

This is the english version of / Questa è la versione inglese di - [Un'altra strada per l'Europa](#)

Another Road for Europe

Europe is in crisis because it has been hijacked by neoliberalism and finance. In the last twenty years the meaning of Europe has become the single market and the single currency, liberalisations and speculative bubbles, loss of rights and the explosion of inequalities.

This is not the Europe that was imagined decades ago as a space of economic and political integration free from war. This is not the Europe that was built through economic and social progress, the extension of democracy and welfare rights.

This European project is now in danger. Facing the financial crisis, European authorities have acted irresponsibly; they saved private banks but refused to contain the difficulties of indebted countries using the tools of the Monetary Union; they imposed on all countries austerity policies and cuts in public budgets that will now be enshrined in European Treaties. The results are that the financial crisis has extended to more countries, the euro is in danger, a new great depression and the risk of disintegration of Europe are looming.

Europe can survive only if another road is taken. Another Europe is possible. Europe has to mean social justice, environmental responsibility, democracy and peace. This is what the larger part of Europe's culture and society yearns for. This is the way indicated by justice movements and mobilisations for dignity and against austerity policies. But it is the sort of Europe that has been ignored by Europe's political forces.

This other Europe is not

a new superstate nor is it another intergovernmental bureaucracy. A form of democratic regional governance is needed if we are to address the global challenges that nation-states are not able to manage.

Along the road to another Europe, visions of change, protest and alternatives have to be weaved into a common framework. We propose five objectives.

A smaller finance. Finance – at the root of the crisis – should be prevented from destroying the economy. The Monetary Union should be reorganised and provide a collective guarantee for the public debt of eurozone countries and the European Central Bank should become the Union's lender of last resort. The burden of debt cannot be allowed to destroy countries in financial difficulty. All financial transactions have to be taxed, imbalances resulting from capital movements need be reduced, stricter regulations should ban the more speculative and risky financial activities, the division between commercial and investment banks has to be restored, a European public rating agency should be created.

More integrated economic policies. Europe needs to move past old and new Stability Pacts, beyond policies limited to the single market and the single currency. Europe's actions need to address unbalances in the real economy and the direction of development. Deep changes in taxation systems are needed, with a tax harmonization in Europe and a shift in taxation from labour to wealth and non-renewable resources, with new revenues to fund European spending. Public expenditure – at national and European levels – should be used to stimulate demand, defend welfare policies, extend public services. Industrial and innovation policies have to orient production and consumption towards high-skill, high-quality, sustainable activities. Eurobonds should be introduced not just to refinance public debt, but to fund the ecological conversion of Europe's economy.

More jobs and labour rights, less inequality. Labour rights and welfare are at the core of the meaning of Europe. After decades of policies that have created precarious jobs, poverty and unemployment, bringing inequality back to the levels of the 1930s, the priority for Europe is the creation of stable, high wage jobs – especially for women and youth - supporting low incomes and protecting trade union rights, collective bargaining and democracy at the workplace.

Protecting the environment. Sustainability, the green economy, energy and resource efficiency are the new meaning of Europe's growth. All policies need to take into account environmental effects, reduce climate change and the use of non-renewable resources, favouring clean, renewable energies, local production, sobriety in consumption.

Practicing democracy. The forms of representative democracy through parties and governments – and the social dialogue among organisations representing capital and labour – are less and less able to provide answers to current problems. Europe's crisis erodes the legitimacy of European institutions – the European Commission and the Central Bank – that exercise unaccountable power, while the European Parliament has no relevant role yet.

In past decades, Europe's citizens have taken centre stage in social mobilisations and in practices of participatory and deliberative democracy – from European Social Forums to the protests of indignados. These experiences need an institutional response. There is the need to overcome the mismatch between social change and political and institutional arrangements that are a remnant of the past.

European societies need not be inward-looking. The social and political inclusion of migrants is a key test for Europe's democracy. Closer ties can be built with the movements for democracy on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean after the downfall of authoritarian regimes.

Making peace and upholding human rights. The integration of Europe has made it possible to overcome century-old conflicts, but Europe remains the site of nuclear weapons and aggressive military postures, and European countries still spend one fifth of world military expenditure: 316 billion dollars in 2010. With current budgetary problems, drastic cuts and transformation in military budgets are urgent. Europe's peace does not result from projecting military force, but from a policy of human and common security that can contribute to peace and the protection of human rights. Europe has to open up to the new democracies of the Arab world in the same way as it opened up to Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

We propose to bring this agenda for another Europe to the European Parliament and to

Europe's institutions. This new meaning of Europe is already visible in cross-border citizens' mobilisations, civil society networks, trade union struggles; it has now to shape Europe's politics and policy-making.

Thirty years ago, at the start of the "New Cold War" between East and West, the Appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament launched the idea of a Europe free from military blocs and argued that "we must commence to act as if a united, neutral, pacific Europe already existed". Now, in the midst of the crisis of finance, markets and bureaucracies, we we must commence to practice an egalitarian, peaceful, green and democratic Europe.

December 2011

[Joomla SEF URLs by Artio](#)