

EL PROGRAMATIC PLATFORM
*Escaping from austerity,
rebuilding Europe*



CHANGE EUROPE
FOR A EUROPE OF WORK



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European**LEFT**



EL Programmatic Platform

Escaping from austerity, rebuilding Europe

It is a certainty that Europe is going through a deep crisis. The very great power left in the hands of financiers, the consequences of austerity policies and the setbacks to democracy endanger the very idea of a European "union".

Anger is high among the European peoples, and it is legitimate.

The European treaties as they exist, based on the principles of competitiveness, competition, deregulation and liberalization, the role of the European Central Bank and the euro, at the exclusive service of the financial markets and the power of big capital do not allow social progress in Europe.

The financial crisis was the pretext for going further into ultraliberalism, for imposing barbaric austerity plans, social and democratic regressions. In country after country, we see the "Troika" landing, these experts of the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission. With the complicity of our governments, they lower our wages and pensions, slash public services, privatize and plunder everything. The result is rocketing unemployment and precariousness; life is becoming harder.

Today, the proposed transatlantic market with the United States and Canada, built by and for multinational companies is a new threat against work, quality standards, culture and democracy on our continent.

We are more and more numerous to feel the need to rebuild Europe. Letting Europe sink into the path of social and democratic regression would be criminal. But letting Europe break up to return to the war of nations and peoples, to fall back into nationalism and xenophobia would not be the solution either. We propose another way: that of a refoundation of Europe on a new basis. Our goal is to open up hope, a new ambition of cooperation and solidarity at a European level in the service of our peoples and the peoples of the world.

The programmatic platform presented today by the Party of the European Left seeks to trace the outline of a Europe refounded on a democratic, solidarity-based, social, ecological and peaceful basis. It is the result of a joint elaboration. We propose the big axes of transformation and the concrete steps to immediately improve the lives of Europeans.

Resisting austerity and putting social development at the centre of European policies, regaining power over finance and building democracy, increasing the rights of everyone: it is around these areas that we propose to all workers in Europe, to all citizens on the left, to trade unionists and social movements in Europe that struggle against austerity and capitalism, for democracy and peace, to unite our forces.

This platform is a starting point. We want to enrich it with meetings with the forces that, like us, are looking for a positive way out of the crisis. These forces are numerous, as was demonstrated by the signatures by more than 100 organizations in an "Altersummit" in Athens in June 2013, of a "Manifesto of the peoples", including many proposals similar to those we propose today. In our countries, platforms, programmes, the demands of associations, unions, networks and political activists of the left and ecologists prove it as well.

The European elections in May 2014 will be a crucial time for the future of the peoples. It is this hope, that of a new Europe that we will be the bearer of, against both the defenders of liberal Europe and the extreme right that rejects the idea of solidarity between peoples.

Pierre Laurent – EL President

Note

We have here two different kinds of material, documents, two texts of the Programmatic Platform:

One is a brief and concise proposal approved as constituting the major axes in successive several meetings, at all levels. It is, therefore, this material - as a platform – that is to be considered and approved in Congress at this particular time in the calendar. These bases allow the campaign to start and their content to be diffused.

A second set of materials brings together a wide range of contributions to the further development of specific points concerning the various aspects of the programme.

All these points have been proposed by Party members, working groups, or networks of women and trade unionists.

Not all points of this document are applicable at the European level, or in all countries.

They do not require, therefore, unanimous agreement, taking into account the diversity of national situations.

This is a contribution that remains open for further development in the coming days after the Congress, at both European and national level.

BASIC AXES

- 1- Resist Austerity - For a new development model
- 2- Give power to the people – For a citizens’ revolution
- 3- For a social Europe, for a Europe of rights
- 4- For fair trade with the world. Refuse the big transatlantic market
- 5- For a Europe of peace.

Basic document of Axes

EL Platform

Abstract of Programme

5 Axes

1. - Resist austerity - For a new model of development

a) The debt will not be paid.

Citizens’ Audit of public debt

Cancellation of illegitimate debt - Restructuring

b) Stop austerity plans in order to prevent human and humanitarian catastrophe.

c) Relaunch economic activity to meet social needs while respecting the environment and fight against precariousness and unemployment, especially among young people and women.

d) The budgets must be turned towards solidarity, aid to individuals and countries in difficulty. They should aim to reduce social, regional and gender inequalities.

e) Situate environmental issues and the growth model in an economy based on an ecological framework. Be active against global warming.

f) Ensure food sovereignty, reform the Common Agricultural Policy.

2. - Give power to the people - For a citizens’ revolution

A socially and environmentally sustainable, democratic and solidarity-based Europe cannot be built on the existing European Union Treaties. We need to rebuild Europe to win power for the people, workers and citizens.

a) Regain power over finance

b) Respect popular sovereignty

c) Facilitate citizens’ involvement in EU decision- making

d) Workers’ rights, trade union freedoms

e) Ensure the independence of European countries towards the USA and NATO, refusal of the Swift programme.

3 - For a social Europe, for a Europe of rights

Our goal is to guarantee the fundamental human rights of all Europeans, men and women, by universal access to these rights, through public services and social security systems, managed by the public. The fundamental rights of citizens are not dependent on the markets; they should not be left in the hands of private companies and financial markets. Their goal is human emancipation and not profits. Also, we think they should be at the heart of public investments by EU funds, state budgets, local authorities, contributions systems.

a) Right to work, wages

b) Right to health care and health protection

c) Universal right to public education

d) Ensure access to common goods

e) Right to social services, and care for disabled people

f) Right to pensions

g) Rights and freedoms

h) LGBT rights

i) Women's rights

j) Migrants' rights

k) Right to culture.

l) Rights of disabled people

4. - For fair trade with the world. Refuse the big transatlantic market

a) Refuse the big transatlantic market.

Deregulation of society and loss of progress of European civilization.

We want to unite all sectors and citizens threatened by the Treaty, in agriculture, industry, audiovisual broadcasting, in the world of work in general, the environment, culture.

We demand a public campaign of information and a referendum about the transatlantic market in every country where it is possible. We want to immediately stop the negotiations on the treaty

b) We will put means of inquiry and struggle in place against the spy networks. This is in order to preserve the independence of European states against the USA and NATO.

c) The EL demands the suspension of the Israel/EU Association Agreement as long as Israel violates international human rights.

d) The EL demands Mediterranean cooperation and agreements for the benefit of ordinary people.

The Union for the Mediterranean, whose declared aim is to promote peace, stability and prosperity, has contributed to destabilizing the region.

e) Renegotiate the free trade agreements with Latin America and the Caribbean on bases that serve mutual interests and benefit the people.

5) For a Europe of peace

We defend peace and political dialogue against violence and military coercion. The EL is the choice of peace between persons but also between peoples and societies. We defend internationalism, contrary to imperialism, which creates divisions between countries and peoples in an artificial way; we want to unite against the neoliberal and capitalist crisis which victimizes a great number of people, workers and society.

- a) The values of peace*
- b) On the military treaties and their consequences for the EU*
- c) On armament policy*
- d) Act on the on-going conflicts, in order to pursue peace in the world*



Extended version of the Document.

Text of proposals received .-

Proposals, points, and arguments to continue building an electoral programme on a European level.

Ideas and examples of various proposals and pluralistic contributions to help formulate our election programmes at national level.

1. - Resist austerity - For a new model of development

a) The debt will not be paid.

- Citizens' Audit of public debts
- Cancellation of illegitimate debt - Restructuring

b) Stop austerity plans to prevent human and humanitarian catastrophe.

c) Relaunch economic activity to meet social needs while respecting the environment and fight against precariousness and unemployment, especially among young people and women.

- We reject the Competitiveness Pact
- We propose the creation of a European public bank of social and solidarity-based development. In contrast to the European Stability Fund, it would distribute funding for projects on the basis of social and environmental criteria. Funded from the ECB, a share of the EU budget and the taxation of financial transactions and revenues, it would free public investment from the financial markets and would in this respect disarm speculators.
- Aim at the public and democratic control of the strategic sectors of the economy in Europe.
- Relaunch and change industrial production in Europe for social and environmental reasons. It is necessary to produce as close as possible to the place of consumption in Europe.
- Produce better and in cooperation rather than by making economic war. We propose a critical evaluation of the way we produce today and to redefine our production targets. Taking into account the social usefulness of production, its environmental impact, and the way the decisions are taken within the enterprises.
- We propose European industrial plans for strategic industries and a European recovery plan.
- Relocate industrial production in Europe through the institution of European protection and social and environmental norms, against the pressure of capital and low-cost production on globalized markets.

With for example:

Concerted national taxes on the re-importation into Europe of relocated production. A "mileage" tax in order to decrease the preventable transport of goods.

d) Budgets must be turned towards solidarity, aid to individuals and countries in difficulty. They should aim to reduce social, regional and gender inequalities.

- We reject budgetary cuts in aid to poor people (PEAD).
- We are fighting for a fair redistribution of wealth, a fair tax system in the member states and in Europe.
- We want the rich and the revenues of capital to contribute more.
- We propose a European tax on large fortunes in order to finance a European economic recovery plan.
- Taxation of financial transactions

- To fight against fiscal dumping, we are in favor of harmonisation of corporate taxation in Europe.
- We are in favor of banning the provision of public subsidies to companies that lay off while making profits.
- We propose to condition and adjust the allocation of public aid to companies, based on the creation of decent jobs and on social and environmental criteria.

e) Situate environmental issues and the growth model in an economy based on an ecological framework. Be active against global warming.

To mitigate climate change, we must save energy, switch mainly to renewable energy supply, provide for an effective carbon tax and binding international agreements. Through ecological restructuring of the economy, reducing the arms race and limiting capitalist profit-making, which emphasizes unilaterally the quantitative growth, we can protect the natural environment in a manner that respects both employment and social justice.

f) Ensure food sovereignty, reform the Common Agricultural Policy.

Europe must guarantee the sovereignty and food security of its people and enable farmers to live with dignity from their work. Agricultural Europe must initiate a development model that respects people and territories. We must undertake an ecological transition in agriculture.

- Establish an international protection clause when the lands, water (fishing) of a country are threatened by speculation and diversion of food production.
- Develop tools to regulate agricultural markets, buffer stocks and measures against speculation. A first step could be the creation of an international convention on the non-speciation of food products (a campaign where the NGOs have already put the banks on the back foot)
- Relegitimize taxes on imports and exports which destabilize local markets, in order to finance the relocalisation of production.
- Stop supporting the production and imports of biofuels, which threaten food production and destroy forest resources
- Implement the community preference and the suspension of bilateral free-trade agreements negotiated by the European Union (Mercosur).
- The affirmation of food sovereignty by the constitution of European security stocks.
- The introduction of economic tools regulating margins and practices of the agrifood giants and the big retailers.
- Faced with the climate risk, we propose that Europe establishes a tool of protection of living activities such as land, sea and forest (Mutual Insurance Calamities' Scheme)

2. - Give power to the people - for a citizen's revolution

A socially and environmentally sustainable, democratic and solidary Europe cannot be built on the existing European Union Treaties. We need the rebuild Europe to gain the power to the people, workers and citizens

a) Regain power over finance:

-Democratic control of the ECB and re-orientation of bank credit. The ECB should use its power of monetary creation to fund projects that create decent jobs (in industry, research, new modes of production) and public services at national and European level.

-The European Central Bank will be allowed to directly lend money to estates at low (or null) rate without any political or economic conditionality.

If the European Central Bank lends money to states directly, then speculation against public debt will stop immediately.

- In case recapitalization of banks is necessary, (it must be democratically controlled) these banks must be placed under democratic control through social ownership. This can lead to public banks subject to supervision by the state.

- Block capital movements between the EU and tax havens outside of the Union.

- Eradicate tax havens within the EU itself.

-We do not accept the neo-liberal criteria of the Economic and Monetary Union and demand that employment, social development and democracy should be given the priority.

-Public control of banks, creation of a public banking pole, separation of commercial and investment banks

-Fight against tax evasion

- End of banking secrecy, which protects big capital, and tax avoidance

- Promote the development of mutual funds and non-profit cooperatives

b) Respect popular sovereignty:

-We demand the abolition of the TSCG and the «6 pack» and all similar measures.

-We will emancipate ourselves from Lisbon Treaty which leads to austerity and takes sovereignty away from the people. The Lisbon Treaty contains all previous treaties and concentrates in itself all the dead ends of contemporary capitalism. It demands free and fair competition at the expense of social rights won by the democratic workers' struggles of the last century.

It promotes free trade at the expense of the environment and social justice. It maintains the authoritarian drift of the European Union by concentrating power in the hands of unelected institutions. It is necessary to overcome the Treaty of Lisbon so as to deal with the social emergency, fight the ecological disaster, solve the democratic crisis and rebuild another Europe.

- Authority must reside with elected assemblies on the national and European levels.

- Budgetary power must be given to the national parliaments. They should also be able to control and participate in EU decision-making.

-Strengthen the powers of the European Parliament and national parliaments against the European Commission. We question the monopoly of legislative initiative granted today to Brussels.

- The European institutions are subject to opaque and antidemocratic lobbies.

Beyond an obligatory register, we will forbid all the lobbies and give their power back to the elected representatives.

- For a better representation of the European Parliament we want to generalize the proportional election system, on national lists, in countries where this is not the case.

- Gender parity should be a principle enshrined in the Treaties

c) Facilitate citizens' involvement in EU decision-making:

-We want to create real power of citizens' involvement. This could start with a simplification of the procedure of the European Citizens' Initiative which is today

littered with obstacles, especially treaties which forbid it to serve human progress, and by real consideration of proposals from NGOs. This implies a questioning of the place reserved today for lobbying.

-We propose the organization of European public debates leading to the consultation of the people on major issues affecting them, with a referendum in as many countries as possible (with a referendum wherever the fundamental laws allow that). We ask that this proposal be applied immediately on the proposed transatlantic market.

d) Workers' rights, trade union freedoms

- We want to give new powers to workers enabling them to act on the direction and organization of their work, to organize themselves within companies and at European Works Councils level, including European posted workers, who are often used by employers as instruments of dumping. For social control of the means of production.
- Encouragement of women's participation and election of women in trade union bodies.
- Workers and their representatives in the management bodies of companies must have veto rights on speculative projects, on restructuring or relocation. In case the project fails, the right to a buyout by a co-operative or other self-managing means is crucial.
- We want tools allowing workers to fight against precariousness in their company. Rights of users must be enlarged, as well as access to the right to strike by private or public workers, including for political purposes.
- We stand for the restoration of collective agreements.
- We want to restore the framework for negotiation with trade unions and fight against the anti-union repression

e) Ensure the independence of European countries towards the USA and NATO, refusal of the Swift program, Prism, etc.

3 - For a social Europe, for a Europe of rights

Our goal is to guarantee fundamental human rights of all Europeans, men and women, by universal access to these rights, through public services and social security systems, managed by the public and/or in cooperation with associations and non-profit organizations. The fundamental rights of citizens are not dependent on the markets; they should not be left in the hands of private companies and financial markets.

-Their goal is human emancipation and not profits. Also, we think they should be at the heart of public investments by EU funds, state budgets, local authorities, contributions systems, etc.

a) Right to work, salaries:

- Enough of competition between workers, which forces down wages and undermines rights! We want wage increases all over Europe, equality of wages between men and women and the creation of a European minimum wage enforced by law or through collective-agreements, to be introduced progressively, adapted to the cost of living in the different countries.

- We want to increase work security and educational training as fundamental principles of the right to work and of collective agreements in the countries of Europe. A leveling upwards of labour legislation could prevent social dumping.
- We are in favor of a reduction of work time without decrease in wages, progressively and taking into account the realities of the different countries, heading towards the 35 h week. This is also a means of combating unemployment.

b) The right to healthcare and health protection:

- Fight against the growing inequalities in health issues and against exclusion and the imposition of individual forms of payment of services and treatments by ensuring universal access to health care.
- Fairness, integrity and the public character of national health systems. Re-appropriation of the management and the objectives of health services. Public resources should be destined for public health.
- Ensuring sexual and reproductive rights, such as the right to free contraception, free - not penalized - abortion and free child-bearing, through the public health system.
- We want to develop a new culture of health, on a human scale, in favour of prevention and health promotion and against the interests of the big bio-pharma-medical industry. Only public intervention can guarantee medical research that is independent of markets and the interests of firms.
- We aim for a public health policy, for the development of all the actions in the social determinants of health: work and conditions of work, housing for all, universal education, clean environment, sufficient and proper food, sufficient pensions and social rights.
- Block privatization and reestablish public health services freed from speculation and the markets.

c) Universal right to public education

- A free, secular school, completely financed by the state, which welcomes all children and which gives the citizens of tomorrow the means of mastering their future and participating in the collective decisions concerning their company, their country and the world.
- The development of inclusive measures in public schools to fight inequalities throughout Europe.
- The development of national public services of education, higher education and research so as to allow anyone to accede to long studies, free of charge, and to succeed in them.
- Education facing the challenge of new knowledge in a spirit of cooperation and of service to the community.
- To liberate education, higher education and research from financial pressure and the short-term needs of companies so that educational systems contribute to the free development of knowledge in the service of emancipation and progress.
- Compulsory schooling with the same duration in the whole European Union, which is necessary to raise the level of knowledge, culture, diplomas and qualifications for all young people, for the whole population.
- An education which is not limited to compulsory schooling and the training period, but which provides the possibility of continuing education for personal growth and for autonomy of thinking.
- Working conditions for teachers and school staff which make possible a positive atmosphere and, consequently, the quality of teaching.

- To ensure secularism, no public funds should finance private schools, private early childhood facilities or cultural associations.
- The public university must have sufficient public budgets to enable any qualified and willing person access to higher level training. Serving the community and society and not the needs of companies and capitalist markets. It should ensure human and humanitarian training alongside technical training, and not see students as instruments of "human resources" at the service of the markets.
- The purpose of education must be human emancipation.
- Students' income must be guaranteed.
- A true co-education based on non-sexist or male-centered values, challenging gender stereotypes.
- Elimination of early school dropout. Special measures against school dropout among girls related to premature and/or forced marriages.

d) Ensure access to common goods

Water and energy must be considered as common goods of humanity. Indeed, they are crucial to life. Nobody must be deprived of them.

- Right to water and energy, by publicly-run systems or public services.
- Free of cost first brackets and progress billings to limit waste.

e) The right to social services, and care for disabled people.

- Provision of structural funds to rescue people at risk of social exclusion.
- Priority to integration or social reintegration, including in the world of work, whenever this is possible.
- Right to public transport.
- Right to communication, to culture.
- Right to insurance/unemployment benefits.
- Right to professional training.

f) Right to pensions

- No increase in the retirement age.
- We demand adequate pension provision and other social protection for all. Low pensions must be increased.
- We are in favour of adequate social public pension systems and the phasing out of private pension funds.

g) Rights and Freedoms

- Every citizen must be able to exercise their civil and democratic rights regardless of their origin, ethnicity, social status, gender, ideology. We defend individual freedoms. We will not tolerate any form of racism.
- Secularism: social secularism as a principle and opposition to any religious discrimination. No religion should affect gender equality.
- Protection of computer and online freedoms: rejection of ACTA
- Protect citizens against the illegal spying of the USA

h) LGBT

To be developed. Working group of LGBT and proposal of ILGA

i) Women's rights

- Demand all social, economic and labour rights, as well as sexual and reproductive rights.
- Equal pay for women and men
- Elimination of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, sexual exploitation and forced prostitution. Endorsement of supporting social structures.
- Provide directives and policy measures aiming at real actual sharing of domestic and family responsibilities.
- Provide consultative status with the European institutions for women's and feminist organizations.
- Right to abortion and free contraception - not penalized and free, included in public health care.
- A secular Europe, where equality between women and men is not related to religion.
- Work towards gender parity in the institutions of the European Union

j) Migrants' Rights

- Abolition of the inhuman and ineffective Frontex program. Europe shall not be a fortress.
- Defense of the rights of migrant women, who are in a situation of extreme vulnerability.
- Struggle for legislation and educational measures to create awareness against the business of trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls.

k) Right to culture

- Culture shall not be a product of enterprises, pure entertainment without discernment.
- Access to culture has to be a universal right. For this, public investment and thus sufficient budgets are needed.
- Defence of European cultural diversity.
- Equal access for men and women to available time for cultural activities and leisure, which supposes equal gender distribution of housework and care work.
- Promotion of popular education, a real factor of emancipation of workers.
- Promotion of cultural products that challenge gender stereotypes. Defense of women against the commercialization of the female body.

l) Rights of disabled people

- Achieving accessibility of buildings
- Educational accompaniment.
- Professional integration.
- Replacement income equal to the minimum wage for people recognized unable to work
- Disabled people are disabled only because of a particular organization of society. Society must adapt and take into account the specificity of this part of the population.

4) For fair trade with the world. Refuse the big transatlantic market

a) Refuse the big transatlantic market. The big transatlantic market threatens social rights, small enterprises, product quality and European identity itself. Deregulation of society and loss

of progress of European civilization. More generally, the EU agreements with other countries of the world threaten the rights of all.

- We want to unite all sectors and citizens threatened by the Treaty, in agriculture, industry, audiovisual broadcasting, in the world of work in general, the environment, culture.
- We demand a public campaign of information and a referendum about the transatlantic market in every country where it is possible.
- We will immediately stop the negotiations on the treaty. Especially since the USA have once again demonstrated their vision of “free and unfettered competition” and “partnership” while spying on states and European leaders.

b) We will put in place means of inquiry and struggle against the spy networks.

- So, in order to preserve the independence of European states against the USA and NATO, we will refuse and put an end to the Swift, Prism etc. programmes.
- Envisage means to apply sanctions against countries which use these practices in Europe.

c) The EL demands the suspension of the Israel/EU Association Agreement as long as Israel violates international human rights.

d) Renegotiate the free trade agreements with Latin America and the Caribbean on bases that serve mutual interests and benefit the people

e) In the Mediterranean: reconsideration of Euromed.

5) For a Europe of peace.

We defend peace and political dialogue against violence and military coercion. The EL is the choice of peace between persons but also between peoples and societies. We defend internationalism, contrary to imperialism, which creates divisions between countries and peoples in an artificial way; we want to unite against the neoliberal and capitalist crisis which victimizes a great number of persons, workers and the society.

a) The values of peace

- Defend the culture of equality, justice and solidarity. Introduce education for peace as a specific subject. The EL will organize events in different European countries in 2014 on the 100th anniversary of the First World War.
- Reform of the UN, transforming it into a democratic organ which guarantees world peace.
- The introduction of an International Tribunal for climate justice
- An ecological crime is a serious infringement to that common good which is the environment. The severity of such a crime is appreciated in the light of the endangering of the ecosystem and its consequences on human rights, and the proven responsibility of criminals. These crimes are crimes against humanity. They shall be punished.
- Support of participation in international organs of defense of peace, such as the WPC (World Peace council) and women's organizations and grass roots women's movements. Take preventive measures (including lessons and instructions to soldiers and officers) on violence against women, rape and trafficking in military conflicts. Judicial punishment for those who commit such crimes, according to international law.

b) On the military treaties and their consequences on the EU

- Review military, commercial and strategic treaties, in particular with the USA.
- Immediate exit of the EU and member states from NATO. Dismantling of NATO bases in Europe. Dissolution of NATO. Europe must not be militarized and connect with NATO through crisis management and rapid reaction forces.
- The EU will not participate in "preventive" wars, nor in “humanitarian” interventions without a UN resolution.
- The status of non-aligned countries must be respected.

c) On armament policy

- Act in favour of a reduction of armament expenses in all EU countries and in the whole world.
- Elaboration of a code of conduct connected to the selling of arms.
- Multilateral destruction of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, banning of explosive mines and chemical weapons.
- Promoting nuclear-free zones.

d) Act on the on-going conflicts, in order to pursue peace in the world

- The EU has to commit to the unification of Cyprus, demanding that Turkey respect international rights.
- The EU has to act for the recognition of the Kurdish people in Turkey and for the end of repression. For us this is a condition for an eventual entry of Turkey into the EU.
- Palestine: The EU has to recognize Palestine and work for the sovereign rights of the Palestinian people, revising its agreements with Israel. We are in favor of a free Palestinian state. We condemn the Israeli colonization of Palestinian territory and advocate a return to the borders of 1967. We demand the destruction of drones.
- The right to self-determination of the Sahraouian people has to be an objective for the EU. We want to nullify the favourable treaties between Morocco and the EU. The EU has to act for decolonization all around the world where people still suffer from this situation.
- Syria - Afghanistan ...
- The EL collaborates with the Platform for Peace in Colombia and will undertake an effort to explain that this peace is fundamental for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Abandon the Common Position on Cuba. Against the blockade.
- Promote relations between the EU and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas.

Latin America Working Group

The EU policy towards the countries of Latin America is the extension of those implemented against the peoples of Europe, based on free and unfettered competition in the name of competitiveness. The EU proposes to countries in Latin America "free trade agreements" or "association agreements" in search of new markets, sources of energy and cheap labour. In the end, it is always a relation of domination that is offered to the peoples of this region.

The ELP proposes a new relationship, based on cooperation and complementarity between the peoples of the EU and America, a relationship that respects the choice of development strategies of countries governed by progressive forces. The ELP rejects bilateral investment treaties that punish countries which dispute the stranglehold of the transnationals over the wealth and economies of Latin America. The EU has much to offer to the peoples of Latin America with a real political cooperation which develops public services and provides transfers of technology.

Political cooperation means working together for dialogue and action in favour of a new international order with a reformed and democratic UN, demilitarization of international relations and the creation of mechanisms for dialogue and conflict prevention.

Human development, climate change, the promotion of peace and disarmament are also examples of terrains for political cooperation.

Trade relations must take into account the asymmetries between the two regions and should be designed as part of development agreements.

The EU should make clear its support for those fighting today in Colombia for a just and democratic peace. The "common position" adopted by the EU in 1996, which conditioned all cooperation with Cuba should be cancelled. Cuba is the only country in the world subjected by the EU to such treatment, which in fact reinforces the blockade, an anachronistic measure to which the island has been subjected for half a century.