



SYNASPISMOS

COALITION OF THE LEFT OF MOVEMENTS AND ECOLOGY

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Athens Declaration

YES, WE CAN CHANGE EUROPE

1st Congress of the European Left

A very successful 1st Congress of the European Left Party was hosted by SYNASPISMOS on 29 – 30 October 2005 at the "Peace and Friendship" Stadium (Melina Merkouri Hall) of Piraeus. One day earlier, a Women's Assembly of the EL took place in the same venue.

The EL consists of 17 member parties and 9 observer parties that participated in the Congress. Also, a big number of parties, social organisations, movements and personalities participated from 45 countries from all over the world. In addition, several parties and personalities sent messages.

The Congress elected a new executive board and re-elected F. Bertinotti as President of the EL.

It approved the Theses, with certain amendments, as a political document and the "Athens Declaration" as a call for immediate action.

It also approved a number of resolutions: on Iraq, Palestine, Migrants' rights, Vietnam, human rights in the Philippines.



test that will be telling in the future. In Germany we saw the birth of the Linkspartei that was very successful in the elections. We saw the birth of a united, national left-wing movement, which is open to Europe and belongs to the European left, that is positioned left of the social democracy, in a country which is the home of the largest social democracy in the world. What these two events represent is something of extreme importance: the end of the reformist monopoly over the European left..."

"The European Party of the Left cannot expect to live simply as the critical expression of social democracy. It can and it must intervene in this political reality, but it can also do so only if it has its own autonomous political project, based on a political culture critical towards the present capitalism, its own autonomous programme, its own autonomous relation with society and the movements. In short the European Party of the Left will become a main actor on the European scene only if it is able to develop fully the promises on which it was built... The objective of establishing a new culture for the transformation of society and with it an organized force able to become the lever of this transformation culture, emerges very strongly in the form of a historical need to create a left-wing way out from the labour movement crisis after the 20th Century defeat..."

"...The failure of the European constitution based on treaties and intergovernmental relations must prompt us to reopen a bottom-up constitutional process turning the European Parliament into the prime forum in which to open this debate, to re-open this debate. However, our contribution must be to combine the political action in parliament with the fundamental action in society... This is the backdrop against which we must be able to bring about, first of all, the growth of a new campaign against war, against terrorism, for peace, that will promote the withdrawal from Iraq of all troops of all European countries. This will help us mark the construction of the first pillar of a Europe of peace, a Europe open to the Mediterranean and through the Mediterranean to the Third World..."

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EURO - MIDDLE EAST FORUM

The "New European Left Forum" (NELF) and the GUE/NGL Group in the European Parliament co-organize a conference in Athens, on 2-3 December 2005 entitled:

EURO-MIDDLE EAST FORUM of Left and Progressive forces

CHANGING THE MIDDLE EAST: CHALLENGES AND TASKS
Promoting peace, independence and democracy

The left, progressive and peace forces will discuss in order to examine and present their own alternative

proposals for the Middle-East, based on peace, democracy, co-development and ecological protection.

The priority tasks are the establishment of a viable independent Palestinian state on the basis of the UN resolutions, alongside Israel and the restoration of independence of a democratic and peaceful Iraq.

Democracy in the entire region is incompatible with occupation and other kinds of foreign domination. Lasting peace also demands the establishment of a zone, free from nuclear and other weapons of mass

destruction in the Middle East.

Beside the members and observer parties of the NELF and the GUE/NGL group invitees include: the European Left party, Nordic Green Left Alliance and the European Network of Democratic Young Left (ENDYL).

A wide range of forces from the Middle East will also participate, especially from Israel and Palestine.

Experts and movements have also been invited from Europe, Middle East, the USA and Russia.

...from the front page

YES, WE CAN CHANGE EUROPE

1st Congress of the European Left

"...During the past year our members and our influence on the European political scene have increased. We have been able to take advantage from our relations with our comrades at the parliamentary group GUE/NGL at the European Parliament, and to develop the largest ever institutional action against the neoliberal policies proposed by the European institutions. We have established new relations and new alliances. This is why, by keeping going and strengthening this way, the party "European Left" can aspire to become a main actor of the social and political struggle in Europe. It's really true what the slogan of our Athens congress says: Yes, we can change Europe!"

Alecos Alavanos

In his opening speech, SYN President Alecos Alavanos, stressed the following:

"The Party of the European Left does not have a long history behind it. Just one and a half year. But it has already made history with its forces' groundbreaking interventions in the referendum on the European Constitution, in national elections and in movements..."

The Left reappears dynamically on the stage and has created a new political subject, the Party of the European Left, to give a convincing and effective reply with alternative and radical proposals to the modern challenges of globalisation and to the issues at stake in the 21st century: war and terrorism, growing international disparities, the deconstruction of social gains that is being attempted and ecological upheaval..."

"... Europe is the field on which the first ideas of socialism were sown. It has the tradition of struggles for a social and democratic rule of law. Europe has the values of justice, solidarity, peace after two devastating wars, ecological sensitivity and social protection.

With their mobilizations the peoples and citizens of Europe have shown that these values are condensed in the European social model. We want to defend and deepen them, to extend and renew them, and to see them implemented throughout Europe..."

The Party of the European Left has the political will to respond to this demand. ... Beyond the battles of defense against the European Constitution, against the Bolkenstein directive and against the commitment of Europe to the hegemonic choices of the USA, we will be judged on our ability to formulate an alternative, radical, realistic programme that will resound with the expectations of our peoples and particularly of the younger generation... There is a need for a profound social and democratic transformation that will reflect the interests of the citizens..."

Athens Declaration

The full text of the Athens Declaration is as follows:

"We, the European Left, gathered in Athens on the 29th and 30th October, 2005

Having acknowledged that the crisis, which crosses Europe has no borders, but has responsables: the neo-liberal

policies decided in Brussels and the ones decided by the national governments. These choices have been made year after year, and the outcome is in front of our eyes, now.

We also acknowledge that the peoples who have been the victims are also the ones that fight and look for alternatives. Europe needs to be refounded on the basis of peace, democracy and on the full respect for social and human rights. This is our commitment and our hope: the European citizens must take their destinies in their own hands.

This action and solidarity declaration is also an appeal to the convergence of all movements and left political forces, who strive to reverse the priorities and to change the policies that have been followed till now.

The European Left and its member parties are committed to fight together with social movements, trade unions, political left forces for another Europe, which is possible. In this context, we fully support all European mobilizations and initiatives against neoliberalism and war, particularly the 4th European Social Forum to be held in Athens.

We are committed to eradicate the tragedy of both unemployment and employment precariousness.

We are committed to fight against social exclusion and the support of employment programs, for new jobs and reduction of working time and for the conversion of precarious employment into steady and decently remunerated jobs. Therefore the European Left will develop an own set of proposals. We stand for all the policies that fight and strive for stopping job cuts and also condemn fraudulent bankruptcies and delocalisations. We believe it is essential to preserve and rebuild social welfare systems (including public pensions) and to take life-long learning as a priority. We demand a new model of production, distribution and consumption.

We fight for the immediate withdrawal of Bolkestein Directive and the GATS (General Agreement on Trade and Services) The deregulation of employment in Europe and the social dumping in the developing countries are the heads and crowns of the same coin. Both give exclusively benefits to the multinationals, increasing the competition among the employees and affecting women. A specific program is necessary to establish a new relation between productive and reproductive work, equal wages to overcome the sexual division of work.

Instead of delocalisation we propose the improvement of time and working conditions, the fulfillment of environmental conditions on production, and the empowerment of the welfare and wage systems. A fundamental prerequisite is more transparency and the improvement of democracy and new worker's power in working place. It is through the defense of rights and not against them that we can achieve a fair world.

For a different EU monetary policy and the withdrawal of the Stability Pact

We insist on an urgent reorientation of the budget and monetary policies of the EU.

The European Central Bank democratically controlled should be placed at the service of employment and of a development which should be free of the financial markets' demands, with particular attention to the less developed EU regions. We demand the end of Stability

Pact, in favour of social policies at European level.

We promote the strengthening of public services in local, regional, national and European levels.

Against privatizations and neo-liberal directives that promote the commodification of common goods, like water, energy, culture, education and health care. Basic services cannot be regulated by profit and have to be regulated by quality levels demanded by the population.

Against migration policies oriented to police and anti-terrorist measures

We oppose to migration policies oriented to police or anti-terrorist fights.

The recent Lampedusa, Amsterdam and Melilla events, the situation of hundred of so-called boat people in Italy and Greece and the unbearable conditions of the migrant detention centres, reveal the cruelty and the Fortress Europe bankruptcy. A new policy based on respect of human dignity, equal labour rights, as they are an essential part of the workers' movement in Europe, has to be built on the legalization of all migrants and demands a strategic support to development.

For a Europe of Peace free from the NATO military structure

We stand for a world without war and we demand a European Peace policy against the military logic of the superpowers' warfare.

We fight for the development of all European cooperation and solidarity to promote peace.

Europe does not need an aggressive alliance which disrupt and challenge the role of the UN to secure peace and to establish peaceful relations with all countries of the world. We call on the European peoples to demand the European countries to give up their membership in the NATO military structure, and the abolition of all NATO and US military bases. NATO, in its present form is unacceptable and the demand for its abolition is highly necessary.

Disarmament has to become the main issue on a Europe based on peace. The European Left demands a reduction of national military expenditure. Europe has to be a continent free from weapons of mass destruction. All European armies must withdraw from Iraq immediately. The peace movement cannot slow down its actions. We are full committed with its objectives, namely the mobilization of public opinion to the solidarity towards the Palestinian people and the Israeli pacifist forces. There will be no peace in the region without a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the UN resolutions. This must be the European priority within the framework of the quartet responsible for the "road map" as well as the destruction of the wall and the immediate withdrawal of the occupied territories.

We oppose the authoritarian offensive against civil liberties, social, labour and democratic rights.

The extraordinary legislation that is being approved by the governments is an offensive against individual and collective rights, a result of a long democratic struggles. We will fight to stop this dangerous trend, for no security can be built against freedom and democracy.

Yes, we can **change Europe!**



We, the European Left, are frilly committed to this challenge.

Our perspective is peaceful, socialist, ecological and radically democratic. Our perspective is also a feminist perspective, for gender equality and democracy in all life domains is far from being real. Our perspective recognises diversity on individual life options. Our perspective is internationalist and opens Europe to the world and promotes cultural exchanges, cooperation and new solidarity.

Our perspective considers the Mediterranean a fundamental space for peace.

Change is a necessity. There is a deep gap between citizens and political elites. The victory of the "No" against the Constitutional Treaty expresses the degree of this fracture. The majority of the population is not against Europe. The majority voted against the liberal and arrogant policies that have set the crisis on an every day basis.

Today, the treaty is politically dead. This is the basis for an enlarged debate on the present and so that Europe's future can have a new prosperity.

We will participate in a broad citizens' movement which will strive for a manifesto or a charter of the social and political rights which is fitting to the Europe we want.

Yes, we can change Europe!

Global Participation

The following political parties and Movements were represented at the 1st EL Congress.

MEMBER PARTIES

Austrian Communist Party (KPO), Communist Party of Belgium (CPB), Czech Party of Democratic Socialism – (SDS), Estonian Left Party (ELP), French Communist Party (PCF), Left Party/PDS of Germany, Coalition of the Left, of Movements and Ecology (SYNASPISMOS)/Greece, Hungarian Workers Party, Party of Communist Refoundation /Italy, The Left (Dei Lenk)/Luxemburg, Left Bloc (BE)/Portugal, Romania, Socialist Alliance Party (SAP), San Marino Communist Refoundation, United Left/Spain, Communist Party of Spain, United and Alternative Left of Catalunya (IUeA)/ Spain, Party of Labour/ Switzerland

OBSERVER PARTIES

Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM)/ Czech Republic, AKEL/Cyprus, Red-Green Alliance / Denmark, Communist Party of Finland, German Communist Party, Renovative Communist and

Ecological Left / Greece, Party of the Italian Communists, Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS), Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP)/Turkey

GUEST PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS

Europe

Bulgaria Gallop Group
Cyprus Peace and Democracy Movement
 United Cyprus Party (BKP)
France Communist Revolutionary League (LCR)
 Movement for an Alternative Social Republic (MARS)
FYROM Socialist Party
Germany WASG
Netherlands Socialist Party
 Transnational Institute
Russia Rodina Party
United Kingdom RESPECT

Asia

China Communist Party of China (CPC)
Israel Communist Party of Israel (CPI)
 Yachad Party

Kurdish Movement

National Congress of Kurdistan
 Socialist Party of Kurdistan

Lebanon

Communist Party of Lebanon

Palestine

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
 Palestinian People's Party

Philippines

Ak Bayan (Citizen's Action)

Africa

Algeria Front of Socialist Forces (FFS)
 Hadjeres Sadek (former 1st secr. of PAGS)
Angola Angolan Embassy
Morocco Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS)
Congo Congo Liberation Movement (MLC)
 Union for Peace and Democracy (UPDS)
Western Sahara Polisario Front

North America

USA US Green Party
 Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism

Latin America

Brazil Communist Party of Brazil

Cuba Cuban Embassy

Uruguay Frente Amplio - Vertiente Artiquista

Supranational left cooperations and networks

GUE/NGL Group in the European Parliament
 New European Left Forum
 Nordic Green Left Alliance
 ENDYL/ European Network of Democratic Young Left
 European Network for Alternative thinking and political dialogue (TRANSFORM)

GREEK POLITICAL PARTIES AT THE OPENING SESSION

New Democracy Party
 Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)
 Coalition of Radical Left (SY.RIZ.A) and its components
 Democratic Social Movement (DIKKI)
 Socialist Workers Party (SEK)

Important messages

The following international political figures and political parties sent messages wishing success: Mahmud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, Joseph Beillin, Chairman of Yachad/Israel, Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, Ken Coates, President of the Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation, United Network (Antiracist organization), Alan Simpson, Labour Party MP, UK. South African Communist Party, Workers Party of Brazil (PT), Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Republican Turkish Party of Cyprus, Communist Party of Ukraine, Movement for the Republic and the Citizen (MRC) of France, Bulgarian Socialist Party, People First Party (Baya Muna) of the Philippines, Movement of Popular Participation of Uruguay, Democratic Socialist Perspective of Australia, FIDA from Palestine.

Cultural Political Event

Mikis Theodorakis honored

In the evening of the first day of the Congress a very successful cultural event was organized in a stadium in the municipality of Nea Smyrni, Athens. It was addressed by SYN President Alecos Alavanos, EL President Fausto Bertinotti, the German left Leader Oscar Lafontaine and PCF National Secretary Marie George Buffet. On the occasion, the popular and world known composer Mikis Theodorakis was honoured. The President of the EL, Fausto Bertinotti presented Mikis Theodorakis with a commemorative silver plaque.

Mikis Theodorakis who is loved and appreciated both for his precious contribution to Greek music and even more for his active and constant participation in all the struggles of the recent history of Greece, said: " the Left must restart from the beginning. It must discover a contemporary ideology – one that will propose to the peoples of Europe modern ideas and solutions, both realistic and regenerative. Solutions that will respond to contemporary reality, will move, inspire and motivate.

Your work ahead is very difficult. Even if you accomplish the beginning of the beginning you will have accomplished a lot. I wish you that with all my heart".

The speech was followed by a marvelous and moving concert by "Mikis Theodorakis" Orchestra. The programme of the event was complemented by a German band "....." and the "Asian Dub Foundation", a rap band from the UK.

ENDYL Conference

In view of the forthcoming 4th European Social Forum to be hosted in Athens next spring, the **European Network of Democratic Young Left (ENDYL)** and the **GUE/NGL Group in the European Parliament** co-organise an International Conference in Athens, 3-4 December 2005, entitled:

"Social Movements and political Left: Political practices and interactions"

The conference will bring together young men and women from the whole of Europe to discuss about the new social movements, the alternative resolution of the Left for another Europe in another world, about the role of Left Youth Organisations in Europe.

Participants include **15 Left Youth Organisations from Europe**, the MEPs **Dimitris Papadimoulis** (SYNASPISMOS) and **Miguel Portas** (Left Bloc, Portugal), as well as **Oscar Reyes** (Red Pepper magazine, United Kingdom), **Marco Berlinguer** (Transform, Italy), **Charalambos Golemis** ("Nikos Poulantzas" Institute, Greece), **Natassa Theodorakopoulou** (Executive Committee EL), **Helmut Scholtz** (Responsible for International Relations, Left Party-PDS, Germany).

4th Congress of the Youth of SYN

The 4th Congress of the Youth of SYN took place in Athens, 24 – 27 November 2005, in a crowded Hall at the Economic University of Athens. The Congress discussed the Political Resolution and the proposals for changes in the Statutes of the Constitution, approved by the Central Council. A new Political Resolution and Statutes have been approved. The delegates elected the new national leadership of the Organisation (Central Council). The new Central Council, consisting of 37 members instead of 42, which was the previous number, after the Congress elected the new Secretary of the Organisation, **Dimitris Tzanakopoulos**.

The views expressed in the Congress as well as during the pre-Congress dialogue offered the ground for a productive and fertile questioning and thinking. That, combined with the exchange of thoughts and constructive conflict of opinions lead to a successful Congress. Continuing and intensifying the work and efforts of the previous periods, the Youth of SYN is determined to strengthen its presence in the Greek society, increasing its interventions and enlarging the composition of the Organisation.

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WHAT IS SYNASPISMOS

SYNASPISMOS is a new left party, which was founded in June 1992. Its name "Synaspismos" (Coalition of the Left and Progress) has been retained from its previous structure, which was a coalition of left and progressive parties and groups that was formed in 1989. The transformation was decided in 1991 after the CP of Greece (KKE) split from the Coalition. The name of the party was amended on 1 June 2003 and since that date SYNASPISMOS is the "Coalition of the Left of Movements and Ecology".

Synaspismos identifies itself with the ideas and values of democratic socialism, ecology, feminism and anti-militarism. It believes in pluralism and considers the defense of human rights non-negotiable.

The Party's regular Congress is held every three years, electing a Central Political Committee (CPC). The Congress elects the Party President and the CPC elects a Political Secretariat. On

major issues the party members decide directly (e.g. the lists for national and European elections are composed through secret ballot among the members).

The Party is closely related with the Youth League of Synaspismos (Neolaia SYN).

Parliamentary representation

Since its foundation, SYN has contested 4 national and 3 European parliament elections. In October 1993, it failed to win representation in the National Parliament by 0.06% (the barrier was 3% and it got 2.94% and 203,000 votes). But in the European Parliament elections of June 1994 the party won 6.3% (408,000 votes) and elected 2 members to the European Parliament (Greece had 25 MEPs). In subsequent elections SYN was represented both in the National and the European Parliament.

Today, SYN has 6 Members of Parliament following the 7 March 2004 National elections, which were contested within an electoral alliance called "Coalition of Radical Left".

As for the European Parliament elections of June 2004 SYNASPISMOS stood its own candidates winning 4.16% and electing 1 MEP, cde Dimitris Papadimoulis.

Strong presence in Local Government

According to the October 2002 Prefectural and Municipal elections SYN is the third party in terms of representation in local government.

In addition, Synaspismos has a strong presence in the social field as well. It has high-level representation in all major trade unions and social movements – women and feminist organizations, peace, environmental, antiracist, human rights movements.