

Common Platform for the 2019 European elections

For a progressive exit from the crisis

Vote left in the European Elections

The European elections in May 2019 will be a crucial step for the future of the peoples. The times are changing and there is a real threat from a more neoliberal and conservative European Union (EU). The forces of the left represent the only alternative to the new neoliberal-conservative central bloc and the real alternative to the far right.

The EU is still in a deep crisis. Macroeconomic imbalances have become worse over the last years and not the opposite. There is a real political changeover whose most significant elements are the rise of the far Right, electoral abstention and the deep crisis of Social Democracy, as well as the reshuffling of the political and electoral balance in a number of EU member states, in most cases at the expense of "traditional" establishment parties.

The rise of the far Right is the most alarming and challenging development. We have to acknowledge that the discontent with and the protest against austerity policies produce big social contradictions and are economically counterproductive. This is helping the Right. The political changes, however, don't present only risks but also opportunities that have to be taken by the Left.

The Left has to become a strong counter weight and a political alternative to the nationalism and racism of the far right, as well as to neo-liberal politics.

Austerity policies, which are a function of neo-liberal dogma, are imposing criminal measures in our continent, and these are at the core of the problems we are facing. Additional problems were produced, namely the social and fiscal dumping, which became a rule across EU.

Workers' rights, the welfare state and collective bargaining were the major targets of these policies, which are likely to continue, as there's no political will to promote them again.

The power of big capital dominates Europe through EU institutions and national governments. Future European cooperation should be under the democratic control of the people, not at the service of the financial markets and big corporations.

Confront and change the European treaties, which are based on the principles of competitiveness, competition, deregulation, and liberalisation. This is the only available democratic path.

Democracy is at danger

Public services and institutions guarantee and expand the rights and freedoms of citizens and form the backbone of democracy. Recovering sovereignty of the people in these domains and promoting real cooperation and solidarity amongst the different countries are crucial steps to promote a new social order, fairer and sustainable for the people.

The worldwide financial and European crisis of public debts served as the pretext for reinforcing neo-liberalism, for imposing barbaric austerity plans, and social and democratic regressions. In country after country, we have seen cuts in our wages and pensions, slashing and plundering public services and privatisation. The result is rocketing unemployment, precariousness, and lack of trust in democratic institutions.

The lack of responses to these concrete problems of the European residents has contributed to the increase of the far right, besides the lack of a collective humanitarian and solidary response to refugees has helped to promote a more racist and xenophobic EU. The presence of men, women and children, from all over the world is now a structural feature of European societies. Once again we must affirm a strict NO to any form of discrimination, ensuring social rights for residents and immigrants, preventing the latter from being the scapegoat of the system.

The increase in inequality between men and women in Europe is still a structural problem, in which the sexism produced by the patriarchal system permeates every social sphere, thereby limiting and undermining the quality of life of women.

We propose an alternative, i.e., building Europe on a new basis of solidarity where the sovereignty of the people must be respected. Our goal is to renew hope: a new ambition for cooperation and solidarity at the European level, in the service of our peoples and the peoples of the world. The electoral platform presented by the Party of the European Left seeks to present the outline of a democratic, social, ecological and peaceful solidarity based society.

We hold the right of European citizens to work, live, study and travel freely between each other's states as sacrosanct.

1) A new model of economic and social development

We can no longer accept either the so-called structural reforms that are reducing the welfare state and workers' rights, or the current proposals of European institutions to deepen the economic and monetary union that do not respond to key issues of reducing inequality, poverty and unemployment.

We are fighting to end austerity policies. Instead, we wish to forge an alternative economic and social policy able to create jobs, redistribute wealth and cover all social needs.

Our strategy is as follows.

- a) In a general framework of democratisation of the EU institution, we consider it necessary, to change the mission of the European Central Bank (ECB) including employment goals and override its autonomy towards a real democratic accountability. Abolition of the fiscal pact and ending austerity plans in order to prevent social and economic catastrophes. To implement this, a public investment program in socially important areas shall be prioritised.
- b) Relaunch economic activity to meet social needs whilst respecting the environment and fighting precariousness and unemployment, especially amongst young people and women. We consider it fundamental to reduce working hours without loss of income. We are going to put forward these proposals in continuous interaction with trade unions.
- c) We support all struggles and forms of economic and social alternatives that emerged from the experiences of social cooperatives and the self-management of recovered factories.
- d) Guarantee that welfare systems ensure full levels of dignity for all residents, securing adequate salaries and universal access to pensions and introducing general and concrete measures against the increasing uncertainty and poverty, which foster the growth of the right-wing.
- e) We reject this European integration model based on a division between a centre and a different, poorer periphery. We don't want some countries developed and others undeveloped inside Europe. It is a terrible circle in capitalism. We work for all countries in Europe to develop in a cooperative way.
- f) EU Budget must be used for solidarity and redistribution. The best ways to facilitate this are the democratic control of financial markets and the public, democratic ownership of banks. A financial transaction tax has to be imposed. In order to find

resources for real social and redistributive policies, a tax reform with a minimum tax for big companies is necessary as well as measures against tax evasion. Tax heavens have to be closed. We propose a public “country by country reporting” defining obligations of full transparency for the strategies of the big companies acting in Europe.

- g) Economic empowerment of women through the promotion of policies to encourage a better work/life balance, and of public plans for education and re-education in equality between men and women. In order to achieve this, an expansion of public employment policies is essential, as is the promotion and development of social policies.
- h) Public debt should not be a national problem. Therefore we ask for a European conference on public debt to finalise and put in place structural and long-term solutions for its restructuring and reduction.

2) A new model for ecological development

Capitalist production develops technology and combines it in various social and economic processes in order to make profit. This is causing most of the ecological problems we face. Search for profit becomes a search of the weakest and least protected, exploiting the environment and the workers of developing countries. The well-being of nature and of humans should always come before profits of the capital.

As the European Left we are devoted to this and we need to:

- a) Prevent the privatisation of natural resources and make public the production and distribution of energy; as well as combat energy poverty by creating a fundamental right of access to energy and water, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- b) Localise and convert industrial production in Europe, develop short production and consumption circuits to minimise the use of resources; we need a low-cost and green solution to tackle energy poverty.
- c) Fight climate change by developing true renewable energies and energy savings, improvement of public transport, and fighting against new so-called market solutions to carbon emissions.
- d) Ensure food sovereignty by developing economically and ecologically sustainable agriculture. The choice of production and investment should be decided so as to preserve local ecosystems and protect biodiversity. We reject the dominant unsustainable production and the consumerist model, both of which are capitalistic.

- e) Protect the sea and use marine resources in a non-explorative way. Fight against marine pollution and protect oil, mining and gas reserves.
- f) The common goods refer to resources that are life's necessities. In that sense, everyone should have an equal right of access to natural resources (land, air, water and energy), cultural resources (including information and digital platforms), education and social protection. We all share responsibility, for current and future generations, and therefore we need to democratize the commons and reject the neo-liberal appropriation of social and economic rights to them.
- g) Fight against free trade agreements because they are a major threat to international cooperation as they are favouring the exploitation of raw materials , especially those from Africa and Latin America.

3) Power to the people

A socially and environmentally sustainable, democratic, solidarity-based and feminist Europe cannot be built on the existing European Union Treaties. We must build a new Europe to win power for the people, workers, and residents. The following points are part of this objective.

- a) Strengthen the fight against corruption through independent control.
- b) Take back power from finance capital by respecting popular sovereignty and by promoting citizens' involvement in EU decision-making
- c) Secure and extend workers' rights, trade union freedoms, and social rights, strengthen the collective bargaining power of trade unions, implement concrete measures to combat social dumping. The European Left supports the introduction of a social protocol in the EU Treaties as proposed by the Trade Union Network Europe, to protect fundamental trade union freedoms, rights and collective agreements. A social protocol needs to clarify that fundamental social rights override economic freedoms, aiming to eradicate social dumping in the EU internal market.
- d) Promote digital democracy, Internet neutrality and freedom of speech. Legally protect whistle-blowers and journalists denouncing economic, financial and tax crimes. Guarantee the right for a free and pluralist press. Impede the proprietary concentration of mass media and, through this, the spread of a dominant thinking.

4) For a Europe of rights and liberties

Our goal is to guarantee the fundamental human rights of all people living in Europe, men and women, by universal access to these rights, through public services and social security systems, managed by the public. The fundamental rights of citizens must not depend on the markets. They should not be left in the hands of private companies and financial markets. The purpose of fundamental human rights is human emancipation, not profit. In addition, these rights should be at the heart of public investment, state budgets, local authorities, and contributory systems.

Inequality, wars, poverty and climate change are forcing millions of people to leave their country looking for a better prospective of life, instead often finding death in that huge and silent cemetery the Mediterranean Sea is today. Europe is guilty and absent: in addition to national egoisms, it refuses to find answers based on openness and solidarity, such as the reform of the Dublin system or the definition of channels for legal migration. We believe that building a new Europe means also to rediscover those values of humanity that today seem forgotten. Moreover, welcome and hospitality policies and recognising migrant's rights are not just a matter of mercy and goodness, but remain a fundamental part of any redistributive action.

We urge the implementation of the following;

- a) Compliance with the sense of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, particularly Article 21 on non-discrimination, and its modification to include the prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity.
- b) The right to universal access to comprehensive healthcare and health protection for all.
- c) Decriminalisation of abortion and free access to it in all member states, as well as free choice of motherhood and the promotion of sexual and reproductive health. Sex education and contraception must be included in all European programs relating to education and health.
- d) Right to universal public and free education. The educational process should be free and secular throughout the educational stream. The school must make the formative assessment the pillar of future responsible citizens. Standardized tests, used under the pretext of objectivity and impartiality, are simplistic and privilege basic knowledge useful only to the labour market. They are to be abolished. As an alternative, it is necessary to describe the evolution of the pupils from the beginning, passing through the moment an assessment is taken, until the arrival, without scores or notes, alongside the obligatory schooling.
- e) The right to social services and care for disabled persons as well as the promotion of independent life.

- f) Promote LGBTQI rights and the end of discrimination: introduce legal gender recognition, civil marriage and child adoption rights for LGBTQI couples.
- g) Full protection of the rights of children.
- h) Defend migrants' and refugees' rights and put an end to the fortress Europe, establishing safe European corridors both for legal migration and receiving asylum seekers. Build links with sending countries, promote a real cooperation, shared responsibility and solidarity-based solutions to foster economic and social integration. Speed up asylum processes as well as resettlement and family reunification programs and condemn unilateral violations by member states which refuse to apply such programs.
- i) A Europe of the Peoples must surely encourage artistic creation, and popular education, including fostering a critical spirit; enriched by a spirit of openness, hospitality and solidarity. It will prioritize the widest access to culture and art for all residents, without exclusion.
- j) Promote the rights of elderly people and guarantee pensions for everyone.
- k) Guarantee the right to impartial and true information. Develop communication rights, to avoid multinational companies or darknet being the only owners of communication channels.
- l) We defend any personal belief but we want to promote a complete separation between state and religion and work for a secularisation of public policies.

5) For fair trade with the world

We are in favour of fair global cooperation. However, we insist on fairness and justice for people and the environment. Our insistence regards in particular the following:

- a) International trade agreements which threaten agriculture, industry, audio-visual broadcasting, workers' rights, the environment, and culture must be rescinded.
- b) The suspension of EU Association Agreements with countries that massively violate human rights and/ or occupy disputed territories, notably Israel and Morocco which oppress and violate the rights of the Palestinian and Saharawi peoples to have a State.
- c) The necessity of Mediterranean cooperation and agreements for the benefit of the people. The Union for the Mediterranean, which has the stated objective of promoting peace, stability, and prosperity, has contributed to destabilisation in the

region due to the neo-liberal policies that have been imposed by the EU as conditions for being part of the Union.

- d) We denounce the free trade agreements with several countries of Latin America, and the Caribbean because they are not based on serving the interests of the people.

6) For a Europe of peace

We defend peace and political dialogue against violence and military coercion.

The European Left is promoting peace between people and between societies. We defend internationalism in contrast to imperialism, which creates artificial divisions between countries and peoples; we seek to unite against the capitalistic, neo-liberal crisis which victimises great numbers of people, including workers, and therefore society in general.

The historical profile and geopolitical situation of our continent demand a concept of independent peace and security as well as the creation of sustainable, good-faith relations wherever possible in the Near East, Middle East, and North Africa.

The historical role of our continent is that of an intermediary, working for the balance of interests without being the executor of military/industrial complexes in the US and the EU. The interests and experiences of non-allied and neutral countries within the EU must be taken into consideration when developing a contemporary and lasting concept for security and peace in Europe.

- a) We don't want NATO on European soil therefore NATO alliance needs to be ended. NATO nowadays is an obsolete alliance that continues to generate imperialist military interventions, instead of "safeguarding peace". What Europe needs is a new, comprehensive peace and security system in dialogue and not "cold war style" confrontations with Russia.
- b) We defend the values of peace, tackling the causes of conflicts. This should lead to a common, integration-oriented refugee and migration policy, as well as addressing the real root causes of migrant flows namely war and poverty. We call for an immediate stop of EU production and exports of war weapons.
- c) Oppose military treaties and their consequences; reject EU militarisation (PESCO and FRONTEX). We insist on social investments rather than military operations expansion hidden under the "defence cooperation and security of the EU and its residents". We completely refuse the Union of Defence and the escalation towards militarisation.
- d) Condemn the criminalisation of NGOs and humanitarian activists

- e) The EU must demand the immediate withdrawal of Turkish occupying forces from Cyprus and the explicit commitment of Ankara to resume negotiations as soon as possible on the agreed basis of bicomunal, bizonal federation, from where things were left off at Crans Montana and according to the framework of the UN Secretary-General.
- f) We want a Europe which is willing to reflect constructively on its relations with Turkey and which is willing to keep its door open to Turkey, but at the same time demand the termination of Erdogan's imperial plan of the islamization of social and political life. The Turkish state must respect human rights and the freedom of expression, instead of tightening repression against democratic forces in the name of an anti-terrorist policy aimed at attacking the Kurdish people, its representatives, deputies, organisations and, in general, against all the country's democratic forces, working for democracy and peace in Turkey and the region. We will continue to stand against the imperialist wars in the Middle East and their inhuman consequences. Europe must be a protagonist in the immediate drawing and implementation of a viable peace road-map in Syria, instead of examining the expansion of its military presence in this war-torn country. It should play the same role in the case of Yemen, instead of remaining silent over the on-going war crimes.
- g) Resist any armaments policy designed to militarise the EU, and instead develop policies to ensure nuclear disarmament and the dismantling of the anti-missile shield. Divest from weapons and devote such funds to education for peace.