

Yes, we can change Europe

Political Theses of the First European Left Congress in Athens 2005

Introduction

The first Congress of the Party of the European Left is being held at what is truly an "extraordinary" time: today we are faced with the huge challenge of opening a new political and social cycle in Europe. Since 1 May 2004 we have been living in an enlarged European Union of 25 member states, witnessing new developments in the European continent that are added daily. People in all European countries – no matter whether EU members or not – wonder what our continent will look like in the future. It is not only possible today to build up "the other Europe"; it is essential.

As we laid down in our programme at the founding congress of the Party of the European Left, we see the necessity for a deep-rooted social and democratic transformation of Europe. We understand the role and the task of the Political Left in Europe as a contribution to form a broad social and political alliance for a radical policy change by developing concrete alternatives and proposals for that necessary transformation of the present capitalist societies. In that we see our responsibility and ability to address all those who are taking action for a more equitable society as a condition for a self-determined life of their own. We want to establish left wing politics lastingly as an independent, self-confident political project contributing to the implementation of solidarity and democratic, social and ecological alternatives. We are caught up in the throes of the full-blown crisis of the neo-liberal model and policies. It is a crisis, which has been dragging on since the end of the 1990s and which has attracted increasingly more right-wing regressive social and political responses. For this reason the conservative and right-wing parties redrew their political strategy, assuming a profile that puts together ultra-liberalism, authoritarianism, populism.

However, we think: prevailing politics in Europe is on the wrong track. It will cost the European peoples dearly to demolish and destroy welfare systems and to allow mass unemployment and merciless competition to rule everyday life. The neo-cons' political hegemony - as a political project caught in a crisis increasingly threatening freedom, peace and security for the majority of the world population is threatening to open a new front of the global and permanent war starting from the persisting military occupation of Iraq, which has to be stopped immediately with the withdrawal of all occupying troops. A dangerous decline in democracy, environmental destruction, as well as the neo-liberal "peace" to safeguard the global military monopoly of force for the USA and the industrialised nations following it on this path still produce great damage. These developments are also affecting the EU's future, being not neutral "excesses" of neo-liberal globalization, but instead the result of a deliberate choice, taken to deepen the dynamic of capitalistic, patriarchal and anti-environmental exploitation and oppression, rooted in the dominant model of society.

While Europe is facing one of its most severe social and economical crises, it chooses security policy as main priority. Besides the socio-economic crisis Europe faces today a leadership crisis. The neo-conservative leadership has misled Europe: rejection of the Constitutional Treaty, resistance to the Bolkestein and Working Time Directives and inability to achieve an agreement on the financial perspectives. The point is that the neo-conservative leadership has led Europe to a state of under-financing, unabling it to give an answer to the expectations of its citizens.

Our challenge is to stop the right wings policy by taking a truly Left innovative approach and at the same time to overcome the strategic impotence of any neo-liberal contents interspersing reformist and social-liberal policies. The EL has the potential and the duty to be a political main actor to change and reform the EU politics and to help in resolving the continental and world political crisis.

We see our job in working resolutely towards a new social contract for the 21st century making the interests of all people on earth, environmental matters, democratic values, social justice and peace the yardstick and objective of the peoples' coexistence. We want the equality between men and women to become a founding value of the process of the European construction. Therefore, we want to make our weight felt in the debate on matters of society at local, regional, national and European levels. The European political Left must develop its own ideas to this end. The Party of the European Left can, must and will confront this challenge.

One encouraging example for our work has been the outcome of the French and Dutch referenda on the constitutional treaty. On that occasion several elements helped to reveal the potential of a New European Public Space for the forces of change. The people had been excluded from the text, having no say in the drafting phase. Alas, they took the stage by force, refusing to be held hostage to an ideology which did not promise anything better than the neo-liberal EU economic model people already witness today. Suddenly, everybody has been made clearly aware of the weight of opposition to the neo-liberal Europe. For it is no coincidence that the increased opposition to the treaty was given an extraordinary impetus following the many demonstrations against the Europe of capitalism and unemployment, like that on 19 March in Bruxelles against Bolkestein directive. The NO! vote was therefore a rejection of the mercantilist substance of the Treaty and of the "functionalist" context in which the EU was established (the economic treaties and the European Central Bank, the single currency, the Commission directives). Opposition to the Treaty has been widely influenced by left-wing ideas and by social demands for equality and justice stemming from the growing concern of a majority of the people about their living conditions.

However, our "No" vote to the treaty, despite what is sustained by the most enthusiastic supporters of the Treaty, is not a No to Europe; it is a Yes to another Europe, to an Europe of more social justice and solidarity, working for world peace and a new development model of all nations.

It is therefore the common aim of the parties and organisations of the Party of the European Left to devise and implement a policy aiming to regain a genuine European public space, where the European citizens, the social movements, and the democratic organisations will be the main actors. Our main goal as political subject is to promote a new kind of democracy. Participation is the first contribution we consider necessary for a radical reform of politics, to ensure that the undemocratic spiral of neo-liberal globalisation and war can be stopped. Our proposals for a different Europe are a concrete contribution to building up a society in which democracy, freedom, equality and peace are the founding values.

I BUILDING PEACE

Europe has been theatre of bloody conflicts for centuries and it has exported, with the colonialism, violence, injustice and oppression. After the end of World War II and the

victorious partisans struggle and the defeat of the Nazism and fascism, it seemed possible to cancel the war from History. The idea of a united Europe rose from this very demand. Yet, war and military confrontations have never been fully excluded from the instruments of international and European politics. EU's role has been uncertain and contradictory, not by its' incapacity to set up an intervention force but for its' inability to define an autonomous project towards the existing project of American hegemony."

Military interventions of the USA with the support of NATO, which violated the international law, reversed the trend to control armaments, which started during the Cold War – also because of the lasting struggle of the peace movement. War is still present in our life, rather it became endemic and pervasive, still being used as a political instrument. The European Union and all other European countries, in virtue of their actual geopolitical position and of their vocation, have to be able to promote and to guarantee the peace.

Radical opposition to war, terrorism and any “clash of civilization” is the first condition for the Europe we want to build. In fact, the attacks on New York, Madrid or London demonstrate that the powerful device of military dissuasion used by the most developed countries of the world was not able to prevent these savage attacks. The logical consequence would have been, instead, to thoroughly rethink the current system of security based on military force including the possible use of weapons of mass destruction that threaten the existence of humanity, to start a demilitarisation and disarmament.

The European constitutional treaty subjects the independence of the EU in foreign policies to a military logic instead of peaceful and civil responses aiming at preventing conflicts. We absolutely disagree with this logic. The European Left, instead, stands for political solutions, the defence and implementation of the international law, for a real democratic governance of the world with a re-formed UNO, with active prevention of conflicts and for cuts of military expenses.

We want an alternative security policy in Europe in order to:

- have a European system of security and defence based on progressive demilitarisation;
- achieve disarmament and deeply cut military expenses at a global level;
- progressively downsizing national armies;
- defend a EU binding code of behaviour preventing arms exports to countries in war or violating human rights
- realize the project of an European Agency for disarmament and conversion;

We want an autonomous security policy in order to:

- let Europe have an autonomous role in foreign, security and defence policies based on the fulfilment of human rights, the respect of the international law, relying on a cooperation to-wards development and on prevention of conflicts;
- oppose any kind of military cooperation with NATO, prevent the deployment of armed forces such as the ones supporting the USA wherever they intervene.

We want an anti-nuclear security policy. That means even more to ban and destroy any sort of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, chemical).

European political autonomy independent from USA is an indispensable condition for Europe to play a stronger role in the world. A Europe of peace must endeavour to raise a political and economic restructuring of international relations in which peace and peaceful multilateralism has to be part of a new model of society.

We want to defend a social Europe in order to join our struggle with all people advocating a fairer world of peace in each continent.

In this sense the European Left supports all processes of decolonisation and the demand of those peoples who want to affirm their self-determination through the UN resolutions, such as the people of the Western Sahara and the Palestinian people.

We consider the new Latin American reality a decisive contribution to achieve a fairer world of solidarity. We support the extraordinary experiences carrier of change in Latin America – such as the defence of dignity and freedom from embargo for Cuba, to begin with. We want the EU to re-establish contacts with Cuba on the basis of a shared agenda including a ban of death penalty, among other issues, but based on mutual respect and equal and fair treatment between Cuba and other countries, namely ACP states. Furthermore we support the Bolivarian revolutionary process in Venezuela and the struggle for the defence of common and public goods throughout Latin America and the struggle against FTAA.

Capitalist globalisation has never been, and is not, merely a process of the economic reorganisation of capital. It has proven to be an extraordinarily powerful locomotive force for driving the reorganisation of the capitalist power structures on a worldwide scale. It has been the tool that has helped to produce a full-blown conservative revolution, shaking to its foundations the world order inherited in the wake of the victory over Nazism and fascism. The traditional form of national state doesn't explain the way in which globalization is developing in practice. We cannot therefore avoid raising the problem of how to change a capitalist society unless we do it on a worldwide scale. In view of these fundamental changes it is necessary to start a new phase of cooperation of the forces striving for social transformation all over the world and in particular in Europe.

At the beginning, neo-liberal ideologists promised globalisation would mark "the end of history", the fully accomplished state of neo-capitalism, with a prospect of stability for years to come. But in-deed, neo-liberal globalisation has not proven to be a stable mechanism for generating added value, while at the same time it has increased inequalities and social injustices.

The crisis of capitalist globalisation has produced regressive and reactionary responses precisely by those who had claimed that it would be the solution to the destiny of humanity. The policies of the economic right wing have become more radical in order to hold the interest groups in their dominant position on a worldwide scale. War has become a stable as well as a structural and endemic factor. The crisis is therefore creating instability and a lack of security worldwide. The doctrine of pre-emptive war, endless and indefinite as this sort of war is, places the United States of America at the heart of the world system of domination. In the present international framework Bush is opting for unilateralism in order to destroy any room for politics.

War is therefore not only a new strategy for controlling the planet's strategic resources, demonstrating that new capitalism will not give up devouring natural resources, but it is taking the place of every rule of international coexistence and respect for the fundamental rights of humanity.

The contest between War and Peace is more relevant today than it ever was. If war is the product of policies aiming at domination, aggression, blackmailing and of tensions brought about by the capitalist globalisation, peace can only be achieved by intensifying all forms of opposition, resistance and contradictions emerging worldwide, even at the nation-state level.

The new peace movement - the other world "power" that has emerged in the present phase - can and must reveal the radical relationship that exists between the neo-liberal model of society and the war waged by the capitalist globalisation, while working for an alternative society. The new peace movement is a disarmed and disarming force, carrier of an idea of peace which does not only mean absence of war or a state of balance based on the power of arms, but which is instead aiming at establishing a social and economic order as an alternative to neo-liberalism and war.

This new order has to be sustainable or it will not be. Today the relationship between war and environmental degradation is more obvious than ever. Changing unsustainable modes of production and consumption is a necessity for peace.

Moreover, we have to combat the other face of war: terrorism. The political project of terrorism, which is independent of war even though it is fuelled by it, is primarily an enemy of the people and of democracy. In particular, the fundamentalist terrorism, while claiming to defend people's rights, advocates a society based on the use of violence brought to extremes, being fully compatible with capitalism.

Terrorism, also, feeds the most reactionary rightwing positions, because it is used as an excuse to attack rights and freedom. The answer against terrorism cannot be more war and repression, the answer must be more democracy and more rights. The Left has to make all people understand: War against terrorism can not be won, but the struggle against it can.

The primacy of politics can only be regained by struggling against war and for peace. Just as there cannot be peace without justice, there cannot be justice without peace.

This is why we condemned the lack of a clear rejection of war in the EU constitutional treaty, and why we saw the institution of a European army under NATO control - i.e., in effect under USA control -, as a threat to the independence and autonomy of the EU, and, at the same time, a resumption of massive investment in armaments. This is why we are proposing cut-backs in the military expenditure of every country, the closure of the USA bases, and the dissolution of NATO.

The European Left favours a common foreign and security policy of the European Union in order to achieve primacy, politics has to aim at a worldwide order based on international law, civilian conflict-prevention and peaceful conflict-settlement as well as solidarity-based and democratic development on the international stage. This must be developed together and in close cooperation with all other European countries.

The European Union should also play a major role in the reform and strengthening of international organisations, starting with the United Nations, in order to establish a new international relationship on a worldwide scale, based on free coexistence and respect for the peoples' rights. Also recalling its tragic past of wars and colonialism, Europe must be in a position to look at the world not through euro-centric eyes, but with the ability to reach out to the new challenges of global equality. We are proposing that the European Union should take responsibility for a radical restructuring of the international economic organisations. The WTO, the IMF and the World Bank cannot be allowed to remain the instruments of domination and generate further injustices. Some of these agencies should be abolished and replaced by others. Already existing ones should have their assignments altered and placed directly under United Nations control.

The EL is in favour of the creation of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state in a guaranteed safety condition shared with Israel on the basis of the UN resolutions and the road map.

What is called the Barcelona process will assume much importance for the EU's international role from our point of view. Instead of introducing the free-trade area planned for the Mediterranean by 2010 we demand to close a partnership agreement on an equal basis with all South Mediterranean countries. The European Left proposes a Euro-Mediterranean alliance which will have on one hand the guarantee of full respect for democracy and Human Rights and on the other hand social and economic integration aiming at the promotion of a balanced and sustainable development. Where free-trade areas have been established in the past (for example, NAFTA between Mexico and North America) inequalities and injustices have been massively aggravated, to the detriment of the weakest sections of the societies involved. For today, where other free-trade areas are being pro-posed (for example the case of FTTA) there has been enormous popular opposition, to prevent their establishment.

The European Left takes actions to defend and build peace not only as an utopian idea but as a social and political construction that will be possible from another development model. Only a Europe that generates an economically equal, socially fair, culturally diverse and environmentally sustainable development will be able to act, from the independence of USA, by and for Peace principles in the world.

Environmental policies must be taken into account in all political fields. This affects the foreign policy, police and legal cooperation in the prosecution of violations of environmental rules. The Kyoto agreement has to be implemented. This is urgently needed as some "natural" catastrophes such as last year's tsunami and hurricane Katrina in New Orleans show us. Far from being only "natural" catastrophes, they are clearly enhanced and some times precipitated by man, and their effects worsened by neo-liberal policies.

II ANOTHER ECONOMIC MODEL FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE

Mass unemployment, the demolition of the European welfare state achievements and in particular the fears of the elderly generation about safeguarding their rights they achieved and of the younger generation about the increasing precariousness are bitter aspects of everyday life in all EU member states. They are the result of the neo-liberal policies practiced by the political and economic elites in the EU and the governments of the European countries. This path is undemocratic, unsocial, lacks solidarity and destroys the environment. According to the logic of those in government today the future EU course will be "Carry on as usual". But: There can be no "Carry on" in the interests of a European space for integration as a response to the globalisation processes. For women the labour market with lower wages, under-qualified jobs, a higher level of unemployment and of seasonal work constitute an even bigger hurdle; their social protection, pensions and other benefits derived from contributions are too often below average in intensity, coverage and in quantity, and much below the masculine average.

Through their globally oriented market radicalism neo-liberal policies more and more dissolve the national welfare state variations, impairs domestic demand, consolidates and increases unemployment and increases the number of precarious jobs, organises a redistribution of the social wealth from the bottom to the top, reinforces the tendencies of eroding solidarity in society and blocks socially and ecologically sustainable growth.

An alternative to this development must promote European strategic investments that guarantees regional equilibrium and conversion, development of European public services and efficient social, environmental and research European policies. The above mentioned aims cannot be achieved without the increase of the current allocated financial resources of the EU. The need for an European fiscal reform, namely the capacity to release European public bonds. The end of EU subordination can only be achieved with the replacement of the stability pact by a growth and employment pact.

The utilisation of women in the framework of the family in order to accomplish the tasks that concern the care of persons, education of children, etc. which permits the governments to disclaim their responsibility and to put in question the existing public services.

Through a policy of curbing domestic mass demand, environmental destruction and speculation in the international financial markets in favour of the ruling classes The dilemma today is: more neo-liberalism, cancelling Europe originality and advancing towards North America model, or new model to reverse the system priorities: giving to people's rights and human values instead of competitiveness.

To achieve this goal it we need to build a European public space, based on a new social democratic commitment, reversing classes relationship.

For the European left the first step towards a different economic policy must be to stop the demolition of the welfare state. Since the implementation of Reagan's and Thatcher's ultraliberal right-wing doctrine, social relations have been redefined on the ideological basis of an unbridled competitiveness and the reduction of labour rights. An ideological change has occurred, by which neo-liberalism has used technological transformations to impose an even harder policy of domination and exploitation. The neo-liberal globalisation has upset labour, global relations and the very structure of the production system as far as both labour and the capital are concerned. Such a trans-formation has produced deep and devastating changes in human relations, in the relation between human beings and nature and in the creation of a shared and fair system of values. The political European Left will have to challenge the huge changes in society and the economy if it wants to present convincing alternative proposals. A return to old ways of social security will not be possible; new and radical demands require alternative policies.

Defending the rights traditionally advocated by the left (political, labour, social, economic and public rights) together with the demands of new political cultures and social movements (feminist, environmental, cultural, intellectual properties'... rights) is a necessity and a possible goal today. Social movements have attracted public attention to the debate over common goods rights (especially right to water) which defence has the same logic as other rights.

Our alternative economic policy must correspond to the human logic: to leave to future generation a better world than in which we live today. In the 21st century, to fight for environmental and social rights is a solidarity obligation and a clever answer to a economic logic that it is not.

We do not only question the primacy of the market and competitiveness and growth. There is a need, instead, for the primacy of the public interest and the political involvement in shaping society. The public is not only the national state. We have to recognize that today by public interest we mean a democracy at different levels that puts together national institutions, local governments and broad forms of citizens' direct participation.

That must be the character of Europe.

But the current model doesn't solve the crisis. There's no economist who answers how global economy can survive without cutting salaries, labour rights or exhaust natural resources to growth.

The European and the EU governments neo-liberal impose a dilution of workers' rights and wage cuts because of international competition. They justify themselves by saying that, without such a competition, companies would relocate their production to countries with cheaper labour costs. This is a lie. We do not accept such a blackmailing and keep on defending social, environmental and labour rights in our countries and elsewhere.

We, therefore, demand the creation of a new European public space in which we can defend labour and social rights convergence in all countries. Opposition to relocation of production should be carried out through social struggle, public intervention and restructuring productive activity with workers' participation.

On the world political stage, for us Europe and the European Union as it exists today are the mini-mal dimension of politics as the expression of class struggle. But Europe's cultures and extraordinary political experiences, the achievements gained in over a hundred years of working-class movement, the debates on sustainability and alternative economic models and the self-critical analysis of the failure of socialist societies in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union still hold out a possibility today. They can and must be related to a movement which marks our own age. The qualitative leap towards the rebirth of the politics is possible.

The crisis, like the war, is a constituent part of today's capitalist globalisation. Precariousness and social uncertainty are affecting employment and the life of the people, as well as the economy and capitalist development. Instability and uncertainty are the general and class measure of contemporary capitalism. These conditions are tending to widen the gap that exists between innovation and social progress. Today, it is becoming increasingly more evident that the model based on social "cohesion" is breaking up. The economic crisis is being offloaded onto the citizens of Europe through restructuring policies for the welfare systems - privatising health care and cutting pensions. Privatisation of services is the next step towards total mercantilization of social life.

We consider social protection a central element for the cohesion of the 25 EU member countries and a true productive element. In effect, the European social model is the one able to defeat the dramatic and growing unemployment and precariousness. European Left Party's opposition is not so much to the declared objectives of the Lisbon strategy but to their subordination to the capitalistic competition politics and to their liberalizing logic. We have to think about a political economy able to stop the social decline, not only by defending social, tax and environmental standards in the global competition, but also by implementing them as true development boosters.

Yes, we must refuse to pay the price of the continent's economic decline. Our alternative economic concepts for the European union must rather focus on possibilities to stave off the economic crisis by re-launching a tangible proposal to prevent the uncertainty and precarious employment and poor living conditions of the European populations. Therefore we work towards the perfectly possible aim of full and decent employment for all of those that live and work here.

We welcome the work done by the MEP's of our EL parties who in the confederal GUE/NGL parliamentary party contribute to designing an independent "European welfare model".

It is not enough just to defend the welfare state. The crisis-stricken conditions in which we are living are essentially the result of targeted choices taken in the framework of globalisation. And they are continuing with ever-increasing intensity, from delocalizing industries and the passive internationalisation of our economies, to the reorganisation of production based on making employment structurally precarious.

We propose to invest the public funds education and technology, taking into account the need of balanced regional and structural adaptation and compensation in all parts of the EU. Instead of competition through lowering of labour costs and investing we want to globally enforce the international regulations for active labour rights – the universal standards of the ILO conventions (above all ILO standards for "decent work") in all labour relations and especially in such parts of the world where workers are forced to compete in semi-slavery conditions. This can and will be an important step against wage and social dumping in the global economy.

The European Left will continue to support all actions combating the increasingly precarious nature of labour and giving it a new status of rights and participation. One only has to look at the Bolkestein directive, and the working hours directive, which directly act on reorganising the production system based on weakening the working people. Millions of them - most seriously affected are women, young people and migrants - are gradually sliding beneath the poverty threshold.

What matters in terms of collective agreements is to defend this system throughout Europe and ban the danger stemming from deregulation by means of various European directives. In order to avoid relocation and competition among workers we have to help create European common standards for wages, public pensions, public services, etc.

This alternative has to be thought forward all policies beyond the Bolkestein-directive and the defence of the public sector. We must broaden the debate to new forms of social economy and the creation of public structures where they are not existing or weak. Innovation, improving and democratising public management is a task of the Left.

Our proposals which will have to be detailed and qualified, shared with the trade unions and all social representations of working and jobless people, are focusing: the alternative society for Europe requires a radical change of direction in economic and social policy, a change of direction which takes into accounts the demands of the movements, and relates to the labour world, environmentalism and feminism. The lever for change is therefore the construction of political, trade unions and social alliances in order to contribute to the growth of a great workers' and alternative movement. By this we mean supporting a European campaign and united proposals to defend and advance working class interests. What we have to do is give priority once again to the Marxian theme of liberation of labour, in other words, appreciate the value of what the labour force has accumulated for society, so that rights and wages, in a non-commodified society, increasingly become variables independent of the domination of business. In this spirit we take the demands and experiences of the labour and social movements.

Moreover, we think that the ECB should have a completely new role and mission, so that it can be democratically monitored by giving up the central role of monetary policies and abandon the stability and growth pact. It is not comprehensible to stick to the rigid rules of the pact although it just has proved that it doesn't stimulate neither the economic stability nor the employment because of its one-sided fixation on the monetary stability. It must be replaced by introducing social, employment and ecological criteria into a new

agreement or “pact” and must contain more flanking regulations to coordinate the monetary policy of the European Central Bank with the economic and financial policy of the member states.

III RADICAL AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

For us an essential condition for another Europe is to build a Participatory Democracy, in our will that only with the entrance of the people in policy it's possible to build a different Europe.

The crisis of neo-liberalism is also deepening the crisis of democracy. A society, which generates social injustices, produces systematic phenomena of exclusion and authoritarianism. We must fight this trend, in order to reopen public spaces where people do participate and have a leading role in an enhanced democracy. No issue of significance to the European future must be discussed or decided without the direct involvement of the European citizens. This project requires our will to change things and our creativity from the local up to the European levels and demands from us a large degree of readiness to learn and to change ourselves. The project will only be successful if it leads to concrete and especially feasible proposals for a real alternative and this process remains open, participatory, democratic and cooperative in relation to experience, ideas and initiatives of the partners of the social movements. The movements, trade unions and other democratic forces have been working so successfully in this direction, and its prime goal has been precisely that of reopening public political spaces, particularly for the younger generations. Politics must restore the sovereignty of the European people. To us participation means introducing more elements of direct democracy and citizens' involvement. Petitions for a referendum, plebiscites and referenda are the instruments to be used.

We must therefore defeat the patriarchal society and achieve a true gender democracy. It is not only a matter of raising the issue of women's emancipation and equality, but taking into account gender differences and to fight against any gender discrimination not only in relation with the distribution of goods, rights and obligations, but also in relation with the participation of women as social subjects in the determination of the norms that rule the society. The concept of parity – and of democracy based on parity, is the prolongation of the fight for civil rights by the movements of the suffragettes. We stand for another form of functioning of society, of participation, policies in order to promote economic independence, to put an end to gender specific violence, to finish with the under-representation of women. Further we express our will to fully affirm the right and freedom of sexual orientation and to combat any discrimination and violence. We denounce sexist violence as being an arm of domination of men over women and refuse to consider them as natural or accidental.

That this parity may take on all of its meaning, we owe ourselves to apply it in our political parties to put in place an organisation so as to make the reform of activism compatible to their way of life.

We criticise the constitutional treaty that emerged from the convention which was based on two serious assumptions: the first was the decision not to let it be written by the European peoples, but to make it the exclusive preserve of the governments of the European Union; the second is the fact that it gives an absolutely central position to the market in building up Europe's political unity. We steadfastly believe in the historical need to build up European unity and we are committed Europeans. For this very reason we

reject a constitutional treaty of this kind: in the name of a fuller and deeper democracy on our continent. We support the establishment of new rights and for this reason we consider the unification process an important and necessary step to promote such rights on a European scale. The Constitutional treaty is blocked and politically dead.

This is the reason why is so important for us the victory of No. It was a leftist vote, positive to European integration, but decisively against the neo-liberal mercantilism. But we should not forget that this victory has opened a ruling class crisis that can be a risk in democracy.

We intend to launch a real democratic process which should include participation at any level, engaging the European parliament with the national and regional parliaments – and consulting the popular organisations – to take responsibility for drafting a text of fundamental right that can be subsequently put to a referendum.

In Europe a feeling of opposition to the governments is growing, as the last European elections also show and a clash between elites and people. We as the European Left Party will, actively contribute to the unfolding of a broad public debate on the future of Europe and its societies. In this conjunction we support the proposal from organisations and movements functioning within the European Social Forum to establish a roundtable with representatives of social movements, left parties and organisations as well as interested social forces such as from culture, the media, the economy aiming to conduct a broad discussion on concrete alternatives

The antisocial and ultra-neo-liberal politics have opened new spaces for the formations of extreme right. It is an alarm that crosses the whole Europe in different forms but all characterized by xenophobia, islamophobia, anti-Semitism, populism, violence and wish of overcoming. Among these formations there are both openly neo-Nazi and neo-fascist groups but also formations that occupy government responsibility.

The active strengthening of civil society structures against far-Right positions, against nationalism, exclusion, discrimination and intolerance and for integration as well as cultural and social diversity is an essential contribution for us to more democracy. We will continue to fight positions aimed at curtailing fundamental rights in a democratic society, freedom, equality, the division of powers and equal democratic participation as being represented today by the reactionary xenophobic Right all over Europe and will do so with our all and determination. To this end we also continue to aspire broad democratic alliances.

We have supported the enlargement and integration of Europe.

We have positively agreed to and greeted the entry of 8 new Eastern and Central-European countries, Cyprus and Malta since we think that the European political space that doesn't stop on the borders of the former East/West blocks. We also notice that the accession process was not used for reviewing the hitherto practiced political, economic and social logic of EU integration. No decisive steps to guarantee the working and production conditions in all member states are recognisable. The European Union remains the big single market for the circulation of capitals and commodities and increasingly services while – against the proclamations the “labour” forces are not able and - even more - migrant men and women are not allowed to move freely.

The process of the European peoples drawing closer together will only develop its democratic potential if it aims for similar living conditions and is thus withdrawn from the logic of marketing regional economic advantages. Implementing common social,

ecological and democratic minimum standards forms the basis to this end. This holds all the more for the future EU enlargement perspectives as well as for the cooperation of all European countries.

We welcome a possible entry of a prevalingly Islamic country that we consider part of the European cultural area. Therefore we support the accession of Turkey to the EU, but we consider it necessary for Turkey to respect its obligations and commitments towards the EU and the international law, including the solution of the Cyprus problem, respecting democratic and human rights, and solving democratically the problem of the Kurdish population.

One of the acid tests for the construction of democracy in Europe is whether we can succeed in winning full citizenship rights for migrants. Millions of people live illegally in Europe today and are often victims of unscrupulous exploitation. They need the prospect of a legal status. For the construction of democracy in Europe we need to fight human trafficking. The causes of trafficking lie in poverty and victims of trafficking are normally poor and often victims of exploitation. All countries should sign and ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the rights of all Migrant workers and members of their families and the Palermo protocol.

It is on Europe's ability to implement concrete policies to welcome in migrants and to show respect for all those who leave their homelands for economic reasons and those who are fleeing war and conflict, that a new idea of citizenship is based. This is why we support the campaign to extend citizenship to all those who live within the territory of the European Union.

An EU-wide harmonisation of the asylum and migration policies on the basis of consistent human rights standards as well as the same integration policy applicable throughout Europe which excludes the possibility of abusing migrants for wage and social dumping and grants them equal rights pave the way towards this goal. We strongly condemn the inhumane practices adopted by most of Europe's governments: rejection of migrants, dispatching them to the external borders, and setting up detention centres for the so-called "illegal immigrants". We believe that no human being can be defined as "illegal", and that human integrity and protection must be guaranteed by the institutions of the state.

We are also combating racism and xenophobia, which have increased in the past few years. All forms of discrimination against those who are "different" are a crime against humanity. We are staunchly opposed to xenophobia, anti-Semitism and reject any campaign against Islam intended to fuel a clash of civilisations.

We consider individual liberties and civil rights an essential part of our political action. Such liberties are based on fundamental ideas, including laicism which should be enshrined as a principle of functioning, because it is an universal value that permits to avoid several undemocratic influences in all domains of society as well as to refute religious discrimination and extremisms.

IV BUILDING ALLIANCES

The real novelty about the dawn of this century is the emergence of new movements and their capacity to link up in a collective drive forward. It has spoken to the world about a new possibility for change. The task facing the European Left must increasingly be that of understanding the nature of these new movements and of preparing itself to

understand the resources that they have generated, in order to put itself forward as a means of contributing to the construction of a general idea for reforming politics and the relationship between politics and the main social actors. Simultaneously, and with a linkage that is not just a matter of timing, the dramatic consequences of capitalistic globalisation affecting all populations have been emerging with glaring evidence. Both are once again putting the issue of the transformation of society back on the current agenda. This issue is also being raised subjectively by a growing awareness on the part of the movements, and may be summed up in the slogan used by the social forums: "another world is possible". The problem has therefore been spelled out, but not solved. Another scenario has opened up: the deepening economic and social crisis and the war that is precipitating into a clash of civilisations. Uncertainty dominates our age, the "socialism or barbarism" alternative is not something from the past.

We have to cooperate with many others, not only with political parties and various social forces. The intuition to create the Party of the European Left was correct as it was demonstrated when it was the only pro-European political force that said NO to the Constitutional Treaty. To increase the European Left we have to advance with a cooperation proposal to all forces willing to combat neo-liberal policies in Europe. The first alliance should be the cooperation among all who defended the "NO" to EU-Constitutional Treaty with all who defend a "critical Yes".

For this reason we support the proposal, presented in the international meeting in Paris held on last June 24, to re-open for a process of new orientating the European Unions development and the European countries policies by introducing a campaign of collecting a mass-petition of the people in all EU member countries. We will participate in a broad citizens' movement which will strive for a manifesto or a charter of the social and political rights which is fitting to the Europe, we want. We consider this new movement to become a consistent part of the European Social Forum - with the concrete perspective of the 5th ESF in Athens 2006 as well as concluding first experiences of its meeting organized in October in Florence.

We are ready to take part generally in activating important energies and, above all, to re-open a concrete discussion of all interested and ready to it women and men all over the continent on European politics.

Our idea of Europe has to burn from the left and from the people. Both are indispensable in building a fighting European movement, with great social and peace campaigns to defeat neo-liberalism in our continent and to give hope for a Europe of Social justice.

Our task is to contribute to generate a popular left and social majority that is, and must be, bigger than us: with other political parties, with European Social Forum and social movements, with feminists, trade unions, popular associations and individuals. A popular majority will growth with alliances and convergences with all who wants build with us another Europe. It is our will.

We, members and friends of European Left want to declare, once again, our active solidarity with all peoples, movements and individuals who suffer injustice and devastating consequences of capitalist globalisation and to start our active cooperation with all who fight for a fair world.

Together we can do it.

Yes, we can change Europe!