

EUROPEAN DEMOCRAT STUDENTS

Programme for European Parliamentary Elections

April 1978

This publication is also available in French and German.

INTRODUCTION

European Democrat Students is an organisation of Christian-Democratic, Conservative, Liberal and Centrist student and youth organisations in Europe. Our aims are to further cooperation between our member-organisations, to work for a united and democratic Europe and to actively strengthen and support those ideals common to our members.

We wish to play a part in the building of the free and united Europe of the future and we believe that this task can best be facilitated through strong political organisations operating across the national borders of Europe.

Accordingly, we attach great importance to the creation of European political parties, particularly a **European Democrat Party** formed by those parties sharing the basic values expressed in this programme, as a means of building and consolidating a free and open European society.

To those parties and their supporters, we commend this Programme for **European Parliamentary Elections adopted in Berlin, on 10 December 1977.**

Signatories:

Autrement, France
Danmarks Konservative Studerende, Denmark
Federation of Conservative Students, Great Britain
Fédération des Etudiants Libéraux, Belgium
Ring Christlich-Demokratischer Studenten, Federal Republic of Germany
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Juventude Centrista, Portugal
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BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. We believe in the supreme importance of the individual. Society exists to serve the individual and to assist him in fully developing his potential. Equality of opportunity must be enjoyed by all; thus a minimum level of subsistence and the opportunity to exercise full political and human rights must be guaranteed.
2. We recognise the great benefits derived from the inevitable conflicts of ideas and interests between different groups and individuals in society; and we regard it as the task of the institutions of society to take advantage of this diversity and to regulate these conflicts in a peaceful and non-violent way. By extension, we believe the same is true at an international level.
3. We assert the fundamental importance of parliamentary democracy in the attainment of these aims. Among the essential features of its process are: the diversity of political parties open to all opinions; effective control of executive actions of governments by freely-elected parliamentary assemblies; guarantees of the right of social, political, cultural, religious and trade union activity; a free press and an independent judiciary.
4. We support the principles of the social market economy characterised by a high degree of personal freedom and opportunity, although we accept that government intervention may be necessary on certain occasions.
5. We believe that decisions must be taken at their most effective level; many by the individual himself; others by local government, regional authorities, national institutions or by the authority of nations freely coming together for the common benefit of their citizens.
6. Accordingly, we believe in the creation of a federal Europe in the long term; a European Community, fulfilling its responsibilities towards the rest of the international community, which would help preserve our common values and enable them to flourish. In this way, democracy and the fundamental rights of the individual can be made secure.

THE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

7. We believe that the European Community requires authority to determine policy, democratic control to ensure legitimacy for its decisions and coherence of mind to present policies which will realistically deal with the problems which face it today. The present decision-making process has many defects: national interests are too often put before the common interest; decision-making is slow and bureaucratic; there is a lack of effective democratic control; and the system prevents a coherent approach to the problems facing us.
8. We do not doubt that a Community of twelve - or more - will render decision-making more difficult. But it is our view that the solution to this lies in institutional reform.
9. After the first European Parliamentary Elections, it is essential that the European Parliament becomes the primary institution within the Community, it being the source of democratic support. It must be greatly strengthened so that all policies are a result of decisions taken by a parliamentary majority; it should have wide powers of investigation into legislation, the activities of the Commission and Community business generally, together with the power to initiate legislation. And it must be elected by a uniform proportional electoral system.
10. There is a need to ensure the influence of each member-state. However, majority voting should speedily be reintroduced in the present Council of Ministers. In the longer term, the Council should develop into a European Senate with an equality of members for each country. The members should be chosen by national parliaments, having regard to the political spectrum of the parliament concerned. The Senate should be a second chamber to the European Parliament taking its decisions by a simple majority; it must have the power to amend legislation but not to initiate or veto it.
11. The Commission must become the political executive of the Community, responsible to the Parliament for all its actions and acting upon all Parliamentary decisions. The President of the Commission should be elected by the Parliament and he should appoint members of his Commission with regard to its political majority. Commissioners would then be open to dismissal - individually or collectively - by the Parliament at any time.

Enlargement

12. Since we regard the primary purpose of the European Community to be to maintain and safeguard a democratic European society, we welcome any opportunity for its expansion, particularly in respect of the emerging Mediterranean democracies. No matter how fully integrated the Community of the Nine might become, it can never claim to be "Europe" without a wider membership.
13. The enlarging of the Community could also prove a positive force in respect of reforming the institutions.
14. The nature of Associate Membership should be stronger. We see the integration of Associate Members in new fields as a desirable step towards enlargement. We believe, therefore, that Council of Europe members should have observer status within the Community since members and non-members must work together on issues of mutual concern. Further, the Community should strengthen its links with bodies such as the Nordic Council.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND EUROPE

15. We believe that the most vital role for the European Community must be in guaranteeing and maximising the fundamental freedoms of the individual including his social, cultural, and economic rights.

Individual Rights

16. It is important to emphasise our concern for the respect of individual rights within the Community in order to allay fears that individuals will be powerless in some great monolithic structure.
17. We strongly support the European Convention on Human Rights but we believe that something further is required in the context of the European Community. We thus recommend the adoption of a Charter of Individual Rights by the European Parliament, by which the citizen would have a right of access to the European Court of Justice. As a general principle, we believe that the Court should be more open to the individual and that a legal aid scheme be created in order to assist this.
18. We also regard the appointment of a Community Ombudsman, with wide powers and terms of reference, answerable to the European Parliament, as an essential requirement to the control of the Community's administrative action.
19. Above all, since the last resort of any citizen is to his parliament, much more should be done to inform citizens of how their European Parliament functions and the way in which they might influence it. In particular, the nature of the committee system and the right of petition should be developed to the maximum convenience of the individual.

Social and Economic Rights

20. Due to its centralized powers in certain areas, like the economy, the European Community will also have influence in the social and cultural structure of the regions, although decisions on these matters will rarely be taken directly by the Community itself. It is therefore necessary for political parties at a European level to have a clear policy on these questions.

21. Accordingly, we call for the establishment of effective national social security programmes, harmonized with personal taxation systems, with the aim of alleviating poverty and guaranteeing freedom and security for the individual by providing a guaranteed income to those who cannot properly provide for themselves. We recognise that such programmes must be borne by both public and private resources; and we reject systems where benefits are paid in kind, since they remove from the individual the choice of maximising his personal welfare.
22. Whilst preserving flexibility for national governments, personal taxation and social security must be coordinated in order to avoid wide disparities of its levels and provision within the Community. This would assist a fair transfer of social security benefits throughout the Community, which is essential for the principle of free movement.
23. We support the work of the Economic and Social Committee of the Community, which we believe could be furthered by investigation into common problems such as youth unemployment.

The Right to Education

24. We regard the right of the individual to education as essential to enable him to develop his potential to the full. Access to education must not be limited by sex, means, local environment or social background. While we believe that education is a right for the individual and that each individual has the right to choose his higher or further education, we also recognise that it follows that not everyone can be guaranteed work that might naturally follow from their choice of education.
25. Education policy should remain the responsibility of national or regional authorities. We want a European policy which supports and stimulates the activities of these authorities, preserving diversity in cultural identities and promoting a better understanding of them among European citizens. To attain this aim, it is desirable that everyone should have fluent knowledge of at least one second language.

26. A European Education Fund should be created to facilitate course exchanges between secondary and higher education institutions throughout the Community for students, researchers and teaching staff. Through such a Fund, language education should be encouraged, with improved facilities for language laboratories and the exchange of teachers as language assistants.
27. In order to increase the study of languages and cultures, as well as to provide a further field for European technical cooperation, we attach importance to the development of television and radio broadcasting at a European level. In this connection, we would welcome the setting up of a European "Open" University with courses based upon broadcasted lectures and lecture notes by correspondence.
28. There should be a Community agreement to help fund individual students wishing to pursue higher education courses in other member-states. This should consist of an undertaking either by an individual student's national government or the European Education Fund to pay all fees, travelling expenses and living costs, according to his national system.
29. While we fully value the diversity of national education programmes, we regard the recognition of equivalent national education standards and qualifications as an urgent necessity. This could be achieved by adopting a Community system for registration and classification of examinations and assessments.
30. We would like the Community to make available funds in order to encourage the exchange of scientists and to allow more possibilities for scientific cooperation on research projects. This is important as a means of both stimulating new areas of study and providing better facilities for scientific work.
31. We believe that education policy has been badly neglected as the European Community has grown; this must be swiftly put right if both a European identity and a graduate pool to match the rest of the world is ever to be created. However, we also believe that education should be aimed at increasing international understanding. This requires an exchange of information of all subjects of study between all countries, as well as opportunities for individual students to participate in higher education in other countries. The removal of educational barriers within the Community will also facilitate the participation of non-Community countries in this cooperation.

Youth

32. Europe must be a living reality, especially for young people, for they are the ones upon whom further development of the process of European integration will depend. To this end, a European Foundation should be established for the advancement of cooperation amongst young people on educational, cultural, social and political matters.

THE REGIONS AND EUROPE

33. Europe's cultural diversity is its true character and strength. We consider an effective regional policy to be an essential part of the European Union we are seeking to create. Such a policy should provide that the decentralization of political power is a fundamental principle of the structure of government.
34. Regional authorities should have direct access to all Community institutions through regular exchanges of information and consultation. Within a European Union, all areas must have true equality of opportunity and in this, we recognise the particular problems of those regions which are peripheral in the area of the Community.
35. Community policy at present is unsatisfactory; the institutions must have the means to advance regional policies throughout the Community. These should include: tax incentives, loans, subsidising interest rates and the use of capital flows to influence returns to labour. Bond financing could also be a source of regional income. The Community should have a special concern for cooperation between frontier regions.
36. Regional and cultural identities must not be permitted to disappear. Cultural diversity is an asset. Thus, the Community must support the existence and development of national and regional literature, music, language and all the other forms of cultural expression.

THE ECONOMY AND EUROPE

37. The main objective of our economy today is to ensure steady and balanced growth, with due accent on the quality of life and not merely on quantitative figures. Economic growth is necessary in order to meet widespread and justified demands for a better standard of living, social security with improved public services and the distribution of wealth both within the Community and in the rest of the world.
38. There are presently great economic problems of an international character such as inflation, stagnation and unemployment. We need, therefore, a social market economy with both the dynamism of private initiative and a responsive management of the economy. We must also pay more attention and finance to the translation of management techniques, know-how and capital in place of subsidising lame ducks.
39. For both reasons of economic stability and European unity, we strongly believe that more control over national economic strategies should be placed in the hands of European institutions. Without this, Economic and Monetary Union - an acknowledged goal of the Treaty of Rome - will be impossible to achieve; and the polarisation of rich and poor countries within the Community can only increase.
40. It is evident that piecemeal attempts towards EMU under the direction of national authorities are unworkable.
41. Any intermediate step towards monetary union through the establishment of permanently fixed rates of exchange between national currencies is doomed to failure, in our opinion, for three reasons. First, national control over the money supply would remain; if one member-state increased the level in its domestic monetary system, this would lead to the importation of inflation from the profligate to the disciplined. Secondly, the control of interest rate structures would remain in national hands. And thirdly, as the "snake" has proved, fixed parities are simply not sustainable between divergent economies. Any approach to monetary union by way of fixed parities must fail while these serious economic divergencies exist; and it seems to us that these will continue for as long as there are nine separate economic strategies.

- 42. Economic union implies the existence of an economic strategy for Europe, including regional policies designed to offset the natural advantages of the centre by aids to industry and agriculture in the regions. Such a strategy would require one of two approaches. Firstly, the agreement and cooperation of all member-state governments; this is the present course, but it is failing since everyone cheats the system. The second course - and in our view the only possible approach - is to remove the means of macroeconomic management from national governments for their direction by a European government.
- 43. We believe in taking a principled stand on this issue, by calling upon the Community to assume collective responsibility for economic problems. We support the creation of a European Central Bank and a Regional Investment Fund, with guarantees as to their neutrality and independence. We also support the Werner Report, which states that monetary union needs to be accompanied by the Community right to create money; the money supply should be controlled, as well as the size and composition of the Debt, by the European Central Bank. We call for a Europa currency unit existing alongside national currencies and adopted over a period of time by the Community's banks and citizens as and when they think fit. Finally, we believe in Article 67 in the Treaty of Rome which provides that member-states should abolish all restrictions on capital movement within the Community, and we call for an integrated capital market.

Industry

- 44. Industry has capitalised upon the economic potential of European integration more quickly and efficiently than the national governments of member-states. This has created an even greater need for a European Community that legally and politically can at least attain the parallel level of development to industry.
- 45. There should be a common set of rules for employee participation by all employees at all levels of the decision-making process, as well as for employee share-ownership, in companies operating in more than one member-state. The law should allow for flexibility; but once a scheme qualifies, it should be effective and be accepted in all the operations which a company might have within the Community.
- 46. All concentrations of power need to be treated with great circumspection. In some cases, monopolies will need breaking up, but what may appear to be a monopoly in one member-state could look quite different in a Community context. The coordination of anti-trust legislation is thus required.

- 47. The powers of directors, disclosure of information, the qualifications and powers of auditors, outsider training and many other aspects of company law need to be coordinated.
- 48. Multinational companies have an important role in creating employment opportunities and national wealth. However, member states should be strengthened in their dealings with them; the Community should ensure this by playing a part in the development of international anti-trust legislation and conventions providing that multinationals must follow certain basic standards with regard to economic conditions, environment, employment and reinvestment.
- 49. As long as national governments retain principal power within the Community, it will be impossible to achieve common taxation levels. But the system of taxation should be coordinated by the Community although the differentials should be a national or regional decision, except for value added tax and company tax; the latter should be at parity except in regional development areas. Multinational holding companies would be taxed at the Community level and sums raised in this way should be credited to the Community budget.

Small Businesses

- 50. Small and medium-sized businesses are a basic element of the economic system in democratic industrialized countries, both in terms of productive capacity and of levels of employment.
- 51. We are convinced of the need to promote the development of small and medium-sized businesses for both political and economic reasons. They guarantee an active market, economic pluralism and the presence of independent economic forces; they are free from the bureaucratic practices of state-owned industries and the general tendency towards bureaucracy of large companies. In fighting unemployment they develop better human relationships; they are essential for the spread of economic power which is linked with the spread of political power. They are an essential element in the social market economy which is one of our basic beliefs.
- 52. More than any other form of enterprise, these businesses guarantee stability of employment, while having to carry steadily mounting costs of social security.

The European Community must take account of this and should also ask member-states to carry out selective policies in their financing of social security costs.

53. A common commercial policy for the Community would serve the interests of small and medium-sized businesses. It would afford them easier access to markets, research facilities and adequate cover for the risks involved in major export operations.

Agriculture

54. There is increasing conflict in agriculture between what are seen as national and Community interests, and it is clear that the present rigidity and inflexibility of the Common Agriculture Policy is likely to put a severe strain on the whole Community. Nevertheless, every member-state must share the blame for its shortcomings, due to their pursuit of vested national interests.
55. We recognise the need for a single market for agricultural produce which was one of the original purposes of the CAP. The long-term aim of any policy in the agricultural sector must be to create a structure which renders the present protectionist measures superfluous.
56. The diversity of agriculture throughout Western Europe requires that a successful agricultural policy for the future must be flexible enough for each to specialise in enterprises best suited to the region. Thus any future policy on prices must differentiate between income support, which merely sustains the inefficient, and that which serves a useful role for the Community as a whole.
57. We clearly state our opposition to blanket measures, which are relevant to only a part of the Community, but are applied to the whole for the sake of uniformity. This in no way benefits either the Community or member-states. As a transitional measure, scope must exist for those governments in member-states who have not yet reached the state of a single integrated market, to operate policies which meet the specific needs and demands of their own producers and consumers.
58. In the longer term, the objective of Community policy must be for the producer to obtain the maximum possible return from the market, as opposed to artificial price maintenance. Since a more efficient policy requires a more

efficient system, a scheme for providing incentives to modernise should be encouraged. It must be noted, however, that the prices of agricultural products affect the low-income families the most. Thus any rise in the level of prices requires appropriate measures to be taken in the field of social security.

Consumers

59. We are concerned with the long-term effects of the inability of the present price support system to accurately reflect and react to consumer demand. Public reaction to the succession of "beef mountains", together with others like skimmed milk and butter, is understandable. We must respond to this by seeking a balance between the needs of both producer and consumer; the objective of any common policy in the future must be to achieve the lowest possible prices compatible with a realistic return of capital for agriculture.
60. Moving from agriculture, we are sceptical of the Commission's constant drive towards ever-greater uniformity. We call for a policy which encourages the increased availability of goods and services; "quality" and "choice" should be the key words in our consumer policy.
61. European consumer movements are an opportunity and not a threat. By providing self-regulatory mechanisms for industry and advertising, consumer movements should pre-empt where possible the use of Community legislation.

Fishing

62. Fish know no man-made boundaries and a common policy is an urgent necessity within the context of wider responsibilities for the conservation of the resources of the sea. Recognising too that fishing is a key sector of the economy of many coastal areas of the Community, member-states should take a common initiative to safeguard their interests.
63. There must be agreements to allow non-member states access to Community waters; and the Community must also secure bilateral and multilateral agreements on fishing outside its boundaries.

64. To protect the resources of the seas there must be widespread common research into fishing stocks, especially to monitor endangered species with a view to limiting or even prohibiting their catch. There must be common supervision of the Community's fishing boundaries and policies.

Energy

65. We consider that a Community Energy Policy should be worked out by setting up machinery to ensure the solidarity of member-states in times of supply difficulties and by establishing a Community instrument which can ensure the proper functioning of the energy market. The politician's task is to ensure conditions so that the amount of energy demanded can be supplied.
66. Community policy should guarantee greater independence with respect to energy supplies. In the coming years nuclear power will be the main instrument to ensure Europe a better degree of independence. Our scientific knowledge of nuclear energy and in particular of the potential risks associated with its production must be broadened. Research and development into alternative and appropriate energy sources must be continued and increased. The general public should also be better informed of all environmental consequences and risks of all types of production.
67. The sudden sharp increases of energy prices constitute a threat to the prosperity and well-being of the peoples of Europe. The aim must be to provide energy at the lowest possible total cost to society. Competition is an important element in this; we feel that too great a concentration of power over energy supplies - whether in public or private hands - is dangerous. Competition must be maintained between various sources.
68. Joint action is both essential within the Community and outside. Special relations with countries outside the Community and harmonious relations with third countries - whether as consumers or producers - must be established, taking into account worldwide political and economic implications of energy problems.

Environment

69. One of the great riches of the Community is the diversity of natural, historical, architectural and cultural heritages. Social and ecological factors should thus form an important part in the consideration of our economic future. Growth is a necessity, but it cannot be an end in itself. Technology must remain the means but not the end.
70. Pollution knows no frontiers. The Community must formulate measures to combat it, which to be effective, must be incorporated into national legislation in the spirit of the Treaty of Rome. The Community should also actively work for all-European cooperation on environmental protection in accordance with the CSCE Agreement.
71. The Community should draw up joint legislation to protect citizens who are exposed to cross-frontier pollution. Legislation, however, cannot be the only means. It is important to put a price on the environment by taxing the creators of pollution and by using the price mechanism to encourage the development, for example, of cleaner production methods and cars that cause less pollution.
72. There are three particular areas where the Community must act. Firstly, only concerted common action can hope to progressively reduce the level of pollution in our rivers and seas. Secondly, legislation is needed right across the board to control the sources of atmospheric pollution; and lastly, suitable places for toxic and radioactive waste disposal should be systematically identified in locations accessible to the whole Community, subject to its stringent supervision.
73. National legislation to protect areas and individual sites of architectural and historical interest varies widely from one member-state to another. We do not believe, however, that Community legislation in this field is desirable, although a central system for registration and classification would be an incentive to those which presently lag behind.

DEFENDING EUROPE

74. We believe it to be of vital importance for the collective security of Europe that the Community establishes a common defence. We consider that this defence policy would best be facilitated by initiating regular consultations between all national defence departments within the Community at a Council of Ministers level.
75. In order to establish long-term cooperation in all fields of defence, we call for Community discussion particularly on security in the Mediterranean. This is an area where urgent action is required; and the present relationship between the Community of the Nine, Greece, Portugal and Spain provides a convenient opportunity to develop a common approach.
76. A further field for initiative is that of arms procurement and standardisation. This is one area where competition within the Community is positively harmful, if not dangerous. We also call for discussions towards securing an arms industry at a high technological level, since this is one basis for an independent European defence policy.
77. We firmly reject the idea that we could work towards an effective defence policy with the participation of only some member-states of the Community. Such an approach could well be damaging to efforts to create a united Europe.
78. The specific position of neutral countries outside military alliances must be taken into consideration by the Community, as indeed must those NATO members outside the Community.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND EUROPE

79. We wish to unite Europe in order to make a real contribution to stability and world peace. We also believe that a united Europe can play an important role in support of democracy and human rights everywhere. Thus, we fully support the development of first a coordinated and later a common foreign policy for the Community. To stimulate this, we support the recommendation of the Tindemans Report that there should cease to be any distinction between treaty and non-treaty business.
80. We believe in strengthening the role of the European Parliament in foreign affairs. The first step towards this would be the establishment of its own Foreign Affairs Committee.

Transatlantic

81. Our policy must recognise that, while within the Atlantic Alliance, interests may not always coincide and that the European Community must be free to adopt an independent line, the common ideals of freedom and democracy which we share are more important than those matters which might divide us.
82. Our relations with the United States, which is at the same time our ally, partner and competitor, are of vital importance to the Community. The United States will remain an essential partner for the security of a free Western Europe. And to promote free world trade and a stable economic situation, a certain cooperation between the Community and the United States is needed.

East-West

83. We believe that a united and independent Europe is the best guarantee for the difficult but necessary process of detente between East and West on equal terms.
84. Increased cooperation, broader contacts and growing exchanges between countries and individuals all over Europe are essential elements of peace and stability. The European Community should constantly work for the lowering of barriers to the free movement of people, information and ideas. There must be no hesitation in pointing out breaches of the Helsinki Agreement, particularly in the field of human rights, by all parties concerned.

Third World

85. We believe that it is just as important for the Community to support the approach that economic development goes hand-in-hand with political development along, if not exactly Western liberal democratic lines, at least a model which respects human rights, in Latin America, Asia and Africa. And Community aid to developing countries should be afforded accordingly.
86. We regard the Lomé Convention as an important step for the Community in its essential efforts to establish equitable and stable relations with the Third World; this must now be consolidated.
87. We support the increased strength and importance of the European Investment Bank, the eventual abolition of bilateral aid and greater cooperation between the major merchant banks and the EIB to secure development loans at low interest rates. This would enable the Community to ensure that more aid went to specific projects that are part of the development strategy of developing nations. The Community should take steps to provide the individual with opportunities for development as well as his government.
88. We wish to see the Community developing trade and economic cooperation with the Third World with the aim of helping these countries develop a versatile economy and industry, instead of remaining as producers of cheap raw materials. We oppose any protectionist measures taken against imports from the Third World. We must encourage the main thrust of Community policy to be the development of trade together with increases in aid, support for commodity reserves by way of UNCTAD and increased educational facilities as a means of creating good will.

Published by EUROPEAN DEMOCRAT STUDENTS,
32 Smith Square,
GB – London SW1P 3HH
& Printed by Deanery Press Ltd., Gibbins Road, Stratford, London E15 2HU.

Konrad-Adenauer-9