



European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)

EU Elections 2019 Manifesto: 10 Key Demands

1. For a fair(er) public perception of the EU

EU law is mostly adopted by the European Parliament AND the national government ministers sitting in the Council. Too often, national governments behave in a self-centred fashion, preventing policy results, and then blaming “Brussels” for failures. This contributes to rising EU scepticism amongst the citizens. Political actors at national and EU levels need to be more determined in defending the virtues of the EU and act in the European spirit of solidarity and compromise. Yielding in one instance means getting something in return at the next occasion!

2. For a better Europe

The debate on the EU - also on a social EU - should not be polarised along the “more-or-less-Europe” divide. Dogmatic and simplistic discourses on “more or less Europe” are not goal-oriented and split societies rather than call citizens to consider the substance of specific topics and themes. A differentiated approach is required. In some cases “more Europe” makes sense, in others, “less Europe” can offer better results.

3. For liberal democracy

Independent judiciaries, rule of law, universal fundamental rights and tolerance are cornerstones of the EU. Minority rights are inextricably inherent to these principles. The EU needs to remain a credible voice, enforcer and defender of liberal democracy, both within and outside the EU. Not least, also citizens and voters must be convinced of the fundamental importance of these values.

4. For a real social mindset

The European Pillar of Social Rights must become the respected reference for more social fairness in the EU and its Member States. It needs to be implemented, enforced and ‘seized’ by all governments, EU institutions, social partners and trade unions alike. The social goals of the EU must be set on equal footing with market freedoms, based on the recognition that inclusive societies do not only stand for social progress but also for economic and fiscal returns.

5. For universal social rights

Social dumping to increase competitiveness in the EU’s borderless internal market needs to be countered. Without prejudice to specificities of public services and traditional principles of career civil service systems, EU-wide robust and binding minimum social standards for workers in particular need of protection based on upward convergence and tied to non-regression clauses are needed. Every person, regardless of the employment status, needs access to adequate and affordable social protection.



6. For effective social policy making

Subsidiarity, especially in terms of social policy, does not only require Member States' competence or action on the lowest levels; it must also focus on solving problems within an increasingly market-integrated EU. In this sense, the current asymmetry between for instance EU competence for the internal market and competition and the Member States' competence for social policy must be considered. Putting the social goals of the EU on equal footing with the Single Market freedoms requires stronger determination and competence at the EU level.

7. For decent work

Without prejudice to specificities of public services and traditional principles of career civil service systems, all workers in a de-facto dependent work relationship must be entitled to decent work. Abusive employment practices specifically developed to take advantage of the EU's internal market's four freedoms need to be stopped. Legislative loopholes have to be closed, as many still exist for a variety of categories of workers, including posted workers and those active in the digital or platform economy. Existing precarious work also in the public sector must be consequently eliminated. Member States should be encouraged to strengthen their labour inspectorates and take advantage of the opportunities opened by new European Labour Authority.

8. For fair and proportionate taxation

Across the EU, capital is still taxed at a substantially lower rate than labour. Scandals of businesses and multinationals avoiding or evading tax keep popping up. The EU must encourage Member States to establish national tax administrations that are better staffed and have more resources. The EU and Member States must adopt forceful policies to close corporate taxation gaps and achieve a fairer balance between capital and labour taxation. This will ensure the necessary resources for the states to function, and ever-widening inequalities between the richest and most vulnerable members of society can be reduced. This goes without prejudice to the fact that financial public resources should be deployed in a sustainable way and with zero tolerance to corruption.

9. For performing public services

Longstanding public underinvestment across Europe has led to deteriorating public services in many Member States. This has been to the detriment especially of the most vulnerable members of society, undermining the principles of the social market economy. Large-scale cuts in the budgets of many Member States have been carried out in times of new challenges for the public sector, in some cases leading to the proper functioning of the state being called into question. Societies with performing public services have been fairer, more resilient and sustainable. And efficient and high-quality public administrations require competent, well-equipped, well-resourced and motivated staff.

10. For investments in people

Investments, mainly in the field of early childhood upbringing, education, health and active labour market policies promote revenue in the long term, both in a social and economic respect. Sustainable and resilient economies need to invest in people. The EU should take necessary steps to encourage Member States to close investment gaps. Economic governance and budgetary surveillance tools should be designed accordingly.