

Berlin, 12 March 2017

Working Agenda of the Progressive Alliance

Progressive Alliance for Freedom, Justice and Solidarity

I. A first review

Almost four years ago, progressive, social democratic and socialist parties and organisations from all over the world joined in founding a new global network: the Progressive Alliance. We have addressed the most pressing issues of progressive politics – peace, democracy, human rights, social justice, decent work, gender equality and sustainability – and have discussed these intensely. What's more, in addition to our programmatic work, within these few years we have succeeded in setting up a comprehensive exchange of ideas on campaign management and modern party organisation. Another aim which is of great importance to us is to promote solidarity with our comrades all around the globe who are fighting for our values of freedom, justice and solidarity, often risking their lives and suffering great personal hardship.

In the meantime, our network encompasses more than 130 parties and organisations. Also, we have provided mutual support in setting up regional organisations and will continue to commit ourselves to regional exchange. We already work together closely with various regional party networks such as the Party of European Socialists (PES), the Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, the Network of Social Democracy in Asia (SocDem Asia), the Central African Progressive Alliance (CAPA) and the Arab Social Democratic Forum (ASDF). We also maintain intensive and strategic relations with the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY). In the past few years, we have also been present on the ground in all regions of the world and have succeeded in expanding and strengthening our network. Right from the very start, the Progressive Alliance has welcomed the urgently-needed cooperation of progressive trade unions, civil society organisations, for instance in the field of gender equality and LGBTI rights, and think tanks.

Finally – and this is the decisive feature of the Progressive Alliance – our global network is based on the commitment of individual parties who propose initiatives and projects and implement these together with the Progressive Alliance. The Progressive Alliance's strength lies, not least, in this commitment and ownership.

II. Our motivation and our obligation

Founding of the Progressive Alliance on 22 May 2013 marked the end of many years of discussion about a modern, democratic and open form of international cooperation between progressive, social democratic, socialist as well as labour parties and kicked off the start of such cooperation.

The Progressive Alliance has succeeded in setting new benchmarks for cooperation and networking not only involving political parties, but also including progressive organisations and movements.

It is precisely this international cooperation which is now needed more urgently than ever before. We are experiencing an unprecedented increase in political and social challenges, the full force of which is unfolding particularly in the international dimension. The financial and economic crisis is accompanied by a wide-scale ecological crisis and severe structural inequality. In many countries of the world, the crisis of democracy has intensified. In many places, the return of war and nationalism as a political means is eroding any willingness to cooperate at an international level.

It must therefore be the aspiration of progressive, social democratic and socialist parties and organisations to formulate realistic and, at the same time, visionary answers to the great challenges of our era. This means the introduction of political pilot projects for the here and now, while at the same time continuing to develop long-term strategies and concepts – by all means with a utopian surplus – which demonstrate that it is possible to create a different, better and more just society by combining day-to-day political business with long-range visions. Because it is possible to create a different kind of world.

III. Focus of our work

Against this backdrop, the Progressive Alliance has outlined the following focal points for its work and we are putting these into practice with the help of our campaigns and various event formats.

Decent Work Worldwide: In October 2013, supported by all our members and with numerous events on all continents, the Progressive Alliance commenced a three-year campaign with the title “Decent Work Worldwide“. Events focussed on the regional exchange of ideas and concepts concerning various aspects of decent work. The encouragement of decent work worldwide is not only a core task of progressive, social democratic and socialist parties, but is also a central starting point for reducing inequality. The majority of the world’s population, including the people of developing countries, has some form of employment. Most jobs, however, are to be found in the informal sector, in which productivity is low, working conditions are poor, wages are unfair and social protection is non-existent. In a lot of countries, child labour, forced labour, discrimination of women, persecution of trade union members and non-compliance with labour protection laws are inherent in the working world. We have extensively discussed progressive approaches and examples of how gender equality, social protection and inclusive growth can be advanced and how social inequality between various countries and sections of society can be curbed. Another major aspect of the campaign was to examine the dynamics of global migration. The Progressive Alliance has drawn up and published comprehensive position papers on all issues of the topic cluster “Decent work“.

Agenda for Peace and Justice: In October 2016, the Progressive Alliance launched the campaign “For a New Agenda for Peace and Justice”. In many countries throughout the world, political crises and states of emergency have become the status quo. Societies are being increasingly confronted with the spread of terrorism and extremism as well as an increase in armed conflicts. Preventing wars and creating the social foundations that allow peace to be established must be the aim of progressive politics. This requires prompt, determined action on the international stage, always under the aspects of international solidarity accompanied by continued dialogue and cooperation. The benchmark for international politics must always be the “strength of law” and not “the law of the strong”.

In order to achieve this, we have committed ourselves to:

- a) reforming the United Nations and helping it achieve new authority and efficacy,
- b) asserting our democratic values, even against authoritarian tendencies both within and outside of our societies,
- c) strengthening universal and indivisible human rights and
- d) understanding peace not just as the absence of war and working towards eliminating structural conditions that often make conflicts and war possible, namely: poverty, inequality and environmental degradation.

As part of its campaign “For a New Agenda for Peace and Justice”, the Progressive Alliance is promoting and encouraging exchange on these issues at events in all regions of the world and in cooperation with our key partners in trade unions, civil society and think tanks.

Election Campaign Seminars: A central factor of exchanges between progressive forces is the further development of progressive and social democratic programmes. Our aspiration is not only to take the lead in national governments, but to prove that our concepts are globally sustainable and globally realisable. However, even the most progressive programme has no chance of implementation unless our parties win elections and are given the opportunity to assume political responsibility. This is why the discussion about election campaign techniques and strategies, along with party organisation, are the Progressive Alliance’s second mainstay, together with thematic content. Up to now, our campaign seminars have focussed on practical exchange concerning successful strategies and concepts in particular, for example door-to-door campaigns, gender-specific aspects of election campaigns and strategies used in online campaigning. Further information and insights can be found on the Progressive Alliance’s homepage under the heading "Progressive Campaigning".

- **International Solidarity Work:** Right from the beginning of the labour movement, cross-border solidarity was one of the decisive characteristics distinguishing this from other political movements. Under the term “solidarity” we understand the idea of a shared sense of community and mutual assistance. Solidarity is the sword of the seemingly powerless and, at the same time, solidarity creates the power to make changes. This has been the experience of the workers’ movement. It is therefore one of the central objectives of all members of the Progressive Alliance to help comrades throughout the world who are suffering political suppression and persecution and who need international support in their fight to uphold our common values.

IV. The Way Ahead

The Progressive Alliance wants to strengthen and expand cross-border dialogue, worldwide cooperation and international solidarity. In order to do justice to our own political aspirations and values of democracy, justice, solidarity and gender equality, also within our own network, we have to advance the basic principles of action and structures of the Progressive Alliance.

For this reason, we want to improve, and in doing so, also strengthen the Progressive Alliance in the following areas:

- The Progressive Alliance is to be given a lean structure, and in future will consist of the Steering Committee, the Coordinator and a Board. As a whole, the Progressive Alliance is striving for maximum transparency and participation. However, to achieve this, a few things still need to be adjusted: for example we need more transparent monitoring of finances and clearer principles regarding which parties can actively contribute to the Progressive Alliance.
- With the new campaign “For a New Agenda for Peace and Justice”, we have created a framework for our programmatic cooperation. We implement this exchange of ideas and knowledge in all regions of the world and, as in the previous campaign “Decent Work Worldwide”, we incorporate trade unions, the progressive elements of civil society and think tanks.
- In order to make our progressive agenda political reality, we have to win elections. Therefore we shall continue with our discussions on programmes, in particular concerning the exchange of experience in progressive campaigning and modern and participatory party organisation.
- We shall continue to actively support and show our solidarity with all those who are threatened by oppression and persecution. History has taught us: our strength as progressive, social democratic and socialist forces lies in international solidarity.
- We, the Progressive Alliance, want to strengthen the voice of progressives and make it heard in the global public and political arena. Only by standing together we can influence

global politics and bring about progressive change. To do this, we must participate in relevant debates and expand our visibility and shared positions in various political fields.

- In order to play a central role in the world as an international alliance of progressive, social democratic and socialist parties, we must increase the Progressive Alliance's prominence. To do this, we shall intensify our media presence – especially in the field of cross-border electronic and social media.
- As progressive, social democratic and socialist parties we see ourselves as part of a social and cultural movement. And it is from this interaction, in particular, that we receive a lot of significant impulses for our political agenda. We are therefore offering an annual award of € 5,000 to projects and initiatives of progressive parties and organisations which have campaigned for more peace and justice in the world in an innovative and exemplary manner. The winner is determined by a jury constituted from the coordinators of the regional organizations within the Progressive Alliance, a representative of the party where the prize will be awarded and the Coordinator of the Progressive Alliance.
- No bright future without a good education – this is one of the basic realisations of our movement. Consequently, one of the core activities of our movement is providing educational opportunities to disadvantaged groups: education as the basis for the shaping of politics, the economy and society as well as the individual's own life. Against this background we want to build up a Progressive Alliance Activist Academy that shall offer instruction and training in all relevant sectors of modern party organisation and communication work to young political activists every year. Parties and organisations belonging to the Progressive Alliance can propose potential recipients and can play an active role in the training courses.
- The youth is the future, but the youth is also the present. It is essential to move to a paradigm in which the youth is not only accepted as a subject with legal rights, but also becomes important agents of social change. Against this background the Progressive Alliance wants to strengthen and broaden its cooperation with the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY).
- We will not rest before gender equality is a natural phenomenon. We believe the issue of gender should be mainstreamed in all policy fields and covered in our discussions. Simultaneously, we will discuss the issue of gender equality intensively and on a regular basis within the framework of the Progressive Alliance by establishing a working group PA gender. We will follow up on the Gender Action Plan of the Progressive Alliance. As Progressive Alliance, we will set a positive example by making sure women play a central and leading role in our network.
- All three points of focus (programmatic discussions, solidarity work and exchange on campaigns) will be handled using a wide variety of formats – public conferences, exchange of experience in the steering committee and field missions, to name just three. Here we shall in future be placing special emphasis on modern and innovative working methods. We

are still searching for further suggestions regarding formats and methods, in order to improve the structure of our experience and information exchange activities.

V. Our mission

The majority of people want to live in a peaceful and just world. It is for them that we engage in political action.

It is up to us, the progressive, social democratic and socialist forces, to determine whether the 21st century will be a century of violence and fierce battles for resources, or whether it will be a century of social, democratic, ecological and economic progress.

The course of the 21st century will depend largely on our strength and on the strength of progressive forces worldwide. We must struggle to ensure that the 21st century will be a century of social justice and democracy.

Annex: Our joint work to date

17-18 October 2016, Brussels, Belgium:

Progressive Alliance Parliamentarian Conference on “For a New Agenda for Peace and Justice” in cooperation with the Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)

19-20 September 2016, Denpasar, Indonesia:

Progressive Alliance Seminar “Living together in a New World, Building Solidarity and Social Justice” in cooperation with the Network of Social Democracy in Asia, hosted by Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-Perjuangan)

25 April 2016, São Paulo, Brazil:

Progressive Alliance Seminar “Democracy and Social Justice” hosted by Workers' Party (PT) Brazil

16-17 April 2016, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia:

Inaugural “Asian Pacific Campaign Forum”, a cooperation of the Progressive Alliance, SocDem Asia and Australian Labor Party (ALP)

15-18 March 2016, Ohio, Washington and New York City:

Progressive Alliance “Campaign Camp on the US Elections” in cooperation with the Party of European Socialists (PES)

14 December 2015, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic:

Progressive Alliance Forum on “Development for All – Democratic and Just” hosted by PRM Dominican Republic

19-20 November 2015, Rabat, Morocco:

Progressive Alliance Seminar on “Social Justice and Equal Opportunities for All” hosted by USFP Morocco

30-31 October 2015, Beirut, Lebanon:

Seminar “Refugees Struggle for Freedom” in cooperation with the ASDF, PES, S&D Group, GPF, Solidar, FEPS, FES, OPIC, hosted by PSP Lebanon

28-29 October 2015, Melbourne, Australia:

"International Progressive Campaign Forum" in cooperation with and hosted by ALP Australia

25-26 September 2015, Penang, Malaysia:

Progressive Alliance Seminar "Growth and Inclusion" in cooperation with the Network of Social Democracy in Asia, hosted by DAP Malaysia

12 June 2015, Budapest, Hungary:

Progressive Alliance Fringe Meeting "For a New Policy of Détente" in cooperation with the Party of European Socialist (PES)

22-23 May 2015, Rotterdam, Netherlands:

Progressive Alliance Conference "Decent Work and Gender Equality" in cooperation with the Party of European Socialist (PES), hosted by the PvdA, Netherlands

26-27 March 2015, Mexico City, Mexico:

Progressive Alliance Seminar "Inclusive Growth and Decent Work" hosted by the PRD Mexico

4-5 December 2014, Lisbon, Portugal:

Progressive Alliance Parliamentarian Conference on "Decent Work and Education: Investing in Equal Opportunities for All" in cooperation with the Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D), hosted by PS Portugal

7 October 2014, worldwide:

World Day for Decent Work

29-30 September 2014, Manila, Philippines:

Progressive Alliance Seminar "Decent Work and Migration" in cooperation with the Network of Social Democracy in Asia, hosted by Akbayan Philippines

22 September 2014, Manchester, United Kingdom:

Progressive Alliance Fringe Meeting “Tackling Inequality: A Programme for the Left to Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Growth” in cooperation with the Foundation of European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) hosted by the Labour Party, Great Britain

22-23 July 2014, Montevideo, Uruguay:

Progressive Alliance Seminar “Fighting Inequality” hosted by PS Uruguay

21-23 February 2014, Tunis, Tunisia:

Progressive Alliance Conference “Inclusive Growth and Decent Work” hosted by Ettakatol Tunisia

23-24 October 2013, Stockholm, Sweden:

Progressive Alliance Seminar “A Global New Deal” hosted by SAP Sweden

22 May 2013, Leipzig, Germany:

Progressive Alliance Foundation hosted by SPD Germany

5 April 2013, Gothenburg, Sweden:

Progressive Alliance Steering Committee hosted by SAP Sweden

3 February 2013, Cascais, Portugal:

Progressive Alliance Steering Committee

15 December 2012, Rome, Italy:

Progressive Alliance Kick-Off-Conference hosted by PD Italy