

Stuttgart Declaration

Adopted on 26 March 1976

The democratic parties in the European Community based on liberal principles

- resolved to protect and to promote the rights and freedoms of the individual,
- desiring to make possible for all citizens of Europe a decent life in a free society,
- believing that peace, freedom and prosperity in Europe can best be assured if the European Community progresses towards a European Union,
- welcoming the decision to hold the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1978, have therefore decided to establish a federation of the liberal parties in the European Community, based on the following platform:

1. The supreme task of the European Union must be to guarantee human, civil and political rights on the European level.

We therefore call for:

- a bill of human rights and fundamental freedoms, directly applicable throughout the European Community, to be drawn up by the first directly elected European Parliament,
- the right of every citizen to appeal to the European Court of Justice when his civil rights are impaired by decisions of the Community institutions,
- the abolition of remaining administrative restrictions within the European Community on the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital.

2. The European Union needs a free democratic constitution based on the principles of division of powers, majority voting and protection of minorities.

We therefore call for:

- increased powers and legislative responsibilities for the European Parliament in all questions within the competence of the European Community, including political cooperation,

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- election of the European Parliament according to the principles of proportional representation,
 - accountability of the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers,
 - an endeavour on the part of the Council to increasingly take decisions by majority vote,
 - protection of the legitimate interests of the regions and minorities in the Member States of the European Community in such a way as to ensure that the diversity of Europe is preserved,
 - the greatest possible recourse to the Economic and Social Committee and to the Standing Committee on Employment, with a particular view to securing at the level of the Community the participation of workers in the management, control and profits of undertakings.
3. The European Union must assure steady and balanced economic growth, thus creating for its citizens the conditions for effective social protection in the vicissitudes of life. This can no longer be done at national level.

We therefore call for:

- the Member States and the institutions of the European Community to make practical progress along the road towards economic and monetary union, for example through an ever greater harmonization of their economic and financial policies and their currencies, including the creation of a joint central bank, and by increasingly holding their resources in common,
- promotion of free competition within a free market system and its protection from abuse by monopolies and cartels, as well as from the excessive influence of public enterprise, by allowing private firms all the room necessary to form themselves into genuine instruments of democracy and progress in the context of a coordinated economy, with a view to ensuring optimal economic growth and sufficient resources to provide effective help for the socially disadvantaged,
- the redistribution of wealth both by use of the Social Fund to reduce inequality between individuals and the Regional Development Fund to reduce inequalities between Regions,
- development of the Common Agricultural Policy in ways which both benefit consumers and encourage efficient farming,
- further progress towards common environmental and energy policies.

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4. The European Union needs a common foreign policy covering both the external relations of the European Community and the European Political Cooperation and designed to serve the freedom and security of Europe and peace in the world, side by side with our partners in the Atlantic Alliance, notably the United States, and in the United Nations.

We therefore call for:

- the development of the closest possible ties also with the Western European countries which are not members of the European Community,
- the further expansion along the lines of the Lomé Convention of cooperation between the European Community and the Third World in the context of a balanced development of the world economy,
- active participation by the Member States of the European Community in all efforts to establish stability and peace in the Mediterranean region and in the Middle East,
- the European Community to speak with one voice particularly in its relations with the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

5. The European Union must be founded on the common conviction that the freedom of the individual, equal opportunities for all and the free competition of ideas and parties are indispensable elements of a democratic society.

We therefore:

- welcome the accession to or association with the European Community and in future the European Union of every European State whose constitution and policy is in conformity with these principles,
- are willing to cooperate within the European Community with all political groups which are ready without reservation to accept and defend the fundamental values of liberal democracy.

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