



Social, fiscal and climate justice: the right-left cleavage is still alive!

*by Maria Joao Rodrigues,
FEPS President*

The European project can only have a future if it overcomes the status quo imposed by conservatives and neo-liberals and if it refuses to fall into the trap proposed by national-populists. Regaining control over our lives in a time of globalisation is only possible if we address social, fiscal and climate justice and if we rebuild democratic sovereignty at all levels from local to national and international, with the European clout as a crucial one.

At the same time, the Social Democratic agenda can no longer be implemented in the limits of national borders. If we want to ensure a fairer welfare system in the age of energy transition and digital transformation, we need to build regulation, re-distribution and taxation policies with more European coordination. That's why we cannot escape a debate on social, fiscal and climate justice!

We need to build on the encouraging message coming from the recent European elections for more climate action, social and tax fairness and democracy when we are now defining the starting point and the direction of new legislature in the European Union. Crucial political battles on the way to govern the EU are and will take place: the growth strategy for the next 10 years, its translation into a multiannual financial programme, the new EU Global strategy, the way to deal with Brexit or the implications of no Brexit, the choices on enlargement, the partnership with Africa, the European migration policy, the ways to deepen European integration regarding defence, the Eurozone, taxation or the social dimension.

Against this background, some priorities should deserve particular attention to prepare the EU agenda for the next five years:

- Making Europe the leading case of green and just transition in line with the Sustainable Development Goals
- Defining the European way to drive the digital revolution
- Revamping the education system to prepare citizens for a digital era
- Developing the European Social Pillar to fight old and new social inequalities and raise social investment
- Reshaping the financial and tax systems to support this grand transformation
- Adopting a European budget to prepare for the future and to promote upward economic and social cohesion, including in the Eurozone
- Building up a European migration policy
- Organising a long-standing partnership with Africa for cooperation and development
- Updating the EU Global Strategy to strengthen multilateralism and assert our values
- Asserting a feminist Europe as a game changer in all levels of the political system: local, regional, national and European
- Making the young generations' aspirations our main compass to sail in troubled waters