

2019 Manifesto
European Free Alliance

Building a Europe of ALL peoples

-Introduction by EFA President François Alfonsi

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"Vote in the upcoming European elections, make your voice heard.

Allow us to make your vote for all peoples of Europe and for Another Europe, be understood!"

1. Self-determination: a right for all peoples.

The European Free Alliance unites political parties in a range of varied and specific institutional situations. Improving the prospects of all peoples of Europe is dependent on the EFA's unfailing support for the right to self-determination. The EFA believes that all peoples have the right to choose their own destiny and the best institutional framework in which to achieve their empowerment.

Whether this is a matter of respecting linguistic or cultural rights, devolution, expanding regional or federal powers, demanding autonomy, achieving independence through a referendum....; all proposals that allow a people to express themselves and to define their own institutions in a democratic, transparent, gradual and peaceful way must be supported.

Self-determination is a principle, enshrined in international law, that can be adapted to the diverse situations encountered by peoples currently under the jurisdiction of various European States, and which allows all people to choose what would be best for them, for their development, and in some cases their survival.

The EFA supports the peoples, nations and regions that are acting democratically and that respect the European Convention on Human Rights. Equal rights, dignity and respect for diversity are the principles underlying the right of self-determination.

Changing the European political project is one of the objectives of the European Free Alliance, which believes that the Europe of old

nation states no longer satisfies the democratic demand for empowerment among the peoples of Europe.

The recognition and support of Europe's peoples, regions, nations and stateless nations is a necessary condition for restoring public confidence in the EU and for promoting a new 21st century democracy to make the European project a success for all peoples, regions and nations.

In a truly diverse and truly united Europe national and region identity go hand in hand with a European identity. Furthermore, the renewal of the concept of national identity over time is essential. Indeed, the sense of belonging to a community with shared destiny cannot ignore new populations who settle in our regions and stateless nations.

Building a Nation in the XXI century means that all citizens living in it take part in nation building. Building a Nation also means to take into account our respective diasporas, reconnecting with them abroad or integrating them back if they wish to do so.

2. A Europe of all peoples.

A Europe of all peoples is a Europe that makes no distinction between peoples and creates no categories, nor second class citizens. EFA wants another Europe which recognises the universality of all people as well as their distinct identities.

Since it was founded in 1981, the European Free Alliance has always believed that the European project must be based on the well-being and diversity of its peoples. The European Union can no longer content itself as being a union of nation states promoting their own interests. The EFA defends a broader, more inclusive vision of Europe, based on the desire to recognise and foster its diversity.

Being profoundly pro-European complements supporting a Europe of peoples. For EFA it is fundamental that Europe accepts and includes all peoples in the decision-making process in order to build a democratic Europe of peace, respect and solidarity.

The EFA would like to build a resolutely social Europe, a welcoming Europe, a Europe that is prosperous for every European citizen and that respects its own plurality. Euro-scepticism and/or anti-EU populism bring no solutions. Europe must invest more in our communities by empowering the social fabric and building ties between peoples. An inclusive approach to welcome new citizens is essential in order to strengthen our sense of identity and community.

In order to reinforce the role of ALL peoples, the nations at sub-state level and/or regions with legislative powers must have a role of their own in European decision-making through a strengthened presence in an “Assembly of regions and peoples” replacing the toothless Committee of the Regions. This in order for ALL Peoples to have direct participation, with voice and vote, in the decisions affecting their citizens.

EFA defends a Europe of peoples where it is logic and evident that the European Parliament has the right to initiate new legislation and where the legislative process within the Council should be transparent. The President of the European Commission should be elected democratically.

It is TIME for the European Union to work for all peoples in Europe.

3. A plan for Peace and Freedom for Europe.

The European Union was founded after the Second World War in order to secure peace as well as economic and social prosperity. Maintaining peace within its borders, the international defence of values such as democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, are the principal missions of the European Union.-Unfortunately the EU institutions and the Member States fall short defending its own core values and civil liberties.-The EU defines itself opposite to a Europe of the Peoples.

But in the construction of a Europe of nation states, the European Free Alliance aims to support minorities, peoples, nations, stateless nations and regions that aspire peacefully to political, cultural, linguistic recognition and the recognition of democratic institutions.

Europe should defend democratic sub-state level institutions if it aims to defend democracy, peace and freedom in Europe.

Today, the European Union faces rising international tensions. The migration crisis that has hit Europe, the jihadi threat, or the question of internal enlargement posed by Scotland and Catalonia-it is time-to construct another Europe.

The EFA supports a Europe that is able to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Not only a Europe without war, but a Europe that stands out for the recognition of its minorities, the right to

self-determination, the unconditional respect for the dignity of peoples and respect for human rights.

Based on those fundamental and democratic principles, conflict prevention and conflict resolution through dialogue is a priority, tackling all the consequences of the conflicts, with special care for victims and political prisoners.

Cultural and linguistic diversity, social justice and the right of self-determination are inter-related. A new project for the Europe of Peoples must be created to meet the democratic challenges and the empowerment to which the peoples of Europe aspire.

The EFA seeks a modern, ambitious and prosperous Europe, not just economically, but also in social and democratic terms. The EFA calls on the European Union to be more than ever a Europe of all peoples and regions where democracy, development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms complement one another.

4. Building a sustainable world.

The principles of growth and development that determine the model for our modern societies have led to the depletion of resources, climate disturbance and a loss of biodiversity across the planet. The pillage of resources for merely financial ends is not consistent with sustainable development.

The European Free Alliance takes an ideological position which, since its foundation, supports and defends greater protection for the environment and biodiversity, limiting the impact of human activities on the environment and protecting European citizens from all the environmental risks to their health; such as the prohibition of the use of GMOs, as well as glyphosate.

In the agricultural and fisheries sector more efforts should be made to reconcile those important national and regional industries with the EU climate goals. Innovation in regional sectors can boost sustainable and organic agriculture, fisheries and rural development and can bring about also a more comprehensive regional policy.

To achieve these ends, the EFA is in favour of an energy policy that prioritises energy efficiency and the production of renewable energy. Fossil fuels are both CO₂ intensive, and destined to disappear.

The European Union must anticipate these changes through an ambitious energy policy- in line with the UN sustainability goals and Agenda 2030- that must be capable of meeting the challenge of the energy transition by developing sustainable alternatives. It is

essential that our regions and nations exercise more energy sovereignty, deciding on the forms of alternative energy to generate, at what price, and under which circumstances. Therefore, the EFA is against fracking as often centralised decisions stemming from capital cities leave our regions and nations facing the risk of ground water contamination.

Although we support the wide autonomy of the regions in defining their energy production, the EFA calls for the phase-out of nuclear power where production and the storage of radioactive waste remains too great a danger to impose on future generations. During the energy transition, solid guarantees on assuring a low price, abundant supply and safety need to be put in place.

The implementation of policies and measures to promote sustainable development cannot succeed without appropriate governance. The EFA also supports all the European initiatives and programmes aiming to encourage the engagement of all players in the decision-making process, as it gives us the opportunity to develop a more concerted, balanced and fairer approach to regional advancement and to the advancement of the stateless nations of Europe.

EFA supports research in the field of renewable energy in the different regions and nations of Europe. EFA promotes regions and nations of the EU to take part in the implementation of research in order to positively influence local and European politics regarding renewable energy and energy efficiency.

5. From Linguistic diversity to Linguistic Justice.

Defending and promoting language diversity is one of the principles of the European Free Alliance.

The European Union, through its policy of supporting multilingualism, primarily encourages the use of official languages. The EFA on the other hand considers all languages as part of humanity's intangible heritage. EFA demands the official recognition, promotion and use of regional, minority and lesser used languages threatened with extinction. It demands specific European programmes to establish more linguistic justice.

Furthermore, the Council of Europe, through the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, must be supported in its actions by all the European institutions so that every Member State will ratify the Charter and implement its measures.

A Europe of peoples, a Europe of cultures, a Europe of languages: this is the Europe that the EFA wishes to promote and support, in the interest of all European citizens.

All the languages of the EU's historical and cultural communities must be valued, so that the richness of our linguistic diversity is no longer threatened.

Like biodiversity, European languages and cultures form our cultural diversity. They represent a part of the ecological balance of our societies. In many cases they are also a formidable tool for

creativity and economic development through innovation and the promotion of local heritage.

European languages have a crucial role to play in the growth and cultural enrichment of community heritage, and it is for this reason that the EU's language policy must protect its linguistic diversity, including minority languages, to ensure the preservation of an invaluable cultural heritage. We want equality between languages to establish linguistic justice.

6. Promoting gender equality

Although gender equality is a core value of the EU, European women still have unequal access to (1) power, (2) prosperity, (3) safety. A structural system of male dominance, patriarchal traditions and heteronormativity has legitimised the oppression of women and LGTB+ individuals in both private and public spheres.

EFA's core mission and work is grounded in the understanding that women are diverse in their needs and identities. Particularly minority women, stateless women, migrant women, women with disabilities, LGTB+ women, as well as young and elderly, rural and poor women, face greater levels of exploitation, discrimination and violence. They also suffer marginalization in the political arena.

Throughout Europe, women are still underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making. EFA believes that the participation of women in public and political life guarantees fairer, more democratic, and more diverse societies. EFA fully supports gender parity and recognises that Europe needs more feminist leadership that values diversity and makes space for women, particularly those belonging to minorities or other vulnerable groups.

Economic crises impact most heavily on women, children and the elderly. The gendered impact of financial instability and cuts in public spending have exacerbated women's poverty in recent years.

EFA promotes women's economic independence by strengthening EU equality legislation, guaranteeing individual rights to social protection and taxation, ending gender pay and pension gaps and providing social care, parental leave and child care. EFA believes that women and men should not only be equal carers of children,

the elderly and persons with disabilities. We also believe in the creation of decent work for women, along with new opportunities for employment for women in social entrepreneurship, the digital economy and other innovative fields.

Moreover, violence against women (VAW) still constitutes the most widespread violation of women's human rights in Europe. Addressing old and new forms of violence is a priority for EFA. EFA calls for gender-sensitive, evidence-based and comprehensive public policies on VAW, from legally-binding instruments to awareness raising activities that have sufficient human and financial resources. We call for more services that protect, assist and inform women when they seek help; improved access to and safety in police, judiciary and health care systems; widespread sexual and reproductive health and education; better support for women's organisations and NGOs; and campaigns that deconstruct myths about gender violence.

We believe that LGBTQI people's voices and experiences need to be heard and affirmed. LGBTQI people are a vulnerable group which has historically experienced hostility and violence. Hate crime and hate speech law needs to be consistent and cover homophobia and transphobia in all EU Member States. EFA campaigns for rights and equality by calling for safe and inclusive education, supporting an inclusive understanding of family, building cross-cultural solidarity and including youth perspectives. Currently in the EU, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is only prohibited in the field of employment. We want to see this expanded to other areas like healthcare, education, social protection or access to goods and services.

The EFA demands that the European Union improves antidiscrimination laws by mainstreaming gender into all fields of EU competence. The EU must consider women's diversity and adopt appropriate measures to combat intersecting forms of discrimination. We call on the EU to measure equality outcomes and the impact of new and existing policies and legislation. We call on them too to prioritize gender sensitive and inclusive EU budgeting.

7. Restoring dignity and equality

Some regions, peoples and stateless nations in the European Union stand in the shadow of centralised States. These States have exploited the natural resources of territories, used their labour, or have developed predatory economic models aimed at putting local populations in a position of inequality by comparison with the majority populations of these Member States.

Despite the diversity of situations, the European Free Alliance believes that all peoples are equal in dignity and that consequently any economic, social or political dominance cannot be allowed to persist.

The EFA has made social justice a key priority in its programme, and fights against any form of discrimination. It also promotes a more equitable distribution of wealth. The EU should be giving more guarantees for social justice while it too often sides with vested interests, big corporations and large member states.

Establishing equality between peoples is crucial to the success of the economic, social, cultural and political empowerment of the regions and stateless nations of the European Union.

EFA supports the European Pillar of Social Rights, which aims to give citizens new and more effective rights. It includes 3 main components:

Equal opportunities and access to the labour market
Fair working conditions

Social protection and social inclusion

Europe wide solidarity mechanisms should combat child poverty, the gender gap, generational poverty, social exclusion in many other policy fields..... This is only possible if all regions and nations of Europe improve their fiscal coordination and harmonise in the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion, tax havens and disloyal unethical fiscal engineering.

Social insecurity and growing inequalities must be combatted by the EU. More rights and opportunities should be given to local communities, in particular the right to choose their own model of development. Subsidiarity is a key word that is not being implemented.

The economic development of regions and nations should be better connected to the local context and the characteristics of the territories and peoples concerned in order to achieve genuinely sustainable development. Social and Economic policies should include more the human dimension and respect for human dignity. This should be placed at the heart of public policies.

8 . Democratic processes and participatory democracy

Member states too easily say that the European Union—is responsible for all the troubles of European citizens. This has led to Brexit - the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union - -and other negative developments.

Therefore, the European Free Alliance will continue to support the revision of the European project, to offset its democratic deficit adapting to new challenges, in particular that of participatory democracy and the involvement of peoples in the European decision-making process.

The EFA supports the principle of the Citizens' Initiative, introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which enables European citizens to call on the European Commission to draft a proposal on a question which they believe needs legislation. It is a first step in involving all peoples in the EU decision-making process although it is overly bureaucratic and inaccessible to the public and therefore it has to be radically improved.

But public confidence and involvement can only improve if the European institutions become more democratic, in particular through strengthening the legislative powers of the European Parliament, the establishment of meaningful constituencies for European elections and a fair electoral system, allowing representation of all peoples of Europe. EFA wants to see greater transparency in the Council as well as the democratic

election of the president of the European Commission by the European Parliament.

In addition, at a time when the use of the internet is spreading and more interaction is possible between governments and the governed, the EFA believes that greater use of the virtual sphere would make it possible to inform citizens better, and to make public action more transparent. It regrets that the EU's information platforms and sites are only available in the official and certain co-official languages.

Lastly, the peoples and stateless nations of Europe desire the democratic handling of their claims. The EFA also supports referendums or public consultation processes organised by the institutions of elected representatives in the regions of the European Union.

Bringing citizens closer to their institutions, respecting all peoples and restoring them to their rightful place in the decision-making process at the local and European level to address the crisis of representation that is evident in the falling electoral turnout: these are the main challenges if participatory democracy is to become a reality rather than just an aspiration.

9. International solidarity

Solidarity between peoples is one of the principles of the European Free Alliance. It has forged an international network with partners through cross border co-operation and mutual support between regions and stateless nations of Europe and around the world. Many partners whose linguistic, cultural and political rights have been and continue to be trampled upon by the Member States work together in full solidarity for a better world.

While state nationalism is inward-looking and based on exclusion, the vision of the peoples' nationalism held by the European Free Alliance is the opposite. It involves inclusion, respect for diversity, and building bridges between peoples rather than fortifying the borders between them. ***It starts from the recognition of all nations as equals, respecting their rights and identities. In that sense, EFA is in favor of the cooperation of free and equal Peoples.***

That is why EFA at an international level stands shoulder to shoulder with ALL peoples suffering oppression: The EFA requires European and international organisations to demand that human rights be respected by every state concerned according to international law and to apply sanctions if needed.

EFA supports measures to strengthen the rights of minorities in Europe and the world. Europe must use its influence on international disputes, especially in countries with which they maintain diplomatic ties and are engaged in cooperation programmes.

The EFA believes that the peoples of Europe and of the world should be able to create their own forms of governance and institutions. The rightful aspirations of those who believe in the restoration of their sovereignty, supported by international solidarity, are entirely legitimate.

We are on a path towards the construction of an international order in which other forms of government, more suited to our times, replace those which correspond to historical circumstances and which are gradually losing their *raison d'être*.

EFA stands for a European Union becoming a real international player with the vocation of bringing more peace, solidarity, prosperity, sustainability, democracy and respect for diversity, not only in Europe but everywhere in the world.

Concerning the question of migration, EFA pushes for strong solidarity with countries and regions at the border of the EU which are particularly impacted by the arrival of peoples from outside the EU. Every Member State must take part and be involved in inclusive policies for migrants. We need to invest in communities outside the EU and likewise within the EU in peripheral areas to stop emigration and any form of brain drain. At the same time we must invest outside the EU and in our peripheral areas for more inclusion of new citizens. We need to work together to empower our communities and our society.

10. Youth

One of the principles of self-determination is to empower the peoples in order to allow them to take action by themselves. That is why we cannot understand the emancipation of our countries, without the emancipation of our citizens, and most particularly youngsters. Young people, as forefront and future of our society, must have an active role both as targets and decision-makers of political policies. For this reason, the European Free Alliance, through its youth branch, EFAY, it's highly committed to ensure full opportunities for the youth and to increase their participation in society.

To guarantee equal opportunities for everyone, EFA will promote policies to tackle youth unemployment, brain drain and poverty, specially paying attention to the deprived and peripheral regions of Europe where young people struggle to pursue their own future. In order to do that, we will tackle measures in order to improve education and employment for young people. In particular, we want to emphasise the promotion of initiatives directed to strengthen local and regional economy and the creation of stable, safe and dignifying jobs. The precarious situation of youth employment, including the proliferation of unpaid internships and temporary jobs, calls for immediate action to ensure the protection of labour rights and a decent income to initiate in safety a fair professional life.

Furthermore, we will table policies directed to address the youth brain drain from the peripheries of Europe to more prosperous latitudes generating a successful environment at home and

stimulating the return of the skills learned abroad to their local communities.

Education is one of the key pillars for any policy addressed to the youth. A high-quality education at all levels (primary, secondary and higher) guarantees not only a good professional development, but also cultural interests, open-mindedness, critical perspective and other skills which contribute to enrich their lives as citizens and human beings.

In order to increase the role of young people in society, we will as well advocate for the creation of more relevant spaces of participation aimed to train young people in democratic processes and to transmit their views and opinions to decision-makers. To that end, we wish also to strengthen youth civil society by promoting youth NGO's, student unions, young workers unions, Youth Councils, non-formal education organisations, etc. A virtuous citizenship is an organised one.

New generations are particularly responsible for ensuring a world free of hate-speech, intolerance and xenophobia. This is even more true for young people from stateless nations. As usual targets of cultural discrimination, they have to be champions of integration and diversity. That is why, the EFA and EFAY promote intercultural dialogue between all peoples and minorities from every corner of the world, particularly those who live together in the European continent.