

Joint declaration - Crisis and the European South: The response of the European Left

The Party of European Left supports the struggle of the working class and the citizens of Greece and the other countries of the European South for the defense of their social and economic rights, which are under attack by the financial markets and the joint neoliberal and authoritarian policies of their governments and the European Union. The Greek, the Portuguese and the Spanish problems are not national problems. They constitute a European problem that puts under question the whole neoliberal construction of the EU.



The economic situation of Greece doesn't justify the propaganda that the country is on the verge of "bankruptcy" and cannot survive without external intervention and/or the government's austerity policies. The debt of Greece is high, but this also happens in other European countries, such as the UK and Spain.

We do not accept the claim that the stability of the euro requires hard austerity measures proposed by the governments of the Eurozone member-states, the European Union and international organizations, like the IMF and the World Bank. All these policies promote capitalist interests and increase unemployment and poverty throughout the EU, while at the same time private banks are bailed out by national governments and the European Central Bank with billions of euro. There is no crisis exit strategy without reinforcing real economy and employment, without more justice in the redistribution of wealth, without democratizing power and property, as a condition for mobilizing public funds.

The governments of Greece and other countries, mainly in Southern Europe, are asked to submit stability programs, which increase VAT and taxes, cut wages and welfare benefits and privatize pensions, while banks and large corporations are being treated much more favorably than in the past. At the same time, the profit margins of European private banks have greatly increased due to the difference between the interest rates of their loans from the ECB (around 1%) and the prices of the government bonds that they buy (6% to 7% in the case of Greece).

We fight against these neoliberal stability programs, under which all member states are being blackmailed and we demand a serious and deep refoundation of the EU and its economic and social policies. The struggle for economic democracy, the promotion of solidarity and the protection of its citizens should be a priority for all political Left and social actors.

In this context, we propose four immediate demands that should be part of our common strategy:

1. Defense of employment, salaries and pensions as a first priority of all European institutions.
2. Taxation of all financial speculative transactions and abolition of tax heavens established in European territory.
3. Creation of a European public rating agency: Countries can no longer be hostages of private rating agencies, which serve speculative interests.
4. Issue of Eurobonds. This will allow member states to borrow at reasonable interest rates.

The European Left expresses its solidarity with all the people suffering the effects of the neoliberal capitalist crisis, which seriously deteriorate human rights and working conditions, especially of the youth, women and the immigrants. EU should be concerned mainly about the well-being of people residing in its territory and not about banks and big capital.

We strongly support the initiative of Synaspismos and SYRIZA for a coordinated struggle of the radical left political forces in the South of Europe and their collaboration with trade unions and social movements, in the context of the general principles of the EL.

As a first step in these common activities, we propose the following actions:

1. The radical Left parties of the South of Europe and the EL commonly decide to intensify immediately their coordination against the effects of the crisis. At the same time, they appeal to other political forces, trade unions, social movements and progressive intellectuals in Europe to act together, since the crisis problem is not a national, but a European and global problem.
2. The 24th of March has already been declared

“a European Day of Action” by the ETUC. The radical left parties of the South of Europe and the EL will participate actively in this Action Day, by organizing common multiple actions in European cities and especially in the capitals of the European South and by promoting their demands and programmatic proposals, in the context of the EL program.

3. During these mobilizations, we propose to adopt a common slogan: **“European People Won’t Pay the Crisis. Let’s unite for a Europe of solidarity!”**

International meeting in Athens, Greece, 28 February 2010

The participants of the meeting: Lothar Bisky, President of the EL

Synaspismos (SYN), Greece, Left Block (BE), Portugal, United Left (IU), Spain, Communist Party of Spain (PCE), Party of the Communist Refoundation (PRC), Italy, AKOA, Greece

To see speeches of the conference please visit the EL on vimeo:<http://www.vimeo.com/tag:partyoftheeuropeanleft>

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