

1 Political Theses

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7 The European Left: Building Alternatives

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9 The second congress of the European Left takes place in a moment of crucial challenge to
10 the European people, their social, economic, cultural and political life. The challenge is to
11 provide new and concrete answers for the future of the European Union, the whole continent
12 and the world. In our countries and in the European Union we are confronted day by day with
13 policies which are un-able to show a convincing, alternative way out of the dead end where
14 the neo-liberal choices have led humanity.

15 Every human being wants to live in dignity and to decide about her/his destiny. Instead, the
16 ruling politics refuse to grant the citizens of Europe their right to decide on the future of the
17 continent. A political change of direction is our strategic aim. The European elections of 2009
18 are an important opportunity for the European Left to politicize the confrontation on European
19 issues and to introduce a change of direction in Europe.

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22 I. European Left: Another Policy for Another Society

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24 A Where we are

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26 The contradiction between capitalism and the emancipation of the individual, armament and
27 war, climate change and environmental disasters, and the privatisation of all spheres of life
28 lead us to ask once again "socialism or barbarism"?

29 The strategy of war, in the name of prevention, non-proliferation, and of the struggle against
30 terrorism has provoked a crisis, but Europe and its governments are unable to break with this
31 logic. New strategies and a capable balance of power, leading to the settlement of interna-
32 tional controversies by political means, have not yet emerged. This is confirmed by the tragic
33 scenario in the Middle East, and particularly in Palestine. Such incapability could cause a
34 new escalation, further exacerbating the vicious circle of war and terrorism. This logic also
35 leads to an arms race and the militarization of European politics under US hegemony

36 At the same time, in the midst of this chaotic and turbulent transition, a new form of "neo-lib-
37 eral organicism" is prevailing, undermining the very roots of politics. The fundamental found-
38 ation of capitalism in its present phase is the presumption that the enterprise represents a
39 paradigm, a model to be followed: not only in organising production, as an economic agent,
40 but in organising the whole economy and society. The alleged "neutrality" of the business
41 paradigm intends to replace politics or subjugate it to its own ends. Politics would thus be
42 doomed to futility.

43 It is increasingly clear that the attempts to dismantle the public sector and the vicious attacks
44 against trade union organisations, currently under way in Western European countries, re-

45flect the notion that all those sectors which are no longer considered "productive", or that
46may impede the direct exercise of power by these new political actors, are to be eliminated
47once and for all.

48Consequently, major economic issues should be left to the major bourgeoisie, such as banks
49and financial institutions, while politics should take care of the poor and the excluded: i.e., it
50should address only what the economy does not.

51

52The neo-liberal choices outlined by Maastricht have caused an erosion of the material living
53conditions of broad sectors of the population, leading to a crisis of rejection of European in-
54tegration. This crisis is due to the un-sustainability of an economic, ecological, patriarchal
55and social model that produces unbearable inequalities, environmental disaster, precarious-
56ness in work and life. It is unable to untie the political knots that lay at the bottom of the crisis
57of social and political cohesion on the Old Continent. The old political powers cannot solve
58these problems, because they continue to practise the politics of Maastricht. This is creating
59a political vacuum.

60

61This vacuum and the absence of prospects for change could generate the victory of neo-pop-
62ulist projects based on a blend of xenophobic and racist elements with neo-liberalism. Their
63instigators use fears and insecurity as levers for reactionary mass populism, for chauvinistic
64tendencies, threatening civil rights, democratic equality, defence of social conquests and the
65welfare state itself with lethal consequences.

66

67In order to face these challenges we have to develop social, cultural and unified action to-
68gether with the people, able to lead the struggle for social transformation within the present
69conditions and to give political engagement sense again. The condition for more acceptance
70of the EU by its citizens is more opportunities to participate. The European Left stands for the
71democratisation of the European Union and of its institutional structure.

72

73The crisis affecting the whole social body, even under the varying conditions of the different
74countries, is a crisis of social cohesion as Europe used to know it. This spawns conflicts, divi-
75sions and tension. It sharpens class-struggle. These conflicts take on new forms and modalit-
76ies, compared with traditional political categories, being right or left. In this framework, the
77geography of European lefts is changing profoundly, creating a series of paradoxical effects.
78Firstly, national policies are regaining importance within the political forces. The process of
79European integration is becoming slower and more contradictory. State intervention in eco-
80nomy, the goal of welfare for all, and the establishment of social compromise through the ac-
81tions of trade unions are questioned. Instead, the ideology of capitalist globalisation and an
82open market with free competition dominates current political thinking. It is deplorable that
83some leftist and social-democratic parties follow this line, in the name of "leftist liberalism".

84

85The crisis of politics is one of the most dangerous and non-explored effects of the neo-liberal
86model, a model which has been imposed on our continent for twenty years now.

87

88This crisis of the relationship between politics, institutions and society has created a vacuum
89through the absence of perspective, giving the impression that politics is not able to face the
90big issues of our time.

91

92The moment has come to present a new perspective starting from this reality.

93

94Our congress has to tackle this task. It has to profile the EL in face of that challenge.

95

96The Party of the European Left has been created through the will of political parties that pro-
97pose social and democratic transformation, and alternatives to neo-liberal policies, through
98our active engagement in the institutional arena and in various alternative movements. We
99want to help create a new political force in Europe, and build alliances which make a differ-
100ence, so that real alternatives may emerge.

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102

103**B. Struggles, social movements and the role of the EL**

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105The popular struggles, the social and citizens' movements on a global scale have put the
106headline: "Another world is possible!" on the agenda. The global movement has been able to
107challenge not only the big international and transnational institutions, but even the economic
108powers. In spite of its discontinuous development this movement still is a precious resource
109for the renovation of left politics.

110

111The French and Dutch "No" to the Constitutional Treaty has had its impact in all the countries
112of the European Union and shown also a deep crisis in the people's confidence towards the
113neo-liberal orientations of European policies. Europe has continued to be crossed by signific-
114ant conflicts of a social, civil and cultural nature. The Trade Union movement is facing new
115challenges. The «old» contradiction between Capital and Labour is swept across by new as-
116pirations and contradictions between genders, generations, cultures, ethnic groups and
117above all by a new awareness of the tangle in the relationship between humankind and the
118environment.

119

120But most of these struggles do not automatically unite themselves or establish connections
121with forms of political representation. Many demands arising from the new generations and
122concerning working life, life in general, interpersonal relationships as influenced by the
123gender issue, cannot automatically transform themselves into a hegemonic culture as Anto-
124nio Gramsci called it. This set of demands can only turn into an alternative project of society,
125if they interact with a culture of transformation and an adequate political structure capable of
126bringing together both protesters and promoters of social change.

127

128This is the role of the EL.

129

130We can meet those demands only through a deep transformation of the political culture. This
131means a big effort of theoretical and practical innovation work. If we are not able to do this,

132labour will be reduced to a mere economic factor, instead of being a paradigm of emancipa-
133tion, of individual and collective freedom. The crisis of the left and of democracy will become
134more and more acute.

135We speak about a society which is swept across by many movements demanding a change;
136and by many forms of division, isolation, outbursts of violence, particularly against women; by
137individualism and «tribal» selfishness. Under this scenario, we must build a social and cultur-
138al system which promotes unity in the camp of the struggles for change, which helps a pro-
139cess of unification, socialisation and shared political involvement.

140

141We shall see the transformation of society as a part of a big cultural transformation by intro-
142ducing new ways of living together.

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145**C. Europe and the Institutions**

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147The legitimacy crisis of politics endangers the process of European integration. Confidence
148in the European institutions has never been so low.

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150Invariably, the recent Council presidencies limited themselves by orientating the interests of
151the EU to global competition in the labour markets, in energy policies, natural resources and
152other fields. The Berlin Declaration of 25 March 2007 and the EU Summit of June 2007 have
153persisted in applying the rationale of the internal market and the framework established by
154the Maastricht Treaty. That means no change in the neo-liberal orientation of European integ-
155ration policies and, with it, in the political approach of the new treaty. Furthermore, the choice
156to entrust decision-making on this issue to an intergovernmental conference and to the
157European Council, with no scope for democratic debate or means to have a voice through a
158referendum, can only widen the gap which separates European citizens from the European
159project.

160

161In this way, European governments are trying to by-pass – instead of untangling – the politic-
162al knots at the root of the crisis of the European Union.

163What is at stake today is not only the social achievements of the workers', women's, peace
164and ecological movements as produced by the victory over Nazi-fascism both in the coun-
165tries of Eastern and Western Europe, but even more the right to work and to organise.

166The subordination of the political system to the interests of the financial markets and the cap-
167italist economic powers, the concentration of powers and the personalisation of politics reas-
168sess the traditional organisation of civil society.

169The growing pressures on both the central State and local authorities to provide more secur-
170ity are the other side of the coin in this step-by-step depletion of democracy. If the exception
171becomes the rule, if the state of emergency becomes a permanent state of affairs, if the
172scope of freedom is being squeezed, the specific task of the respublica also (or above all, if
173not exclusively) becomes repression, and law and order.

174

175The European Left has to make a quality leap in political action. That depends on our ability
176to oppose the suggested, fateful, neo-liberal concept of society and the conviction that these
177circumstances can be changed.

178

179This requires a permanent struggle against neo-liberal ideology, demanding solutions to spe-
180cific problems deriving from the daily experience of the various movements. These struggles
181represent in their effect the way to the social and ecological transformation of Europe. There
182are clear interconnections of the positions of the workers' movement, the trade unions, the al-
183terglobalist movement, the European Social Forum, the feminist, environmental and social
184movements, the science and art communities with the policies of the European Left.

185

186This project requires closer links among our parties at the European level, new forms of com-
187munication and cooperation. It requires a more marked political profile in our parliamentary
188and non-parliamentary struggles. Our ambition is to smash the grand coalition of populists,
189conservatives and social-democrats, which has so far shaped the European project. Our am-
190bition is to launch the idea of a left-wing alternative.

191

192The social devastation produced by the reforms in the labour market and the rapid growth of
193what we have called "precarity" is the field against which we have to build our social policies.
194For this reason, we have to fight the Green paper on labour, which is yet again an attempt to
195unhinge collective bargaining, aiming at an individualistic model of employment. Precarious-
196ness is not only the condition that young people and women are facing in the workplace; it is
197the description of a social, civic and cultural condition.

198

199This is not just an economic problem. It is a question that concerns civilization as a whole,
200the crisis of human existence itself – like the open questions of the relationships between the
201sexes, the generations and communities, between individual and class, individual and soci-
202ety. At the heart of it this is a real civilization problem. And the enormous growth of inequality
203is becoming its most important feature.

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206**D. For a democratic reconstruction of Europe.**

207

208The party of the European Left has been the only political subject on the continent to hold a
209unitary position towards the European constitutional treaty. Our opposition starts from the cri-
210ticism of the undemocratic, neo-liberal, patriarchal and militaristic model of the European
211construction (a model which is institutionalised by that treaty itself).

212

213We have said it before and we say it again: after being rejected by the French and Dutch ref-
214erendums that treaty is dead. All of those who try institutional alchemic operations to resur-
215rect it, moving around the reasons of its refusal – as the European governments are trying to
216– lead Europe into a new deadlock. The project of "a modified treaty", recalling in fact the
217substance of the rejected treaty, will not solve the current crisis of consensus. Furthermore,

218any operations aiming to exclude the peoples from ratifying the treaty will not only be intoler-
219able, but also dangerous for the European Union's future.

220

221Now more than ever, there is the risk that the "obstacle", constituted by the expression of the
222people's will, shall be eliminated. That is why we demand a real debate on the content of the
223new treaty involving the people before any decision is taken, and its ratification by referen-
224dum in all the countries of the European Union.

225

226With the orientations fixed at the European Council in June 2007, a period of negotiation has
227been opened leading to the elaboration of a new treaty which should be ratified before the
228French presidency of 2008 and the European elections of 2009. For the EL and the forces
229acting for another Europe, the stake is considerable.

230

231The European Left opposes the project of this treaty which, actually, aims at preserving the
232core and main contents of the currently valid treaties and the European Constitutional Treaty
233– a society regulated by free and undistorted competition – now included in an additional pro-
234tocol. We see the need for a new European debate on further ways in the sense of "refound-
235ing Europe". The only possible way to contribute to lasting peace, to peaceful co-existence
236and cooperation of the peoples and states of Europe, to a democratic, political and social
237perspective of the European continent, is to finish with neo-liberal logic and profoundly re-
238shape the European process. This debate must lead to a new social contract at the
239European level, recognized by all citizens and human beings living and wanting to live in
240Europe.

241

242This European public debate needs to be started, organized and built up; the democratic
243wound at the heart of the EU with its oft-described and recognized lack of democracy needs
244to be healed.

245We demand a real popular participation in the elaboration of the policies and the European
246project. It is the only way out of the deep crisis which crosses the European construction. In
247these conditions, the European elections of 2009 have to constitute a political moment of in-
248tervention by all the forces committed to a new perspective in Europe, with the EL at the
249front, to make a new conception of Europe prevail, in connection with the social, political, and
250citizens' struggles. We want the European Parliament – the only subject representing popular
251sovereignty in the current institutional order of the Union – and the national parliaments to
252really act regarding the decisions concerning the institutional and political future of Europe.

253

254The "refoundation" of the Union must start at its base. Its heart must be a new social, envir-
255onmental, feminist and democratic model which ensures peace, breaking with neo-liberal
256policies, and ensuring peoples' participation in all the stages of its making.

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263**II. Fields in which the European Left will actively contribute to change**

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265**A. Capitalist globalisation and Europe**

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267Our time is one of capitalist globalisation, which shows its faults, its limits, and its unsustain-
268able nature. It is also a time of irreversible new realities and potential effects linked to the de-
269velopment on worldwide scale of the exchange of knowledge. The exacerbation of the con-
270tradiction between, on the one hand, the devastating and unequal exigencies of this global-
271ized, financialized, and militarized capitalism, and on the other hand, the potential of human
272emancipation and sustainable societies, makes even more urgent the construction of a per-
273spective of transformation.

274

275Considerable power is more and more concentrated in few hands: the international finance
276funds, the transnational corporations and the supranational organisations of global capitalism
277– the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank etc. These
278organisations are shielded from any democratic control. This democratic dispossession de-
279pends on the will of the most powerful states' governments to assume, at the service of the
280dominant capitalistic financial forces, decisions which pretend to serve the fate of humanity.

281

282To this material monopoly the immaterial one is added. Knowledge becomes a good with
283high added value. The tools for understanding reality and for the production of the necessary
284goods are in the hands of a few people. The key elements of the capitalist phase nowadays
285are financialization, which profoundly modifies social ties, labour, societies, the role of States,
286and the creation of more and more profit from capital investment in the production of intan-
287gible goods (knowledge, information, communication, training, entertainment, culture).
288However there is an essential difference in the nature of these goods and material ones. The
289basic feature of immaterial goods is that their usage by one "consumer" does not prevent the
290usage by others.

291Today the fundamental aim of the left must be to assert that knowledge is a public good and
292to fight for the implementation of this principle. This will be achieved not only through the ad-
293option of adequate measures able to assure free access to it, but especially by saving the
294production of knowledge from the laws of the market .

295Neo-liberal politics need to reduce the essence of democracy - that is to decrease the de-
296cision-making power of the people's representative institutions (parliaments, councils, etc.).
297European capitalism tries to answer the expansion of the capitalist market and global com-
298petition by the reduction of labour costs, the delocalisation of production, by wage control, by
299reducing rights and public intervention in the economy, by the devastating actions of these
300multinationals in the countries of the Southern hemisphere. We are still witnessing privatisa-
301tions, an increase in profits and financial speculation, wealth concentration and rise of dispar-
302ities, but without any social and political criticism able to invert these processes. The
303Maastricht criteria, which are still the basis of economic policy, continue to be a straightjacket
304restraining social and political conquests. This limiting function is also carried out by the Sta-
305bility pact and by the rigid monetarist criteria of the European Central Bank.

306

307Our socio-economical-ecological proposal for Europe is based on five main principles:

- 308(1) the need to have full and qualified employment, against precariousness of employ-
309 ment,
- 310(2) a leading role for public financial intervention,
- 311(3) the need to overcome the predominant, environmentally harmful, economic model,
312 that overcomes both the overexploitation of human beings and of the world's natural
313 resources,
- 314(4) the need to keep the public sector in European countries and public services,
- 315(5) the urgency in guaranteeing an income and pension which is secure to live on and
316 which guarantees all people a life with dignity.

317

318By changing its internal and external policies towards the goals of a new model of develop-
319ment which is socially and ecologically sustainable, and peaceful, Europe can make a differ-
320ence.

321The Party of the European Left therefore is in favour of an integrated strategy for sustainabil-
322ity and solidarity. In our view this strategy should include economic, socio-cultural, ecological
323and institutional dimensions. Economic sustainability aims at the maintenance of the existing
324“capital stock” of society and its social wealth, the guarantee of economic efficiency, ecologic-
325ally and socially sound productivity growth and innovative capacity, at economic stability, the
326strengthening of regional economic circuits, an equitable trade and payments balance, and a
327new kind of full employment. Employment policy beyond labour market policy has to include
328guaranteed security for the whole of life, social policy goals such as the quality of work,
329gender equality, and health-conducive organisation of the working environment. Socio-cultur-
330al sustainability includes the eradication of poverty and social exclusion, the implementation
331of gender equality, an equitable distribution of wealth and incomes, the strengthening of fun-
332damental social rights and equal access to public goods, the provision of improved social se-
333curity, public welfare and public services as well as a socio-ecological change in consump-
334tion patterns. The orientation of the EU Treaty and of the Lisbon Strategy at “global competit-
335iveness” is in this light neither economically meaningful nor effective. Ecological sustainability
336aims at the protection of biodiversity, a drastic reduction in energy and material consumption,
337in the length of transport distances, in land use and environmental pollution by toxics sub-
338stances etc. Finally, the institutional dimension of sustainability means more participation
339rights and chances for the people, the strengthening of networks and a closer cooperation
340among the institutions.

341

342The integrated strategy can be put into practice by combining binding targets at EU level, ac-
343tion programs and measures, a common regulatory framework in all relevant policy areas
344such as scientific research or regional policies, interlinking by the EU and its member states.

345

346Obviously, such a profound policy change will not happen by just counting on the “good will”
347of the current ruling elites in the EU and its member states. It needs mobilisation from below
348– from trade unions, social movements and the left. That is why the Party of the European
349Left wants to initiate a broader debate about an alternative and about fostering movements

350and coalitions for change. We want to join such concrete thematic debates within the ESF,
351other social and democratic initiatives, with Trade Unions or within the ongoing work about a
352Charter of principles for another Europe.

353

354We propose a harmonization of the social and environmental standards at the highest exist-
355ing European level, to fight against any kind of dumping and thereby to defend the global
356economy. The harmonization of taxes, particularly for manufacturing, is unavoidable in facing
357the free circulation of capital and the consequences for wages and conditions in the field of
358production. We want coordinated European tax and financial policies, for a solid and socially
359just financing of the policy tasks of the member countries, with the aim of introducing new cri-
360teria for an economic- ecological and social sustainable development model. We propose to
361coordinate in the new budgetary policy more public investment in the social infrastructure
362and ecological re-conversion, as well as coordinated monetary and budgetary policies for the
363strengthening of the internal economy, and an ecologically sound revival of domestic demand
364– all this is possible against this background and can lead to meaningful full employment with
365high quality employment and social rights. If there is no European regulation then internal
366economic competition, unfettered market forces and the unequal development of social,
367wage, tax and ecological standards will on the other hand drive the downward trend still fur-
368ther.

369

370In order to achieve these aims we call for:

- 371(a) an active European industrial and research policy predominantly linked to a European
372 public sector able to achieve synergies with the private sector;
- 373(b) a reform of the current Economic and Monetary Union system by placing the
374 European Central Bank under democratic control and replacing the current growth
375 and stability pact: i.e. the role of the European Central Bank should be not only to
376 control inflation but also, in line with the political aim of employment for all, to increase
377 the level of employment and ecological sustainability, and therefore the ECB statutes
378 must recomposed to guarantee that.
- 379(c) to shape all these trends with great respect for the environment, not only in a direct
380 way but also in rationalising the need and use of energy sources; and in developing
381 research on renewable energies;
- 382(d) Guaranteeing social protection and dignified living conditions, that is to say, to defend
383 human rights for all who live and work in Europe and to promote solidarity as the
384 binding principle of society.
- 385(e) The EU budget should be increased to tackle future challenges of socio-economic
386 and ecological restructuring of the economic model, which needs in parallel a reform
387 of the EU budget, guaranteeing regional and social cohesion.

388

389The European Left wants to change the European taxation system from the current one
390(Value Added Taxation, VAT) based on the individual level of consumption, indirect, regress-
391ive, and on a national basis, to another one based on individual income, on a European level,
392progressive and with a redistribution effect. That is to say from the present one that reduces
393the taxation on the profits of capital and puts the main burden on the workers' salaries to a

394progressive one able to produce a redistribution of created wealth. We are for a taxation of
395financial returns and financial speculative movements (Tobin Tax).

396

397We need to consider building universal European social protection, which guarantees inalien-
398able and universal rights, as a different civilisation model.

399

400In face of the hegemonic pretensions of the great powers and the international financial insti-
401tutions, as well as the crisis of the unilateralism of the United States, the demand for a reas-
402sessment of the role and the responsibility of a reformed and democratised United Nations
403Organisation should be reaffirmed.

404

405This is one of the reasons why the European Left is opposing the current project of an Eco-
406nomic Partnership Agreement (EPA), foreseeing the development of commercial relations
407with Africa and the Mediterranean countries by the colonialist, unequal procedures and dir-
408ectives of the IMF and the World Bank. The Policy of European Neighbourhood (PEN) is fol-
409lowing the same logic. It is not able to establish co-development relations at the risk of dan-
410gerously aggravating the disparities, the growth inequalities. If we want to answer the chal-
411lenges of development, Europe has to implement a new model of cooperation free from ul-
412traliberal criteria. This reorientation is even more necessary because of the challenges im-
413posed by the EU enlargement.

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415

416**B. European Left against war**

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418Peace requires action and cooperation. Social initiatives and social forums, trade unions, left-
419wing parties and critics of globalisation are finding more and more common ground in their
420actions against war, violence, armament and militarisation. Those in Europe who say no to
421war could become the majority: this is an important insight, and starting point for the policies
422of the European Left.

423

424Support for Wars waged by the US, assisted by Member States of the European Union, for
425increasing armament and for the stationing of US troops in Europe is dwindling among the
426European population. Fewer and fewer people believe that more involvement from the US
427and NATO means more security. Quite the opposite: the so-called 'War on Terror' has thrown
428whole regions into a vicious cycle of violence and increased the danger of terrorist attacks.
429New wars will not be waged, as claimed, for human rights, democracy and disarmament, but
430over the routes for pipelines, over economic markets, for a new partitioning of the world
431along imperialist lines. There is a real danger that Europe will get more and more involved in
432such conflicts and wars.

433

434The strategy of solving conflicts by military means, put in place by the neo-conservative US
435administration after September 11th, has reached an impasse. It has failed on international
436level and is even losing support in the United States itself. Unilateralism has been pushed
437back, but has not been defeated yet. The real problems are the lack of a political alternative

438which can isolate the Bush administration, and the failure to start a political process to solve
439the world's conflicts, in order to give peace a chance. It is unacceptable that Europe is still
440unable to act on the international scene as a strong voice against war.

441

442Our alternative to war is rule of law and of another international economic and trade regula-
443tions. This is a way to overcome war as a tool to solve contradictions in the current capitalist
444model of dominion. There is a growing gap between the will of the people, and governmental
445policies and actions. Governments have proven to be unable to meet the expectations voiced
446by the extraordinary mobilisations of the peace movement on our continent as well as in the
447world. This situation could worsen.

448

449We call for the immediate end of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. We insist on the end of the
450foreign occupation of these countries and demand the immediate withdrawal of all foreign
451troops. The European Union member countries must make progress by carrying out the polit-
452ical obligation to give back to the Afghan people the right to decide on their own future on
453democratic grounds and to end the destruction of the society by civil wars. We strongly op-
454pose any military solution of the nuclear dispute with Iran. The Iran-conflict seems to become
455a new core of destabilization of peace and international stability in a world-wide scale: we
456resist to any attempt of the United States and the European Union member countries –
457ahead of all France and Great Britain - to get tied up with the Bush-administration's politics -
458to use this as a pretext for realizing their own plans for geopolitical restructuring. At the same
459time the European Left is concerned about the ongoing attempts by the Iran governing
460circles to oppress attempts of forces striving for further democratization of the Iranian society.
461The new developments in the direct neighbourhood – along the Turkish-Iraq-border charac-
462terized by the international law violating attempts of the Turkish government to intervene into
463the Iraq Kurdish autonomous zone for a military solution of the Kurdish question can not but
464increase the danger of a explosion of the whole region. The European Union and all its Mem-
465ber countries are called to take an independent from the US policies course for contributing
466to stabilization, peace and disarmament in the whole region. The support and promotion of
467an OSCE like permanent conference of peace, cooperation and security in the Middle East
468could be such a European contribution.

469The European Left commit ourselves to working for a preventative peace, and a mobilisation
470of the peace movement to this end.

471

472We resist the militarization of the foreign and security policy of the European Union and its
473Member States. We do not want Europe to act as a power of intervention or to build up milit-
474ary capabilities, which it is developing more and more. At the same we resist a continuation
475of such military policies carried out by its member countries. Europe does not need Rapid
476Reaction Forces, designed to carry out preventive war as set up by the European Security
477Strategy of 2003. Contrary to the proposed Lisbon EU-Treaty we insist on the reduction of
478military expenses and we oppose the European Arms Agency. Therefore we look for an al-
479ternative to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) excluding role of EU and
480European countries as an integrated arm of NATO. Especially now that the NATO is reas-
481sessing its strategic concept.

482

483We have to challenge the European industrial-military complex, producing military culture
484and defining industrial and development policies both on the European and on the national
485level. The European Left strictly stands for reconverting war industries. We continue to op-
486pose all existing military bases of the United States in Europe and plans for building up new
487ones. We resist any attempt at rearmament, as it is expressed by such examples as the US-
488base in Vicenza or of the US-Anti-Missiles bases in the Czech Republic and in Poland or,
489such bases of the United States in Bulgaria and Romania and other European countries – on
490a bilateral basis or even under the attempts of new constructions mixing US- and NATO
491structures.

492

493The European Left is willing to cooperate with all peace- and political forces who are putting
494the is-sue of disarmament and the striving for conversion at the core of the political agenda.
495It concerns particularly nuclear disarmament: We demand an end to any thinking in the de-
496velopment or use of nuclear weapons – even as means of nuclear deterrence or of political
497blackmailing. It is inadmissible that there are still hundreds of US atomic bombs in Europe!
498We see this task not limited to Europe: we support the call for nuclear weapons free zones in
499the Middle-East and the Mediterranean as in all other regions of the world. And it is true also
500for other weapons of mass destruction. The European Left supports the keeping of existing,
501and the conclusion of new, arms control treaties and their strict implementation. This includes
502atomic, biological and chemical weapons as well as conventional weapons. All states pos-
503sessing nuclear weapons must be compelled to disarm. An international accord on the aban-
504donment of the nuclear first strike, and of any potential use of nuclear weapons against coun-
505tries not possessing these weapons, is extremely necessary.

506

507The fight for peace remains a core element of any alternative to the civilisation model in-
508voked today by neo-liberal policies as a reaction the global challenges. Europe and the EU
509can and must play a different role for a world order based on the principal recognition of in-
510ternational law and the Charter of the United Nations, carrying out democratic reforms with
511respect to the evolution of the last 60 years. The EL stands for an international policy and a
512world order based on the supremacy of international law against the arbitrary law of the
513strongest; against military force which is the catastrophic result of five years of pre-emptive
514and permanent war led by the USA. In this connection there is the need to call into question
515the strategic relation with NATO and the need to overcome it. We want Europe to be a place
516of dialogue between the civilizations. This function should not be determined by a policy of
517rearmament or power, but by an active role in the world to promote processes of peace and
518total disarmament.

519

520The European Left declines the use of force for conflict solution. We advocate A CFSP based
521on a multi faceted non-military security concept. Equally necessary is an all-European secur-
522ity system on the base of the OSCE requiring a new relationship between the EU and the
523CIS, including the Russian Federation.

524The European Union has an special obligation for contributing to the peace of the whole
525continent. This must include active steps to overcome the consequences of the first wars in

526Europe since WW II in former Yugoslavia, where European countries had been involved. The
527current development around Kosovo is linked to the mistaken policies of the European Uni-
528on against former Yugoslavia. We reject any kind of unilateral negotiations on the future
529status of Kosovo.

530

531Generally, The European Left insists that “deadlocked” conflicts in Europe should be solved
532only by political means, grounded on international law. We reject ad-hoc changes of interna-
533tional law and the tendency to shape the international law to a common law type as it is prac-
534ticed by the US.

535Indeed, we want the European Union to be an active factor in a multilateral system of inter-
536national relations, which recognizes independence, self-determination and right of own socio-
537economic development of all countries and peoples in the world. This approach must be a
538basis for the EU’s relationship with countries in Latin America, in Africa, with China, India and
539other Asian countries. And of course it must be also the basis for future relations with Turkey,
540the countries of the Western Balkans and other countries in Europe not belonging to the EU.

541

542The Situation in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region is also of great importance for
543the European Left. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ongoing Israeli occupation of
544Palestinian territories turns this region into a permanent factor for destabilization and en-
545dangers peace world wide. A just solution of this conflict is an urgent need for the whole inter-
546national community. A real political turnaround must be based on the resumption of new ne-
547gotiations according to the UN-Resolutions. It must be based on solving the major problems:
548the Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, the fate of the refugees, the
549status of Jerusalem and the guaranteeing of the peaceful co-existence of Israel and an inde-
550pendent and economically viable Palestinian state.

551

552A comprehensive political solution to the Palestinian and Middle-East issues must involve all
553the regional players concerned, e.g. Lebanon and Syria. The European Left commits to sup-
554port all the efforts aiming at the unity of the Palestinian and Israeli left forces. Within this
555framework the need for reopening a dialogue strongly emerges on the Left, to define a com-
556mon point of view, a common strategy, a common engagement.

557For all too long, Europe has needed to overcome its inability to play an active role based on
558international law, giving a solid prospect of peace to this region. Therefore we as the
559European Left propose an international meeting which shall include the participation of the
560principal subjects of the Israeli and the Palestinian Left.

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570III. For a new social, democratic and ecological model

571

572A. A social Europe

573

574The Europe we want and which we are fighting for is a social Europe, a Europe with labour
575and rights. It is an alternative to the Europe of deregulation and reduced rights, of social
576dumping on foreign markets and horizontal conflict between workers and immigrants, East
577and West.

578

579The European Left Party is fighting for the eradication of unemployment and for new full em-
580ployment, for quality employment, for a Europe without precariousness. We are committing
581ourselves to a new European working standard aiming at a shorter working time for every-
582body, thus enabling women and men to better reconcile employment and personal life, and to
583a drastic reduction of the unemployment rate. They are imposing upon us a system of social
584relations completely subordinated to the market and deprived of rights, in the name of com-
585petitiveness and flexibility. In opposition to the Green paper of the European Commission,
586the European Left Party proposes legislation envisaging a convergence of equal rights for all,
587the full respect of trade-union rights, and collective bargaining.

588

589All over Europe there is a huge wage problem. The difference between the rich and the poor
590increases everywhere, although in varying degrees per country.

591

592The producers of wealth must be remunerated adequately, as a minimum in accordance with
593the growth of productivity.

594

595The wage question is not only an economic issue, but a strategic political topic for the Left.
596The enormous rise of productivity must be redistributed among the workers, in particular
597those whose wages have lost purchasing power.

598

599All over Europe, women are employed in tasks related to the care of people, the upbringing
600of children, etc. That allows governments to pass off their responsibility and to question the
601existing public services. The wages of women are lower than those of men for the same
602work; women are often under-employed and work part-time. The rate of unemployment is
603higher among them and at the same time the employment rate is much lower. Women bene-
604fit less than men in quantity and quality from the social protection systems: pensions and oth-
605er allowances of social security.

606

607We demand real equality of men and women concerning employment opportunities, promo-
608tions and wages. We demand employment laws, safety regulations in the workplace, real
609chances of instruction for all and measures enabling us to reconcile work, private and family
610life. With this in mind a new labour law should be passed, which significantly cuts weekly
611working hours and drastically limits overtime, so that the available work is shared between
612more people. Shorter working hours also better reflect modern gender roles, where men and
613women want to share work and domestic tasks, and should do so for their own benefit.

614

615The European Left Party puts at the top of its action the defence of the public services and
616the promotion of the public sector. Open debate must be started on the de-privatization of
617those public services which have already been privatized.

618

619

620B. An Ecological Europe for peace and global justice.

621

622Globalized capitalism intensifies the ecological crisis. Its economy is directed towards short-
623term transfers of stocks at the stock exchange. The trade in humans, and trafficking of wo-
624men, must be combated. It is in deep contradiction with the natural long-term cycles. Envir-
625onmental technologies are highly developed, but nowhere are the ecological re-organization
626of production and the ways of life approached in an energetic way. This is even more de-
627pressing as we have only some years to decide if it is possible to avoid a world climate dis-
628aster. Drastic changes to our way of life will be inevitable.

629To prevent the most severe impacts of climate change, action needs to be taken within the
630next ten years. This is even more valid for Europe. There will be huge investments in the
631European energy sector in the years to come that will set the course until the middle of the
632century.

633

634Human-induced climate change is already happening and a further increase of global tem-
635perature is already inevitable. Future generations will need to deal with and adjust to the im-
636pacts of anthropogenic climatic change. A major ecological issue is the chemical pollution of
637that the earth, which drastically affects the biodiversity. The impact of pesticides on human
638health has now been demonstrated. The European Union has imposed a socially and ecolo-
639gically non-sustainable agricultural model. Small farmers have been sacrificed in the name of
640profit of agriculture and food multi-nationals.

641

642It becomes more and more obvious that the catastrophic consequences of the capitalist mod-
643el of development cause growing threats to the environment. The new generations will have
644to deal with climatic changes resulting from direct human action in the biosphere. A model
645based on the obsessional and exclusive search for maximum profit at the lowest social and
646environmental costs in the shortest possible time can only destroy our planet. Before 2020,
647three billion women and men will have no access to water, an increasingly rare resource
648which many try to privatize.

649

650Europe must play a central role in the approval of post-Kyoto, exceeding the given goals.
651The approval of the new protocol needs a radically alternative model to the liberal one. It
652needs equality, starting with the same amount of emissions per capita. It needs cooperation
653and technology transfer, finding resources through a carbon tax. It needs a new role for the
654public sector starting with the property of the energy networks and with the promotion of sav-
655ing and of alternative sources. It needs the construction of an ecological economy and soci-
656ety.

657

658We need not only a policy for the reduction of carbon dioxide, not only a control of the current
659levels, but also an energy policy aiming at a radical change of energy consumption. This can
660only be carried out by using economic programming, by investment in renewable resources,
661and by a policy of economizing and reducing waste.

662

663Water, energy, health, education, transport and communications, all that we define as com-
664mon goods- rights consolidated by the struggles of the democratic and workers' movements,
665corner-stone of the European welfare state- must belong to the public domain and be defen-
666ded from privatization. We fully agree with the resolutions of the World Water Assembly for
667Elected Representatives and Citizens (WWACE), which took place last March in Brussels,
668and we entirely support its demands.

669

670The party of the European Left fights for a Europe capable of defending common goods (with
671priority to water and energy) from merchandisation and privatisation. One of the major stakes
672of the political action of the left, in order to change Europe, is to defend public services, to let
673them develop, to create the conditions for social and democratic control of the most import-
674ant sectors that are essential to life, and environmental protection.

675

676An economy of peace, with social and democratic rights, an economy that respects the envir-
677onment – these are the fundamental characteristics of our alternative strategy.

678

679

680**C. A Europe of rights and freedoms**

681

682For the Europe we want, we have to create a strategy that introduces a harmonization to-
683wards the top, a virtuous dynamic able to open a completely new perspective for the future of
684social development and cohabitation.

685

686We want to open a new era for fundamental rights.

687

688The European Left Party is fully engaged in the defense of civil and human rights, of the free-
689dom of opinion and disagreement, of political and trade union organisation for everybody and
690in all forms, against emergency laws which were passed in almost all countries in Europe
691after September 11th.

692

693The emergency laws have started a race for systems which can monitor people all over
694Europe. For years the governments of the EU member states have refused – despite the de-
695mands of the European Parliament - to adopt a framework agreement on data protection.
696They aim furthermore to collect and exchange personal information about every citizen. New
697technical possibilities are exchanged within Europe and with third party states, without con-
698sideration for data protection or for the consequences.

699

700On the contrary, we demand a European-wide system for the preservation of critical infra-
701structures, which are directed at the needs of the citizens, as in cases of natural disasters.

702

703The “war on terror” is used to justify the massive restriction of fundamental rights and
704freedoms. Cruel methods of domination are used with less and less reserve: Guantanamo,
705the return of torture or – concerning Europe – the case of the CIA flights are clear examples.

706

707We demand the abolition of all the new emergency laws that have been introduced after
708September 11 in European countries.

709

710We fight against the social segregation of the migrant population by proposing a program
711based on the recognition of equality as regards political and social rights.

712The European Union, currently one of the main recipients of the migratory flows, has still no
713common policy guaranteeing freedom and equal rights for the migrants. On the contrary, the
714common immigration policy of the governments is characterized by opening the internal bor-
715ders and taking more efforts for the reinforcement and shared control of the external borders.

716

717In intergovernmental provisions, all the decisions and agreements were directed towards
718such an objective. In fact, it is the exclusive function characterizing all the three guiding prin-
719ciples of the immigration policy of the European Union: the Schengen agreement and the
720convention on the application of this agreement (acquis of Schengen), the Dublin convention
721“to harmonise” the restrictions concerning the right of asylum and the common regulations
722regarding visas. Basically, that means the establishment of a list, increasingly extensive, of
723countries whose citizens are obliged to present visas when entering the European Union.
724Reinforcement of bodies such as FRONTEX or the support for measures such as the extern-
725alization of detention centres for migrants and minors to be repatriated, or the “subcontract-
726ing” of repression for closing the ways leading towards Europe, have all the same results.

727

728For this reason we campaign for the abolition of FRONTEX and the system of hunting down
729Asylum seekers and people in general which hides behind this agency. The EL demands the
730acceptance of the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and is against the
731ejection of refugees to third party states who do not recognise the international conventions
732relating to refugees and accept the deaths of refugees (for example, through abandonment in
733the desert or in the sea)

734

735In the same way we consider the right to health as a fundamental right for a Europe which
736wants to be democratic and advanced. The continuous dismantling of the public health sys-
737tem is, on the contrary, proof of a neoliberal policy which tends to guarantee the right to
738health only to those who have the means to pay for what should be guaranteed to everybody.
739To reach this, the European Left fights to obtain in all of Europe an equitable financing of the
740public health structures, access to basic medicine, and the right to physical and mental
741health.

742

743The right to work must be guaranteed through the abolition of all discrimination on the
744grounds of religion, sex, sexual orientation, opinion or country of origin.

745

746All people have the right to choose their profession freely. The reduction in working hours will
747be one of our objectives in all of Europe. We pursue the objective of full employment in indef-
748inite duration. We fight against any form of casualisation, as well as for a descent pension for
749everybody. Every worker must be protected against dismissal; any arbitrary dismissal must
750be punished.

751

752The right to collective bargaining, the right to strike and to free trade unions must be again
753guaranteed in Europe.

754

755The total casualisation of employment, in particular for the young generations, the recogni-
756tion of a so-called individual right allowing the development of one's own capacities for "get-
757ting rid of the laces of dependence as a social fate ", urge us to open a big debate among the
758left on the definition of an instrument which can shield the European citizens against the
759blackmail of second-rate, degrading or badly paid work. The continuous enlargement of the
760European Union has accelerated the spread of this phenomenon. In this sense, the basic in-
761come could be a just formula to guarantee a descent existence and protect a young person
762or a needy one from the blackmail of the market. There is no full citizenship if the family in
763which one is born defines the perimeter of the possible choices.

764

765The defence of the public services must be inscribed in the heart of our concept of a new
766Europe.

767

768The public services, in spite of the differences of organization in the European countries,
769must not be subject to the rules of competition and search of profit. On the contrary, they
770have to satisfy fundamental needs. The public services have to be managed democratically
771and publicly. This concerns health, housing, transport, modern communications, and educa-
772tion. The merchandisation and impoverishment of knowledge, instruction and research has to
773stop. Instruction must be again considered as a fundamental right for all and accompany the
774cultural development of everybody. It is necessary to guarantee the complete independence
775of training and research for students, teachers and researchers. They have to escape the lo-
776gic of short-term profit. Research has to receive sufficient public resources. This Europe has
777to assure the necessary public financing for primary and secondary education as well as uni-
778versity training. Research is at the heart of the civil and economic development of all
779European countries, it is the future of the new generations.

780

781It is necessary to adopt a new conception of economic development, especially where the
782exploitation of natural resources is concerned. An economic model which respects the envir-
783onment and is centred on the development of the human capacities is needed. In this regard,
784important the role Europe could play in the field of energy is very important, leading the world
785transition from the fossil to the renewable sources.

786

787Natural resources must be considered as a common good of humanity and not be subjected
788to intellectual property rights and patents. They have to stay outside the field of privatisation
789and the market; and must be managed by public policies with citizens' participation.

790

791Water is a common good. Access to drinkable water is a fundamental right for everyone. Wa-
792ter access must be guaranteed by public structures.

793

794The soil must also be protected against the multinationals. It is necessary to introduce gener-
795al rules of use discouraging their practices, because we are against polluting agricultural sys-
796tems. The production of GMOs must be forbidden. At the same time we demand that the EU
797defends the moratoria in the other countries of the world.

798

799Our Europe has to respect and guarantee in all domains the principle of equality of the cit-
800izens by respecting their differences and variety. For that reason we recognize as fundament-
801al value the right to gender equality in partnership and free sexual orientation. This is not only
802to be recognized as an individual right in the private sphere, but also as a choice, guaranteed
803by the state.

804

805All public institutions have to guarantee the freedom of women and act against all forms of
806patriarchy. Every woman in every country must be able to decide freely on her body, exercise
807the right to abortion, to contraception, to chosen maternity and to the techniques of artificial
808reproduction.

809

810A democratic and open Europe is a Europe that declares the secularism of its public institu-
811tions, guarantees the dignity and the freedom of conscience of all citizens, the gender parity
812in the public institutions of every State, freedom of individual and collective religious prac-
813tices, freedom to get organized and to express political beliefs freely. The EL recognizes the
814right to self-determination, and people's right to decide in democratic conditions, including
815the respect and equal conditions of all the citizens.

816

817Our theses are outlining the main characteristics for another Europe. They recognize a differ-
818ent civilization. We are fighting for peace, democracy, social and political rights that are not
819separate parameters but components of an alternative development in its totality: of sustain-
820able development.

821

822An economy of peace, of social and democratic rights, of respect for the environment – these
823are the fundamental characteristics of our alternative strategy.

824

825A deep democratic reconstruction of the European institutions is an indispensable compon-
826ent of our whole strategy. In this field the Party of the European Left, and our large social and
827political alliance, take the historical responsibility to change the political balance and the polit-
828ical orientations in Europe.