



## EL Action Plan for the Balkans

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**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the European Left** reiterates that the establishment of a lasting peace in the Balkans constitutes a top priority for the region, especially for the Western Balkans where many wounds remain open from the dissolution and the wars in Yugoslavia, which culminated with the NATO bombings in 1999. International law must be upheld, especially in the case of Kosovo for which new negotiations will take place. Mutually acceptable solutions are needed for the outstanding problems and for overcoming tensions between countries in the region, steering clear of the “divide and rule” logic and nationalist hatreds.

**Together with the forces** of the left, ecology and peace movements in the Balkans, we will work towards a comprehensive multifaceted concept of security (political, economic, social, ecological, human), rejecting options which lead to war and to violence, to border changes, to the undermining of international law and to violations of human and minority rights. We want to incorporate gender and ecological approaches to security into our political discourse and actions

**We commit ourselves** to supporting new initiatives towards demilitarization and against further militarization, such as the joint campaign of SYN–ODP for the mutual reduction of arms and military budgets of Greece and Turkey. We are against NATO expansion in the Balkans and fight for the region to become free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and foreign bases, as a contribution towards a nuclear-free Europe.

**The European Left will spare no effort** in contributing to the broadest possible peace coalition, despite differences over specific issues. In pursuing common action, we have to associate the struggle for peace in South-eastern Europe with the cause of European peace and security, which requires opposition to NATO’s new strategic concept, the dissolution of NATO and the creation of a non militarized pan-European security system, including Russia, based on the principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We also reject courses of action capable of triggering new threats to peace, such as the “antimissile shield.”

**The EL supports the European prospects** of all Balkan countries, while also struggling for a radical change of the current neoliberal policies carried out by the EU and its member countries. In order to achieve this, we must struggle, along with the left in the Balkans, to



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establish relations of equality and solidarity between the EU and the peoples of the region, relations based on promoting real convergence and enhancing social cohesion.

**The European Left supports the development** of cooperation in Southeast Europe, which can help to nurture other forms of cooperation in the broader region, such as the Black Sea Cooperation. This requires the active participation of civil society, social movements, trade unions, feminist, peace and ecological initiatives. It is necessary to overcome the logic of the blind pursuit of profit as a basis for the coexistence of the countries and the peoples, and establish instead **policies of solidarity and co-development**.

**Regional cooperation** must also contribute to creating the necessary conditions for the protection of social rights, the equality of all people living in the countries including migrants, combat organized crime and trafficking. In particular, the struggle against violence on women, protection of the rights of children, should be consistently on the agenda.

**Cross-border cooperation** can be exceptionally beneficial, an area in which local authorities have already started to contribute. We will also support initiatives and common actions in the field of culture, where the Balkan peoples share a wealth of common traditions.

**Our position for sustainable development** and the growing environmental interdependence, calls for intensifying cooperation in the areas of environmental protection, energy policies and biological diversity. The EL wants to promote new strategies in energy saving, and to re-orientate the production of energy towards using renewable energy sources instead of new nuclear plants.

**We want to work together with organizations** which are active in the environmental sector. We are proposing to jointly produce a **Balkan Ecological Charter**. It is our goal for this initiative to mobilize and unite a wide array of forces in the region, but we also aspire for it to find substantial support in the broader European region as well. In addition, a common action could also be developed for a **“Balkans Free of GMOs”** (Genetically Modified Organisms). With this in mind we are proposing the creation of a **Balkan Network** in the EL.