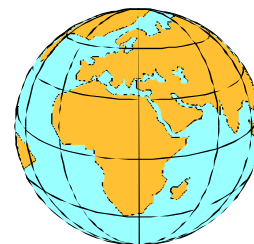




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**“Liberate work by removing its tax burden and finance social security by taxing the consumption of goods, which most often are produced by machine.”
(+ unconditional Basic Income for all)**

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1. PRESENTATION OF « SPRING ALLIANCE »

The Spring Alliance is a participatory movement to ensure that the European Union puts people and planet first.

It was created by three leading European civil society organisations: the European Environmental Bureau, the R European Trade Union Confederation and Social Platform and was later joined by Concord (European NGO confederation for Relief and Development). But the Alliance is much broader than that – it's supported by a network of organisations from all comers of civil society and beyond, including development NGOs, Fair Trade movement, anti-poverty campaigners, consumer organisations and representatives from the research community.

Here the introduction of MANIFESTO published by SPRING ALLIANCE.
In appendix, you will find his full text of 27 pages.

<http://www.springalliance.eu/>

2. INTRODUCTION TO MANIFESTO PUBLISHED OF SPRING ALLIANCE (2009) FIVE CHALLENGES TO TAKE UP AND 17 PROPOSALS FOR L' EUROPE



spring alliance

For a European Union that puts people and planet first.

MANIFESTO

1. Introduction

Today, the European Union stands at a crossroads.

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

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

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

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

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

If you'd like to help steer the EU onto a course that benefits its people and the planet, join us! Please see our website at www.springalliance.eu for information on how you can support the campaign.⁴

2. Challenges

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since 2005, the EU has made a push to increase the deregulation of its markets, including its labour market, in accordance with its "Lisbon" growth and jobs strategy. This had a detrimental effect on European society, causing a rise in low-quality work and failing to reduce poverty. The Lisbon

strategy, with its strong emphasis on competitiveness, also had an adverse effect in the environmental domain, by halting or slowing down the adoption of legislation, including in the area of climate change.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The majority of the EU population feels disconnected from EU decision-making processes. National politicians often consider "Brussels" as an external power, and sometimes use it as scapegoat for unpopular decisions. This further undermines the EU's credibility and its capacity to lead its citizens through difficult times. ⁶

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

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

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

- There is an increased support for a new global architecture with more regulation of markets (particularly financial markets)
- There is an increased awareness of the need to take urgent action to confront ecological and social challenges
- Civil society movements and entrepreneurs are active in developing alternative solutions to these challenges

- Large investment programmes are being put in place to cope with the crisis, and these can be designed to promote sustainable developments

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

Overview of our 17 proposals

A. Establish an economic and governance strategy that serves people and planet

1. Put in place a new economic strategy
2. Revise the Better Regulation Agenda

B. Preserve and restore ecosystems

3. Reduce resource use and energy consumption
4. Prevent dangerous climate change
5. Make agriculture and fisheries sustainable
6. Adopt a "Biodiversity Rescue Plan"

C. Establish inclusive societies

7. Reduce inequalities and eradicate poverty
8. Guarantee universal access to public services
9. Combat discrimination and racism; guarantee gender equality and respect for migrants' rights

D. Promote green and quality jobs

10. Reinforce quality jobs and improve access for all
11. Ensure a just transition to quality jobs, and help workers move into new emerging activities

E. Assume global responsibility

12. Reform global economic and financial governance
13. Guarantee policy coherence to achieve development goals
14. Increase and improve finance for development

F. Improve democracy

15. Invest in dialogue with European citizens, trade unions and civil society
16. Improve access to and scrutiny of decision-making
17. Strengthen the governance of EU strategies and of the Open Method of Coordination

¹ EU Coherence project

² Hunger Free Campaign and FAO

³ World Bank, March 2009

⁴ Action Aid, March 2009 5

- 5 Joint report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, European Commission, 2009
- 6 Social Protection and Social Inclusion Indicators, European Commission, 2008
- ⁷”Growing Unequal”, OECD Report, 2008
- 8 “Equal Pay” campaign, European Commission, 2009