

European Free Alliance (EFA) Manifesto

for the June 2009 European elections

Vision for a People's Europe

(not a populist Europe)

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”.

(Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

(Article 1 (1) of the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

Introduction

The European Free Alliance (EFA) comprises parties from nations, stateless nations and territorial entities with a strong sense of identity that want a proper voice in Europe. **EFA brings together 40 progressive parties. We have representation in 17 Member States.**

EFA is a **pro-European party**, but we are critical of the way Europe is being run at the moment. We want a more democratic and decentralised Europe which is better equipped to deal with the challenges of globalisation. EFA aims for a People's Europe. We have a vision of a harmonious Europe made up of diverse peoples working together in a spirit of co-operation. We want to protect our rich diversity while taking advantage of what a stronger union has to offer. The political tool to do this is **subsidiarity**, bringing decision making closer to the citizen.

We need a fair and flexible distribution of responsibilities under the banner of **shared sovereignty**. The way forward is the construction of an interconnected system where everybody has a say. We advocate effective, co-operative bilateral relations between the EU and self-governing states and entities.

The European Free Alliance, in the last 30 years, has been standing up for the **rights of stateless nations, peoples and regions**. Since the first direct elections for the European Parliament, EFA has been defending the **right to self-determination and the right to speak and protect native and historic languages**. The EU now has 27 Member States and 23 official languages. Catalan, Basque, Galician, Welsh and Scottish Gaelic are now also used in the EU institutions, but do not have full official status. Democratic legitimacy makes our cause unstoppable. To fully realise our historic rights and improve the social wellbeing of our citizens and the economies of our countries, we need to be fully represented in Europe. **We need a people's Europe.**

In an increasingly inter-dependent world, the EU should give regions and nations the

place they deserve. In recent years, we have seen Montenegro (2006) and Kosova (2008) become independent states. Scotland, Wales, Catalunya and the Basque Country are now on their path to national self-determination and a full place at Europe's top table. The challenge now is to achieve an ever broader participation of all peoples and nations in the political process.

Political devolution, leading to self-government and the recognition of particular identities, is the natural synthesis of our political struggle. **EFA wants to see stateless nations and regions and small States** work together better to improve the democratic process of European decision making. **We want a people's Europe.** EFA rejects a monolithic EU as a replacement for traditional states with real power still retained in the hands of the largest member states.

In 2009, EFA will campaign on two fronts. Our representatives are committed to putting forward **progressive policies**. We work for **improved social conditions**, quality of life, and a fair distribution of wealth. We also champion the principle of **sustainable development** as the vehicle for the delivery of improvements in people's quality of life within the context of a clean environment and energy independence. Our ideology is in line with people's desire to build a better world for present and future generations.

But our countries' current **constitutional status** means that we lack the level of representation that member states enjoy in Europe. As a result, we risk being left behind when Europe makes vital decisions that affect all our futures. This is undemocratic and we are working to change that. This is also why we operate, beyond the state level, on a national and regional level, fighting for proper representation for the stateless nations and peoples of Europe at every level of government that decides our future. **We demand a People's Europe.**

Our member parties are:

Alands Framtid, Bayernpartei, Bloque Nacionalista Galego, Chunta Aragonesista, Die Friesen, Enotna Lista, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Eusko Alkartasuna, Fryske Nasjonale Partij, Libertà Emiliana-Nazione Emilia, Liga Repubblica Veneto, Ligue Savoisiennne, Lithuanian Polish People's Party, Mebyon Kernow, Moravana, Mouvement Région Savoie, Omo Ilinden Pirin, Partei der Deutschsprachigen Belgier, Partido Andalucista, Partit Occitan, Partit Socialista de Mallorca i Menorca Entesa Nacionalista, Partito Sardo d'Azione, Partitu di a Nazione Corsa, Plaid Cymru-the Party of Wales, Rainbow-Vinozhito, Scottish National Party, Silesian Autonomy Movement, Slovenska Skupnost, Sociaal Liberale Partij, Strana regionov Slovenska, Südtiroler Freiheit, Union Démocratique Bretonne, Union du Peuple Alsacien, Unitat Catalana.

Our observer parties are:

Lista Per Fiume, Movimento per l'Indipendenza della Sicilia MIS, MMROP Hungarian Roma Party, ProDG, Renouveau Valdotaine, Südschleswigscher Wählerverband SSW, Wendische Volkspartei SLS.

"Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." Martin Luther King

In the 2004-2009 legislature, our 6 MEPs have been working hard in the European

Parliament (Scottish, Welsh, Basque, Catalan, Latvian and Transylvanian). Through a parliamentary alliance with the Greens, we established a significant presence in parliament. During the last parliamentary term, EFA MEPs have:

- Achieved **co-official status at EU level for the Welsh, Catalan, Basque and Galician**
- Actively campaigned for the requirement of **a single seat for the European Parliament**.
- Introduced regional **tax autonomy** into the EU agenda (www.taxautonomy.org)
- Sought tougher EU action on **climate change** with renewables at the heart of Europe's energy future and backed the **20/20/20 targets**.
- Supported EU protection **and recognition of distinctive national and regional products**
- **Campaigned for a fairer distribution of EU structural funds for stateless nations and disadvantaged regions**

Our priority is to defend the rights of the People's Europe to determine their own future and live in a peaceful, democratic and diverse society.

Working for a better Europe: a People's Europe.

1. INSTITUTIONAL EUROPE

Empowering nations - Emerging states.

A new category of political entities is emerging in the EU: the **Emerging States**. As political and juridical rights in the EU are linked to "statality", the historical nations co-existing within the framework of the present Member States are blowing fresh air in the direction of full recognition. Some of these nations try to get recognition of their collective rights by creating their own states. Demands for public and democratic consultation in Scotland, Wales, the Basque Country and Catalonia are a first step in this direction.

Emerging states **will become new actors at a European level**. The EU has to acknowledge this new challenge, as it did with the last enlargement towards the East and the Balkans. With a peaceful and democratic will, this process has to be achieved in a normal way.

New states do not mean more isolation but new opportunities. From a democratic and pro European point of view, **a nation that becomes a state will bring its citizens closer to Europe and create greater transparency**. It is important to mention that the creation of a new State would lead to new forms of cooperation with the State from which it has emerged.

The EU must create the political and legislative basis to enable **internal enlargement**; this means adapting Europe to the multi-layered reality in which we live. On the basis of the principle of self-determination, **EFA supports the will of those nations who are ready to assume all of the responsibilities of a State in Europe as well as those who strive for more progress in autonomy in Europe**.

An alliance between the stateless nations, **Emerging States** and the existing **small EU Member States, with co-ordinated** strategies, should be encouraged in the European Parliament. EFA does not favour a centralised Europe ran by big member states. To restore the democratic balance of power, small states and regions and stateless nations should work closely together on the basis of solidarity and complementarity.

EU reform is urgent.

If subsidiarity is really an operative principle of the Union's principles, then it must operate at all levels, with direct effect. This means that the **democratic partnership among the various tiers of government** (EU, Member States and those of their component parts that enjoy constitutional self-government) must be guaranteed in the EU Treaties. It also means that there must be a right to **effective participation in EU institutions by all of the communities, peoples and countries of Europe.**

EFA regards the **involvement of the national and regional parliaments in the European decision-making process** by way of the scrutiny of EU legislation and the actions of their Member State governments in the Council as being vital, precisely with a view to the implementation of the subsidiarity principle.

A reform of the EU institutions, including the Parliament, to create **greater openness and transparency in decision making** is essential. The Committee of the Regions should be reinforced and reformed as a Senate of the regions. EFA wants a democratisation of Europe and wants to enhance the participation of the citizens through a direct election of the President of the Commission. The consultation of local, regional and national parliaments before the adoption of European rules and laws, with special attention to regions with minorities or lesser used languages, should be done at the start of the law-making process. After voting for laws, measures should be taken to make them more known and accepted by the inhabitants, companies and organisations in the European regions. Further EU enlargement would not be desirable without these necessary reforms.

An evaluation of the European tender-system should be undertaken. There is a lot of criticism of its bureaucracy, its time-consuming and complicated procedures and its effect on prices.

Towards a Social Europe.

The European Social Model has to be strengthened as a cornerstone of the European Model of Society based on **solidarity: full employment with quality jobs and gender equality in a healthy and safe work environment with access to universal services of general interest.** The EU needs a **renewed Social Agenda** with real actions and instruments to **root out all forms of discrimination** in the Union. Good examples are directives on cross-border healthcare, a work directive, a directive on social services which are of general interest, and cross-border initiatives on Roma issues.

More than ever, with the worldwide crisis in the capital markets, **it is necessary for Europe to protect its people**, for the **Social minimum measures to be upgraded** and for regulation - in the fields where it is needed - not to be seen as an evil, as is too often the case when it comes to the European Commission. People are suffering as a result of rising prices, rising fuel costs and problems in the real-estate markets; the credit crisis is widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots. **Central control instruments** to prevent and a central intervention budget to remedy monetary crisis situations are needed

by the European Central Bank (ECB).

Measures of gender equality should open up labour markets more for women. Services of general interest should be more open, especially for those with lower incomes. The rise in the price of water, which is sometimes as high as 300% and which is, strangely enough, sometimes caused by privatization, is unacceptable. Affordable access to clean water is a right to all. The EU should ask for better guarantees at an international level; instead of tolerating market fundamentalism, **more control over fraud and instability of the financial markets is needed.**

Binding quantitative and qualitative targets should be agreed upon at a European level. A European Social Stability Pact should be implemented with the aim of achieving full employment, **fair wages**, social welfare, social equity, gender equality, cultural diversity, and ecological sustainability.

2. DIVERSITY AND EQUAL LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

Cultural diversity and respect.

According to UNESCO, by the end of this century, a large number of the 6,000 languages which exist in the world are endangered and likely to disappear. Consequently, the EU has to recognise and put into practice "**unity in diversity**", **respecting the reality of its different peoples** and, in particular, the stateless nations and regions that have their own languages, history, economic, social characteristics and political aspirations. The EU has to overcome the centralistic and technocratic mentality and practices of the States.

Only EU **recognition of all languages** will represent true linguistic diversity or **linguistic democracy**. Stateless nations and regions should have equal rights to use their languages compared with the official state languages. This would ensure that their languages could **no longer be denied rights as official EU languages**. EU policies also have to **promote** the cultural diversity of TV, media, film industry, internet, education and radio in the stateless nations **and in minority-regions**. Equal access for minority languages in programmes such as life-long learning is needed.

“All languages are free and equal when it comes to dignity and rights. National minority languages, lesser-used languages, languages of historic minorities and majority regional languages ... all are equal to state languages.” EFA calls for a **UN Declaration of Linguistic Rights** which is similar to the UN Declaration of Human rights 1948.

The right to petition and to put questions in one's own native tongue empowers democracy and is an important element of the transparency of power.

We welcome the advances made in ensuring that Catalan, Basque, Galician and Welsh have co-official status in the EU. We want to build on this achievement and ensure that they are recognised as full official languages. These are historic European languages used daily by millions of people in all walks of life, at work and at home. It is time for the opportunities, rights and privileges granted to languages such as German, English, Swedish or Maltese to be granted to those languages which currently have 'co-official' status.

“We are as much for the preservation of ecodiversity as we are for the preservation of the plurality, diversity and richness of languages. A

language is a cultural means for the construction of reality, not a simple tool for the transmission of information. In the field of culture, which is the basis for humankind, the loss of a language is equivalent to the loss of an element of biodiversity in the biological field.”

(Bernat Joan I Mari from Ecolinguistics)

EFA promotes a vision for multilingual education with programmes to support multiculturalism, minority languages in higher education, and student and professional exchanges for minority languages.

An evaluation of Life Learning Programmes should be undertaken, including the implications for Lesser Used Languages (LuLs). The reintroduction of earmarked subsidies for minority languages is essential for the equal treatment of LuLs.

“The EU is there for the people and the communities! The people are not there for the Union.”

Nelly Maes

3. ENERGISING EUROPE

Sustainability: Environment and Energy.

Sustainability is at the heart of our political strategy, both culturally and linguistically as well as environmentally. **Building sustainable communities in a sustainable Europe.**

Fighting climate change has become a concrete example of European leadership. In the **UN Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in November 2009**, Europe must demonstrate its willingness to show this leadership. The European Commission should promote competitiveness in the field of innovation and research and development in the field of renewables. A visionary Europe should not allow the economic recession and the monetary and financial crises to push climate change out of the picture.

As far as nuclear energy is concerned, EFA adopts a clear **anti-nuclear position** and wishes to see a phasing out of nuclear energy at a European level. Promoting energy efficiency and independence and more use of renewables must be the cornerstone for a EU energy policy. **No EURATOM, but EURENEW. EFA demands a European treaty on renewable energy.**

EU investment is needed for delta and coastal areas that will face serious problems as a result of climate change and rising water levels, as well as for mountain areas and other environmentally fragile zones that are also getting affected by it.

Europe continues to lead on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali process, whereas the US, the major emitter of CO₂, has only recently signed up. But it needs to do more. A **reduction in Europe’s ecological footprint** from 4.8 ha per person to less than 1.8 ha per person is essential if we do not wish to endanger the world’s capacity even further. The EU should lead the way on **sustainable consumption**.

Economy: Housing, Transport and Tourism.

The EU could do more in the field of housing making better use of the structural funds.

We must address not only social problems in the housing sector for those on lower salaries. But also the issues of **isolation, energy-saving measures and passive housing** need to be actively promoted. We must also look at the role of the EU in helping other levels of government to improve the availability of social housing and offer more affordable housing options to those in need.

We support the goal of full employment for all citizens, with a focus on **regional development** and the reconversion of old industries. We should offer dedicated education and training opportunities for under-represented groups such as the less well off and the disabled in order to improve their chances in the labour market and promote their social mobility. The sector of social employment could be further developed in order to create usefull much needed jobs in our communities.

Mobility

Physical mobility in the EU should be improved by Trans-European Networks (TENs). EFA wants a **modal shift** towards more **sustainable means of transport with costs supported** in accordance with the principle of “the polluter pays”. As an important economic sector, tourism should turn more towards **sustainable tourism**.

You are what you eat.

We are opposed to the commercial cultivation of GMO's for food productions. **We support further** stringent legislation on labelling and traceability for the import. In the short run the European Union should recognize and further develop **GMO-free regions and zones**. A large majority of the people of Europe reject GMOs. So this is not only an issue of food safety but of **our democratic right to choose what we eat** and of **the rights of people to be put before profit**.

Europe's stomach: Food, farming and fisheries.

We recognise the vital role the EU has to play in promoting sustainable rural development and viable rural communities. Food production, farming and fishing are vital industries in this respect and deserve continued EU support.

The Common Agricultural Policy or CAP needs reform and we welcome the review currently underway. It is vital that EU funding remains available to help smaller producers, family farms and fishing communities, helping secure a viable future. Sustainable agriculture, fishing and farming could then flourish, playing an important role in countering the present challenges to food quality, safety and supply. EFA request that the EU focusses more on animal welfare within its policies.

Bio fuel production must not compete with the food production chain. Our first priority is to **deliver quality foods to all citizens**.

Rural development and tourism should be made compatible with one another. EFA promotes the use of **quality products, regional and local foods, and slow food as one way to tackle 'food miles'**. Higher standards of consumer protection are needed in the internal market without harming traditional, local and regional food production.

Knowledge, research and innovation are Europe's future.

Innovation in the agriculture, energy and transport sectors should be the driving force

which propels Europe towards a more sustainable future. Innovation is essential to revive the labour market and enable Europe to face the worldwide challenges of declining or delocalising industries. New sectors and new technologies can pave the way for the future of Europe, provided that they are the driving force which is used to make Europe a more social, sustainable and economically self-sufficient continent. We support economically and ecologically sustainable development, in line with our resources and the needs of our communities.

4. EUROPE IN THE WORLD

Common foreign and security policy

Security and foreign policy should aim at **conflict prevention** and community development. Achieving lasting peace in the Middle East and in other areas of conflict through negotiation is a requirement for world peace and stability. The rooting out of terrorism should not jeopardise human rights. A **treaty on the export** of arms and a **binding code of conduct on the arms trade** is essential. We will also support EU action to end the use of chemical and biological weapons as well as cluster bombs and other weapons of mass destruction. EFA supports a nuclear free Europe.

EFA urges the EU and its member states to recognise, encourage and respect all the demilitarised and neutral regions and nations who are determined and dedicated to remaining as such, in an uncertain and increasingly changing world.

Migration

We recognise the invaluable contribution that migration has made to Europe, socially, culturally and economically over many years, and believe that this important contribution will continue in the future. We view migration as a natural process in human life and it is in all our interests for the EU to deal with migration as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Equally, we recognise the many potential shared benefits of greater co-operation in asylum and immigration at EU level, and the important role that Europe could play in assisting the integration of new migrants included in the languages of the stateless nations.

We also believe that we share a duty to uphold and defend people's right to seek asylum and continue Europe's proud tradition of offering refuge to the persecuted.

Solidarity with the developing world.

With over 1.2 billion of the world's people surviving on less than €1 a day, we are committed to the achievement of the eight **UN Millennium Goals** and the Johannesburg commitments. The combating of poverty and hunger, the provision of universal primary education and the accessibility of healthcare with special attention to the fight against HIV, the empowerment of women and the implementation of policies towards gender equality, and the building of global partnerships are essential to the achievement of peace and justice.

EFA supports a vision for overseas aid, **fairer trade policies to empower developing countries**, and measures for dealing with people trafficking and the challenges and

opportunities of migration. In the context of a European foreign policy we also support greater European involvement in peace keeping and conflict prevention. Creating an EU peace-keeping force is essential to sustainable and worldwide peace. EFA supports an investment programme for Africa to make efficient use of solar power possible so that the continent can be less dependent on oil producers.

In order to avoid the repetition of failures of previous forms of development aid, the coherence of the different kinds of action implemented by the different actors (EU, States, NGOs, etc.) should be reinforced. It is crucial to establish a **strong relationship and synergies between development and security, development and migration, development and protection of the environment, and integration between commerce and development.** This needs to be completely achieved with regard to human rights and in an efficient and transparent way which creates synergies between the North and the South.

Development programmes should fully respect the cultural roots of the population, but the governments of developing countries should also respect human rights. **The application of humanitarian law is the cornerstone of a just and fair world.** We fully oppose the breakdown in the respecting of human rights within the context of newly emerging economic powers like China.

Your vote will enable us to continue to champion the following critical issues in the European Parliament:

9 Proposals for EU2009:

- 1. A binding code of conduct on the export of arms and an arms treaty**
- 2. More money for European coastal protection, mountain areas and other fragile zones**
- 3. Radical reform and democratisation of EU institutions,**
- 4. EU minority language rights legislation, including the private sector**
- 5. EU legislation to promote local food procurement**
- 6. Replacement of Euratom with Eurenuew**
- 7. Multiplication of EU university exchanges by a factor of 10 (from 2% to 20% of Erasmus students)**
- 8. Higher investments in innovation and research and development in order to meet the Lisbon strategic goals;**
- 9. Joint decisions by regions with regard to the distribution of structural funds**

- Higher investments in renewable energy sources
- Legislation to protect workers from exploitation
- EU funding to tackle poverty and homelessness
- Increase in development aid
- Action to combat people trafficking
- Establishment of an EU peace-keeping force
- EU Organ Donor Agency to co-ordinate organ donation
- Establishment of a programme to promote cultural, educational and professional exchanges among speakers of minority languages
- Abolition of the requirement of two seats for the European Parliament.
- Quick integration of migrants through the use of the regional language and by enhancement of their work status to avoid exploitation and discrimination.

- Reduction in the burden of transit traffic in ecologically fragile areas
- Facilitation of conditions for Internet navigation (with the scheme of EU intervention on rates for mobile telephones)
- Encouragement of health and food campaigns in EU schools and universities (with the scheme of free school fruit)
- Creation of EU territorial bodies in border regions
- Boost of trans-frontier transport infrastructure
- Set up European plans to fight depopulation in rural areas and to promote investment and progressive development in such areas

Barcelona, March 2009.