



#EuropeTogether we can! António Costa and S&D Group with clear vision for a progressive Europe engaging with citizens in direct dialogue!

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Portuguese Prime Minister, António Costa, has spoken in the EP plenary today in Strasbourg laying out his vision on the 'Future of Europe'. António Costa is the first progressive leader to speak in the context of this new series of exchanges launched in the House setting out a clear vision for a progressive Europe. In light of the various challenges today, there can only be European answers to the problems we face. In his speech, António Costa called for a European response to the refugee crisis, the fight against terrorism, to tackle climate change, to fight unemployment and ensure a fair digitalisation.

In order to face these challenges and to re-establish economic and social convergence, the progressive leader was clear: Europe needs a stronger EU budget and a eurozone reform with a proper fiscal capacity. In this sense, fair taxation and new own resources are necessary tools. Costa led by example when announcing that Portugal is ready to raise its contributions to the long-term EU budget.

Replying to António Costa's speech, S&D acting Group president, Maria João Rodrigues, said:

"Portugal's socialist-led government has proven that there is an alternative to blind austerity. It is possible to go back to growth while fighting social inequalities. Another Europe is possible! With his speech, António Costa has proven that he has an ambitious and progressive vision for what should be the new phase of the European project.

"We must launch a powerful strategy to invest in the future making the best of the energy transition and the current digital revolution.

"The Europe of tomorrow must be a social one. The proposals from the Commission on the implementation of the Social Pillar are crucial in this respect. The various initiatives are a good start but we must do more to ensure that the measures do not remain empty words but become concrete reality for people. Investment in jobs, fighting youth unemployment, ensuring the rights of the children, pursuing minimum wages across Europe - it is our duty to deliver on these needs.

"The EU can only take effective action if it has the means to do so. The EU must be equipped with a strong, long-term EU budget based not only on contributions from member states but also increased own resources. Today's vote on the MFF and the Own Resources report will play a central role as well as our continued joint fight against tax evasion and tax fraud.

"Finally, the EU must remain an example of international co-operation based on human values, democracy, fairness and sustainable development."

Maria João Rodrigues emphasised the need to engage with citizens in the upcoming EP elections 2019:

"The upcoming EP elections in 2019 are the moment when people can decide which Europe they want. It is our duty to ensure that citizens have a real say in these elections. Thus, to engage with them in an open and inclusive way is fundamental.

"We warmly welcome the 'Citizens Conventions' to be launched by the EP and the other EU Institutions. It will be important to ensure that all political groups will take part in these dialogues, so that the people can see the differences between the proposals offered by the political groups.

"The S&D Group, together with its partners from the progressive family, is already engaging with citizens in the context of its #EuropeTogether initiative launched in October 2016 in Brussels. We will continue our citizen events all across Europe and are looking forward to listening and debating with citizens about the future Europe they want. Join us and have your say on your future!"

Note to the editors - the TOGETHER initiative:

The #EuropeTogether initiative aims at bringing European politics closer to citizens. The campaign brings together politicians, academics, civil society and citizens to debate and come up with new proposals for the future of Europe. On **12 April 2018**, the next Together event will take place in **Hamburg**, focusing on the topic of **'Managing Migration & Supporting Refugees in a Globalised World'**. The full programme can be downloaded [here](#).

You can follow the debates on Twitter using **#EuropeTogether** or on the dedicated **#EuropeTogether platform**.

MEPs INVOLVED



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