



European Congress

‘New Prospects for European Solidarity or
Downfall? A Social Democratic Perspective’



Fankfurt, 4th-5th May 2018
Activity report

FEPS

May 2018

FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) together with the Forum Demokratische Linke (DL21) and Jusos Frankfurt organized a conference on the future of European Social democracy and different European issues. The conference took place in Frankfurt on the 4th and 5th of May.

Together with more than 180 members of the DL21, the SPD and 23 international speakers the conference provided the opportunity to discuss the perspectives a more social, more democratic and peaceful Europe one year before the European elections in 2019.

The conference started on Friday with a Keynote of Gesine Schwan, who encouraged the participants to fight for a process of renewal and engage in it to shape it. Renewal mustn't become an empty phrase. Schwan also presented a concept of new and strengthened solidarity, linked to the effects of the economic crisis and austerity policy in European countries. Only solidarity can ensure a vital and united Europe. Higher public investments, a European Monetary Fund and a stronger Social policy on a pan-European level are necessary to bring back the sense of solidarity in Europe.

Besides the pan-European level the regional level plays a more important role in solving current problems. Gesine Schwan presented a new approach for a collective European asylum and refugee policy.

One aspect is a system of incentives for municipalities to make them receive refugees voluntarily. They ought to provide good circumstances for a successful process of integration. Citizen participation and financial support from the EU helps to compensate the costs of these programs, strengthens a open culture and the active role of citizens in the regions.

The following discussion was a appropriate starting point to depict problems on the one hand and solutions as well as chances for the creation a positive narrative of Europe one the other.

You can find Gesine Schwan's short statement and concepts on the Youtube-Chanel of DL21 (only in German).

The second day of the conference started with workshops on several theoretical and practical issues of European politics. Economic and social politics, democratization of the EU, migration and asylum politics and the EU as a project of peace were discussed with international speakers and experts from political parties, universities and social organizations.

The closing panel summarized the inputs, discussions as well as the main results of the workshops and added the personal perspectives of the guest on the podium. Moderated by Dietmar Köster, MEP from SPD in, Julie Ward, MEP from Labour in Great Britain, Pier Antonio Panzeri, MEP from PD

in Italy, Julia Zimmermann, Member of the National Executive Board of Razem Party in Poland and Giorgos Chondros from Syriza in Greece discussed the question of the future perspectives of European social democratic and socialist parties and the progressive forces in Europe. The conclusion was that the balance of power must change in Europe and generally switch to the left. Only a Europe that cares about its citizens and espouses solidarity can overcome neoliberal concepts and isolation.

Our major task as left forces in our parties – especially of the DL21 which represents the left wing in the SPD – is to support these goals, to shift majorities in our parties and to shape the process of renewal before the European elections will take place next year.

Sources:

<https://www.forum-dl21.de/spderneuern/fuereuropa/>