

## The Socialist Group in the European Parliament

Solidarity, sustainability and social justice are some of the principles common to the social democrat, socialist and labour members of the European Parliament. In order to strengthen their influence and gain real support for their proposals, MEPs belonging to Socialist Group began cooperating in the early stages of EU integration and now represent the second biggest group in the Parliament.



*The logo of the Socialist group*

They took 27.19 % of the vote in the 2004 election, giving them 200 seats. Their members come from 23 EU countries and have places on all standing committees, with seven of their members chairing committees. The current president of the Parliament, Spain's Josep Borrell, is a Socialist. In addition, three vice presidents and two quaestors also belong to the Socialist group.

The leader of the group is a German - Martin Schulz. He was elected to the position in 2004 but has been an MEP for 12 years. His role is essential for the proper running of the political group. He coordinates all the activities of the group, speaks for the Socialists and represents its position in the plenary.

Before the very first direct election to EP in 1979, the Socialists issued a European Election Manifesto with the group's political priorities and the group has kept up the practice. The goals include economic growth, the fight against the poverty, social integration, security and the protection of environment. But with ongoing globalisation and rising unemployment it seems that the challenge of job creation is taking centre stage. Socialists find that unemployment is a millstone around the neck of social Europe.

The complexities of the problems that Europe has to face are sometimes very technical and hard for people to understand. Bringing the Union closer to citizens thus remains one of the major challenges for the Socialist group. "In a series of policy debates and decisions - enlargement, chemicals, the budget framework and even the appointment of the Commission - the Socialist Group has taken the lead on standing up for peoples' interests in shaping European laws," said Mr Schulz. These are all examples of areas where "Europe does listen to people."