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Progressive Alliance Statement to fight the consequences of Covid-19

Borderless challenges require borderless solidarity

The Covid-19 pandemic has become a scourge for mankind. Hundreds of thousands have already contracted it and many thousands have died and will die of it. The virus causes enormous suffering, creates individual and collective insecurity worldwide by threatening people across borders and destabilizing entire countries and regions.

The fatal consequences of this pandemic particularly affect people who are less fortunate, who are already starving and who cannot expect financial support nor medical protection from their governments and public authorities, those who are suffering of war and expulsion where again women are the most exposed.

Covid-19 is an enormous challenge for everyone. Medical and health care as well as social and economic systems are reaching their stress limits. Progressive answers to these challenges are needed – today and for the time afterwards.

Social Democrats, Socialists and Progressives are at the forefront in fighting the health, social and economic effects of this unprecedented crisis. What we need is social cohesion and solidarity, at national and global level!

Over the next few weeks, the foundations of a new world order shall be laid. Progressives need to raise their voices now in order to have a say in its shaping. The shift of control over vital public services to the private market only is the wrong path. We now can see clearly that social security and health care are not costs to be cut, but essential pillars of good functioning societies which need sustainable investments.

The ignorance and arrogance of the nationalists and populists divide societies and endangers us all. Their path is wrong and put human lives at risk - this is now more evident than ever - lacking any ethical or humanist reference and undermining our democracies.

Already now, the struggle over who will have to bear the costs of the necessary rescue packages has begun. Different from the response to the financial crisis of 2008, our democracies, societies, economies and simply the planet cannot afford another decade of austerity or uncontrolled markets.



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Solidarity means that the strong use their strength to help the weak. The answer to this crisis is global solidarity. We, the parties and organisations of the Progressive Alliance, defending a multilateral approach therefore demand and promote an immediate and bold global agenda:

We call for acute measures:

- **A global humanitarian ceasefire** as urgently demanded by the UN Secretary General in order to create the necessary space to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, even in war and crisis areas – also an immediate ending of politically motivated embargos in order to allow access to food and medical supply. It is now about saving lives and mitigating the spread of the virus.
- **Global cooperation and coordination are the prerequisite for a successful fight against the effects caused by Covid-19.** We call on governments to apply without delay the recommendation of the WHO. Those who isolate themselves and do not support others with all their possibilities show a lack of solidarity and are responsible for a major catastrophe. Mutual global support is needed by politicians, research institutes and companies to support those states and people in vulnerable areas across borders in their search for political and medical solutions.
- **Immediate medical support for refugee camps in preparation for the spread of the viral disease.** Refugees and displaced persons are most vulnerable and must not be forgotten. International institutions and states must continue and even increase their aid and assistance.

In the medium run we call:

- **For an international fund to be created by the United Nations** to support the treatment of coronavirus patients worldwide and to tackle the long-term consequences. This fund needs not only to enable acute measures, but also future-oriented investments in the general interest. We call for intensified development cooperation as we must shoulder the costs of the pandemic together as the impact and costs of the corona crisis will be enormous and will overtax many states, rush them in severe financial and economic crisis.
- **The G20 to work closely with the United Nations to coordinate tax and monetary policies,** as well as trade resumption and joint aid packages. National crisis policy is necessary and justified, poor and weak countries cannot be let alone to face the situation. The G20 countries and other strong economies are required to step up.



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- To prevent the risk of a new debt crisis, **for tax avoidance to be coordinated and combatted effectively in order to create new fiscal space** and room for manoeuvre for global financing of global challenges. Targeted debt relief strategies and orderly state insolvency proceedings could take some pressure out of the debt bubble.
- To consider **investment in health and care services as an essential investment in general interest**. Covid19-crisis is not least a social crisis. Health systems at national level and worldwide are reaching their stress limit or are already beyond it. If a proof was necessary the pandemic clearly shows that the neoliberal mantra of maximizing profits at the expense of health, social and public services has also led to this crisis and weakens the states' ability to respond and leaves people behind without any access to medical help.
- To agree in short term on **price controls for important medical goods, international cooperation in vaccine research** and clinical tests, dismantling of patent protection, helping the most affected countries **to stabilise their health systems** and securing the supply chains for medical goods.
- **To review neoliberal reforms of common goods and services** which have failed. We need **social protection floors in all countries** like requested by ILO, we urge for communalisation of public health systems as well as sustainable social investment.
- **On the governments of the nation states to raise the respective minimum and living wages significantly in the health, care and service sector**. Cost pressures were passed down in the last decades, with the result that the workers who ensure our health care and services today are at the end of wages and salaries and are not adequately protected against the virus they fight today.
- **For an international agreement on sustainable investment programs on social infrastructures**. Unlike after the financial crisis, it is important that the new liquidity on the capital markets will flow into socially meaningful real sustainable investments, e.g. social infrastructures, green deal packages etc. **in the general interest** to promote the socio-ecological transition alongside the 2030 agenda.
- For a **redeveloped multilateralism** where Progressives are in the lead for alternative policies and promoting the public interest. We call for **strengthening multilateralism and giving international institutions more decision-making power. The legal and financial foundations must now be expanded**. This virus does not recognise borders. While the list of challenges that we can only tackle globally and collectively is getting longer, multilateralism is on the decline. Many international institutions, such as the United Nations and the WTO, are underfunded and in crisis today, unable to fulfil their intended roles for global governance.



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In times of crisis more than ever: good and democratically legitimised governance are needed

The largely uncontrolled advance of this unprecedented pandemic is currently used by authoritarian and undemocratic regimes to reduce even more democratic and civic space, fundamental rights and democratic institutions. Social democrats, Socialists and Progressives **need to coordinate in regional and international institutions** to ensure that such attempts shall not remain without consequences. Support to progressive and democratic civil society is needed.

- We commit to **defend the rule of democratic law**, the individual and collective fundamental rights and civil liberties;
- We promote **strengthening solidarity at national and global level**;
- We defend and promote **transparency and democratic participation** in good governance;
- We stand **against any attempt of stigmatisation** of refugees or minorities.

Combating the effects of Covid-19 crisis needs democratic control and governance through parliaments, including use of new forms of communication in order to secure space of political debate on choices of policies, programmes and projects.

The virus does not know any borders. The response to the virus cannot know any borders either!

As social democrats, socialists and progressives we engage for better coordination, common approaches and set a new global progressive paradigm through our global network: Progressive Alliance