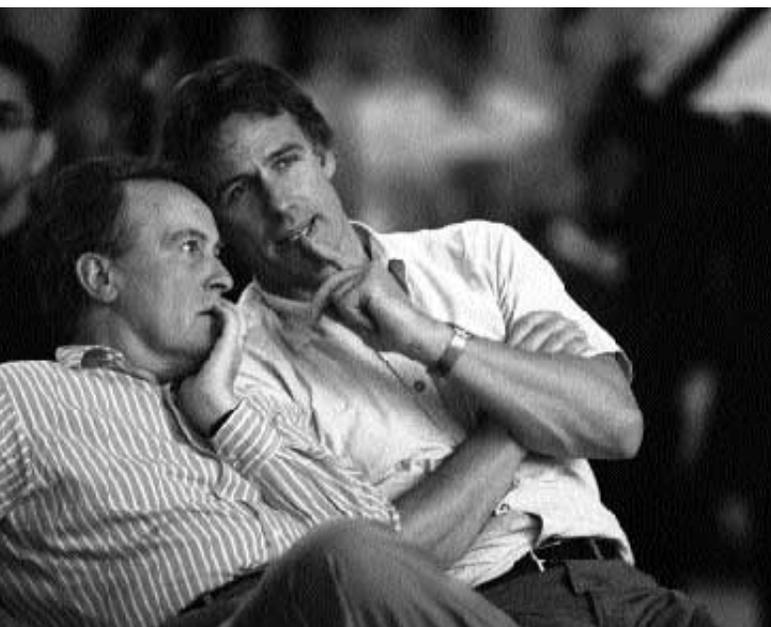
Confronted with electoral defeats of PES governments and the resurgence of the far and populist right in many EU member states, the PES re-focused its work on analysing the rise of the Right and the consequences that should be drawn from it. After an initial debate in the 17 May 2002 Prague Presidency, Alfred Gusenbauer - leader of the Austrian Social Democrats, who had been the first to experience the coming to power of a far right party in early 2000 - was given the task of



drafting a PES policy to counter the new right-wing populism. The debate was continued in a PES Vienna conference on 5 June 2002 and the 2002 Summer University in Budapest.

4. Widening the scope of the PES into more EU institutions

With the socialist advance into EU national governments, the 90s saw an unprecedented extension of PES activities into EU bodies formerly 'untouched' by the party. The PES as a 'network' party often brought representatives from PES member parties in EU bodies together for the first time. That in mind, coordination efforts by the PES should not be confused with national political party coherence. The PES aimed at enhancing its members' awareness of one another in EU bodies and created a framework for exchange, thus hoping to contribute to a process of long-term convergence. While the PES group in the European Parliament has been known for its relative coherence and voting discipline for a considerable time, the party's efforts to 'go into' other EU bodies was just



beginning. The strict traditional concept of a party formulating policy which is then (given a majority) implemented by its group in a political body could not be applied to bodies like the Council which primarily serves to represent national and not party political interests.

Committee of the Regions

Soon after the establishment of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) under the Maastricht Treaty, CoR members themselves expressed the wish to form party groups in the new EU body. Originally, this wish met some resistance within the new assembly, but finally it was agreed to have both national delegations *and* political groups. Until party groups in the CoR were formally recognised, the PES provided organisational support for its group in the CoR.

Council of Ministers

In September 1994, when, despite the four biggest PES member parties being in opposition, the PES was represented in half the EU's national governments, the Bordeaux bureau meeting tried to initiate meetings of national ministers from PES member parties. However, the President's letter to PES party leaders did not have any visible effect before 1996. In the run-up to the Irish Presidency, Ruairi Quinn (LP-Ireland) invited finance and economic ministers from PES parties to the first ever 'PES EcoFin' meeting in Brussels in March 1996. During the Irish EU Presidency, a further series of PES ministerial meetings was started for the portfolio of social affairs under the chairmanship of Edna Fitzgerald (LP-Ireland), in September 1996. Ministerial meetings in other portfolios followed, some more or less one-offs, but some even resulting in seminars, expert conferences and PES ministers' policy papers.

Table 5: PES ministerial (and member parties spokespeople) meetings since 1996

Portfolio	Initiator/first chair	First meeting/venue	Follow-ups (incomplete)
EcoFin	Ruairi Quinn (LP-Ireland)	10 March 1996, Brussels	1996: 5 May, 2 June, 13 October, 1/8 December 1997: 16 February 1998: 16 February, 19 May, 29 June/5 July, 11 September/11 October, 22 November 1999: 25 May, 7 November; common text: 'The New European Way' 2000: 12 March, 7 November 2001: 11 February
Social Affairs	E. Fitzgerald (LP-Ireland)	23 September 1996	1997: 16 April, 6 October 1998: 7 April, 7 June, 26 October, 19 November, 1 December 1999: 9 March, 11 November 2000: 10 February, 16 October 2001: 5 March
Science & Research	J. Ritzen (PvdA)	17-18 October 1996 (open conference)	1997: 4-5 April (Lisbon conference) 1998: 11 February, 21 June 1999: 2 December (incl. Energy Ministers) 2000: 14 June
Transport		12 December 1996	1997: June, one further meeting
Education	J. Ritzen (PvdA)	May 1997	1997: 25 June, autumn, 19 November 2001: 12 February
Environment	M. de Boer (PvdA)	15 October 1997	1997: 15 December 1998: 22 March, 5 October, 6 December 2000: 29 March
Foreign Affairs	Robin Cook (LP-GB)	12 March 1998, London	1998: 5 September
Defence	A. Tsohatzopoulos (PASOK)	9 May, Rhodes	2001: 17 November
Development	Clare Short (LP-GB)	17 May 1998	Common text: A New Agenda for European Development Cooperation
Culture	(informal meeting)	16 November 1998	

Agriculture	Karl-Heinz Funke (SPD)	17 May 1999	
(Telecom) Trade & Industry	Erkki Tuomioja	8 November 1999	2000: 17 May, 2 October, 21 December
Justice & Home Affairs	(during Finish EU Presidency)	1 December 1999	2000: 2 March, 29 November 2001: 14 March, 16 November, 5 December

Right from the outset, PES ministerial meetings always included not just the actual PES ministers, but also those spokespeople for the relevant portfolio from member parties in opposition and from the EP group. The electoral context of the first PES EcoFin meeting in Spring 1996 showed why limiting meetings only to ministers would have been problematic: with the Spanish socialists voted out of government just a week earlier, the governments of the five biggest EU member states were centre-right governments without PES participation. As this would have meant the exclusion of the five biggest PES member from ministerial meetings (if spokespeople from opposition parties had not been included), it was unimaginable to limit meetings to actual ministers or state secretaries.

The ministerial meetings' impact on the councils' agendas is difficult to measure. However, they also indicated the changing and different nature of the PES as a *transnational* party organisation. The meetings offered a platform to intensify exchange between senior politicians from PES member parties. Furthermore, ministers and party representatives especially from small member began to use the PES secretariat in Brussels as a political reference for expertise on EU politics.

Commission

The fact that the Prodi Commission inaugurated in 1999 included 10 Commissioners from PES member parties further highlights the opportunities offered by the advance of PES member parties between 1997 and 2000. A first discussion on how the PES could better include 'its' Commissioners into its work had been held in November 1995. PES Vice-President Philippe Busquin hosted a meeting with personal advisors of the commissioners from PES parties, trying to identify their willingness to participate in PES bureau, leaders' and working party meetings. The tradition of meetings of Commissioners and the PES group leadership in the EP during plenary weeks continued. The revised PES statutes adopted by the 2001 Berlin Congress included new references to Commissioners, for the first time defining 'close cooperation with the socialist members of the European Commission' as one of its aims and explicitly fixing their standing participation in PES congresses, leaders' summits and the PES Presidency. However, there were obvious and strict limits to their involvement in PES activities, with Commissioners being bound to collegiate responsibility (while sometimes also biased in favour of the interests of their country of origin) and the Commission composed of politicians from the four major European political groupings.

Chapter 2 • 1994-2002

Nevertheless, the attendance of PES Commissioners at PES meetings increased, some of the Commissioners being directly involved in the drafting of working parties' reports. In the aftermath of the Berlin Congress, the PES Commissioners elected Neil Kinnock as their coordinator for PES meetings, in order to ensure a more official and permanent representation of Commissioners in the Presidency and other bodies.

Intergovernmental Conferences

In addition to the more frequent Council participants', leaders' and ministerial meetings, intergovernmental conferences (IGCs) offered further opportunities for the PES to influence the EU agenda. As early as the latter half of 1994 a working party on the IGC was set up, later broadening its portfolio to 'IGC and Enlargement'. In the course of the 1996 IGC, the situation proved more difficult for European political parties with issues at stake being national interests rather than left-right socio-economic cleavages (as in the 1991 IGC on EMU). In 2000, the establishing of the Convention on a European Charter of Fundamental Rights followed a 1999 PES manifesto demand. Moreover, a joint campaign by European political parties in the run-up and the course of the 2001 IGC led to the inclusion of a decisive amendment to the Treaty article on European political parties.

Convention

General satisfaction with the work of the Convention on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, independent of the pressures of day-to-day political life, led the European Council to set up a new Convention on 'The Future of Europe' only two years later. The PES Presidency embraced the idea of a new Convention in its Tallinn Declaration in the run-up to the 2001 mid-December Laeken EU Summit. While in 2000, PES Convention coordination had been organised under the supervision of the PES group in the European Parliament, convening the 'PES Members of the Convention on the Future of Europe' was done by the PES (party) secretariat in 2002. Under the chairmanship of Convention Vice-President Giuliano Amato, the PES Convention Members set up six internal PES working groups, unrelated to the working groups that the Convention set up later. Working group results were to be put together in the course of a seminar of Convention members in late summer 2002 in Birmingham.



5. Internal developments

After the early 90s had seen a rise in the former CSPEC member parties' willingness to strengthen their transnational organisation which led to the birth of the PES in November 1992, the PES underwent internal statutory adjustments during its first 10 years of existence, some of them acknowledging the fact that the PES network had become further differentiated, others acknowledging changing working methods.

The statutes adopted by the Hague Congress in 1992 were modified by each successive Congress. The Brussels Congress in 1993 provided for the creation of a PES Women's Committee and the inclusion of one representative from its ranks with full (voting) rights in the PES bureau. In 1997, two representatives of ECOSY were granted voting rights in the bureau, too. Since the 1999 Congress, the PES group in the Committee of Regions was also admitted, being given only the right of initiative. In addition, the PES clarified the integration of associate and observer parties in the course of its various congresses. Associate and observer parties were admitted to meetings as far



as they are explicitly invited to these, but without the right to vote. Associate parties were also granted the right to ‘present proposals to, and speak of these before the Congress’. Considering these enlargements of PES bodies, the revised statutes also provided for full member parties being empowered to ‘meet in camera’ if they decided to do so.

Growing imbalance between bureau and leaders’ summits

Apart from granting representation in the party’s bodies to cross-national member organisations like ECOSY and the women’s committee as well as the PES group in the Committee of the Regions, the internal relevance of its main bodies, the bureau and the leaders’ summit, changed significantly. Bureau meetings tended to become more and more occupied by technical and organisational questions rather than policy or strategic discussions – a development that the 1995-1996 PES activity programme had already recognised when it stressed that ‘administrative or technical matters on the bureau agenda should be kept to a minimum’ – obviously indicating that so far, they had *not* been kept to a minimum.

Another development further contributed to the problematic situation of the bureau. Especially after the wave of social democratic electoral successes in the mid and late 90s, leaders’ summits turned increasingly into prime ministers’ meetings, so becoming the actual power centre of the PES. This development was strengthened by PES meetings of the personal advisors (‘sherpas’) of the leaders in the run-up to the actual leaders’ summits. With more and more party leaders having become prime ministers, not just a new channel for influencing the EU agenda, but also a new public stage had been opened up for the PES. While the IGC in 1990-1991, leading up to the Maastricht Treaty, had seen the essential decisions pushed through by a majority of centre-right heads of government, socialists and social democrats now had the conditions, at least in terms of numbers, to put their policies at the top of the EU agenda.

In contrast, bureau meetings lost even more importance with frontline politicians increasingly allowing their international secretaries to take their seat, making the bureau as the official steering body of the PES less and less visible for the member parties not to mention the public. The bureau’s faces were virtually unknown, internal party officials rather than leading politicians. In turn, it became even less interesting for senior member party representatives to attend. It was increasingly evident that the bureau was no longer an adequate political counterpart to the governmental leaders’ summits.

Problems with drawing up a list of PES vice-presidents also contributed to questioning the then make-up of the PES’s internal structure. The PES founding Congress in the Hague had accompanied its first president by a slate of six vice-presidents (the CSPEC leadership had begun with three in 1974 and had had five vice-presidents in its final leadership before being succeeded by the PES). Over the course of the following congresses, more and more member parties pushed to be repre-



mented by a vice-president of their own. In order to maintain PES unity, the bureau gave in to these pressures. Despite a rotation formula agreed upon on the eve of the Barcelona Congress, the number of vice-presidents was increased to eight in 1995 and to 10 at the 1999 Milan Congress. This made the formal election of vice-presidents more and more questionable; in fact, it tended towards a return to the equal representation of each member party. The ever-increasing number of vice presidents also played its part in weakening rather than in strengthening political leadership within the bureau.

The 2001 statute revision

Against the background of these developments, PES vice president Heinz Fischer (SPÖ) was given the task of drafting reform of the PES. After discussion and changes by the bureau, Fischer's proposals were submitted to the 2001 Berlin Congress. Instead of the bureau, there would be two new bodies: the presidency and the coordination team, both of which met on an informal basis for the

first times in 2000 and early 2001, so even preceding the actual statute changes. An earlier proposal by Fischer to cut the number of vice presidents had been dropped, as was the formal election of these by the PES Congress, in favour of a single confirmation vote on an agreed slate of presidency members. In addition, a mild re-structuring of the statutes was realised, shifting the article on the party's aims into the position of a 'preamble'.

The *Presidency* as the political successor to the Bureau, consists of:

- ▶ the president,
- ▶ one representative from each full member party,
- ▶ the secretary-general,
- ▶ the leader of the PES group in the European Parliament,
- ▶ a representative from the women's standing committee,
- ▶ a representative from ECOSY and
- ▶ a representative from the PES group in the Committee of the Regions,

adding up to 26 members with voting rights. In addition, each associate party, one PES Commissioner and, should he or she belong to a PES member party, the President of the European Parliament have a seat in the Presidency. The Presidency elects the PES vice-presidents from its own ranks. 'Full member-only presidencies' including only those members with voting rights are possible. In compensation for giving up the election of the vice-presidents by Congress in favour of ex officio membership – which formally can be interpreted as a step back in terms of integration, the PES restricts participation in the Presidency to one member per party. This basically means that personal advisors of Presidency members can no longer be present in the actual meeting, in order not to inflate its size and to create a more confidential atmosphere encouraging more open political discussion.

Technical and organisational questions that had increasingly overburdened bureau meetings are now dealt with in a completely new body, the Coordination Team, whose composi-



tion basically mirrors the Presidency. However, each member party is represented by its international secretary.

In addition, the 2001 Berlin Congress statute changes invented another new party body, the PES Council. After the PES had merged its ordinary and its manifesto Congress in 1999 for the first time, it had come to agree that this exception to the rule should become the rule from then on, resulting in just two PES congresses during an EP five years term in the future. To compensate for the decreased frequency of the Congress, the Council was introduced, aimed at creating a high-level PES forum for policy debate. The Council's tasks were described as follows:

'The Council will contribute to the shaping of PES policy, will serve as a platform for strategic discussions and will meet in those years where no Congress is held. The Council is convoked by the Presidency of the PES.

The Council can adopt resolutions and recommendations to the affiliated parties and organisations, the Presidency, the Congress and the Parliamentary Group of the PES in full respect of the Congress being the supreme organ of the PES.'

In June 2002, the first ever PES Council was set for 14 and 15 November, to be held in Warsaw. It would mark the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the PES.

'From Internal Coordination to External Presentation'?

The extension of PES coordination into more policy arenas – EU summits, IGCs, Councils – especially in the second half of the 90s enabled the PES to increase its relevance in EU agenda-setting. However, as these activities have to a large extent remained hardly visible to the public, the 1997 Malmö Congress set as the main PES target shifting its priorities 'From Internal Coordination to External Presentation', thus putting more emphasis than before on highlighting the PES and its stake in EU socialist and social democratic coordination. It would prove difficult to implement these demands since the PES budget did not allow for any major public campaigns without external support.

The first PES Summer University in Vienna in 1996 might be seen in the light of these demands. Due to the PES's limited own means, it was organised and funded in close cooperation with the parliamentary group and the SPÖ (as the host party). The 1996 Summer University marked the beginning of a new tradition with annual follow-ups from then on. It offered young activists from PES member parties an opportunity to establish links among each other as well as to become familiar with the PES and its coordination activities, sometimes for the first time.

Table 6: PES Summer Universities since 1996

Host parties*	Venue	Dates	Subject
SPÖ	Vienna	26-30 August 1996	
PvdA, SPD	Maastricht	26-31 August 1997	Europe in the Year 2005
PASOK	Halkidiki	27 Aug – 1 Sep 1998	Our Message For 1999
SAP	Bommersvik	27 July – 1 Aug 1999	The New Europe: An Enlarged EU and a New Security Structure
LP-Ireland	Dublin	22-27 August 2000	Conflict Resolution in Europe - The Enlargement of the EU - The New Relations between Europe and the USA
DS	Reggio Emilia	30 Aug – 2 Sep 2001	Media and Democracy
MSZP	Budapest	21-25 August 2002	Regenerating the European Left - in the light of the rise of right-wing populism & The Convention on the Future of Europe

* All Summer Universities were coorganised by the PES and co-funded by the PES Parliamentary Group.

Apart from efforts like the summer universities and the 1998 and 2000-2001 round table series, the 2001 Berlin Congress still stated that the extension of PES coordination 'has not coincided with a more public role of the PES, nor with a greater involvement of the individual members of PES member parties.'

Another attempt to raise the awareness of the PES in its member parties and a wider political public was the PES yearbook. The first Presidency after the Berlin Congress commissioned Heinz Fischer to head the project. 'Visions for Europe', the first PES Yearbook, was eventually launched before the press in Vienna and London in May and June 2002 and included contributions by numerous PES politicians, ranging from (EU as well as CEE) heads of governments, ministers, commissioners to MEPs, PES representatives and international secretaries.

The Quinn Project

Whilst only modest progress in making the PES more visible to the general public had been achieved as a side-effect of the leaders' summits in the second half of the 90s, a project was started in the PES in 2000 that intended both to strengthen formal links between the PES and its mem-



ber parties and to raise awareness of the PES within the wider individual membership of its member parties. Initiated by vice president Ruairi Quinn, a motion on ‘Strengthening the PES’ was approved by the 2001 Congress. Apart from supporting the gradual integration of CEE sister parties and calling for an EU statute for European political parties, the motion urged PES member parties

- ▶ ‘to incorporate a reference to the PES in their party statutes’
- ▶ to ‘refer to the PES and use its logo on basic material such as party membership cards and web sites’
- ▶ ‘to further strengthen the mandate of their [PES] Congress delegates by formally electing or nominating them by party organs’

While the latter proposal was directed at the member parties’ leaderships, urging them to adopt transparent rules on how to nominate their PES Congress delegates, the PES in turn provided for stronger involvement of ‘ordinary delegates’ in the proceedings of its congresses. In the past, congresses had been dominated by a tight, formal agenda mainly including speeches, only formal votes on motions and elections (often open) fixed in advance. The 1997 Malmö Congress offered delegates the opportunity to table amendments to the key Congress declaration for the first time. Debates were structured in plenary sessions as well as round tables, a practice continued in Milan and Berlin.

Chapter 2 • 1994-2002

6. Campaigning for a European political parties' statute and funding

In the course of the 1990 intergovernmental conference, a joint campaign by the then three European political party federations (EPP, ELDR and CSPEC, the PES's predecessor organisation) had led to the first ever inclusion of an article on European political parties in the Treaty on the European Community (TEC). Although the mere fact that article 138a made its way into the Maastricht treaties at relatively short notice (the first official draft in which it appeared was the one of the final summit of heads of governments in mid-December 1991) was a success for European-level political parties, it was only half of what they had originally aimed at. EPP President Martens especially regretted the fact that the final article 138a TEC did not include a reference to further European legislation necessary to enable European political parties to fully fulfil their tasks – i.e. a reference to a parties' statute which would define a legal framework for the recognition and, as a consequence, funding of European political parties from the EU budget.

The claim for such a statute remained constant, but more or less unheard for the following years. The three secretaries-general proposed a European party statute as a 'Political Follow-Up to article 138a' in June 1992. Another meeting of the three party presidents in March 1993 passed, but finally real steps were not taken until 1996, when the European Parliament gave Dimitris Tsatsos MEP (PES) the task of drafting a report on a 'European political parties statute' on the basis of discussions in the EP's constitutional committee. The Tsatsos report was adopted by a plenary session of the EP in December 1996. It called unsuccessfully for the Commission to draft a green paper on the matter.

A change or addition to article 138a was regarded more and more as a necessary pre-condition for a parties' statute. The Greek government put forward a proposal to include this change in the course of the following IGC in 1997. Despite support by both the Austrian and Italian governments this attempt failed. Only a few countries were willing to give it their support, and in addition, the European Parliament's representative in the IGC, Elisabeth Guigou, was not in favour either. In consequence, the statute was postponed for another three years until the next IGC.

The Court of Auditors urges change in political parties' funding

In the year 2000, another development made the need for a parties' statute ever more urgent for European political parties. In March 2000, it emerged that an investigation by the Court of Auditors had found several instances of the EP political groups' use of their funds from the EP budget to be questionable. Among these questionable practices was the part-financing of European political parties by the EP groups.

In the case of the PES, financial support by its EP group made up for more than half of its revenue. While the official PES group's membership subscription was as great as the total of all mem-

ber parties' subscriptions, the group provided for the whole staff of the PES secretariat as well as for a large share of the costs for joint activities of the party and the group – e.g. the round tables and several conferences.

In the aftermath of the CoA's findings, two conclusions were drawn. First, the European political parties and the European Parliament had to increase their efforts to secure a parties' statute and EU political party funding in order to end up with a regulation that was not just legal but seen to be legitimate and transparent. However, as this could only lead to a mid- or long-term solution, there was an urgent need for a solution to bridge the period between the CoA's findings and the final coming into force of a parties' statute.

Therefore, the political groups in the EP agreed on a change of internal regulations. This transitional financing, due to run out by the June 2004 European elections, set limits on the support that the groups could give to their political parties. In detail, this meant that political parties were allowed to draw on up to 10 per cent of their groups' staff and up to five per cent of their groups' budgets. In terms of personnel, this meant, more or less, continuation of the prevailing situation. However, the limit of five per cent of group expenses that could be spent on a political party covered only the group's subscription, but no longer the whole range of additional financial support for political parties' activities. As a consequence, the transition financing forced the parties to look for other ways of making up for loss of revenue.

The PES thus scrutinised its current expenditure. Among its expenses, meetings of PES bodies turned out to be the costliest single items, mainly because of travel cost reimbursements. In the past, travel reimbursements had often meant an almost complete reimbursement of some member parties' subscription payments; in some cases, member parties actually received more in travel cost reimbursements by the PES than their actual subscriptions in the same year. The PES bureau thus approved a gradual phasing out of these reimbursements formerly granted to member parties' representatives in PES meetings.

Attempts to establish a transparent long-term solution for parties' funding

The imminent changes and problems of party finance on EU level added further urgency to the realisation of a European political parties' statute. In the course of the 90s, the number of European political parties had grown to five, allowing the party presidents to open an initiative from a broader base. In late 1999, the five secretaries-general of the parties and the four secretaries-general of the EP's political groups agreed to launch a joint approach, very similar to the approach of 1991, when the then three presidents had put forward the case for a 'parties' article'. In a common statement headed 'European Party Statute' issued on 15 February 2000, the secretaries-general declared that a European political parties' statute was indispensable in order to implement the rather general description given in article 191 TEC (ex-article 138a) and in order to provide for the transparen-



cy needed. Their declaration included recommendations for elements that should be included in the statute. The items dealt with were:

- ▶ *Definition* - that European parties should consist of 'national and/or regional parties in European countries', must respect 'democracy (...), human rights and the rule of law', must be represented in at least a third of EU member states and aim at being represented in the EP;
- ▶ *Organisational Provisions* – that European parties must have 'a written statute' guaranteeing internal democracy, provisions for membership and legitimate and accountable party organs including a regularly held Congress,
- ▶ *Tasks* – that European parties should have the tasks lined out in article 191 TEC, both inform about and involve the citizens in the political life of the EU, draft a political programme, to contribute to MEP recruitment and influence EU decision-making bodies
- ▶ *Funding* – that European parties should be funded from EU means, on condition that they provide for a significant part of their revenue from membership contributions and donations; that EU funding should be linked to a party's EP election results; that they must make their accounts public

- ▶ *Recognition* – that an independent body should decide on the recognition of European political parties; that appeals against the non-recognition are dealt with by the European Court of Justice.

In many respects, the statement resembled a working paper of the secretaries-general from June 1992 which had already outlined proposals on a potential parties' statute structured under five headlines, too: 'Definitions, Constitution, Duties, Financing, Recognition'.

Among the points touched in the 2000 statement of the secretaries-general, definition and funding of political parties later turned out to be the most debated ones.

The statement of the secretaries-general was supported by a joint letter of the party presidents to Commission President Prodi on 17 February as well as a letter by the EP political groups' leaders to Prodi on 21 February. The party presidents asked the Commission to draft a regulation proposal on a European political parties' statute and to put forward its proposal in the IGC later that year. They also asked to be consulted in the course of the following legislation process.

On 27 March, the EP agreed on its proposals for the IGC among which there was a draft revised article 191. That revised article 191 provided for the adoption of a statute and funding for European political parties under the co-decision procedure (article 251 TEC). The party leaders supported that proposal on 13 June, opting against the alternative way of adopting a parties' statute by the article 308 procedure (which demands unanimity in the Council). They emphasised the need for a sound legal base for European political parties and especially their funding with regard to the Court of Auditors' findings of March 2000.

In a debate with the European Parliament on 14 June, Commissioner Barnier announced a 'three step approach' with regard to the parties' statute: After a period of '*trilogue*' between Parliament, Commission and Council, a *transitory solution* would be sought according to article 308 after which a *long-term solution* could be looked for as soon as a revised article 191 would come into force. The Commission proposed the amendment to article 191 to the IGC on 12 July.

During the trilogue, the PES did not only support the case of a parties' statute by its EP group, but also tried to influence senior PES members of the IGC. In the run-up as well as in the course of the Porto and Biarritz PES leaders' summits in June and October 2000, the issue was raised in order to maximise support from Council members from PES parties.

The cross-party strategy turned out to be effective again. The Nice EU Summit approved an amendment to article 191:

'The Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in article 251, shall lay down the regulations governing political parties at European level and in particular the rules regarding their funding.'

In a 'Declaration on article 191 of the Treaty establishing the European Community' in the annex of the Nice Treaty, it is clarified that:

'The Conference recalls that the provisions of article 191 do not imply any transfer of powers to the European Community and do not affect the application of the relevant national constitutional rules.

The funding for political parties at European level provided out of the budget of the European Communities may not be used to fund, either directly or indirectly, political parties at national level.

The provisions on the funding for political parties shall apply, on the same basis, to all the political forces represented in the European Parliament.'

Thus, the IGC made clear that a European political parties' statute would not interfere in national legislation on parties (at national level).

The pre-condition for a long-term solution was now fulfilled. However, for the time until the ratification of the Nice Treaty, the Commission now had to engage in the process of combining article 191 TEC-A and article 308. The Commission drafted a proposal for a parties' statute and submitted it to the EP in February 2001. After the EP Constitutional Committee discussed the proposal in April and May, its conclusions were accepted by a large majority by the EP plenary session and submitted back to the Commission.

While the secretaries'-general statement of early 2000 had supported a threshold of at least 'a third of the member states' in which a European party had to be represented, the Commission proposal preferred the threshold of 'five member states'. While both formulae were identical at the time, the Commission's version would have virtually lowered the threshold once new member states were admitted to the EU.

The Commission included only slight changes from the EP's statement in its revised proposal, which was then submitted to the Council. The latter dealt with the proposal in the second half of 2001, under the Belgian Presidency. In the course of the negotiations in the Council, the following points proved to be the most tricky ones to reach agreement on:



- ▶ the link between the recognition of a party and its adherence to democratic principles
- ▶ the minimum number of countries in which a European political party would have to be represented to be recognised as such
- ▶ the approval of a ceiling for donations

Despite various attempts to overcome the different national positions by package-deals, the Belgian Presidency acknowledged on 7 December 2001 that it was not able to reach a statute that would secure unanimous support in the Council .

The PES saw the outcome of the Belgian Presidency ambiguously. On the one hand, neither an agreement nor a statute was yet realised; on the other hand, the Commission's proposal had been 'watered down' so much that PES President Robin Cook hoped for a better outcome in a second run once the Nice treaty was ratified. The 'watering-down' referred especially to the lowering of the threshold to three countries which many Council members seemed to have been willing to accept, with the Austrian government even demanding a further lowering to two. In addition, the Austrian government as well as the Danes had been unwilling to link the recognition of a political party to its recognition of democratic principles. Finally, the topic of donations revealed how much member states tried to push through their respective national traditions at EU level, with France and Belgium preferring a complete ban of donations, while other countries wanted a more or less regulated or generous permission of donations.

However, in the course of 2002, a European political parties' statute seemed to become further beyond reach. The tide in the electoral cycle had turned since the year 2000, bringing into government not just centre-right but also right-wing populist parties. This suggests that not just unanimity, but even a qualified majority in the Council (given the Nice Treaty is finally ratified) for a 'better' statute is more and more unlikely, for it cannot be expected that the new right-wing parties in government will approve a statute that requires them to form cross-national alliances to qualify for party funding from the EU budget.

**A History of the Party
of European Socialists**

| **Annexes**

I. Member parties

Full Members

January 1957	Parti Socialiste (PS, Belgium) ¹ , Socialistische Partij (SP, Belgium), Parti Socialiste (PS, France) ² Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD, Germany) Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano (PSDI, Italy) Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Luxembourgeois / Letzeburger Socialistes Arbechterpartei (POSL/LSAP, Luxembourg) Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA, The Netherlands)
November 1966	Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI, Italy) ³
April 1973	Socialdemokratiet (SD, Denmark) The Labour Party (LP, Ireland)
January 1976	The Labour Party (LP, Great Britain) ⁴ Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP, N. Ireland)
January 1979	Partido Socialista (PS, Portugal) Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE, Spain)
February 1989	Panellinio Socialistiko Kinima (PASOK, Greece)
February 1990	Sozialdemokratische Partei Osterreichs (SPO, Austria)
November 1992	Soumen Sosialidemokraattinen Poulue (SDP, Finland) Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS, Italy) Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti (SAP, Sweden)
November 1993	Det Norske Arbeiderpartei (DNA, Norway)
March 1995	KISOS (then EDEK, Cyprus)

Associate Members

February 1990	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz/Parti Socialiste Suisse
March 1999	Ceská strana sociálne demokratická (CSSD, Cz. Republic) Möödukad (Estonia)

Magyar Szocialista Párt (MSZP, Hungary)
 Latvijas Sociāldemokrātiskā Strādnieku Partija (LSDSP, Latvia)
 Lietuvos Socialdemokratu Partija (LSDP, Lithuania)
 Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (SLD, Poland)
 Unia Pracy (UP, Poland)
 Partidul Democrat (PD, Romania)
 Partidul Social Democrat Român, PSD (Romania)
 Strana Demokratickej Lavice (SDL, Slovak Republic)
 Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS, Slovak Republic)
 Združena Lista Socialnih Demokratov (ZLSD, Slovenia)

March 2000 Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, Turkey)

Observer Status

March 1980 Israel Labour Party (ILP, Israel)

Malta Labour Party (MLP, Malta)

February 1990 Sosyaldemokrat Halkgi Parti (SHP, Turkey)

November 1992 United Workers' Party of Israel (MAPAM, Israel)
 Partito Socialista Sammarinese (PSS, San Marino)

May 2001 Althyduhusinu - Social Democratic Party (A, Iceland)⁵

¹ Until November 1978, the Belgian PS and SP were united.

² Until May 1969 the French member of the Liaison Bureau was the Section Française Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO).

³ Merged with PSDI in 1999 to become Socialisti Democratici Italiani (SDI)

⁴ Although eligible for membership in 1973, the British Labour Party and the Northern Irish SDLP did not participate in the work of the CSPEC until January 1976.

⁵ Althyduhusinu was downgraded from associate status (granted in February 1990) to observer status in 2001

Annexes

II. Presidents

April 1974-January 1979	Wilhelm DRÖSCHER (SPD)
January 1979-March 1980	Robert PONTILLON (PS-F)
March 1980-May 1987	Joop DEN UYL (PvdA)
May 1987-January 1989	Vitor CONSTANCIO (PS-P)
February 1989-May 1992	Guy SPITAELS (PS-B)
November 1992-October 1994	Willy CLAES (SP-B)
March 1995-May 2001	Rudolf SCHARPING (SPD)
May 2001-	Robin COOK (LP-GB)

III. Vice-presidents

April 1974-June 1978	Sicco MANSHOLT (PvdA) Robert PONTILLON (PS-F) Ivar NORGAARD (SD)
June 1978-April 1980	Sicco MANSHOLT (PvdA) Bruno FRIEDRICH (SPD) Karen DAHLERUP (SD) Karel VAN MIERT (SP/PS,SP-B)
April 1980-February 1983	Manuel MARIN (PSOE) Bruno FRIEDRICH (SPD) Lionel JOSPIN (PS-F) Frank CLUSKEY (LP-Ireland)
February 1983-September 1985	Bruno FRIEDRICH (SPD) Jacques HUNTZINGER (PS-F) Anker JORGENSEN (SD) Rui MATEUS (PS-P)

September 1985-October 1987	Jacques HUNTZINGER (PS-F) Rui MATEUS (PS-P) Gwynneth DUNWOODY (LP-GB) Karsten VOIGT (SPD)
October 1987-March 1990	Gwynneth DUNWOODY (LP-GB) Guy SPITAELS (PS-B) Elena FLORES (PSOE) Pierre GUIDONI (PS-F)
March 1990-November 1992	Elena FLORES (PSOE) Gérard FUCHS (PS-F) Roy HATTERSLEY (LP-GB) Lelio LAGORIO (PSI) Thijs WÖLTGENS (PvdA)
November 1992-March 1995	Elena FLORES (PSOE) Gérard FUCHS (PS-F) Thijs WÖLTGENS (PvdA) Jack CUNNINGHAM (LP-GB) Mario DIDO (PSI) Heinz FISCHER (SPÖ)
March 1995-June 1997	Philippe BUSQUIN (PS-B) Heinz FISCHER (SPÖ) Pierre GUIDONI (PS-F) Lena HJELM-WALLEN (SAP) Raïmon OBIOLS (PSOE) Achille OCHETTO (DS) John PRESCOTT (LP-GB) Akis TSOCHATZOPOULOS (PASOK)
June 1997-March 1999	Robin COOK (LP-GB) Heinz FISCHER (SPÖ) Lena HJELM-WALLEN (SAP) Henri NALLET (PS-F) Raïmon OBIOLS (PSOE) Achille OCHETTO (DS) Akis TSOCHATZOPOULOS (PASOK) Jan Marinus WIERSMA (PvdA)

Annexes

March 1999-May 2001

Jean ASSELBORN (POSL)
Robin COOK (LP-GB)
Heinz Fischer (SPÖ)
Lena HJELM-WALLEN (SAP)
Henri NALLET (PS-F)
Raïmon OBIOLS (PSOE)
Achille OCHETTO (DS)
Ruairi QUINN (LP-Ireland)
Akis TSOCHATZOPOULOS (PASOK)
Jan Marinus WIERSMA (PvdA)

IV. Secretaries-General

April 1974-July 1977	Manfred MICHEL (SPD) (joint with EP Group)
July 1977-November 1982	Dick TOORNSTRA (PvdA)
November 1982-October 1989	Mauro GIALLOMBARDO (PSI)
October 1989-March 1995	Axel HANISCH (SPD)
March 1995-September 1999	Jean-François VALLIN (PS-F)
September 1999-	Ton BEUMER (PvdA)

V. Congresses

1 st Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	January 1957	Luxembourg
2 nd Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	June 1957	Luxembourg
3 rd Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	October 1958	Strasbourg
4 th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	May 1960	Strasbourg
5 th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	November 1962	Paris
6 th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	September 1964	Rome

7 th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	November 1966	Berlin
8 th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	June 1971	Brussels
9 th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC	April 1973	Bonn
10 th Congress of the CSPEC	January 1979	Brussels
11 th Congress of the CSPEC	March 1980	Luxembourg
12 th Congress of the CSPEC	November 1982	Paris
13 th Congress of the CSPEC	March 1984	Luxembourg
14 th Congress of the CSPEC	April 1985	Madrid
15 th Congress of the CSPEC	May 1987	Cascais
16 th Congress of the CSPEC	February 1989	Brussels
17 th Congress of the CSPEC	February 1990	Berlin
1 st Congress of the PES	November 1992	The Hague
Extraordinary Congress of the PES (Manifesto)	November 1993	Brussels
2 nd Congress of the PES	March 1995	Barcelona
3 rd Congress of the PES	June 1997	Malmö
4 th Congress of the PES (incl. Manifesto)	March 1999	Milan
5 th Congress of the PES	May 2001	Berlin

Annexes

VI. Party Leaders' summits

November 1974	The Hague
January 1976	Helsingor
June 1978	Brussels
June 1979	Brussels
April 1981	Amsterdam
June 1984	Brussels
June 1985	Rome
October 1987	Paris
June 1988	Rome
November 1988	Berlin (EC-EFTA Conf.)
June 1989	Paris
October 1989	Milan (Ad Hoc)
November 1989	Lisbon
March 1990	Vienna (EC-EFTA Conf.)
June 1990	Dublin
December 1990	Madrid
January 1991	Brussels (Gulf Crisis Meeting)
June 1991	Luxembourg
December 1991	Brussels
June 1992	Lisbon
October 1992	Brussels
December 1992	Edinburgh

June 1993	Copenhagen
September 1993	Arràbida (Conclave)
December 1993	Brussels
June 1994	Corfu
December 1994	Essen
June 1995	Valbonne
November 1995	Madrid (Conclave)
December 1995	Madrid
March 9-10 1996	Sintra (Conclave)
March 28 1996	Turin
June 1996	Florence
October 5 1996	Budapest (Conclave with CEE party leaders)
October 26 1996	Dublin
December 1996	Dublin
April 1997	The Hague (Conclave)
May 1997	Nordwijk
June 1997	Amsterdam
October 1997	Luxembourg
December 1997	Luxembourg
March 1998	London (European Conference with CEECs)
April 1998	London (Conclave)
June 1998	Cardiff
October 5 1998	Vienna
October 24 1998	Pörtlach

Annexes

December 1998	Vienna
January 1999	Vienna (Manifesto)
April 1999	Brussels (Kosovo Crisis)
June 2 1999	Köln
June 16 1999	Brussels (Post-EP election)
June 29 1999	Brussels (Post-EP election)
October 1999	Tampere
December 1999	Helsinki
March 2000	Lisbon (Conclave)
June 2000	Porto
October 2000	Biarritz
December 2000	Nice
March 2001	Stockholm
June 2001	Göteborg
October 2001	Ghent
December 2001	Laeken
March 2002	Barcelona

VII Programmes, manifestos and declarations

Common Programme of Action for the Socialist Parties of the European Community, 5th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC, Paris, November 1962.

Towards a Social Europe, 9th Congress of the Socialist Parties of the EC, Bonn, April 1973.

Political Declaration, Leaders' Summit, Brussels, June 1978.

Appeal to the European Electorate, 10th Congress of the CSPEC, Brussels, January 1979.

Report on the Confederation's Functions, Structure and Programme of Activities (Debunne Report), 11th Congress of the CSPEC, Luxembourg, March 1980.

Manifesto of the Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community, 13th Congress of the CSPEC, Luxembourg, March 1984.

Unity in Europe for Peace and Jobs, 15th Congress of the CSPEC, Cascais (Lisbon), May 1987.

EC/EFTA - Common Future 1992, EC-EFTA Leaders' Summit, Berlin, November 1988.

For a Europe of Unity Prosperity and Solidarity: Manifesto of the Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community, 16th Congress of the CSPEC, Brussels, February 1989.

Strengthening the Confederation (Kok Report), 17th Congress of the CSPEC, Berlin, February 1990.

Leaders' Declaration on the Intergovernmental Conferences (Madrid Declaration), Leaders' Summit, Madrid, December 1990.

Luxembourg Declaration on the Intergovernmental Conferences, Leaders' Summit, Luxembourg, June 1991.

Europe, Our Common Future (Den Haag Declaration), 1st Congress of the PES, The Hague, November 1992.

Manifesto for the Elections to the European Parliament of June 1994, Election Congress of the PES, Brussels, November 1993.

The European Employment Initiative: Put Europe to Work (Larsson Report), Leaders' Summit, Brussels, December 1993, and revised, Corfu, June 1994.

Good Environment gives Good Jobs: Environment, Employment and Welfare: a socialist vision, Report by Leaders' ad-hoc Working Group, Brussels, February 1995.

Annexes

Barcelona Declaration, 2nd Congress of the PES, Barcelona, March 1995.

Bringing the European Union into Balance, Leaders' Summit, Madrid, December 1995.

Budapest Declaration, Leaders' Summit, Budapest, October 1996.

Thoughts and Proposals on a New Model of Development, Document presented to the 3rd Congress of the PES, Malmö, 1997.

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A European Employment Pact for a New European Way (Guterres Report), Report by Leaders' ad-hoc Working Group, adopted by the 4th Congress of the PES, Milan, March 1999.

The New Europe. 21 Commitments for the 21st Century. Manifesto for the 1999 European Elections, 4th Congress of the PES, Milan, March 1999.

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Strengthening the Party of European Socialists, 5th Congress of the PES, Berlin, May 2001.

The Future of Europe (Tallinn Declaration), PES Leaders' Declaration, Tallinn, December 2001.

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