

New Deal for Europe



**EUROPEAN
SPRING**

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Introduction

- * European Spring was formed to restore hope to Europe.
- * Our movement is united behind a shared vision of Europe as a realm of democracy, sustainability, prosperity, and peace.
- * We present this shared vision as a New Deal for Europe.
- * This document sets out the core principles and key policies of the New Deal. Each pillar of the programme offers immediate solutions to Europe's political, social, economic, and ecological crises.
- * Together, the pillars form a long-term vision of a sustainable way of life. The New Deal promotes a model of development that takes account of the major challenges that lie ahead: from the scarcity of natural resources, to labour market automation, to the destruction of the environment. European Spring is committed to establishing local systems of production and supply, and to preserving our natural world, cultural heritage, social progress, and public services.
- * The New Deal provides an alternative to the choice that Europeans currently face – between apathy and anger, between technocracy and autocracy, between those who defend the European Union as it exists today and those who wish to destroy it forever.
- * We are aware of the challenge of implementing an ambitious agenda like ours. But we will use the opportunity of this election to inspire citizens across Europe to join our coalition for democratic change. Only when millions of citizens stand together will the demand for change become irresistible.
- * There is no time to waste: Join the movement for European Spring!

I. Democracy

The European Union must be governed by the people of Europe, and for the people of Europe. Today, the EU suffers from a deficit of democracy: unelected officials make decisions behind closed doors, where corporate lobbyists have far too much influence. European Spring will fight for a democratic Europe, where citizens enjoy fundamental rights and control the future of their communities.

i. A Democratic Constitution

We call to bring the people of Europe together to develop a new Democratic Constitution for Europe. The EU is currently governed by a set of treaties drafted by unelected diplomats and government ministers. European Spring will launch a series of citizen assemblies, traveling country to country to ask people what they want from a new European constitution. This process will culminate in a referendum requesting a Constitutional Assembly, composed of democratically elected representatives from across Europe, who will draft the new democratic constitution.

ii. Empowering European Parliament

European Parliament must have the power to represent the interests of its democratic constituencies — and to check the power of the EU's unelected bodies. We propose to strengthen the European Parliament in several ways. Parliament should have the competence to determine how its members are elected. Parliament should have the right to initiate legislation. And Parliament should be able to elect the President of the Commission freely and democratically — and to dismiss the Commission and its President through a constructive vote of no confidence.

iii. Direct Democracy

We believe that citizens should have a greater say over the future of Europe. As a first step, we will improve the European citizen's initiative (ECI). We will lower the number of required supporters, and we will revoke the Commission's right to dismiss ECIs at will.

iv. Copenhagen Commission

We must protect our fundamental rights against member-state governments who try to take them away. We propose to strengthen the ECJ by introducing a Copenhagen Commission, an independent watchdog that will investigate violations of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, which guarantees dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, judicial independence, and respect for human rights in all EU member-states.

v. Radical Municipalism

Across Europe, mayors and municipal movements are inspiring people to participate in politics and create change at the local level. European Spring is proposing a comprehensive set of reforms to empower these movements and strengthen the role of local government in Europe.

We will reform Europe's competition laws in order to allow local governments to resist privatization and more easily re-municipalize public services. We will fight the new revisions to the Bolkestein Directive and reform the e-Commerce Directive in order to allow local governments to regulate local industries. We will work to change public procurement laws that currently restrict the possibilities for municipalities to promote a radical transition to sustainable and ethical economies. And we will fight to reform EU asylum law to enable municipal governments to welcome migrants against more restrictive national laws.

Finally, we will create a new Parliamentary Committee to analyse the local impact of the 'sharing economy,' with the aim of establishing a common set of regulations that strengthen local government and respect local needs.

vi. Right to Information

Transparency is the oxygen of democracy. To hold leaders accountable, citizens must be able to see how decisions are made.

We will strengthen the "Right to Information" in the European Union. We will make the minutes from all meetings in EU bodies available to the public. We will

challenge the use of “LIMITE” designations that prevent the public from seeing important EU documents. We will require MEPs to fully disclose their use of public funds, and we will call for MEPs to disclose their large financial assets to watchdog authorities. Finally, we will propose that all trade and treaty negotiations — often designated as classified — become part of the public record.

vii. Mandatory Lobby Register

We propose a public “Mandatory Lobby Register” that requires all lobbyists to register with the EU and requires all EU officials to report when, where, and why they meet with lobbyists, as well as any benefits they receive from them — directly or indirectly, before or after the lobbying campaign. The current lobby register is “voluntary.” We believe that all lobby groups should be forced to disclose how much they spend on their campaigns, and which officials they target. Minutes of all such meetings must be prepared and submitted to an independent oversight body.

viii. Ending Cash-for-Citizenship

The granting of EU citizenship should be independent of an applicant’s assets. However, governments across the EU currently sell European citizenship to the highest bidder. Malta, for example, offers citizenship to anyone who agrees to spend one million Euros on development and real estate. These cash-for-citizenship schemes violate the fundamental right to equality, and render Europe into a playground for the super-rich. European Spring will strive to introduce legislation that will end cash-for-citizenship schemes.

ix. Closing the Revolving Door

European Spring will block the ‘revolving door’ that moves EU officials from public office to lucrative lobbying positions in the private sector and then back again. There is almost no regulation of the revolving door in the EU today: officials have a two-year period during which they must apply for permission to

take lobbying positions, and it is almost always granted. We need a 10-year ban on lobbying after holding EU office, and conflicts of interest regarding current office holders must be investigated.

x. Fighting Corruption

The European Union is rife with corruption. Member-state governments funnel EU money into the pockets of their friends, family, and political supporters. Companies engage in tax fraud. And European banks launder money for criminals. European Spring will fight to increase the resources of the European Anti-Fraud Office to investigate the use of public money across the EU, strengthen the sanctions against EU officials and member-state governments that are found guilty, and close the VAT loopholes that currently enable billions of tax fraud each year.

xi. Protecting Whistle-blowers

Journalists, investigators, and employees face major risks when they blow the whistle on wrongdoing. Several European citizens who have reported on corruption have been murdered, and many more have faced threats to their life. We will strengthen the protection for whistle-blowers in order to guarantee their physical safety, job security, and legal status when they come forward.

xii. Transnational Voting Rights

European Spring believes that European citizens should be guaranteed a vote in European Parliament elections regardless of their place of residence. To date, millions of EU citizens living in "third countries" are not given the opportunity to elect an MEP. After Brexit, that number will only grow. We believe that living abroad should not come at the cost of your vote. We will change the law to allow the member-state consulates to host voting for European citizens outside the EU.

II. Workers

European Spring will fight for worker power. Millions of people in Europe today cannot find work, and millions more can only access low-pay, precarious jobs. The share of wealth held by workers is in decline, and the share of wealth held by the top 1 per cent continues to climb. We believe that all people are entitled to a decent job with strong protections against exploitation.

i. Universal Citizen Dividend

We will set up a Citizen Wealth Fund that is owned collectively by the European public. This portfolio will include assets purchased by central banks, a percentage of capital stock from initial public offerings (IPOs), and revenues from intellectual property rights, among others.

Each year, the Fund will distribute a Universal Citizen Dividend that allows each and every citizen to enjoy the fruits of economic activity. The proposed Dividend is independent of social assistance payments, unemployment insurance, and other welfare programmes.

We believe that the dividend is the first step toward the creation of a universal basic income, which can provide freedom and dignity to all Europeans, regardless of employment status.

ii. Jobs Guarantee

We call on all European countries to reach a multilateral agreement to guarantee decent jobs for all European residents who seek one. The Jobs Guarantee will empower local authorities to employ millions of people in useful jobs, and it will provide wages to millions of workers in areas like social care that are currently unpaid. Through this Jobs Guarantee, we can end the twin crisis of unemployment and forced migration in Europe.

iii. Workers Compact

We will propose a Workers Compact to reinforce worker rights across Europe. The Compact will introduce new European minimum wage legislation that includes criteria for the convergence of wages across Europe, applying especially to member-states where there are no collective agreements. It will create a new EU working standard, with a maximum of 35 hours of work per week and a minimum of 35 days of vacation leave per year. It will fund a new all-European Work Inspection Agency that will coordinate and monitor member-state institutions to oversee employers' compliance to labour laws and fair treatment of employees.

iv. Transforming Corporate Culture

We will fight to change the balance of power between workers and management in European firms. We will introduce legislation that strips corporate bonuses and strictly regulates executive pay, bringing it within a multiple of the lowest paid employee. And we will guarantee that company boards include directors that are directly elected by the workers themselves, giving greater representation to workers' interests in corporate governance.

v. Worker Ownership Funds

We are proposing a plan to bring firms under partial control of the workers they employ. Our plan will support medium-to-large companies to create Worker Ownership Funds that distribute an annual percentage of their shares to their employees. Such funds will not only provide annual dividends to workers. They will also increase workers' say over company decisions as shareholders. As such, they are an important step toward democratizing the European economy.

vi. Transnational Workers Commission

If Europe's corporations operate transnationally, Europe's workers must organize transnationally, as well. Currently, several international corporations rely on precarious labour and play off workers of different countries to lower costs.

European Spring will set up a Transnational Workers Commission that will strengthen collective bargaining across the continent. The Commission will act a 'union of last resort' for workers that currently lack access to a labour organization. And the Commission would support the formation of new transnational unions to challenge corporations that rely on precarious labour.

vii. Improving Self-Employment

For many workers, self-employment provides freedom and flexibility. But some companies — in particular, online platforms offering transport and delivery services — circumvent worker protections by substituting employees for contractors.

European Spring believes that self-employed workers should have access to the same rights to minimum wages and working conditions as all other workers. We will reform the competition law that limits the potential for self-employed workers to collectively negotiate fees and working conditions. We will fight to expand existing labour regulations, social protections, and employer contributions to include self-employed workers.

viii. Public Sector Erasmus

The public sector employs millions of Europeans and serves millions more each day: its performance is crucial to Europe's well being. We will introduce an Erasmus for civil servants to foster cooperation between employees of EU institutions and officials in member-state public sectors. The programme aims to promote the exchange of best practices in carrying out public service, from the domain of health and care to justice and security.

III. Solidarity

European Spring believes that every person is entitled to a decent standard of living. 118 million people in the EU are currently at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Homeless is on the rise, and millions of households suffer from food insecurity. European citizens have a fundamental right to solidarity, and the EU must honour it.

i. Transforming the Single Market

We believe that no government should be prevented from providing public goods because of private interests. We will replace the principle of free competition in the EU Single Market with the principle of solidarity.

We will introduce fundamental changes to the EU's state aid regulation in order to allow governments to provide better public services. We will widen the 'De Minimis Regulation' in order to allow public authorities to invest in critical services, and we will guarantee their right to re-municipalize them, as needed.

In addition, we will reform public procurement regulation, broadening the definition of procurement for "social value" in order to facilitate cooperative ownership and allow for public provision of services like healthcare.

ii. Expanding the Cohesion Fund

We are proposing a significant expansion to the EU Cohesion Fund in order to support underdeveloped regions of the European Union. We aim to devolve cohesion funding from the member-state level, providing funds to localities in need and empowering them to invest in local services. We will also expand the remit of the EU Cohesion Fund to include investment in housing, health, and other social facilities.

iii. Solidarity Programme

We propose an emergency Solidarity Programme to fight extreme poverty and guarantee access to basic goods for every European resident. We will radically expand the budget for the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), increasing its reach into underserved communities and offering stronger support for NGOs that already provide food assistance.

iv. Eradicating Child Poverty

The crisis of child poverty in Europe is severe: a quarter of all children are experiencing or at risk of poverty and social exclusion. European Spring will introduce a Plan to Eradicate Child Poverty that will commit more resources from the European Social Fund to guarantee access to healthcare, housing, nutrition, and education to every child. The Plan will place a target for child poverty reduction in the 2020 Strategy and call for close monitoring of member-state progress in the European Semester.

v. Housing Security for All

Decent housing is a human right, yet millions of families in Europe live in substandard conditions and at risk of eviction. We are calling for all European countries to come to a multilateral agreement to fund and guarantee decent housing to every European resident. In addition, we will introduce a number of new regulations to fight gentrification, displacement, and tenure insecurity. We are calling for a harmonised system of tenant protections, including limits on rent inflation, minimum tenancies, and protections against evictions. We will introduce a Europe-wide housing standard that directs resources from the European Social Fund toward the renovation of inadequate social housing. And we will reclaim vacant buildings in high-demand areas for housing the homeless.

vi. European Health Standard

We propose a European Healthcare Standard to commit EU member-states, in collaboration with the EU, to rapid improvement of healthcare provision. The standard will be defined as a basket of minimum healthcare services, with targets for healthcare investment in Member States and special provisions for historically marginalized groups and disabled people. We will direct funds from the EU budget to support regions that struggle to reach those standards.

vii. Right to Water

We believe that all people have a right to clean water and sanitation. We will enshrine a “Right to Water and Sanitation” in the Water Framework Directive, and we will introduce a moratorium on all liberalisation of water and sanitation services. We will introduce legislation that requires all member-states to invest in public water resources and provide additional support to households that cannot afford to pay for water privately.

viii. Solidarity for People with Disabilities

The EU has failed to address the needs of people with disabilities. We will propose new legislation that provides greater resources to eliminate all forms of architectural barriers in public buildings, guarantee healthcare for all forms of disability, ensure that all EU member-states provide decent and appropriate education, and provide for people with disabilities to live independent lives. We believe that these are not simply questions of access — they are questions of justice.

ix. Decriminalizing Drugs

Europe should lead the way toward a sane and sensible drug policy. We are calling for the legalization of marijuana and the decriminalization of drug consumption, more broadly. Systems like Portugal’s, in which the marijuana is decriminalized but marijuana consumption is against the law, are unsustainable. We must legalize it, and provide medical assistance to all drug users seeking treatment, rather than incarcerating them.

IV. Nature, the Climate & Europe's Green Transition

European Spring stands for a sustainable way of life. For too long, the EU has allowed private interests to ravage our natural habitat, endanger public health, confiscate commons goods, and sacrifice animal welfare. Today, scientists are unanimous in highlighting the deadly threat posed by climate change, as evidenced by mass extinctions Earth's our plant and animal life.

This threat demands an ambitious and urgent response: a resolute change in our mode of development and a transition at all levels of society — energy, consumption, food and agriculture, housing, consumption, and economic growth. These are a matter of survival for the planet and for future generations. European Spring will deliver them with determination.

i. Green New Deal

We will introduce a Green Investment Programme that invests €500 billion each year in Europe's green transition. The investment from the Green New Deal will transform Europe's infrastructure to align with our ambitious climate goals and the IPCC's recommendations, including the transition to low-emissions transportation methods and the construction of renewable energy systems.

The Programme will be financed entirely via Green investment bonds issued by Europe's public investment banks institutions, and backed by an alliance of Europe's central banks, which will stand ready to intervene in the secondary bond markets in case the Green investment bond yields begin to rise.

The programme will consult with communities, cities and municipalities to develop and manage the projects that matter most at the local level. Special attention will be paid to coal-depend regions to ensure that there are new jobs in green industries for every one that is left behind in a fuel-reliant industries.

ii. 2030 Climate Compact

The European Union must move faster in order to protect the planet from uncontrolled climate change and keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees. We will introduce a 2030 Climate Compact that sets more ambitious targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the adoption of renewable energy sources, and overall decline in energy consumption.

In order to achieve these goals, we will support phasing out all environmentally damaging subsidies and strengthen the review of the environmental impact of the EU budget.

We will foster low-emission mobility, developing infrastructure for walking, cycling, and public transport, as well as encouraging a shift from freight transport to rail and inland waterways.

And we will support the development of renewable energy systems, removing existing barriers to solar-wind energy production and storage, and investing in the distribution of energy by smart and secure supply grids.

iii. Pricing Fossil Fuels

We will raise prices on carbon to bring Europe in line with emissions targets. We propose a progressive carbon tax based on the level of a country's development and emissions. In addition, we propose a carbon border tax that raises the price of carbon-produced goods from outside the EU in order to help firms reduce their climate impact while remaining competitive. And we will reform the emission trading system by reducing the number of emission certificates and including more industrial sectors and greenhouse gases in its scope.

iv. Transforming Agriculture and Land Use Policy

We will transform European agricultural and land use policy in order to guarantee food and resource security and improve environmental sustainability.

As a first step, we will align the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with policies like the Birds and Habitats Directive, the Water Framework Directive, the Nitrogen Directive, the Pesticides Directive, the Emission Reduction Directive, and the Marine Strategy.

In addition, we will initiate a shift from intensive large-scale animal agriculture in Europe toward sustainable and small-scale practices, notably by redirecting CAP subsidies toward organic, vegetable-preferring, permaculture farming and affiliated research. We believe that the EU should aim for quality food self-sufficiency, while reducing our reliance on commercial exports and agricultural dumping.

We believe in celebrating Europe's biodiversity. We will support foresters to increase their species diversity, promote forest restructuring and climate adaptation, and initiate reforestation. Finally, we will increase the European contribution towards biodiversity within the Natura 2000 network of protected areas, the High Nature Value territories and all the necessary ecological corridors and buffer areas.

v. Animal Welfare Standard

We will harmonize animal protection laws in a new Animal Welfare Standard. This standard will target practices like the breeding of defects, compulsory mastication, the fixation of sows in the crate, and livestock transport. We will strengthen the regulation of animals in industry, research, and education and encourage their replacement with alternative methods like cell culture and biochips.

vi. Disaster Prevention, Protection, and Adaptation Plan

We will protect citizens and their communities from natural disasters. We will introduce a European Plan for Seismic and Hydrogeological Risk that directs funds for (i) classification of risks and the creation of a publically available hazard maps, (ii) renovation of infrastructure with high levels of vulnerability, (iii) new standards for construction, and (iv) maintenance of regions at risk. The plan will expand on the EU Solidarity Fund to support municipal governments to develop strategies for disaster preparedness and response.

vii. Fighting Pollution

European Spring will develop an integrated waste management system to fight pollution in Europe and around the world.

We will ban open landfills and introduce new regulations to ensure that landfills are managed to very high standards to protect water from pollution. We will dramatically reduce waste exports, and we will subsidize new research in recycling methods and biodegradable materials to upgrade Europe's waste management.

We will take a strong stance against the production of pollutants. We will introduce regulations to restrict heavy metal pollution that poisons water, pharmaceuticals pollution that leads to drug-resistant super-bugs, and micro-plastics that kill aquatic life.

To fight plastic pollution, we will support an EU-wide tax on plastic production. The current EU tax targets member-states that fail to recycle their plastic, but it does not provide incentives for companies to stop using plastic in their products. We will tax plastic producers.

viii. Europe's Blue Transition

We must respect our oceans, shifting away from a model that treats them as repositories for our waste. European Spring will propose a blue transition in European maritime strategy and water framework directive.

We will introduce legislation that keeps fishing at sustainable levels, setting the limits for fishing below the Maximum Sustainable Yield and investing greater resources in sustainable, small-scale fisheries from the EU budget. We will radically expand the Marine Protected Areas around Europe in order to protect marine ecosystems. We will implement the European Parliament resolution preventing the exploitation of deep-sea resources. And we will improve the monitoring system for pollution in the oceans to reduce the amount of waste in our waters.

ix. A Ban on Fracking

We will propose a Europe-wide ban on 'fracking' and the use of shale gas. Fracking methods are a present threat to our health and our climate. We are calling for their immediate end.

x. European Environmental Court

We will work to create a special body attached to the European Court of Justice that will investigate and adjudicate compliance with the 2030 Climate Compact and the National Emission Ceiling Directive. The Environmental Court will also rule on Europe-based companies operating abroad and their respect for environmental standards in industries like fishing, mining, and drilling.

V. Eurozone & EU Public Finance

European Spring believes that Europe's economic institutions should serve the interests of the many, not the few. The structure of the Eurozone has created severe inequality between countries, regions, and classes. The enforcement of 'austerity' has deepened these inequalities and prevented national governments from addressing their economic challenges. EU Cohesion Funds help to rebalance the European economy — but we must go much further in order to democratise EU public finance, prevent another financial crisis, and restore faith in the European project.

i. Expanding the EU Budget

The EU budget is a vital resource of investment for all EU member-states. We will introduce new measures to expand the EU budget, while matching these spending commitments with EU own resources. We will develop several avenues for raising the revenue for this ambitious budget, including a carbon tax to curb climate change, a tax on financial transactions, and the introduction of new Eurobonds to finance infrastructure projects across the EU, among others.

ii. Democratising EU Budget

Despite its central role in EU public finance, citizens have limited say over how the EU budget is developed and decided. We will introduce new measures to devolve control over EU resources. We are calling for all European parties to publish their budget priorities ahead of European Parliament elections in order to allow citizens to express their preferences over EU expenditure. And we will allow citizens and grassroots organisations to participate in the 'pilot-project' phase of the European Parliament's Budgetary Procedure, providing a portion of funding to their proposed projects in order to demonstrate their value and apply for more resources in the overall EU budget.

iii. Budget Tracking Tool

Transparency for the EU budget is essential for combatting corruption and ensuring that EU money is spent fairly. We will develop a digital tool to enable the public to see where EU budget money is going, how it is spent, and what the outcomes of these projects are.

iv. European Clearing Union

To address economic inequality in the EU, we need to think beyond the EU budget. Countries that consistently run large trade surpluses push down demand in the global economy, hurting all. Conversely, countries with consistent trade deficits can easily fall into debt crises. That is why we are calling for a European Clearing Union (ECU) that will rebalance Europe's lop-sided trade relations. The ECU would create a common accounting unit, and it would evaluate each country on how much it exports or how much it imports. The ECU would tax countries with high levels of trade surplus, and it would use these additional funds to invest in regions that lack access to investment resources. In this way, the ECU will significantly reduce the structural inequalities between EU member-states. In addition, the ECU will incentivise countries with large trade surpluses to stop "living beneath their means" and increase wages and investment, reducing inequality within countries, as well.

v. Public Debt Conversion

The Maastricht Treaty has put a harsh limit on member-state debt. However, since 2008, most member-states have exceeded this limit. The Eurozone needs a sustainable solution to this problem. We will offer the opportunity for member-states to convert their debt with a loan serviced by the European Central Bank at a very low rate, reducing debt burden in the short-term and — due to the low rate — in the long-term, as well. We will also ensure that the ECB is protected from losses by ensuring that its new liabilities are given priority over its other obligations, and by forcing the European Stability Mechanism to ensure their bonds, as well.

vi. Completing the Banking Union

We will complete the banking union in order to guarantee the integrity the Eurozone and protect it from future financial shocks. Our plan is twofold. First, we will support a European deposit insurance scheme that shares risk across the Eurozone. Second, we will extend the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive to account for all ‘zombie’ banks currently in operation. We propose to move these banks into a Eurozone jurisdiction in order to restructure and recapitalise them.

vii. European Treasury

We support the establishment of a European Treasury that will radically expand investment across Europe. The current set of policies — from the Stability and Growth Pact to the European Fiscal Compact — have created a straitjacket. European authorities lack access to fiscal resources, and Europe has suffered a crisis of under-investment as a result. The European Treasury would remove these constraints through a mix of EU taxes and bond issues. Such a Treasury could, for example, guide the Green New Deal through its bond issues, among other projects.

viii. Democratising the ECM

Europe’s most powerful economic institutions should belong to the people. We will fight for the European Stability Mechanism to be placed under EU jurisdiction, strengthening the role of the European Parliament in managing its affairs and putting an end to the “veto” powers that allow rich countries to prevent the ESM from serving poorer ones.

ix. Democratising the ECB

In addition, we will reform the ECB in order to give greater voice to the needs of Europe’s citizens. In particular, we will extend the ECB’s mandate beyond price stability toward the maintenance of a low unemployment rate. The Federal Reserve of the United States already operates this “dual mandate.” It is time for the ECB to join them.

VI. Debt, Tax, & the Financial System

We will transform the financial system to prioritize people over profits. The 2008 crisis revealed fundamental flaws in our financial system. But in the years since, policymakers have failed to address them. Millions of people are still struggling with debt, while the banks rake in record profits. We need a comprehensive plan for change.

i. European People's Bank

If we wish to guarantee access to decent jobs, health, and education, we cannot rely on private finance alone. European Spring is proposing a European People's Bank (EPB) that will cater to the needs of every neighbourhood in every municipality of the EU. Each member-state will govern the EPB in its jurisdiction, issuing national tax credits to create liquidity for each branch. The EPB will then use a Public Digital Payment Platform (PDPP) to take deposits and give out loans on the basis of those tax credits. Through this mechanism, the EPB can invest in a range of municipal services without increasing member-state deficits.

ii. Private Debt Restructuring Organisation

We are proposing a new agency to protect families that are struggling with debt and to support community banks from non-performing loans. The worst of the bad debts will be moved to a Private Debt Restructuring Organisation in exchange for tax credits of an equal value. As the debt is being processed, we will introduce a moratorium on home foreclosures and auctions, allowing debtors to pay rent directly to the PDRO. Finally, when they are solvent again, debtors will have the right to buy their house back from the PDRO.

iii. Ending Tax Havens

We demand tax justice. Each year, the EU loses over €1 trillion to corporations and individuals dodging their taxes. We must put an end to this unfair system.

European Spring will challenge the laws that allow jurisdictions like Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Ireland to enable tax evasion.

We will also clean up Europe's banking sector. We will introduce a simple rule: banks that do not disclose what they do in tax havens cannot operate in Europe.

Finally, we will investigate all European corporations and individuals with accounts in blacklisted tax havens outside the EU. If they are caught engaging in tax evasion, we will revoke their property rights.

iv. Beneficial Ownership Registry

There are thousands of shell companies and "special purposes entities" that do not declare their true owners. European Spring will introduce a Beneficial Ownership Registry that will require all companies, corporations, and economic entities to declare the identities of their owners and the details of their assets. We demand transparency.

v. European Inheritance Tax

We propose that European countries come to a multilateral agreement on Inheritance Tax to minimise the transfer of economic inequality from one generation to the next and to provide a strong, efficient funding base for the spending in our programme.

vi. Implementing the Coordinated Corporate Tax

We will end the race to the bottom in corporate taxation. We support the European Parliament's proposal for a 'Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base,' and we will push to implement it within the parliamentary mandate.

vii. Taming Finance

In order to prevent the reckless banking that led to the last financial crisis, we are calling for a new macroprudential framework to reduce risk and encourage investment among Europe's banks. We will raise the minimum equity ratio in order to increase banks' resilience. We will limit the total assets that banks are allowed to accumulate in order to prevent them from becoming "too big to fail." And we will ban toxic financial products that distort banks' balance sheets and put our economies at risk.

viii. Enforcing the Financial Transactions Tax

We will enforce the EU-wide Financial Transactions Tax that has been proposed by the European Parliament. The Financial Transaction Tax is a core element in our strategy to strengthen solidarity among member states and to finance crucial expenditure for the common good.

VII. Migrants, Refugees, & Newcomers

European Spring is fighting for a humane Europe. We must come together to formulate a pan-European system that guarantees legal and safe pathways, respects the fundamental rights, supports transition into European society, and fights the causes of involuntary migration at their origin.

i. Humane Common Asylum System

We are calling for a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) that respects international and European law and guarantees newcomers' fundamental rights.

The CEAS must protect the right of 'non-refoulement', which prohibits states from returning newcomers to places in which they face irreparable harm, including persecution, torture, or other human rights violations.

We will fight to end the so-called "hotspot" system of migration control and rapidly improve migrants' living conditions. Detention centres must be closed down, with a special emphasis on ending the detention of children. Reception facilities must provide decent housing, legal facilities, healthcare, and specific spaces for women and children to be safe from abuse. And asylum procedures should not be outsourced by extending the concept of safe third countries as discussed in reform proposals by the European Commission.

The asylum application process must guarantee an informed decision in accordance with the rule of law. Asylum seekers are entitled to written information about the asylum process, including information about competent authorities, formal requirements, and time limits in a language they understand, as well as legal assistance by qualified asylum lawyers, with translation and interpretation free of charge. Final asylum decisions should be usually rendered within a few months — not within years, as is often the case today.

Positive asylum decisions should be mutually recognised between European countries, allowing recognised refugees to move freely and settle wherever they have prospects for employment, family ties, or language skills. Communities and countries hosting refugees and migrants will receive funding and support within our integration and investment programme.

ii. Ending Fortress Europe

We believe that Europe should welcome newcomers — not push them away. That’s why we will introduce safe, legal, and open pathways to Europe.

We propose to allow Schengen visas to be granted by EU consulates around the world. We will expand the EU Blue Card scheme so that job-seekers from outside the EU have the opportunity to come to Europe. We will introduce new education and labour mobility schemes that bring students and workers from outside Europe. And we will propose a legally binding obligation to issue humanitarian visa in consulates and embassies of EU states to people in need of international protection who wish to enter the EU to apply for asylum.

iii. Supporting Family Reunification

European Spring believes that family reunification is a fundamental right and a benefit that is enjoyed not only by migrants, but also by society as a whole. We will radically expand the eligibility for family reunification inside and outside the EU. We will adopt broader guidelines for identifying family members outside the EU, and we will introduce new Family Reunification Visas that grant rights of resettlement. We will allow for EU residents to apply on behalf of their relatives, rather than forcing their relatives to apply from their own country of residence. And we will expand the financing for family reunification in the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund in order to support those who lack the resources to travel to Europe. No one should be forced to enter into poverty or face exploitation to reunite with their family.

iv. Ending the Externalization of EU Borders

The EU and its member states currently collaborate with countries like Turkey, Sudan and Libya to reduce the flow of migration to Europe. The result is serious human rights violations, including detention, torture, and sexual violence. These conditions only encourage migrants to take more dangerous routes to Europe, with many lives lost along the way.

We are calling for the termination of all such deals, including the EU-Turkey deal, agreements with Libyan authorities, and funding for migration control in Sudan, among others.

In their place, we will increase cooperation and funding of international organisations working with refugees (UNHCR) and migrants (IOM), and we will support civil society organisations working with refugees, migrants, and potential migrants in their countries of origin and countries of transit. Cooperation with countries of origin and countries of transit should only be allowed if they not only respect human rights — including their right to leave— but also monitor them and implement measures to address existing cases of rights abuse case.

v. European Search and Rescue Operation

We are calling for the establishment of a European Search and Rescue Operation (ESRO) geared at saving people in distress at sea and bringing them to a place of safety — as required by international maritime law. While patrolling Europe’s external borders, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency — also known as ‘Frontex’ — has not prevented the deaths of migrants traveling sea routes to Europe. By establishing an ESRO, we are committing to zero deaths at sea.

vi. Political Rights for Migrants

We will fight to include all newcomers in EU politics in their places of residence. We believe that the right to vote is a crucial step towards participation, self-determination and integration in healthy democracies. We will fight for all newcomers to enjoy full EU voting rights after meeting basic criteria, such as a minimum period of residency. Moreover, we will lobby for programmes through which EU member states agree to grant this right in national elections and referenda.

vii. Supporting Integration

We believe that integration is a common obligation to support newcomers and a common opportunity to enrich European society. We will increase funding in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) in order to guarantee access to education and language training. We will also increase funding to local integration schemes that foster exchange and offer training for newcomers.

viii. Fighting Migrant Exploitation

We believe that all migrant workers should be entitled to the same rights, benefits, and protections as European citizens. It is not migrants who lower wages, but a system that keeps them illegal, unskilled and under threat of deportation. We will fight exploitation by creating a special body to investigate wages and working conditions in migrant communities.

ix. Defending and Extending the Freedom of Movement

The freedom of movement is a fundamental human right — and a cornerstone of the European Union. We will defend free movement by demanding the immediate elimination of all border controls within the Schengen area.

In the long-term, we aim to extend the freedom of movement to countries beyond the European Union, providing even greater freedom to the people of the world to travel freely and choose their place of residence. In order to participate in that regime, countries would have to meet certain standards concerning the border regime, economic development, human rights, and rule of law.

VIII. Trade & Europe's Role in the World

Europe must stand for peace and solidarity with people around the world. The EU today plays a major role in arming and subsidizing violent conflicts in non-EU countries. The EU's trade policy plays a major role in exploiting workers in non-EU countries. European Spring will fight to end Europe's role in armed conflict and exploitation.

i. Just Trade

We believe that 'just' trade should be the basis of EU trade policy, not 'free' trade. We will fight to end the system of 'dumping' on developing countries. During any trade deal negotiations, European Spring will defend higher standards to protect the environment, human rights, public health, labour rights, public services, animal welfare, and consumer rights. Finally, we will fight to terminate existing agreements like TTIP that pose a threat to high standards and human rights.

ii. Ending Investor Privileges

European Spring rejects all mechanisms that create special privileges for multinational corporations. We will oppose Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) and the Investment Court System, which give international investors unfair legal powers to sue local authorities. We will also reject any attempt to create a Multilateral Investment Court. Instead, we will ensure full regulatory freedom for environmental and social policies without the threat of international investment litigation.

iii. Fair Intellectual Property Rights

We believe that the right to healthcare comes before the profits of pharmaceutical corporations. European Spring will challenge all intellectual property protections that interfere with the universal access to basic goods such as nutrition and medication.

iv. Holding Transnational Corporations Accountable

Multinational corporations must be accountable for their human rights violations. European Spring supports the UN's Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights. We call on the UN to push for an enforceable mechanism that allows affected people to bring corporations to court.

v. Peace & Solidarity Pact

The European Union is militarizing at an alarming rate: the Commission is proposing a €13 billion Defense Fund that will increase the size and scope of EU military capabilities. We propose a 'Peace and Solidarity Pact' that rejects EU militarization and ends Europe's role in violent conflict around the world. We are calling for the immediate end of all arms sales to states with records of rights violations, and more stringent regulations on all arms exports. We will fight the 'military-industrial complex' by demanding transparency in lobbying by defense contractors in Brussels. And we call on all member-states to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons in order to end the global arms race.

vi. Bolstering EU Accession

We believe that the EU should uphold high standards for accession in order to encourage its neighbours to respect fundamental rights and protect democracy. We will call for new criteria of accession to the EU to include social security among citizens, levels of inequality, and working conditions, among others.

vii. International Clearing Union

We will link up with progressive movements from around the world to call for an International Clearing Union (ICU) in order to rebalance and stabilize the global economy. The ICU would provide the same benefits as the European Clearing Union, but at the global level: it would measure each country's trade balance, tax countries with high levels of surplus, and invest these resources in areas that lack access to investment. The International Monetary Fund would administer the ICU, and ensure that the rules of the Union were fair, multilateral, and democratic. Rather than serving the interests of a few nations, the ICU will increase the equity, output, and stability of the whole global economy.

IX. Women, Gender Equality, & LGBTTQIA+ Rights

No one should face discrimination on the basis of their identity.

Across Europe, there is a large gap between cis men and other genders in terms of paid wages and political power. On average, women are paid 16 per cent less than men — two full months of unpaid work each year. Meanwhile, millions of people with uteri are denied the right to make decisions about their own bodies.

They are not alone. People in the LGBTTQIA+ community are also fighting for their fundamental rights to safety, family, and autonomy.

European Spring will stand up for a more equal Europe, with dignity for all.

i. Equal Pay Standard

We are calling for a pan-European Equal Pay Standard (EPS) in order to end gender-based discrimination in the workplace. The EPS will prevent employers from inquiring about past income as the basis for salary negotiations, therefore forcing all employers to base pay on qualifications. The EPS will also force employers to publish their internal salary payments to increase transparency. All employees will be allowed to petition discrepancies in pay between colleagues, and employers must respond with detailed reasoning for remaining pay gaps.

ii. Gender Parity in the EU

We will fight for gender parity in our politics. We propose the introduction of a European gender parity clause that will ensure an equal and fair representation of all genders at all levels of all EU institutions. The proposal will also stipulate new gender balance thresholds for the electoral lists of political parties in the European Parliament.

iii. Convention on Reproductive Rights

We believe that gender-based oppression in one member-state is a threat to marginalized genders in all of them. We are calling for a pan-European Convention on Reproductive Rights, which sanctions member-states that fail to guarantee safety, security, and reproductive autonomy.

In the Convention, we will call for a range of immediate reforms to promote reproductive rights. We demand free and easy access to contraception without prescription. Hygiene products like tampons, sanitary towels as well as menstruation cups should be affordable and freely accessible in schools, universities, work places and public spaces of all kinds.

All people with uteri in Europe should have access to and free information about safe and legal abortion. Pregnant people should have access to prenatal care through free prenatal testing, free midwifery care, free or subsidised courses in order to help them prepare for the delivery. People at risk of foetal death or premature birth should be entitled to a fully paid holiday during pregnancy.

These rights extend into parenthood. Parents should be entitled to 480 days of parental leave. Parents who are not employed should also be entitled to parental leave. Outside the 480 paid days, parents should also have the legal right to reduce their normal working hours to spend more time with their children.

iv. Ending Gender-Based Violence

The EU must do more to end gender-based violence. We will fight to protect and extend the Istanbul Convention, calling on all member-states to ratify protections against gender exploitation. We will fight for all member-states to implement the special protections for women who remain at high risk. All EU-sponsored facilities for asylum-seekers must provide gender-specific facilities that guarantee protection from harassment and sexual assault. Exploitation and oppression based on gender should be respected as a basis for refugee status.

v. Enforcing LGBTTQIA+ Rights

European Spring demands equal rights and privileges for LGBTTQIA+ people. We will fight for all EU member-states to recognize all marriages between partners and guarantee marriage privileges to those partners. In addition, we will fight to guarantee LGBTTQIA+ people's right to adopt children. Finally, we will fight for all EU member-states to recognize non-binary people and guarantee free access to transition procedures.

X. Technological Sovereignty

We believe in a technologically sovereign Europe, where Europeans make their own decisions about their data, platforms, and innovation. Our data should belong to us, our private conversations should remain private, and our publically-funded innovations should belong to the public. European Spring will harness the power of technology to serve the people.

i. The Right to Open Internet

We will introduce legislation that enshrines a right to open and uncensored Internet. To provide more universal access to the Internet, the legislation will attach responsibilities for EU member-states to develop and expand digital infrastructure. To ensure that all people have the capabilities to navigate the Internet, we will revive the EU's "Lifelong Learning Program" to help build digital literacy and digital capacity across Europe.

ii. European Autonomous Data Network

The current structure of the Internet is far too centralized. Much of the "cloud" that stores and manages our data is privately owned and perfectly structured for government surveillance. We propose a new European Autonomous Data Network (EADN): a decentralised, anonymous, and encrypted network of devices that protects our data and prevents surveillance. All public services should be based on the EADN, and all citizens should be granted a Citizen Digital Identity that allows them to access government websites and participate in public forums — verified but anonymous.

iii. Democratising Research and Innovation

The EU's "Horizon Europe" invests billions of Euros each year in research and innovation. But European citizens have no say over the direction of these funds and even less control of the products and patents that they yield. We will democratise Horizon Europe, mandating (i) citizen participation – rather than

consultation – in defining the mission and destination of EU innovation funding, (ii) more resources dedicated to grassroots, social, and cooperative-based projects, and (iii) mandatory collective ownership rights for the products of public investment. European Spring believes that public money should deliver public knowledge, public ownership, and common wealth.

The same principle applies for the development of artificial intelligence. The EU must invest in open AI to promote machine-learning and technological progress in Europe. And all ethical issues stemming from the rise of Artificial Intelligence should be settled democratically and debated at the European level.

iv. Open Platform Standards

We will work toward mandatory open standards for online platforms. These standards will allow all users to interact with social media platforms without giving away their data, and they will allow users to switch platforms without losing all the data that they have stored. By allowing users to migrate off of these platforms, we will reduce the monopoly control of large tech platforms and encourage new digital ventures, both public and private.

v. Building the Digital Commons

Corporate control of patents and copyrights limits innovation and prevents free expression. We will build the digital commons by restricting the power of copyright. We propose to (i) require that all code developed with public money remains in the public domain, (ii) expand the “Fair Use” clause in all Copyright law, (iii) reverse the burden of proof in copyright so that, unless something is shown to be protected by copyright, it remains in the digital commons, and (iv) review the EU Copyright Directive to rebalance the rights of users, creators, and innovators.

vi. Cyber Security Rights

We believe that all people are entitled to cyber security rights that protect them from state surveillance and private data trading. We believe that citizens have a right to know who collects data about them, for which purposes, and using which algorithms. We demand that all digital products have privacy as their default setting. We will restrict the sale and access of users' data to third parties that do not have explicit consent. We will give all citizens the right to know when they are interacting with an algorithm. And we will enshrine the right to equal treatment, ensuring that citizens do not face discrimination — racial, ethnic, or otherwise — on the basis of digital algorithms.

vii. Free & Open-Source Governance

Public authorities must retire pre-digital practices that prevented the public from overseeing their work. We are calling for the introduction of free and open-source software at all levels of public administration and publicly funded institutions. And we are calling for all records that are available to the public to be digitized and published in an open online database. Technology can and should be a vehicle for transparency.

XI. Arts & Culture

Culture is our common language and our shared heritage. Today, culture is beyond the reach of many Europeans, who cannot afford to attend events, access museums, or make a living from their artwork. European Spring will fight to expand access to arts and culture, creating new and publicly supported avenues for artistic expression.

i. Protecting the Cultural Commons

Over the last few decades, art has privatized: wealthy collectors hoard precious works, while governments cut back support for museums. European Spring will resist the privatization of Europe's cultural institutions. We will support the classification of all of Europe's historic sites as public domain, enshrining collective ownership of the cultural commons. And we will support new EU funding to match member-state investments in a range of cultural institutions — from historic museums to community art centres.

ii. Fighting Gentrification

We will fight gentrification in order to support artists to keep their homes, studios, and galleries. We will strengthen tenants' rights by introducing Europe-wide minimum tenancies that slow the pace of displacement. At the same time, we will oppose projects that take advantage of poor neighbourhoods for 'aesthetic' purposes. Art must become a vehicle for communities to express themselves, not a vehicle for profiting off the community.

iii. Ending Artist Exploitation

We will put an end to artist exploitation. We call for all public institutions to cease the use of contracts that deprive artists of their right to dispose of their works. Contracts for one-off presentation should be used whenever work is not purchased for collection. When artists are preparing works for institutions, they should be hired on the basis of contracts that ensure they are granted social security, leave, and all other workers' rights. Artists cannot work without pay.

iv. Decolonising Culture

We demand the immediate decolonisation of European culture. We call for the relocation of all works plundered from former colonies to be returned to their original homes. In cases where the works remain in Europe, we will ensure that the pieces are framed to give viewers a clear understanding of their colonial heritage. We will also push for curatorial representation from former colonies in preparing shows that reflect on Europe's history of colonisation.

v. Recasting Creative Europe

We are proposing a radical expansion and renovation of the Creative Europe program. The expansion will focus on supporting smaller, community-based projects. It will increase the number of annual grants for artists across EU member-states. And it will create a new fund that is dedicated to youth and their arts training.

vi. Expanding Access to the Arts

We will promote a massive expansion of access to Europe's cultural institutions. We will make all European cultural institutions free for under-25s and over-60s. Access is not only entry — but also the programming and management of the institutions themselves. We will support greater democratic management of Europe's cultural institutions, with mandatory gender and age balance on all boards.

vii. European Public Broadcaster

We will establish an independent European Public Broadcaster. The Broadcaster will translate and deliver member-state content for a European audience in order to develop a common culture. The Broadcaster will also employ its own journalists to produce content about European issues that will be aired across the European Union. Such content will include, for example, a European news broadcast that can be aired each day beside national main news programmes. Such an independent broadcaster will fortify the role of a free press in Europe and help bring Europeans together around common issues.

viii. Public Media Fund

We will create a new European Public Media Fund that will co-finance projects at the local, regional, and member-state levels. The Fund will contribute a certain percentage of the production costs of a wide range of content, including films, podcasts, documentaries, and radio programs that enrich a progressive, democratic, and pluralistic transnational conversation. In return, the Fund will receive limited licenses for public distribution in the whole EU.

XII. Youth & Education

European Spring will invest in Europe's youth. Millions of young people today lack access to decent education and job opportunities. This failure has put the future of Europe at risk. We will fight to restore young people's faith in the European project by expanding opportunities for them to travel, study, work, and participate in European democracy.

i. Empowering Public Education

We believe that a free and well-resourced public education system can be a powerful engine toward a fair and inclusive Europe.

European Spring will introduce a plan for a more integrated European public education system that still respects the diversity of education models across the EU. New solidarity funds will invest in public education systems in order to balance outcomes across Europe. Each course of study, at both the high school and university levels, will guarantee a degree that fits into a common European framework with automatic equivalence across the EU.

Among universities, public funding will be allocated on the basis of academic projects rather than rewarding a "publish or perish" culture. We will support professors to do inter-university exchange in order to facilitate academic dialogue between European universities. And we will make it easier for students to carry their credentials and training between universities and member-state education systems.

ii. Universal Erasmus

We will fight for a Universal Erasmus that guarantees access to the programme for every European youth. We will expand the budget in order to facilitate participation, and we will introduce new political education programs that encourage young people to pursue international activism. Our goal is to move beyond Erasmus's focus on 'marketable' skills to support a pan-European youth movement.

iii. A Better Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee has supported many young people to enter work and acquire skills — but many young people still lack access to opportunities for training or decent work.

We propose a strengthened Youth Guarantee. We will enforce higher rates of investment across Member-States in order to expand access to training and meaningful work. We will call for greater oversight of Youth Guarantee placement in order to ensure that jobs are not only decent — but also offer the opportunity to pursue a professional career. We will directly coordinate with youth organisations to help deliver this improved Youth Guarantee, empowering them to launch their own ventures.

iv. European Apprenticeship Contract

We propose the creation of a European apprenticeship contract that will provide greater mobility to young workers to pursue opportunities abroad. The common contract will be valid in all countries in the European Union, allowing young people to do an apprenticeship in any company registered in the EU.

v. Ending Youth Exploitation

We will crack down on youth exploitation. We call for an end to both unpaid internships and under-paid internships that cut wages under the legislated minimum. We will support the formation of youth unions on the Transnational Workers Commission that can bargain on behalf of young workers.

vi. European Teaching Corps

We are proposing a Europe-wide initiative to train a new generation of teachers. The European Teaching Corps will support university graduates to teach in primary and secondary schools across the EU. The goal is both to provide new opportunities to young people to become teachers and travel the continent, but also to increase the multi-lingual resources in Europe's primary and secondary education system.

vii. Commemorating Common History

Europeans share a common history, and it deserves a special place in our education system. We are proposing the development of a new course on the History of Europe for primary and secondary students across Europe, encouraging schools to adopt common content to commemorate shared history.

viii. Beyond Structured Dialogue

The voice of the youth is rarely heard in European politics today: few participate in politics, and fewer find a place at the negotiating table. European Spring will fight to include a quota of youth representatives at every level of European governance. In addition, we will radically expand the Structured Dialogue, reaching out to communities that have historically had little access to EU institutions and developing new digital platforms that can encourage participation among young people who cannot travel to participate in person. Europe's youth will inherit its institutions: it must shape them, as well.