



Riccardo Nencini
Leader
PSI, Italy

Brussels, 16th December 2010

Dear Riccardo,

At the beginning of this month we had a successful PES Council in Warsaw. **We adopted two clear resolutions and two detailed policy papers which will guide our action over the coming year.** The general resolution summarizes our proposals on the renewal of social democracy, on a progressive way out of the economic crisis and how to build a fair Europe, by and for the people. The policy papers give more detail on how we can overcome mass unemployment and social exclusion, while promoting fair, green and smart growth. The Council also took a historic and decisive step towards the designation of a strong PES candidate for President of the European Commission in the 2014 European elections.

The way in which we adopted these key political documents at the PES Council invigorated our decision making process, which I believe will strengthen the positions themselves. Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou gave an excellent speech, in which he articulated what it means today to be a European social democrat and to be proud of that identity. After the past tumultuous year for Europe it was an inspiring and timely reminder of why our investment in our political family matters so much.

Unfortunately we missed several of our leaders in Warsaw. Last year in Prague we made a **common commitment, our Mandate for Change, which was designed to enable us to better bridge the gap between our action on the national and European level.** Though we have had a fruitful year in the PES, this is still a pressing issue which we must address in 2011. It goes to the very core of *Our Vision for Progressive Societies in the 21st Society* project. European citizens spent 2010 condemning the European Union, not the Conservative EU majority, as they should. Our job is to promote this essential distinction and to provide a credible alternative. These are the kinds of difficult questions and issues we need to answer if we want to be in majority across Europe again.

Our renewal agenda is of vital importance for our member parties and for the PES as a European party. **2011 has to be the year of our *Progressive Societies* project.** There are a lot of very good renewal and reflection processes taking place within our family across the member states, in parties, foundations, think tanks and NGOs. Next year we need to bring these processes together so that we can all learn from them. **By pooling our resources we can move forward together.** But we must act together at European level. Our parties need modernisation. We need new ideas, new answers, new tools and a new narrative. We have launched RE: NEW, an online platform for debate, to this end. Also, the PES Network on Modernising Politics and the Progressive Societies Advisory Committee were both inaugurated this year.



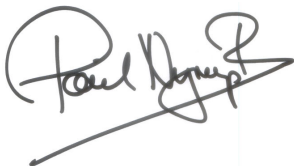
For this process to be successful however, we need you, as party leader, to take the initiative and lead the way. Without you our actions can only go so far. **Our credibility depends on our ability to coordinate.** We need your commitment if we are to build a new alternative. As such I would like to take this opportunity to **ask you to join me in Athens, on the invitation of George Papandreou, for a PES Leaders Conference on the 4th and 5th of March.** The format will be: an evening dinner on the 4th to discuss our values and identity within the framework of the *Progressive Societies* project, and a morning session on the 5th to discuss our common European political strategy. A formal invitation will follow in January. For now, please reserve this date in your agenda as it is crucial that we have as strong an attendance as possible. Furthermore, meeting together in Athens to discuss these crucial issues will send an important signal of our family's unity.

The Athens meeting is the first in a series of actions we have planned for 2011. The second will be a meeting on the 23rd of June in Brussels, before the European Council, where we will discuss the ways in which we can highlight the real power struggle between European political parties, the clear party political dividing lines within the European Council and the destructive consequences of the conservative agenda. These meetings are intended to lay the groundwork for the elaboration of our *Declaration of Principles*, to be adopted by the PES Council in November, in conjunction with a large PES Convention on *Progressive Societies*. The Declaration and the outcome of the Convention will form the basis for our *Fundamental Programme* to be adopted in 2012.

2010 has also shown us that European unity is fragile. It has exposed once again the strength of European Conservatives when they act coherently. Their austerity driven assault on the welfare state, under the guise of deficit control, has attacked the most vulnerable citizens. We can only take them on if we match their actions with the same coordination and strength. We have the possibility and the potential to again become the main political force in Europe. **To do this we need to define the political agenda.** We must be audacious at all times and be proud of who and what we represent, but we must also be effective at communicating our ideas and projects. **Let's make 2011 the year we renew our commitment to, and engagement with, each other.**

I look forward to seeing you in Athens. For now, let me wish you a peaceful Christmas break with your loved ones and a healthy and successful new year.

With all my best wishes,



Poul Nyrup Rasmussen
President
Party of European Socialists

