



GLOBAL
PROGRESSIVE
FORUM



Subject: Invitation to participate in the Conference "Working together to address the refugee crisis: a progressive roadmap for EU-MENA cooperation" in Beirut, Lebanon, on 30-31st October 2015

23 September 2015

Dear friends,

Five years ago the PES and the GPF launched a series of events to talk about democracy and social justice in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Today, the situation has changed dramatically. What started in Syria as an uprising against the regime of Bashar Al Assad, has now become a full-fledged war involving a myriad of actors and providing fertile ground for the rise of the Islamic State (IS). Conflicts erupted in Iraq, Yemen, Libya and the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. Tunisia has endured two horrifying terrorist attacks in only a few months' time, giving an unpredicted blow to the tourism sector, where the country gets most of its revenues.

This summer an unprecedented number of refugees has reached the EU's borders, prompting a humanitarian crisis of proportions unseen in post-war Europe. This has led many of our social democratic leaders to call for unity and solidarity in order to find common answers. This solidarity should start within Europe, but it should also apply to those countries in the Middle East that are carrying the heaviest burden of the refugee crisis. Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan have taken up scores of refugees, putting their already fragile population balance at risk.

The causes and consequences of the current refugee crisis affect us all. Although the Middle East and North Africa are home to just 5% of the world's population, they have produced more than one-third of its refugees. In Syria alone, 11 million people have been forcibly displaced within and outside the country. We need to work together with our partners in the Middle East and North Africa to come up with structural, humane and progressive solutions addressing the current situation.

This is why the Global Progressive Forum (a joint initiative of the PES and the S&D Group), the Olof Palme Foundation, the Progressive Alliance, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, SOLIDAR and the Arab Social Democratic Forum have put their hands together to organise **the conference 'working together to address the refugee crisis: a progressive roadmap for EU-MENA cooperation'**. The conference is part of a series of activities on the refugee crisis, and came as a result of a field visit in Lebanon this summer with our partners. **It will take place on [30-31 October](#) and will be hosted by our sister party PSP in Beirut, Lebanon.**

In partnership with



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



solidar

We would be delighted to welcome you at this conference. If you wish to register please send an email to sylvie.rurakamvye@pes.eu.

Best regards,



Sergei Stanishev
President of the Party of European Socialists



Gianni Pittella
President of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists and Democrats in the European
parliament

In partnership with



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



solidar



GLOBAL PROGRESSIVE FORUM



In partnership with



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES

