

LEFT PARTIES IN EUROPE REJECT THE 2014-2020 MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The European Council agreement on the future EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the upcoming seven years from 2014 to 2020 is not acceptable.

This agreement paves the way for seven years of austerity and economic downturn in Europe and denies the notion of European solidarity.

Contrary to the official statements, the European Heads of State and Government propose cuts in those areas, such as the European Social Fund, which most concern the lives of European citizens in times of crisis. We note with dismay that the European Heads of State chose to hit the poorest citizens hardest: the budget dedicated to food aid which has been around 3.5 billion euro for the period 2007-2013 will be drastically reduced to 2.5 billion euro for the years 2014-2020; bearing in mind that it will now cover 28 and not 27 Member States. Solidarity is once again sacrificed on the altar of budgetary austerity while the number of persons living below the poverty line in the EU has increased from 18 to 25 million between 2008 and 2012.

This is a shame that can only feed the growing rejection of the European Union by its peoples.

The violent cuts foreseen in the cohesion and agricultural policies, slashed by 8 and 16 %, respectively are the immediate consequence of the abandonment of EU solidarity. This would also lead to a deficit of 250 billion euro by 2020. By putting aside these policies, which constitute the redistributive policies *par excellence* of the European Union, the decision is made to forget once and for all the project of a Union based on solidarity.

We are fully opposed to the direction that the European policies have taken for too long. We utterly reject generalised budget cuts which penalise all European citizens but first and foremost youth, workers, unemployed, farmers, fishermen, researchers, academics, environmental projects, regions.

State aid towards agriculture, fisheries, industry, and soon local authorities is regulated and, for the most part, prohibited by the provisions of the Treaties establishing the internal market rules. The reorientation towards an agriculture which is more respectful of the environment and which supports the role of small farmers as protectors of the countryside is totally absent. The CAP will continue to benefit the largest and those who pollute the most.

Without European programmes funded according to the needs and stakes at play, everything that concerns the daily life of the European citizen will be severely affected if there are no possibilities of granting additional aid from national budgets.

We now call on all Members of the European Parliament to continue the efforts they have initiated to reject austerity and the return to national-centred policies, as agreed amongst Heads of States and Government. The European Union could not and cannot

be reduced to a liberal Europe having the single market project as its sole purpose project. At this pace, the ideal of a United Europe is doomed.

We can not accept, as we have long proclaimed, that state powers relating to economic and monetary matters are systematically transferred into the hands of the European Heads of States and Government so that the policies that we entrust in her end up fiscally weakened.

We stand for, with pride, unity and in a coherent manner, a Multiannual Financial Framework for the EU that does not extend the austerity imposed on Member States because we know that austerity will never lead to anything positive regardless of the level at which it is applied.

The vote on the European Parliament resolution on the EU Council Conclusions on the MFF for 2014-2020, will go beyond the economic and social dimension which is so dear to us. In a more discrete yet all the more serious manner, it will also be about the deepening of European democracy. If the European Parliament robbes the decision of the Heads of States, it will renounce from its own decision-making powers.

The provisions of the treaties grant the European Council, which gathers the national Heads of State and government at the European level, the right to determine the overall amount of the multiannual financial framework and the overall amounts for each heading (cohesion, agriculture, etc.). The Council sends this proposal to the European Parliament which can either accept or reject it. The general legal framework is negotiated in detail between the two institutions according to the ordinary legislative procedure in which both institutions should have an equal footing.

The Heads of State and government have, however, taken the few existing legal instruments of European democracy hostage by defining the European Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 in its utmost details. The European Parliament is thereby placed in front of a done deal and can only accept or reject it as a whole; this exceeds by far the competences of the European Heads of State and government. It is completely unacceptable.

We fully reject these EU Council Conclusions on the 2014/2020 MFF as we rejected all of the austerity mechanisms, from the European Semester to the "two pack", through the "6 pack", the ESM and the Merkozy treaty.

We need another Europe, refounded to become a true democracy. A Europe with a redistributive budget, without austerity in return, a Europe for all its citizens. This is the Europe we are fighting for.

We leave you with a warning: The on-going policy of austerity and the authoritarian power of the European Heads of State and Government correspond to social decline, decline of sovereignty and decline of democracy.

The resistance of the people is inevitable. It will have no limit.

Strasbourg, 13 March 2013

Signed by:

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