

10th Anniversary FEPS
“Prioritising People and Planet –
A New Agenda for Global Progress”
Brussels, 29 January 2018
Speech Pascal Lamy

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair”.

We all remember this famous quote from the "tale of two cities" by Charles Dickens, a historic novel which he situated just before the French Revolution

This is where we started from for our journey in 2015 with the aim to prepare a new agenda for global progress. The megatrends that we have identified with the help of Ian Goldin and which will shape our future can bring the best of times or the worst of times depending on the balance of political forces. They will determine “the good, the bad, and the ugly”.

The common conviction of the group I had the pleasure to chair, was that we, progressives, have the possibility and the responsibility to tilt the balance in the right direction.

But a possibility or even a responsibility is not a capacity. And let’s be frank, in this respect we have lost ground during the last 2 decades and we need to regain force.

That’s precisely the point of the proposal which we adopted in last September and which we are making public today.

Why today?

In order to mark the 10th anniversary of the FEPS. FEPS is about ideas, proposals, debates, agendas, visions, inspirations.

Why a global agenda?

Because our world has reached an unpatented level of interdependence, hence a necessity to develop our local agendas within a global one, with a pluri-continental, pluri-cultural frame.

Why “people and planet” which is our title?

Because too many people as well as our planet are the victims of the excesses of capitalism and neoliberalism.

Why a platform, with concrete proposals?

Because this is the only way to test the willingness of such a diverse group to converge on both principles and policies.

Why, finally, these two parts, one on an ideological software followed by one on the user’s notice what Frans Timmermans calls the “organisation”?

Because the way politics develop today are profoundly different from what it was 10 years ago. We need to question some of our old good organisation beliefs including this Leninist view according to which progressives are to lead the social movement. Maybe it is time to look at it the other way round!

What next for this work?

Our hope is that this short piece will serve to trigger as many debates as possible on various continents with the help of FEPS, the Global Progressive Forum, and many others in order to inject new life in the progressive side of priorities. We need it as other forces have recently been more successful than us at exploiting the growing political and social discontent.

We have known for a long time that we have to think beyond capitalism, which has recently given birth to an even more unruly child, named “national capitalism”. This is the first urgency. National capitalism, we have to fight upfront, my friends, before it is too late for the people we care most about, and for the planet!

Let me as I conclude thank again wholeheartedly the members of this fantastic group. Many thanks also to Massimo D’Alema and Ernst Stetter, who entrusted me with the task of guiding this journey, and also to the supporting team: Ania Skrzypek, Céline Guedes, Vassilis Ntousas, Alain Bloëdt and others.

It was a risk worth taking and this is precisely what FEPS is, and should remain, about.