

## Political document, EL Congress

### Refound Europe, create new progressive convergence

Since the Fourth EL Congress, held in Madrid in December 2013, and particularly since the start of 2015, crises and divisions have worsened throughout the whole of Europe, to the point of becoming an existential crisis for the European Union. Economic and social problems have been exacerbated. This period has combined the growing authoritarianism of austerity policies with, latterly, elements of dislocation. The dominant political forces, whether they are conservatives, Christian democrats, liberals to which must be added the right wing of the social democrats, considering the capitalism an impassable horizon, are stuck in a blind alley. They are facing the crisis of capitalism, down which they themselves have led the EU as well as major divisions within their political families. Europe's future is mired in growing uncertainty, particularly as the recomposition of the international relationships of forces has direct consequences for the EU and its position in the world.

The whole European edifice is creaking and could collapse. The entire European project is again being called into question, even its foundations. The European Union's supposed founding values have, in practice, been reduced to nothing. The different ways in which countries like Greece on the one hand, and on the other those that boast the rank of regional power, such as the United Kingdom, are handled, shows the brutality of the relationships of forces, institutional and otherwise, at the very heart of the European Union. The Brexit marks a turning point in the history of the European Union. Even before the vote, the Brexit negotiations further entrenched the practice of social dumping within the European Union itself. The fact that, for the first time since 1957, a people decide to leave the European Union marks the weakness of a Europe oriented to markets and finance. The EU's striking failure and its refusal to tackle the migrant issue by applying the principles of solidarity and international law are crystallising the bankruptcy of the current model and adding weight to the serious trend towards EU breakup. The stagnation caused by the failed policies of the ECB – which will be pumping € 1.5 trillions solely into the banks and big business, at a loss, between now and March 2017 – demonstrates that it is structurally incapable of envisaging another economic model. For years, they have cited against us the dogmas of the Treaties in order to block the progressive changes we propose. Today, however, the truth is that everything is now on the table and all the debates have been reopened.

Today, the forces of the *status quo* are out of their depth and the forces of reaction are on the offensive throughout Europe. The right and extreme right are offering backward and xenophobic solutions. Political crisis is widespread. The continent is on the edge of a tipping point that could lead its peoples to turn in on themselves, with all the risks of tensions and breakup this will bring. Meanwhile, war is at the very gates of the European Union, in Ukraine and on the shores of the Mediterranean.

In this context, EL has a duty, now more than ever, to go on the offensive for a Europe of solidarity, feminism, democracy and cooperation. The EL brings together a broad alliance of communists, socialists, republicans, anti-capitalists, environmentalists, feminists, ecosocialists and other democratic and progressive groups. At a time when the class struggle is intensifying, it sees itself as a tool serving the interests of the majority in Europe by defending the perspective of democratic socialism to the peoples of Europe. The historical crisis of Social Democracy comes from the alignment of its leadership with neoliberalism and with liberal building of the EU since the 80's. It can open opportunities for building a Left defending and alternative project to neoliberalism. The EL is eager to open a discussion with all the available forces for such project. Aware of those challenges, the EL proposes to the whole European left, to the social and civic forces that are ready for it, to open up forums for wide-ranging debate, broad battlefronts for building anti-liberal majorities capable of tipping the relationship of forces back towards the peoples. The outcome of the political and economic convulsions is not predetermined. We can see the worst emerging, with the forces of the hard and extreme right continually on the rise throughout Europe. We are also witnessing the rise of the left that is seeking to open up progressive solutions, admittedly in relationships of forces that are still very unfavourable, for example in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland. European Left's responsibilities are greater than ever in this clash of highly contradictory trends. The peoples of Europe urgently need to break out of the deadly dilemma that the ruling classes are trying to lock them into: either accept endless austerity and anti-social competition, or submit to authoritarian moves to throw them out of

the eurozone or even the EU itself; either accept the unlimited free trade of capitalist globalisation, or turn in on themselves. We reject the unleashing of an even more brutal torrent of competition and speculation on the peoples, which would make the crisis even worse and set back civilisation even further throughout Europe. We call for a Europe of solidarity and shared social progress.

Our goal is to open up another possibility, another way. This new hope must lead in the direction of profound change in Europe, towards founding a new Europe, towards founding a different Europe as well as saving people from austerity and stopping them from turning to xenophobia. This underlines the urgent need to change the relationships of forces, not just in each of our countries or, even more so, in just one of them, but progressively in several countries and at the level of Europe as a whole.

## **I- Historic crisis of European integration: the fault lines**

### **1/ A worsened international context**

The ruling classes' inability to offer sustainable solutions to capitalism's systemic crisis of 2008 is a fundamental element of the European crisis. The way the crisis that broke out in 2008 was handled sought to rebuild the neoliberal pre-crisis model, guaranteeing the privileges of the "1%", and freedom for the banks and big business to act as they saw fit. The crisis led to a fall in production and a rise in unemployment, causing explosive inequality within each country and between countries. The spectre of an epoch of stagnation looms larger. Worse still, the conditions of financial over-accumulation have been reproduced, for another, bigger financial crash in the years to come.

Since the start of the 2000s, financial deregulation had led to skyrocketing housing prices, unpredictable amounts of credit for developers and homeowners, all of which led to vast indebtedness and credit bubbles. Larger cities have experienced a gentrification-led restructuring of central urban areas with a massive social cleansing of the poor as a result. Around the financial breakdown around 2008, we saw massive support of financial companies with pouring of billions into a bail out, indebting the states and combined with austerity measures against the population. Massive defaults and evictions, first and foremost in Spain, have spread all over Europe. The 2015 international private investment funds and hedge funds have entered the European housing sector thus creating conditions for the next outburst of crisis.

The multifaceted European crisis, which extends all the way to Russia, forms part of the new global imbalances, which it is exacerbating: The evolution of the American and Chinese economies is increasingly divergent, and as a result the entire global economy is destabilised. The "emerging" countries have been shaken too, with falling commodity prices, erratic exchange rates and the temptation to rely completely on exports. The build-up of both public and private debt, which more than doubled from 2004 to 2015, is further destabilising the economy. While industrial production fell 3% in 2015, ECB policy is incapable of a significant economic relaunch. All this demonstrates the ruling classes' inability to come up with new policies and the political and moral impasse into which they are driving Europe.

Three new elements have appeared since 2013.

First of all, war has again become an immediate prospect for Europe. The civil war in Ukraine has claimed more than 10,000 lives since April 2014. It is creating deep rifts in Europe, which recall those of the Cold War. The Minsk agreements are still not being fully enforced. European Left demands real implementation of the Minsk agreements by all the parties. The chaos reigning in several regions of the globe, from Africa to the Middle East, is destabilising international geopolitical relations. The breakup of entire states, such as Iraq or Syria, under the double impact of wars, mainly caused by Western imperialism, and excessive liberalisation policies is paving the way for new forms of totalitarianism and obscurantism, such as the so-called Islamic State. Entire regions of the globe are grappling with a barbaric challenge to the principles of equality and justice.

The civil war in Syria is in the process of becoming the bloodiest conflict since 1945. The civil war is the result of a democratic and peaceful movement faced with the Assad regime's brutal reaction, it then turned into a regional – and even indirectly international– civil war as a result of the intervention of regional and global

powers. The EL supports in this context the struggle of the Kurdish people, whose forces are practically the only to fight on a meaningful scale for a democratic, pluralistic, anti-patriarchy society. The European Left argues that there is an urgent need for a sustainable, peaceful and political solution. We are promoting the idea of a global peace plan for the Middle East and for the Mediterranean.

The agreement between the major powers and Iran removes the risk of war, at least provisionally. It also denies the states in the region a pretext for nuclear armament. The European Left advocates the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. That, therefore, also applies to Israel. The EL stands up for the perspective of a global nuclear disarmament.

The conflicts in the Middle East, exacerbated by imperialist interventions, have opened the door to extremism and terrorism, which are now striking at the heart of Europe. Terrorist attacks are democracy's worst enemy, in and of themselves, and because they are used as a pretext for "anti-terrorist" measures that curb fundamental rights. What is more, they open up a space for xenophobic and racist propaganda and for the forces of the extreme right. For those reasons, this sort of phenomenon, which stems from a totalitarian ideology, must be fought remorselessly.

Then, despite all the warnings, the ecological crisis has worsened. The issue is not whether we will go into an ecological crisis, but how we can get out of the ecological crisis that we have been in for several years now. We know that, above a 1.5°C temperature increase from the pre-industrial age, the warming of the lower atmosphere will most likely bring ecological and social disasters very difficult to be reversed. The ecological crisis is a consequence of the expansion of the capitalist mode of production, which causes an unlimited productivism to the detriment of natural resources, on the one hand, and an alienating consumerism on the other. All that is to the detriment of production and social needs, which need to be developed and met. The world of the future that has to be thought out is inseparable from a long-term view of our natural environment, from society setting limits on resource exploitation, and from seeking a form of "good living" whereby humans can flourish while developing an environment fit to live in. Today, any socialist perspective is inseparable from the ecological transition, from the transformation of the modes of production to meet the needs of society and of preservation of the environment.

The world is facing a challenge of civilization. The election of Donald Trump, an unscrupulous, hawkish, sexist and racist billionaire adventurer, backed by ultra-conservative and right-wing American currents, at the head of the world's foremost power, can announce a period of great instability. The candidacy of Hillary Clinton certainly did not represent a real alternative, all the more so because it was supported by liberal and interventionist forces. But now the swing of the United States can become the starting point of a new economic crisis and a spiral of war. This result is the fruit of the social fractures caused by capitalist globalization, as well as of the feelings of fear and hatred that the failure of the world order causes.

## **2/ Fractured societies brought to their knees**

Austerity policies are leading to major social regression across Europe. Wages, collective bargaining agreements and social benefits are the permanent target of austerity policies. The ruling classes are exploiting the crisis to take their revenge for the social rights won through the struggles of workers in the twentieth century. Mass unemployment, job insecurity and poverty are disfiguring all European societies. Current free trade within EU borders without any form of social harmonization favors social dumping, widespread deregulation and lowering the price of labour. In the name of this blackmail, we break social protections, we lay off faster and easier, we precarise, we strangle economic activity. The EU is again a machine that accelerates the massive destruction of employment and is manufacturing unemployment and poverty. Gender inequality is being reinforced through growing job insecurity.

Gender inequality and the exploitation of women are on the rise. Women have less and less protection in the labour market. Undeclared jobs as domestic help are hitting hard especially immigrant women. The trade with migrant women and women from Eastern Europe as domestic help must stop. Instead, we must fight for good and cheap public day-care offers for all children, so that women can participate in the labour market on an equal footing with men - that is women should have equal pay with men. On the social and societal issues, nothing is being done to harmonize the rights upwards, particularly the right to have a job and women's rights. This

regression in women's rights is fatal. Austerity policies are pushing them into undeclared work, exclusion and even prostitution.

Throughout Europe, the rights and collective bargaining agreements that govern relations between workers and employers are increasingly under threat. Almost all of the eurozone countries are growing at a pitiful rate, often not at all: the eurozone average for quarter two of 2015 was 0.3%. This vision based on cutting "costs" (labour, public spending, social protection) at any price is preventing any healthy economic relaunch and causing mass unemployment. One in four Europeans (122 million people) is threatened with poverty. Those figures are even higher for women, young people and children. There is even a resulting humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by the dismantling of state health services. Public services everywhere are under attack from neoliberal capitalism.

Europe's internal imbalances are being worsened by these austerity policies and the ensuing economic stagnation. The differences in economic and social indicators between northern and southern Europe are growing. The gap is widening between the countries where the unemployment rate is at rock bottom and those where it is continually rising. The official figures show a 20-point gap between Greece and Germany. That contrast is all the starker among the under-25s, for whom the gap has increased sevenfold. The new generation knows they will be worse off overall than their parents were. Competition is heightening the imbalances between the regions and major cities of Europe. The breakdown of public services means that our societies are becoming increasingly fragile, with more and more people being excluded. These divisions are fostering dangerous and segregationist ideologies.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the years following the restoration of capitalism and the transition marked by European integration have not had the expected results. Living standards and wages remain far lower than in other European countries. Almost all banks have been privatised and the majority of them are in the hands of Western banks. The productive systems have been dismantled, leading to mass unemployment and the emigration of hundreds of thousands of people in search of a better life. Rural regions are completely abandoned. All this taken together underlines the risk of major social regression that is hanging over the continent. And the European Union is no longer a factor of regulation: it now promotes policies that are exacerbating the crisis and its consequences.

### **3 / The democratic crisis: scorned peoples and a fragmented EU**

The fracturing of democracy has worsened since 2015, with some countries and some issues treated differently from others. The ruling classes are buttressing their position with monetarist fiscal and financial authoritarianism, and with the application of authoritarian federalism to the questions of the budget and debt. Juncker's statement after Syriza's 2015 win that "there can be no democratic choice against the European Treaties" shows that, the more the model fails, the more the Treaties' advocates heap praise on it. The economic absurdity of the "3%" budget deficit dogma of the EU's rulers is widely acknowledged today, even by liberals, without anyone calling out their stance as a political tool for enslaving the peoples and governments trying to escape it. The *diktat* imposed on Greece and on the government of Alexis Tsipras and Syriza was preceded by what can only be described as a banking coup whose aim was to cut the country's lifeline. It demonstrates the brutality of the methods used by the Troika to put pressure countries, and their total disregard for the verdict of the polls. The less direct attempts to destabilise the Portuguese Government ultimately follow the same logic. Yet, when David Cameron, in the name of the United Kingdom, a far greater and more influential economic and diplomatic power, demands concessions that weaken workers' rights, he is listened to.

The ultranationalist, authoritarian and clerical governments that have risen to power in Eastern Europe are accentuating the retreat of democracy and the curbing of rights. What is more, they are fighting to rewrite history from a reactionary point of view. The forces of the left and the communists in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are targeted of constant attacks. Governments are doing all they can to discredit and destroy progressive forces to keep themselves in power. Since 2014, the entire apparatus of the Ukrainian state is focused on destroying the Communist Party of Ukraine. The purpose of the "decommunisation" campaigns in Ukraine, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and other countries is to ban communist organisations and wipe communist monuments and toponyms off the map. Yet there are legal ways of standing up to those processes, as the examples of the Republic of Moldova and Hungary show.

In many EU countries, there is a true backlash in women's rights to decide over their own body. There are heavy attacks on abortion rights from right-wing governments and the Catholic and Orthodox Church. Women have fought hard to regain their right to their own body. Polish women had a victory. A total ban on abortion was changed to abortion under certain conditions. Polish women continue their struggle for the right to decide themselves on abortion. A woman's body is her own and she has the right to decide whether she wants to end a pregnancy or not. The European Left demands the right to abortion in all European countries.

On social and societal issues, nothing is being done to make rights converge at the level of the most advanced countries, particularly the right to employment and women's rights. The EU is doing absolutely nothing to penalise the attacks on women's right to control their own bodies, or sexist violence against them. When a country unilaterally decides to close its borders and flout European rules on migrants, it is not met with the wrath of Brussels. So far, eight countries have closed their borders and the European Union is letting them do it.

Brexit has given the crisis a new dimension. The Brexit result has to be accepted as a fact. The shock of Brexit reveals the extent of the rejection of neoliberal integration of the EU. It highlights the depth of the territorial and social fault lines, following more than thirty years of austerity and capitalist globalization. This was a social protest. However the extreme right exploited the protest. The strategy of right has unleashed the forces of xenophobia. The new British government looks to be even further to the right than the previous one, combining even starker austerity with yet more stigmatization of immigrant workers, democracy and political direction across the EU. Taking into account the real consequences emerged from Brexit, this process must be subject for democratic evaluation and decision. For the left in the UK, the fight to maintain freedom of movement, human right, and workplace protections is being renewed and could form the basis for radical change in democracy and political direction across the EU. The EL supports the right of people from Northern Ireland and Scotland, who have voted against Brexit, to see their will be respected in talking for Brexit. This also raises questions for the left and its ability to step forward with an alternative for the peoples of Europe.

#### **4 / The continent on the edge of an ideological tipping point**

The political crisis is spreading throughout Europe. Outgoing governments are almost systematically punished at the polls. Rapid and contradictory political shocks are polarising European public debate. Rising xenophobic and nationalistic sentiment poses an existential challenge to the left in Europe. The continent is threatened with a wide-ranging ideological shift. In different countries, and in different ways, extreme right and right-wing populist forces are seeking to impose their chosen themes. Disorientation, despair and fear of international changes amplify their message. The "protectionist", even "social", discourse of the extreme right is part of an old tradition of theirs dating back to Europe's fascist regimes. It is used to ensure they get into power, and to marginalise the left and the labour movement.

The political leanings of some governments are legitimising their discourse and making people turn to them, like in Slovakia. An authoritarian bloc is in power in several European capitals: Warsaw, Budapest, and Bratislava. The Baltic governments are heading in the same direction.

In the repetition of the second round of the presidential election in Austria the candidate of the radical right, German-nationalist Freedom Party was defeated by a broad front ranging from critical forces of civil society to representatives of the established parties. This is a great success, but the danger is by far not over because the social and political causes for the rise of radical right are still existing. The rise of the extreme right in Germany is a phenomenon not seen since 1945. In France, the FN is at the heart of national politics and is preparing confidently for the 2017 elections. In Belgium, a Flemish nationalist party with close ties to the extreme right is part of the government. Even in the Scandinavian countries – previously well known for their humanism and solidarity the extreme right wing has had a dangerous development. There has for a long time been a strong extreme rightwing party in Denmark, the Danish People's Party, which has been successful in getting implemented the most xenophobic immigration policies ever seen. Also in Norway, Sweden and Finland there are strong rightwing parties and the Swedish party "Sweden Democrats" even has its origins in the neoNazi movement. Last but not least, the rise of the Golden Dawn in Greece after 2012 has allowed this criminal neoNazi gang to achieve institutional representation in local, national and European bodies, despite the fact that a big part of its leadership is under legal process facing accusations of murder, illegal weapon possession etc.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the development of nationalism, neo-fascism and xenophobia is feeding off the

people's impoverishment and the crisis of democracy. In Ukraine, in the Baltic States and in other countries of Eastern Europe, the extreme right is in a position to participate, in one form or another, in solutions of power. Denunciation of the "enemy within" is having a major impact on the peoples of those countries. The economic crisis and unemployment are intensifying hatred of migrants and Roma people, who are being scapegoated. In Turkey, Erdogan is using the emergency state regime as an instrument to violently suppress democracy, crush freedoms, muzzle the media, reduce the powers of the opposition, lift the parliamentary immunity and imprison HDP deputies, and trigger a murderous war against the Kurdish population of the country. Yet this ideological change is far from uncontested, which means Europe is not yet reversing its history. The peoples are mobilising against the corruption of the ruling classes and the political deadlock in some countries. The overthrow of the Romanian Government in November 2015 and the mass anti-corruption demonstrations in Republic of Moldova are clear signs of that. In Western Europe, and particularly in Greece, the movement of solidarity towards migrants shows that the spirit of welcome is still alive in Europe and it is not a "luxury" for rich countries. This solidarity movement is acting as a brake on and a focus of resistance against societies tipping into xenophobia.

## **5 / The migrant issue as a catalyst for the European Union's historic crisis**

The mixture of powerlessness and amorality with which the European Union and most of its governments have reacted to the influx of migrants shows the scale of the crisis of the European Union and its principles. This crisis is also forcing Europe to rethink its future.

The migrant crisis is concealing an underlying systemic crisis. It is a massive and structural phenomenon, which is the consequence of the rapidly deteriorating international situation and the policies that caused it, including the policies of the EU itself and its Member States. It is estimated that, by 2050, if there isn't any political change, 200 million migrants will have fled war, economic crisis, state disintegration, the chaos that reigns in much of Africa and the Middle East, and the effects of the climate crisis. The European Union bears a significant share of the responsibility. The conclusion of bilateral free trade agreements has encouraged the dismantling of public services and, consequently, the weakening of the state in a number of African countries. The participation of certain European states in those regions' wars is another black mark against the EU. The migrant crisis is a sign of the crisis in the EU's relations with the world.

What is more, the fact that a million refugees cause such upheaval in a political union with a population of 580 million illustrates the scale of the crisis in the EU. The humanitarian situation of the refugees is an international scandal. The temptation to use refugees as a tool for social dumping reinforces the population's inclination towards turning in on itself and even falling into xenophobia. The situation is particularly serious for women and young people. They suffer the most from violence, including sexual abuse, and workplace exploitation. We need to create specific protective mechanisms, put in place legal safeguards and train up specialists.

The most despicable twists in this tale come from the steps taken by some governments, such as those of the Visegrád Group and of Denmark. Yet Western European governments hardly come up smelling of roses, as we can see from Manuel Valls's statement at the Munich security conference in February 2016 and, even worse, the statements by the Belgian Interior Minister.

This crisis is another opportunity to blackmail Greece, which is handling the migrants' arrival in Europe alone, as one of the few countries that has made a large number of welcome centres available. We must also pay tribute to the wave of solidarity rippling through Greek society, which has enabled them to tackle a very complex situation, without it benefitting the extreme right.

The EU-Turkey deal, condemned by humanitarian organisations, gives Erdoğan an unacceptable blank cheque, when his policies are one of the causes of the Middle East crisis, and he is deploying brutal repression against the Kurdish population, Turkish democrats and even the freedom of the press. It confirms the willingness of Europe's rulers to shut the EU's gates on people fleeing war, violence and poverty. Almost all the heads of state have accepted it all, only too pleased to be free of their responsibilities to take in people in distress and offer them asylum. The management of the refugee crisis by the EU is another solid proof of the political and ethical bankruptcy of the neoliberal European integration project. The EU leadership remains silent instead of applying sanctions against those member-states who unilaterally violate the agreed program for the safe and proportional relocation of refugees that arrived and remain blocked in Greece and Italy.

## **Conclusion: a new period of history**

In short, the European Union and the whole of Europe are entering a new period of history. Following the period of two blocs and the Common Market, originally set up between six countries, the Single European Act and the Treaties that followed elevated competition to the status of a higher law within the EU. That went hand-in-hand with setting social systems off against one another, and dismantling the most advanced social rights. This edifice built in the 1980s and 1990s has been creaking for several years. It is going through a serious crisis of legitimacy and the underlying project is currently one shared by only a minority among the peoples of Europe. A new period of history is starting, in which the EU is being pulled in two different directions, with authoritarian federalism being reinforced at the same time as elements of it are crumbling. The European continent is therefore at a turning point: either the reactionary values of a rightist bloc combined with fiscal authoritarianism will win the day, or a new political and social bloc working for the peoples' interests will manage to emerge in Europe. If nothing is done, the peoples face a terrible dilemma: either the whole edifice will crumble before anyone is ready, least of all the ruling classes, or the continent will remain mired in austerity and mass unemployment, behind its closed borders.

Yet we can step back from the brink. The peoples have not given in: quite the opposite. There are political, social and civic forces that reject the dilemma. EL is turning towards all those forces, to propose that, together, we come up with a new politics at the service of a union of European peoples based on sovereignty and solidarity.

## **II- A social contract of sovereignty and solidarity between the peoples of Europe:** **European Left's keynote policies for ending austerity and the liberal** **rationales of the European treaties**

The Party of the European Left brings together political organisations with different views of the European project, but with shared goals: to reject the dilemma imposed by the ruling classes, of either authoritarian federalism that rides roughshod over popular sovereignty and the rights of nations, or heightened national self-interest and rivalries; and to unite the peoples of Europe around a joint project of solidarity and social justice. Regardless of what might be the viewpoints on the EU, the core question is on the content and the political perspective.

The Party of the European Left defends a socialist perspective, defined as a society of justice founded on the pooling of wealth and the means of production, and on the sovereignty of democratic choice, in harmony with the planet's limited resources. It rejects capitalism, which causes inequality, injustice, poverty and wars, as well as patriarchy and all discrimination.

The Party of the European Left is resolutely committed to a project of construction and a broad front with the political movements, civil society organisations and individuals who, even though they do not agree about everything, share a common view of key left policies, making possible broad coalitions that could become a majority. The demands of the current situation mean that the political challenges could not be greater. EL's keynote policies are intended to enable us to debate and campaign around concrete solutions, until we make possible the necessary breaks and alternative solutions.

EL advocates a social contract for sovereignty and solidarity between the peoples of Europe. Europe must become a union of nations and peoples whose sovereignty is respected, with the common goal of human development. We are ready to work towards that prospect with any willing political, civic, trade union, social and intellectual forces, on the basis of five guiding principles. These guiding principles provide the basis for European Left to act. They imply a fundamental challenge to the present framework of the European Union.

We oppose the rationale that lies behind the Lisbon Treaty and hence the other treaties that it contains. At the next European summit in Rome in March, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, European leaders intend to lay the foundations for a reform of the Treaties. The European Left must strongly denounce that a deepening of this liberal Union is contrary to the interests of the peoples. We oppose the strengthening of economic and monetary Union (EMU); the inscription in the marble of the European semester and we oppose just as much the current European army project, especially when working hand in hand with the warlike organization, NATO. Our aim is to withdraw from the European fiscal compact. Although we fight on every occasion to roll back the rationales behind national and European political decisions, we are not seeking to adapt the existing framework but to refound Europe, because it is clear that it is not possible to introduce a policy of social change without breaking away from the treaties that are based on the dogma of free, unfettered competition and on calling into question the right of peoples and nations to govern themselves in a democratic fashion.

We need a project for the European solidarity project but it will not be possible unless we recover political and economic sovereignty for the European people. This project must be built with those countries and people who show the will to achieve this sovereignty and to build a new European project with new values and principles of solidarity and internationalism.

It is possible and necessary to coordinate the wish for national sovereignty triggered by cuts and austerity policies in the EU together with our internationalist tradition. In this sense it is important to give priority to the alliances with those countries suffering the debt and subjected to the EU architecture, motivating and coordinating a left project together with other European forces.

## **1/ For a Europe that respects popular sovereignty**

We stand for refounding Europe by applying the principles of justice, social progress and democracy while respecting the democratic rights of nations and European states including the right to hold referendum on the necessary changes to the European construction. The peoples have the right to decide on the powers given to a democratic political space in Europe, on a democratic structure for the continent and on the prerogatives of parliaments, while respecting the democratic, sovereign rights of peoples.

It is necessary to review the way in which the European framework and the prerogatives of European States and nations is expressed. Europe must not substitute itself for individual states, for the national level and for their prerogatives, but should encourage cooperation on joint projects and global challenges. The sovereignty of every state should be respected. The democratic legitimacy of each country must take priority over the current European treaties. A state should have the right to non-application of European directives and decisions that are regressive in terms of social and democratic gains and the people's rights. European laws should be drawn up jointly by the European Parliament and the national parliaments. The European Commission should not have the right to initiate legislation, which should be the joint preserve of national parliaments and the European Parliament. The pressure of lobbies should also be prohibited.

We want to help governments who seek to move away from the liberal approach and promote the idea of progress in Europe.

## **2/ A pact for a new development model**

We need to break with the liberal competition rules and with austerity. The development pact that we are proposing meets social needs.

The reconstruction of Europe's economy and monetary tools must be put at the service of a new development model based on public investment and the creation of jobs that meet social and environmental conditions. The money that the ECB is injecting into banks and multinationals at a loss must instead be channelled into an audacious, socially useful and environmentally sustainable policy for an economic relaunch, and into the much-needed creation of stable workplaces in industries brought back within Europe's borders. That policy will make possible the necessary ecological transition. The EU must work with the Member States to ensure a strategic

dialogue with the major industrial sectors to safeguard production and work, or else retrain workers for new jobs. This involves identifying Europe's needs as regards energy transformation, transport infrastructure, education and training, and the future of its industry and manufacturing, which are evolving towards new problematics, such as the circular economy and the activities and work that this sector contains. This implies ensuring public control of energy. Privatisations must be halted and privatized sectors must be taken back to the public sector. There must be a moratorium on all energy and transport deregulation policies, and a plan for cutting energy consumption, while increasing energy efficiency and diversification. Sustainable development must be based on investment for scientific and technological research. The Common Agricultural Policy has to be reformed in order to break with the power of agribusiness and its productivist logics and to be put into the service of an agriculture, which guarantees basic and stable prices to farmers and fishermen, as well as to ensure healthy affordable food for people. Public funds must not be used to support the chemical industrial farming system and facilitate low prices on the global market, which outperforms small and medium scale farmers in Europe as well as farmers in third world countries. Organic farming practice should be a prerequisite for obtaining financial support and there has to be a ceiling for financial support per agricultural unit in order to support a sustainable rural structural development. Furthermore, the financial support has to be dedicated to support public goods: employment, strong local and regional markets, development project on small-scale organic farms, installation of young farmers and fishermen for a generational renewal and vitality in rural areas, food quality and -supply, animal welfare and protection of biodiversity, water and climate. In this way the EU can become a significant player of the environmental and climate issue.

This new development model must be created democratically, involving the Member States and supporting policies implemented at national level. To that end, a European social and environmental development fund must be set up, with the Member States involved in its monitoring and decision-making.

The defence and expansion of public services at both national and European level are tools for implementing a new development policy that goes against the liberal logic. It should be based on a transparent, democratic monitoring tool. It is necessary to set up a body to observe the deterioration of public services with common criteria that apply to every country. If countries so wish, national public services could work together more closely in order to tackle the common challenges that are facing the peoples of Europe.

### **3 / Struggle against inequality and for jobs, breaking with social dumping**

Combating social dumping is essential if we want the idea of the peoples of Europe coming together and showing solidarity for each other to survive. To bring an end to social dumping, Europe must take steps to bring social and democratic rights up to the same high level in all the Member States. We are calling for the introduction of a principle of social non-regression in the EU, meaning EU provisions on social and environmental matters can only be applied if it is superior to national legislation. The Posted Workers Directive, under which people's wages can vary by up to 30% from country to country, must be repealed. A new directive asserting the "equal pay for equal work" principle must be adopted. The general objective must be to progressively guarantee all workers equal treatment in terms of wages, benefits and working conditions.

The right to a decent income for all, women and men, involves ensuring true gender equality in terms of wages and career progression. According to the 2012 Eurostat figures, the employment rate for the 20-64 age bracket is 12% lower for women than for men (58% against 70%). The wage gap is 16%, with 32% of women on part-time contracts, as opposed to 9% of men; 21% of European women earn less than the minimum wage. The EU Treaties may officially promote gender equality, but the reality is quite different.

Reduced working hours for all, women and men, must be encouraged throughout Europe to curb unemployment and give young people access to jobs. Banning employers from imposing part-time work, combating workplace gender division, implementing and bolstering genuine state childcare, and setting up a European system of equal and untransferable paternity/maternity leave will mean women suffer less discrimination. A basic income sufficient to live with dignity must be provided for everyone, including unemployed people.

The European development plan, reduced wage inequality and the defence of European jobs leads us to the question of the EU's position in terms of international trade. We must break from TTIP, CETA and TISA immediately. For EL, like many others, that is a major and immediate political demand. EL is seeking to strengthen and expand the unified campaigns for a halt to TTIP, CETA and TISA negotiations. The EL calls for

the development of the mobilization against the CETA to prevent its ratification by national and regional parliaments.

The EU must oppose the system of free trade, and the slashing of social and environmental regulations, thus making commercial exchanges mutually beneficial.

#### **4 / Reclaiming money: breaking with fiscal dumping, fighting tax evasion, taking back control over the banks and the euro**

Europe must combat fiscal dumping. Tax havens are able to flourish under the current system, which creates tax competition between the Member States. Today, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Ireland and the Netherlands and other EU countries increasingly fall into this category. The LuxLeaks and SwissLeaks affairs, as well as the Panama Papers, have revealed the scale of this organised system. Closing down tax havens and the uncompromising fight against tax evasion and all forms of financial crime represent major challenges for Europe. Building a tax system that serves the interests of the majority and the common good is a foundational project and struggle for the coming years. A tax system that will transfer the tax burden from lower and middle classes to the upper classes, so as to serve the most vulnerable social strata, address existing inequalities and promote a growth in favor of public interest. In this fight, we need to build a broad front in order to lift the veil on the secrecy that surrounds financial centres and tax havens which, apart from offering very low or zero taxation, also constitute destinations for covering potentially illegal activities. The interests of the peoples must take precedence over the vested interests of the multinationals. Capital flows must be monitored and purely speculative transactions banned. A financial transaction tax and a capital tax, for instance, could finance an European social and environmental development fund, which can thus be financed by a massive annual investment. The EL will study the ETUC proposal for a plan representing 2% of the European GDP for 10 years.

Breaking with austerity involves breaking with the dictatorship of debt. Southern European countries' debt must be cancelled or renegotiated at a European debt conference. First and foremost, the European Council and the European Commission must listen to the Greek government's demand to renegotiate its debt.

Reclaiming money will involve radically overhauling the role of the banks in all European countries and the architecture of the eurozone. To establish democratic scrutiny of the ECB as well as a reform of its role and workings demands fundamental change. The ECB must commit itself to defending jobs and promoting environmentally sustainable development. It must become the lender of last resort for the Member States. There must also be a drastic overhaul of the monetary union, for those Member States that want to be part of it. The euro has now become a weapon of war for the ruling classes. We need to break with the idea of the euro as a disciplinary tool. The European currency must be deeply redesigned. Rather than being fetishized, the euro must become a tool in the service of the real economy; of new industrial, agricultural, social and environmental goals; and of the common good. The people of Europe need to take control of the euro. Within the eurozone, the currency must be used in a way that is shared and concerted, and must include mechanisms that take account of economic and social changes in the different eurozone Member States. In any case, no country should be obliged to join the eurozone. A country that makes a democratic decision to leave the euro should be able to do so without being subjected to sanctions, pressure or blackmail.

The EL is continuing the reflection and debate on the single currency as well as studying alternatives that would not penalize peoples and would not jeopardize their social and democratic conquests.

#### **5 / For a Europe of socially just environmental and energetic transition**

There is an urgent need to build a low-carbon Europe, which must set an example with new energy, transport, housing and even agriculture policies. Energy mixes must include as much energy from decarbonised sources as possible, with a growing emphasis on renewables. The choice of production and investment has to function according to criteria of local ecosystem preservation and to the protection of biodiversity. We reject capitalist productivism and consumerism. The EL favours a variety of production modes, based on industrial policies that promote the creation of clean and environmentally friendly technologies.

Europe is a political area that allows the fight against global warming to be taken up at continental level, in order

to develop environmental sustainable energies and promote energy saving. Every step forward in terms of social progress is inextricably linked to implementing the ecological and energy transition. It is a long-term process in which efforts to “greenwash” capitalism have no place. The rationale of short-term profits is incompatible with preserving our ecosystems. This means that people have to take ownership of environmental and energy issues. The question of access to increasingly scarce natural resources such as water, agricultural land and fossil fuels is becoming a major geopolitical challenge. COP 21 has set targets but has not set out how these will be achieved. The Paris Climate Agreement is a step in the right direction, but it remains very inadequate. The reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is a major policy objective that aims to limit global warming to 2 degrees: by 2030 they should be 75% of current emissions. The targets of a 30% cut in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020 and a 40% cut by 2030 are far too low. It is absolutely essential that we save energy and develop environmental sustainable energies, through a development of public investments. That applies to transport and industry, first and foremost. The extraction of shale gas should cease. Europe should act to put an end to speculation on raw materials.

We stand for a Europe that is self-sufficient in major foodstuffs. The future of Europe’s agricultural and food policy should be decided as part of public policies that respond to real needs and public health issues. Pollutant pesticide use must cease. We aim to provide everyone with a range of top quality food. Europe’s agricultural policies should provide a shield against the interference of speculative markets in the area of agriculture.

We stand for a new agricultural policy that can break away from the productivist approach and be at the service of an agriculture that guarantees stable minimum prices for farmers and fishermen. Aid should depend on production, environmental issues and the fragility of the sectors. Agricultural production must have to respect the idea of fairness that is beneficial to all international trade with developing countries.

## 6 / For a Europe of equal rights for all

EL follows in the tradition of those who have fought for the victory in Europe and the world of “natural and imprescriptible rights” for all men and women, and it intends to continue their fight. To quote the 1793 Declaration of Rights, “*It is oppression against the whole of society if a single one of its members is oppressed. It is oppression against every member of society if society as a whole is oppressed.*” The violence of the neoconservative attack and the threat of ethnic hysteria across the continent of Europe are turning the issue of defending and expanding human rights into a major battlefield. EL takes its place at the forefront of those who are defending a society of freedom and equality. The fight against racism, xenophobia and essentialist views of nations that are based solely on blood is a priority for us. The fight against terrorism must not lead to a reduction of political liberties.

Political and trade union rights have to be defended. The state of emergency that is gradually creeping across Europe must be abolished. The criminalisation of social and democratic movements must be countered. It is important to guarantee true pluralism and real press freedom that counters the interests of the huge media groups. Everywhere in Europe, political, social, democratic and more broadly the whole gamut of human rights must be aligned with the highest criteria. Workers in Europe need strong common rights in labor law and the right of access to social security, especially in the context of the development of cross-border movements of labor.

This is clearly the case in the application of gender equality in economic and political spheres. Equal pay is an immediate imperative. Everywhere in Europe, women should be able to choose what they do with their bodies. No-one should be sold or forced to rent out their bodies. We call for the fight against human trafficking to be intensified. We believe that prostitution should be abolished.

The right to a secular education and a functioning healthcare system, to live in a clean environment, to freedom of expression, the rule of law and security, the right of access to an independent legal system that is free from pressure and that provides a fair trial and resistance to arbitrary acts should be ensured throughout Europe. LGBTIQ people are the victims of discrimination or even, in some countries, persecution at school, in the workplace and in access to medical treatment, often with the tacit consent of the authorities and the police. They are the target of conservative discourse on the family, which aims to strengthen patriarchy. In most European countries transgender people are often deprived of their right to determine their own gender identity.

Education plays an important role in shaping citizens. We stand for an idea of education that breaks away from the idea of a utilitarian education that focuses solely on immediate economic needs. Education should prepare the citizens of the future and be free of bias based on ethnicity or gender. It should combine the transmission of both knowledge and skills. Schools should be free of charge, secular, free of the influence of private and

religious interests. Universities and research should be freed up from economic pressures.

EL fights for the harmonisation of rights and the alignment of economic, social and fiscal policies with the highest standards in Europe.

## **7 / For a Europe as an area of peace and security**

A regional cooperation for progress could greatly transform the path of the globalization towards a world of peace and international trade that is equitable for all, responding to human needs and global environmental challenges.

The European Neighbourhood Policy and the EU's international relations must be guided by the principles of cooperation and co-development, particularly with Mediterranean, African, Asian and Latin American countries. Latin America and the Caribbean have become a front of the offensive of the ruling classes, which want to take back their lost influence and overthrow the region's progressive governments, which are standing up for the rights of the peoples against capitalist and imperialist interests. EL is working with our sister parties in the region so that the interests of the majority triumph over the interests of the 1%.

European Union association agreements must be a lever for social progress and protecting rights. They can be suspended. In particular, the agreement with Israel should be suspended for as long as Israel continues violating international human rights. Europe must be a lever for peace and defence of the peoples' rights, particularly in its immediate neighbourhood: in the Middle East and Ukraine.

We need to take the required diplomatic initiatives to produce political solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East, to re-establish a just peace in the region, and to promote economic and social development that meets the peoples' fundamental needs. All European countries and the EU itself must recognise Palestine. European Left advocates establishing a fair and sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians, applying the UN resolutions: in other words, recognising a viable Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

A political solution must be found for recognition of the Sahrawi people, by holding a referendum on self-determination.

The EL opposes the further militarization of EU foreign policy and the involvement of the European countries' military forces in external operations. We must combat NATO's aggressive presence in Europe, and that struggle must lead to NATO's dissolution. We must resolutely oppose NATO diktat seeking that European nations spend at least 2% of their GDP on military purposes. Stepped-up US military investment, particularly in Eastern Europe, must be condemned. The elements of the anti-missile shield that are being built or are already operational must be dismantled immediately. We must combat the rising militarisation of Eastern European societies due to the creation of militias, often from ultra-nationalist circles. The European Union and Russia must find a means of peaceful and constructive dialogue, with all subjects that cause military, political, territorial or energy tension on the table.

The Cyprus problem is in essence an international problem of invasion and illegal occupation, in violation of the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the UN, but also has an internal aspect, of restoring relations between the two communities of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot. The negotiations between the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus, which take place under the auspices of the UN, are at a crucial juncture. The comprehensive peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem must be in accordance with the High-Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979, the UN Charter, international law and the EU *acquis communautaire*. It must comply with the agreed framework for a bicomunal, bizonal, federal state with a single sovereignty, a single international personality and a single citizenship, as it is prescribed in numerous UN Security Council Resolutions. Simultaneously it must provide for the political equality of the two communities within the framework of the federation as this was itself outlined by the resolutions of the UN.

The European Left supports the ongoing negotiations and recalls the decisive, supportive and constructive role of the left forces in defending the right of the Cypriot people, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, to live in a reunited and free country. For this reason, the solution should provide for the withdrawal of the Turkish occupation troops and settlers, the termination of the anachronistic system of foreign guarantees and restore the unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. It should also restore and safeguard the human rights

and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots, including that of the right of return of the refugees to their homes and properties.

We need to break with the idea of “fortress Europe”. Europe and the Member States must offer migrants a decent welcome, in a context where the crisis of liberal globalisation, wars, chaos and barbarity are ravaging entire regions of the globe. Migration policy must be a shared European responsibility. That also means combating the super-exploitation of workers and the use of illegal labour. The Schengen agreements must be renegotiated in favour of new policies on international migration and freedom of movement, which has become a structural phenomenon worldwide, and also of co-development.

In fifteen years’ time, Africa will represent one quarter of the world’s population. By the end of the century, half the world’s population aged 15-64 will be African. Going beyond emergencies, it is essential to work towards a partnership for sustainable joint development between European and African countries. In terms of demographic explosion and economic backwardness, sub-Saharan Africa poses a critical challenge for the 21st century. The planet’s peace and prosperity therefore depend, in large measure, on the necessary responses to the following challenges: ensuring jobs and access to fundamental goods and services to the population. The exploitation of natural resources must be taken away from the big multinationals and returned to the peoples.

### **Conclusion: keynote policies**

EL intends to take these keynote policies as the basis for broad, open campaigns, reinforcing actions that have already been taken:

- For a Europe that allows people to take control over economic choices: for withdrawal from the fiscal compact, for a European investment plan that favours jobs, public services, and energy and environmental transition, subject to the acceptance of the Member States, for restructuring and renegotiating debt, for fundamental reform and the redirection of injections of capital from the ECB in favour of a development policy that works for everyone. For social harmonization which is the only way to prevent widespread dumping between Member States. This means calling into question the existing European treaties, starting with the Lisbon Treaty, as well as the economic governance mechanisms, the fiscal pact and the European semester.
- For the creation of a broad popular and progressive left-wing front to stand against the extreme right and fascism.
- Promoting broad unity among the working class and poor through fighting poverty and austerity and promoting solidarity.
- For the fight against tax evasion: zero impunity from tax evasion.
- For the reduction of working time, a decent income for all and a public policy of investment in favor of employment.
- For the rupture with the TTIP, TISA and to impede the CETA ratification.
- For equal rights for all: gender equality in every sphere.
- For a dignified welcome and a policy of helping migrants and refugees.
- For a fundamental change in the Energy system with a drastic reduction of CO2 emissions and a future based on ecologically sustainable energy.
- For a Europe that works for peace: for nuclear disarmament, the dismantling of the anti-missile shield, for a peace initiative in the Middle East. The EL supports the pacifist movements and disarmament campaigns.

## **III. Changing the relationships of forces throughout Europe**

### **1/ Promoting unity for a progressive common front**

We have important lessons to learn from the last three years. The coming to power of a government of the left in Greece shows both that victories are possible and that changing the relationships of forces in one single country

is not enough. We must open breaches in other countries in order to reverse the relationships of forces in Europe. The Greek experience is ongoing and the Greek people will once again have to win European battles against the Troika and within the Eurogroup.

The progressive convergences of European left in the last few years show that unity around a content is not an empty slogan. The evolution of the relationships of forces in Europe can gradually outline another possible future, to break with the rationales of both austerity logics, neoliberal politics and xenophobia logics wherever they come from.

That is the challenge for the whole European left. We need victories that will make a left-wing alternative credible in our countries and at European level. What holds true for Greece or Portugal will also hold true if, in the coming years, another force of the left is elected to the highest levels of power.

To combat more effectively the rise of xenophobic forces, to develop a credible political alternative to austerity, to challenge the defeatist attitude and the liberal orientation by the majority of social democratic leaderships, the left must become able to take the necessary measures to work towards creating a new historical front. That front must represent a majority and be capable of uniting the social forces with an interest in change around the issues of social justice, fundamental rights and popular sovereignty.

Our goal is simply to unite all sectors of the population that are interested in ending the devastation caused by predatory capitalism, in particular the popular strata, which form the majority of the population, whose standard of living stagnates or falls.

Some openings exist. Some sectors are or could be receptive, such as the political, social, civic and intellectual movements that are expressing their opposition to the prevailing orthodoxy of budget surpluses and austerity. EL calls therefore to assemble the broadest possible spectrum of those on the left who share the desire to stop the devastation caused by the policies that are destroying the very idea of a rapprochement between the European peoples.

The trade unions that are fighting for workers' rights provide an essential fulcrum for rebuilding Europe. An active trade union movement is needed if we are to move away from austerity policies. Social movements organised at European level, such as the actions of the dockers against the directive liberalising the ports, are also needed. The EL supports their development. EL is ready to work at the European level with the ETUC and receptive trade unions in order to undertake a European project for the benefit of workers. The EL recognised the critical importance of trade unions and industrial action in shifting the balance of forces toward the working class and people more widely. We will help support any workers taking strikes and other industrial action in support of their members and will facilitate all forms of solidarity and information about these actions across Europe.

The cultural battle is of crucial importance. The cultural diversity of the peoples of Europe is a resource that must be preserved. The ruling classes use culture as a weapon to impose their own representatives on the people and to legitimise the neoliberal and neoconservative offensive in minds and representations, often perverting the political and social concepts of the left. For European Left, culture is a tool of emancipation, to advance ideas of freedom, resistance to oppression, solidarity and protection of the common good.

The speed of political change in the last few months tells us that this is a realistic vision. Syriza coming to power in Greece, despite the obstacles raised by the aggressive attitude of Europe's ruling classes, the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party, the rise of the left in Portugal and the changes in Spain illustrate the possibilities. EL affirms its willingness to work with any forces of the left involved in opposing austerity, even when they are engaged in debates about solutions to the European crisis. It also affirms its willingness to work with social democrats who refuse to renounce the values of the left and refuse to transmit the neo-liberal offensive. EL wants to forge closer bonds with ecologist forces that are not resigned to "green capitalism", and share the desire to combine social and environmental change.

What is more, the emergence, throughout Europe, of civic movements and political forces demanding the same thing, albeit in a sometimes confused manner, shows that there is significant desire in Europe for the people to re-appropriate the tools of state power and popular sovereignty, as well as a demand for the invention of new types of political action. Aspirations also concern concrete demands, such as the housing, water, energy or

climate issues, or the demands for political transparency and the democratisation of the public domain. These movements make the core issue of the common good central to the debate.

## **2/ Building a permanent framework for progressive forces in Europe**

EL itself was built by bringing together forces that come from several traditions. It has been able to move forward thanks to a consensus that has respected its diversity. At the same time, it has become more consistent. There are new discussions in our ranks on the challenges of the new phase currently underway. We must always work better with the many forces that will not join EL.

Taking the actual state of the relationships of forces in Europe as a starting point, our party has decided to take the initiatives necessary for entering a new stage in our ambition for the convergence and solidarity of progressive forces. The central issue is one of continuous construction of cooperation with all Europe's progressive forces. That must be done in a resolutely audacious way. We must work with all the forces involved in the GUE-NGL. The GUE-NGL plays a major role in protecting the principles of solidarity, justice, human rights, women's rights, public service and peace. We must also work with the new left-wing movements that are emerging around Europe, such as in Spain, Belgium, Ireland, Poland and the Balkan countries, and with new citizens' movements and initiatives, without excluding anyone, on a critical attitude to European institutions and the currency. There are also forces prepared to work together, among ecologists or certain sections of social democracy.

For this, EL wants to strengthen the initiatives already launched, such as the Forum of the South in Barcelona, the Forum for Alternatives in Paris and the Alliance against Austerity in Athens. These frameworks enable social, civic and intellectual movements to meet. The European Citizens' Initiatives on water and TTIP, and the campaigns for gender equality and women's rights are also forums for common and pluralist action, in which EL is very active.

The question of a new qualitative leap for this approach now arises. The challenges of today illustrate the need for new, broader alliances. We call for the creation and organisation of a new political space at European level, which could, initially, be an annual European political forum. The aim of this space would be to bring together all the political, social, trade-union, intellectual and NGO forces currently seeking a way out of the crisis through progress. Those different forces may not be entirely in agreement on the best way to fight this battle. The key thing is sharing a common goal. The São Paulo forum points the way. The political spectrum covered is deliberately broad, bringing together forces that share the same concern for protecting human rights, social rights and popular sovereignty. It would be a space for exchanging experiences, working out policies and developing actions. That would emphasise historical common ground as regards the current situation, starting from the actually existing relationships of forces, looking beyond periodic differences of opinion.

To achieve this target and be, ourselves, at the service of this ambition, the Party of the European Left proposes to all the available forces, in Europe, to build an annual political forum, open to all the political, democratic and progressive forces. This Forum would enhance the realization of common struggles as well as set up a balance of power in Europe. It shall be open, plural and participative, with movements and intellectuals, towards a work programme for convergence.

The EL proposes the first Forum to be held in Autumn 2017 in Marseille.

The EL, which welcomes new forces and count today 38 Member, Observer or Partners, from 25 European countries, will commit its forces in this project, with the respect of all, and under the responsibility of its new instances of direction and representation, the collective presidency, the political secretariat and the Executive Board.

In a broader perspective, the EL could update its action, not only during its Congress every 3 years, but every year, during an annual General Assembly as defined by its statutes.