

2019 Manifesto  
European Free Alliance

Building a Europe of ALL peoples

-Introduction by EFA President François Alfonsi

1. Self-determination
2. A Europe of all peoples
3. Peace and freedom for Europe
4. Building a sustainable world
5. Linguistic justice
6. Promoting gender equality
7. Social justice: Restoring dignity and equality
8. Decision-making by all peoples
9. Greater solidarity between peoples
10. Empowering Young People

*"Vote in the upcoming European elections, make your voice heard.*

*Allow us to make your vote for all peoples of Europe and for Another Europe, be understood!"*

### ***Building a Europe fit for all its Peoples.***

*Europe is deeply diverse, and it's thanks to all the different groups of people who helped build its history. And it is only by championing "unity in diversity", as its own motto states, that Europe will succeed in building a future in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected for all.*

*But a Europe of States stifles the diversity of all European peoples. Our political party, the European Free Alliance, is the voice for those peoples that are struggling with central governments to secure recognition of their rights.*

*Above all comes the right to decide your own destiny — the right of self-determination.*

*In its latest term, the European Parliament saw events that were entirely new to the European Union: Through referendums in Scotland in 2014 and Catalonia in 2017, the right of self-determination was exercised in a democratic and exemplary manner. Respect for the choices taken by these peoples forms the very basis of democracy.*

*Catalonia — a victim of repression over half a century that is unprecedented in Europe — will be a key issue for the European Union in the forthcoming parliamentary session. The EU's democratic credibility is at stake, as Spain regresses towards an authoritarian regime and casts aside respect for the fundamental freedoms that Europe has a duty to ensure.*

*We also need to find an answer that enables the Scottish people to remain in the European Union despite Brexit, in accordance with the will of the great majority of Scotland's citizens.*

*Beyond these two symbolic cases, historical groups of European people throughout the Union are seeking more and more freedom and — through either independence or full autonomy — the ability to exercise their right to decide their own futures.*

*The European institutions are therefore in need of comprehensive reform so that all of Europe's peoples can participate in the decisions that concern them. The EFA is the party and political grouping that has most consistently, since the first directly elected European Parliament, promoted this message as essential to Europe's future. Our European Members of Parliament have defended all the peoples, nations and minorities who the Europe of States overlooks.*

*At a time when these questions are intensely relevant, it is important for our group in the European Parliament to bring more weight to bear. To do so, we need to have higher numbers and be better united.*

*This 2019 EFA manifesto lays the policy foundations for this grouping. It will provide a common basis throughout the 2019-2024 parliamentary term.*

*François Alfonsi,  
President of EFA.*

## 1. Self-determination: A right for all peoples

The European Free Alliance unites political parties working across different types of institutional realities. Work to improve the prospects **for all Europeans** depends on the EFA's unfailing support for **the right to self-determination**. The EFA believes that all peoples have the right to choose their own destiny and an institutional framework that empowers them.

Whether this involves **respect of linguistic and cultural rights, devolution, expansion of regional or federal powers, demands for autonomy, or the achievement of independence** through referendum — all proposals that allow groups of people to express themselves and define their own institutions in a democratic, transparent, gradual and peaceful way must be supported.

Self-determination is a principle, **enshrined in international law**, that can be adapted to the different situations faced by peoples under the jurisdiction of European states. It allows all peoples to choose what is best for them, for their development, and in some cases their survival.

The EFA supports the peoples, nations and regions that are acting democratically and that respect the European Convention on Human Rights. **Equal rights, dignity and respect for diversity are the principles underlying the right of self-determination.**

**Changing the European political project** is one of the objectives of the European Free Alliance. We believe that the Europe of old nation-

states no longer satisfies the democratic demand for empowerment among Europe's peoples.

The recognition and support of Europe's peoples, regions, nations and stateless nations is needed to restore public confidence in the EU and **promote a new 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy** that makes the European project a success for everyone.

In a **truly diverse and united Europe**, national and regional identity go hand-in-hand with European identity. The concept of national identity must also be renewed over time. By creating a sense of belonging to a community with a shared destiny, we can ensure that new populations who settle in our regions and stateless nations are not ignored.

**Nation-building in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must involve all of the nation's citizens.** Respective diasporas must also be recognised, allowing people to reconnect with those abroad or integrating them back if they wish to do so.

" The EFA believes that all peoples have the right to choose their own destiny and an institutional framework that empowers them. "

## 2. A Europe of all peoples.

A Europe of all peoples is a Europe that makes no distinction between peoples, without creating categories or second-class citizens. The EFA wants another Europe, a different Europe, which recognises the universality of all people as well as their distinct identities.

Since it was founded in 1981, the European Free Alliance has always believed that the European project must be based on the well-being and diversity of its peoples. The European Union can no longer satisfy itself with just being a union of nation-states that promote their own interests. The EFA has a broader, more inclusive vision of Europe that recognises and fosters its diversity.

By being profoundly pro-European, we support a Europe for everyone. For the EFA it is fundamental that Europe accepts and includes all peoples in the decision-making process, so as to build a democratic Europe of peace, respect and solidarity.

The EFA would like to build a resolutely social Europe, a welcoming Europe, a Europe that is prosperous for every one of its citizen and that respects its own plurality. Euroscepticism and/or anti-EU populism do not bring solutions. Europe must invest more in its communities by empowering the social fabric and building ties between people. An inclusive approach that welcomes new citizens is essential to strengthening our sense of identity and community.

To reinforce the role of ALL peoples, sub-state nations and/or regions with legislative powers must play a role in European decision-making. They should be given a strengthened presence in an “Assembly of Regions and Peoples,” replacing the toothless Committee of the Regions. This would ensure that ALL groups have direct participation, with voice and vote, in the decisions affecting them.

The EFA defends a Europe in which the European Parliament has the clear and logical right to initiate new legislation, and where the legislative process in the Council is transparent. The president of the European Commission should be elected democratically.

It is TIME for the European Union to work for all peoples in Europe.

### **3. A plan for Peace and Freedom for Europe.**

The European Union was founded after the Second World War to secure peace as well as economic and social prosperity. Its principle missions are to maintain peace within its borders, defend values such as democracy internationally, and to ensure the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.-Unfortunately, the EU institutions and member states fall short of defending these core values and civil liberties. Instead, the EU positions itself in opposition to a Europe of the Peoples.

By building a Europe of nation-states, the European Free Alliance aims to support all peoples, including minorities, as well as nations, stateless nations and regions that peacefully aspire to political, cultural and linguistic recognition and recognition of their democratic institutions.

Europe has to defend sub-state level democratic institutions if it wants to defend democracy, peace and freedom within its borders.

The European Union today faces rising international tensions. The migration crisis inside the Union, the jihadi threat, and the question of internal enlargement posed by Scotland and Catalonia — it is time to construct another Europe.

The EFA supports a Europe that can meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That's not just a Europe without war, but also one that stands out for the recognition of its minorities, the right to

self-determination and the unconditional respect of the dignity of people and respect for human rights.

Based on those fundamental and democratic principles, the priority must be to prevent new conflict and resolve existing conflict through dialogue, as well as tackling all the consequences of conflict with special care for victims and political prisoners.

Cultural and linguistic diversity, social justice and the right of self-determination are inter-related. A new project for the Europe of Peoples is needed to meet the democratic challenges and provide the empowerment that Europe's peoples aspire to.

The EFA seeks a modern, ambitious and prosperous Europe, not just economically, but also socially and democratically. It calls on the European Union to be more than ever a Europe of all peoples and regions where democracy, development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms complement one another.

#### **4. Building a sustainable world.**

The principles of growth and development that underpin our modern society have led to the depletion of resources, climate change and a loss of biodiversity across the planet. The plunder of resources merely for financial ends is not consistent with sustainable development.

The European Free Alliance has supported and defended greater protection of the environment and biodiversity since it was founded. It seeks to limit the impact of human activities on the environment and protect European citizens from all environmental risks to their health; such as the prohibition of genetically modified organisms and glyphosate.

More efforts should be made to reconcile the interests of important national and regional agriculture and fisheries industries with the EU's climate change goals. Innovation in regional sectors can boost sustainable and organic agriculture, fisheries and rural development and lead to a more comprehensive regional policy.

To achieve this, the EFA favours an energy policy that prioritises energy efficiency and renewable generation. Fossil fuels are CO<sub>2</sub>-intensive and destined to disappear.

The European Union must anticipate these changes by creating an ambitious energy policy — in line with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — that supports the development of sustainable alternatives to transition away from fossil fuels. It is essential that our regions and nations exercise more

energy sovereignty, deciding on the forms of alternative energy to generate, at what price, and under which circumstances. The EFA is therefore against fracking, as decisions on it are often made in capital cities and leave regions and nations facing the risk of groundwater contamination.

Although we support the wide autonomy of regions in defining their energy production, the EFA calls for the phaseout of nuclear power. The production and storage of radioactive waste remains too great a danger to impose on future generations. During the energy transition, solid guarantees for low prices, abundant supply and safety need to be put in place.

Policies and measures to promote sustainable development cannot be successfully implemented without appropriate governance. The EFA also supports all the European initiatives and programmes aimed at encouraging all players to engage in the decision-making process, as it gives us the opportunity to develop a more concerted, balanced and fairer approach to the advancement of Europe's regions and stateless nations.

The EFA supports renewable energy research in European regions and nations. It also encourages regions and nations to take part in research so that they can positively influence local and European politics around renewable energy and energy efficiency.

## **5. From Linguistic diversity to Linguistic Justice.**

Defending and promoting language diversity is one of the principles of the European Free Alliance.

The European Union's support for multilingualism is primarily focused on encouraging the use of official languages. The EFA, on the other hand, believes all languages are part of our intangible heritage — and demands the official recognition, promotion and use of regional, minority and lesser-used languages threatened with extinction.

A Europe of different peoples, different cultures, different languages: This is the Europe that the EFA wants to promote and support, in the interest of all European citizens. We want to value all languages from the EU's historical and cultural communities, to protect the richness of our linguistic diversity.

Specific European programmes are therefore needed to ensure linguistic justice. Furthermore, all European institutions need to support the Council of Europe's work in making sure that every member state ratifies the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages and implements its measures.

European languages and cultures form our cultural diversity. They contribute to the ecological balance of our societies, the way biodiversity does in nature. In many cases they are also a formidable tool for creativity and economic development through innovation and the promotion of local heritage.

European languages have a crucial role to play in the growth and cultural enrichment of local heritage. This is why the EU's language policy must protect and preserve its diversity, including minority languages. To establish linguistic justice, we need to create equality between languages.

## 6. Promoting gender equality

Gender equality may be a core value for the EU, but European women still have unequal access to power, prosperity and safety. A structural system of male dominance, patriarchal traditions and heteronormativity has facilitated the systematic oppression of women and LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex) individuals in both private and public spheres.

The EFA's core mission and work is grounded in the understanding that women have diverse needs and identities. This is particularly true for women in minority, stateless, migrant, disabled and LGBT+ groups, as well as those who are young and elderly, rural and poor. They face greater levels of exploitation, discrimination and violence, and are marginalised from the political arena.

Women are still underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making throughout Europe. The EFA believes that the participation of women in public and political life guarantees fairer, more democratic and more diverse societies. We therefore fully support gender parity and recognise that Europe needs more feminist leadership — leadership that values diversity and makes space for women, particularly from minorities and other vulnerable groups.

Women, children and the elderly are most heavily affected by economic crises, and financial instability and cuts in public spending have exacerbated poverty among women in recent years.

The EFA promotes economic independence for women by strengthening EU equality legislation, guaranteeing individual rights

to social protection and taxation, ending gender pay and pension gaps and providing social care, parental leave and childcare. Not only should women and men be equal carers of children, the elderly and people with disabilities — we also support the creation of decent work for women, in particular with new employment opportunities in social entrepreneurship, the digital economy and other innovative fields.

Moreover, violence against women still constitutes the most widespread violation of women's human rights in Europe. Addressing old and new forms of violence is a priority for the EFA. We call for gender-sensitive, evidence-based and comprehensive public policies to stop violence against women — ranging from legally-binding instruments to awareness-raising activities — with sufficient human and financial resources. We call for more services that protect, assist and inform women when they seek help; improved access to and safety in police, judiciary and healthcare systems; widespread sexual and reproductive health and education; better support for women's organisations and NGOs; and campaigns that deconstruct myths about gender violence.

We believe that LGBTQI+ voices and experiences need to be heard and affirmed. LGBTQI+ people are vulnerable and have historically experienced hostility and violence. Laws against hate crime and hate speech need to be consistent and cover homophobia and transphobia in all EU member states. The EFA campaigns for rights and equality by calling for safe and inclusive education, supporting an inclusive understanding of family, building cross-cultural solidarity and including youth perspectives. Currently in the EU, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is only prohibited in the field of

employment. We want to see this expanded to other areas like healthcare, education, social protection and access to goods and services.

The EFA demands that the European Union improve its antidiscrimination laws by mainstreaming gender into all fields under its competence. The EU must consider women's diversity and adopt appropriate measures to combat different forms of discrimination. We call on the EU to measure equality and the impact of new and existing policies and legislation, and to prioritize gender sensitive and inclusive EU budgeting.

## 7. Restoring dignity and equality

Some regions, peoples and stateless nations in the European Union stand in the shadow of centralised states. These states have exploited the natural resources of territories, used their labour and developed predatory economic models aimed at disadvantaging local minority populations compared with the majorities in these member states.

The European Free Alliance believes that all peoples are equal in dignity, despite their diversity. That means economic, social and political dominance cannot be allowed.

Social justice is a key priority in our programme. We fight against any form of discrimination and promote a more equitable distribution of wealth. The EU should be giving more guarantees for social justice, but instead it too often sides with vested interests, big corporations and large member states.

Establishing equality between peoples is crucial to empowering the European Union's regions and stateless nations, economically, socially, culturally and politically.

The EFA supports the European Pillar of Social Rights, which aims to give citizens new and more effective rights. It includes three main components:

- Equal opportunities and access to the labour market
- Fair working conditions
- Social protection and inclusion

Europe-wide solidarity mechanisms should combat child poverty, the gender gap, generational poverty and social exclusion in many other policy fields. But this is only possible if all regions and nations improve their fiscal coordination and harmonise their efforts to fight against tax fraud, tax evasion, tax havens and disloyal unethical fiscal engineering.

The EU must combat social insecurity and growing inequalities. Local communities should have more rights and opportunities, particularly in choosing their own model of development. Subsidiarity is a key word that is not being implemented.

To achieve genuinely sustainable development, the economic development of regions and nations should be better connected at the local level, taking into account the characteristics of the territories and people involved. The human dimension, and respect for human dignity, should play a bigger role in social and economic policies — it should be placed at the heart of public policies.

## **8 . Democratic processes and participatory democracy.**

Member states are too quick to blame the European Union for all of the troubles facing European citizens. This led to Brexit — the United Kingdom's intended withdrawal from the European Union — and other negative developments.

The European Free Alliance will therefore continue to support a revision of the European project, to offset its democratic deficit in adapting to new challenges — in particular that of participatory democracy and the involvement of peoples in the European decision-making process.

The EFA supports the principle of the Citizens' Initiative, introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which enables European citizens to call on the European Commission to draft a proposal on an issue that they believe needs legislation. It is a first step towards involving all peoples in EU decision-making, although it is overly bureaucratic and inaccessible to the public, so needs to be radically improved.

Public confidence and involvement can only improve if the European institutions become more democratic, in particular by strengthening the European Parliament's legislative powers and establishing meaningful constituencies for European elections and a fair electoral system that allows for the representation of all European peoples. The EFA wants to see greater transparency in the Council and the democratic election of the European Commission president by the European Parliament.

The EFA also believes that greater use of the internet would make it possible to better inform people and make public action more transparent — especially nowadays, as the spread of internet use makes it easier for governments to interact with those they govern. It regrets that the EU's information platforms and sites are only available in official and certain co-official languages.

Lastly, Europe's peoples and stateless nations want their claims to be handled democratically. The EFA also supports referendums or public consultations organised by the institutions of elected representatives in the European Union's regions.

Bringing citizens closer to their institutions, respecting all peoples and putting them in their rightful place in the decision-making process at the local and European levels to address the crisis of representation that is evident in the falling electoral turnout: These are the main challenges if participatory democracy is to become a reality rather than just an aspiration.

## 9. International solidarity

Solidarity between peoples is one of the principles of the European Free Alliance. It has forged an international network with partners through cross-border cooperation and mutual support between regions and stateless nations, in Europe and around the world. Many of the partners whose linguistic, cultural and political rights have been and continue to be trampled upon by member states work together in full solidarity for a better world.

While state nationalism is inward-looking and based on exclusion, the European Free Alliance's vision of the peoples' nationalism is the opposite. It involves inclusion, respect for diversity, and bridge-building between peoples, rather than the fortification of borders between them. ***It starts from the recognition of all nations as equals, respecting their rights and identities. In that sense, the EFA is in favor of the cooperation of free and equal peoples.***

That is why internationally, the EFA stands shoulder-to-shoulder with ALL peoples suffering from oppression: It wants European and international organisations to demand the respect of human rights by every state concerned, according to international law, and to apply sanctions if needed.

The EFA supports measures to strengthen the rights of minorities in Europe and around the world. Europe must use its influence on international disputes, especially in countries with which it maintains diplomatic ties and cooperation programmes.

The EFA believes that the different peoples of Europe and worldwide should be able to create their own forms of governance and institutions. The rightful aspirations of those who want to restore their sovereignty, supported by international solidarity, are entirely legitimate.

We are on a path towards the construction of an international order in which new forms of government, more suited to our times, replace those that fit for historical circumstances, which are gradually losing their *raison d'être*.

The EFA wants the European Union to become a real international player whose goal is to bring more peace, solidarity, prosperity, sustainability, democracy and respect for diversity, not only in Europe but around the world.

On migration, the EFA pushes for strong solidarity with countries and regions at the EU borders that are particularly affected by the arrival of people from outside the EU. Every member state must be involved in inclusive policies for migrants. We need to invest in communities outside the EU, and in the EU's in peripheral areas, to stop emigration and any form of brain drain. That also requires us to invest outside the EU and in our peripheral areas to encourage better inclusion of new citizens. We need to work together to empower our communities and our society.

## 10. Empowering Young people

One of the principles of self-determination is to empower people so they can take action by themselves. That is why the emancipation of our countries should start with the emancipation of our citizens, and most particularly youngsters. As those at the forefront of our future society, young people must play prominent roles as both the targets and the decision-makers of political policies. This is why the European Free Alliance, through its youth branch, EFAy, is highly committed to ensuring full opportunities for young people and to increasing their participation in society.

To guarantee equal opportunities for everyone, the EFA will promote policies to tackle youth unemployment, brain drain and poverty, paying special attention to the deprived and peripheral regions of Europe where young people struggle to pursue their own future. To do that, we will work on measures to improve education and employment for young people. In particular, we want to promote initiatives aimed at strengthening local and regional economies and creating stable, safe and respectable jobs. The precarious situation of youth employment, including the proliferation of unpaid internships and temporary jobs, calls for immediate action on the protection of labour rights and decent income, so as to encourage the development of a fair professional life.

We will also table policies to address the youth brain drain from the peripheries of Europe to more prosperous areas. We want to create a successful environment at home and encourage young people to bring the skills they learn abroad back to their local communities.

Education is one of the key pillars for any policy aimed at youth. A high-quality education at all levels (primary, secondary and higher) guarantees not only good professional development, but also cultural interests, open-mindedness, critical perspective and other skills that can help enrich lives.

To increase the role of young people in society, we will also work to create more relevant spaces for participation. The goal is to train young people in democratic processes and transmit their views and opinions to decision-makers. To that end, we want to strengthen youth civil society by promoting youth NGOs, student unions, young workers' unions, youth councils, informal education organisations, etc. A virtuous citizenship is an organised one.

New generations are particularly responsible for ensuring that the world is free of hate speech, intolerance and xenophobia. This is even more true for young people from stateless nations. As usual targets of cultural discrimination, they have to be champions of integration and diversity. That is why the EFA and EFAy promote intercultural dialogue between people and minorities from every corner of the world, particularly those who live together in the European continent.