



Instead of turning inward, let's work together to build a more just and sustainable Europe

Joint appeal from International Solidarity NGOs' National Platforms of Bulgaria, France Germany, Italy and the Netherlands

On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, important elections are held in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. As inheritors of the European project initiated in 1957, our countries are now captivated by a narrative of crisis - economic, security, migration, social and institutional. This rhetoric evokes skepticism among European citizens about the ability of Europe and its Member States to respond to contemporary issues, opening the door for the rise of populism and withdrawal into one's own country.

Yet by 2015, our countries, along with the other 189 members of the United Nations adopted a common agenda for 2030: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the same year, the Paris Climate Agreement was also signed in order to protect future generations from the effects of climate change. To address universal problems in an increasingly interdependent world, these two initiatives led by the international community call for the need to rebuild our development models: the only possible future for our planet and its inhabitants must be built around a new social and environmental contract.

However, after agreeing to this new contract, many nations are now divided and influenced by increasingly nationalist, populist and climate-skeptical policies, challenging our collective project for a sustainable world. This undermines the collective power of the European Union as leading actor in development.

As representatives of Bulgarian, French, German, Italian and Dutch civil society, we appeal to our public leaders to defend the European Union's founding values of democracy, citizen participation, equality, social justice, solidarity and respect for human rights. We urge our future heads of state and government to place policies of development and international solidarity at the heart of public action in order to address the root causes of inequality and thereby contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, in Europe and worldwide.

Defending an ambitious European development policy that meets the needs of the most vulnerable populations means to influence and to go beyond a short-term challenges linked to security, migration or economic interests. This requires developing ambitious means of implementation that should not shy away from their primary objective of eradicating poverty and tackling inequalities.

The European Union was built on an ideal of cooperation and peace. We call on our future elected representatives in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands to take the sustainable development goals and international solidarity as an opportunity to revitalize the European project. Faced with the apparent absence of prospects, thus engendering extremism, as well as a disunited and disoriented Europe, it is our hope that they will rebuild a Europe of peoples that would exceed the sum of our national interests in order to foster a more just, stable and sustainable world.

Signatories:

Bulgarian Platform for International Development. Ventsislav Kirkov. Chairman of the management board. | **Concord Italia.** Francesco Petrelli. Spokesperson. | **Coordination SUD.** Philippe Jahshan, Chairman of the board. | **PARTOS.** Bart Romijn, Director. | **VENRO.** Dr. Bernd Bornhorst, Chairman of the board.