

Cooperation Committee of the Nordic Social Democratic parties and trade union LO's (SAMAK)



SAMAK – Arbeiderbevegelsens
Nordiske Samarbeidskomite

Tlf: +47 24 14 40 83
Ep: samak@samak.info
www.samak.info

*Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
in the European Parliament (S&D Group)
Attn. President Gianni Pittella*

Dear Gianni!

Oslo, April 5 2017

SAMAK CALL ON S&D GROUP PRIORITIES

Europe faces huge challenges on a wide range of issues the coming years. The political decisions taken in Europe on how to handle these issues will also have global reach. To this end, we believe the S&D group is and should be a major player in European politics.

As you know SAMAK represents the Social democratic parties and the LO trade unions in the Nordic countries. Based on the *Sörmarka Declaration* of 2014 and the resolution adopted at our annual meeting of 2017, SAMAK encourages the S&D-group to promote the following goals up to the European elections in 2019.

1. A democratic, trusted and forward-looking European social model

It is vital to increase European citizens' trust in politics and democratic political institutions. This must govern day-to-day decisions, co-determination and communication, but also long-term strategies and accountability. In our view, the future European social model needs to be worked further on and made understandable and accessible to citizens, in cooperation with the social partners and civil society. We must have policies for and come across with a *Europe for the people*. Better answers to well-founded concerns about the unfair sharing of the fruits of globalization and new technology, as well as the principles for a sustainable migration policy, are parts of a future progressive European social model. Full employment remains absolutely necessary for socially acceptable outcomes.

2. Pushing for a social progress protocol

We call for a social progress protocol. We must take immediate action to strengthen growth and combat social dumping. However, there are limitations to what can be achieved under the current EU treaties. Therefore, in conjunction with the next EU treaty revision, social rights including trade union rights, should be strengthened. The social progress protocol should clarify in primary

law that neither the economic freedoms of the internal market nor competition rules take precedence over fundamental social rights. In the event of conflict, fundamental social rights must have priority.

3. A Europe based on equality

The recent broader understanding that inequality impedes economic growth must translate into policy initiatives in practice. Redistributing current incomes is necessary. However, that in itself is not sufficient. In the long run, an equal society requires policies that ensure all Europeans increased professional competencies, throughout their lives.

At the same time, we have to curb the ever-increasing amassment and concentration of wealth; if not the European social model will surely be undermined by lack of legitimacy, unchecked market forces, and money disrupting the political system. Gender equality and anti-discrimination have to be furthered, both in their own right and as vehicles for a just and efficient society.

4. Decent work, learning jobs for all

The labour market is the heart of any social model. High and stable employment must be universally accepted as a main goal of economic policy. The fight against social dumping has to be stepped up significantly to protect workers as well as labour market regimes, and this may also alleviate public concerns about international cooperation in trade and other areas. Increased efforts to stimulate on-the-job training are necessary not only for economic development, but for equality as well. Our answer should be higher and higher competencies, and life long learning, not more and more “simple” jobs. To reach this end in the long term, at least in a Nordic setting, it is crucial that the political authorities stimulate and engage broad and responsible social partners, on the employee but also the employer side.

5. Future aviation on fair terms

The SAMAK report “*Future aviation on fair terms*” of January 2017 supports and supplements the work in this area undertaken by the S&D group. Your efforts for a decent future for European, as well as global, aviation must in the decisive time ahead be geared and calibrated to reach a successful conclusion within the EU.

6. Combatting tax fraud and securing the tax base

Of course, the power to levy taxes is in the hands of the EU Member States. However, without a broad and robust tax base not undermined by tax evasion

and avoidance, the European social model will wither away. We see substantial positive policy results in this area, but the challenges are still large, diverse, and driven by new technology. The important efforts from the S&D group for the future tax base must continue without loss of momentum.

7. A green economic development

Especially in light of globalization and new technology European industries and firms will still need constant restructuring. However, necessary modernizations will not be sustainable if they do not give due consideration to the threats of climate change, and policies in relevant areas must be coordinated and facilitate this green economic development. A just transition is essential.

Concluding remarks

As is well known, the Nordic countries have had quite favourable economic and societal developments for many years. However, we still need support and attention from our European partners to safeguard and improve further the Nordic model.

Not least, we need backing from the S&D group to keep intact our unique and well-functioning labour market regimes. They are a basic pillar of the Nordic model, which rely on the social partners and not politically decided minimum wages to ensure decent wages and working life.

SAMAK and its members stand ready to support and cooperate with the S&D group. These are challenging times. Then let us not forget that Europe, through determined cooperation based on social democratic principles rather than a failing neo-liberal approach, has enormous possibilities. An important part of policymaking must be to identify the future possibilities – and to communicate clearly these visions and the road map to reach them.

Yours sincerely



Jonas Gahr Støre

Leader



Jan-Erik Støstad

Secretary General