

Evaluation using the questionnaires
filled in by Member and Observer parties for the 5th EL Congress

The political orientations and the utility of the EL

Orientations

On the overall evaluation of the Party of the European Left (EL), in general the parties feel that the EL political action is highly significant. The party does a good job shaping the European positions on European problems. The need to “rebuild Europe” in a perspective of global anticapitalistic fight and the will to change the European system, allowing alliances between progressive forces and the governmental majorities, have being shared. Our common project is referred to economic, social and political aspects, based on cooperation, democracy and not to those of a centralised European Union at the service of financial capitalism.

The claim of a European integration on different lines, rejecting austerity and structural reforms, breaking treaties, with the perspective of going beyond capitalism, i.e., the idea of refunding Europe, have been gathering us together. This is the substantial contribution of the EL to the European struggles, because the EL is convinced that there is no solution only at a national level, but also at a European level.

According to some, it seems that political topics that are major, despite their political importance and potential, are sometimes neglected in discussions, or dealt with in a subsidiary manner in the general context. The discussions, which mostly take place elsewhere, should also be held within a party with the EL's size and perspectives.

The utility of the EL

The EL is seen as a vector for building bridges and also as a tool which contributes to the formation of European left wing forces, especially when considering the diversity of the parties and, consequently, the diversity of positions on multiple issues. This is increasingly true when we consider the collaboration with *the Social Forums* or the *Altersummit*, with which the parties work together on a regular basis.

The role of Transform! on this matter is fundamental because its stable relationship with the movements helps us day by day in many activities that we co-organize.

Also the Transform! own activity of policy debate and critical scientific analysis is very important for the EL and adds more quality in the European and global scenario.

That is why the development and activities of Transform! Represent a very important value for the present and the future of the EL.

35 On the parties' relations with the EL, the main usefulness of belonging to the EL is
36 represented by the possibility of coordinating our policies in the fight against austerity and for
37 democratic, social and ecological progress. Yet there must be more coordination between the
38 national and European levels for the planning of activities, and this is true for both the EL and the
39 parties in each country. The EL is a crossroads of various forces which are politically and culturally
40 diverse. Their convergence at a European level, the campaigns and the bridging of points of view
41 are useful in national battles. However, we note that the EL isn't currently appealing at a national
42 level in some countries.

43 The parties that belong to the EL strongly feel the solidarity and cooperation among
44 themselves, as well as the harmonisation of their points of view. These are very important elements
45 in order to overcome the feeling of isolation, to move forward with the everyday struggles, and to
46 exchange information and experiences with the different parties. These elements also offer data on
47 the life of the left wing parties in Europe and throughout the world.

48 An additional effort should be made to take better into account some countries or regions such as
49 Eastern and Central Europe. Especially for this part of Europe, the success of left parties in other
50 European countries could be an incentive, an example to motivate them to continue the fight.

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52 The EL could have a more important role to play, especially at present, considering the left wing
53 alternative initiatives. At the moment, the EL is too often a spectator and it should endeavour to be
54 more effective and show itself as the driver, the catalyser for the political debate and the fight of the
55 alternative European forces. It should combine different forces and unite them in new impulses.

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58 **The EL campaign for the 2014 European Elections**

59 Some parties feel that the EL participation was useful for the electoral campaign, while
60 others don't, even if this raised more interest in the campaign. The fact that the EL had a candidate
61 for the Presidency of the European Commission was highly useful for some, while for others it
62 didn't have a great influence on the electoral campaign. Yet the Greek candidacy had a European
63 dimension and that helped in providing a different momentum. In some countries, this candidacy
64 has helped in the development of convergences for pluralistic coalitions, in particular we refer to the
65 case of Italy with the successful "Lista Tsipras".

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67 The impact of this proposal was different depending on the country and the parties and the use of
68 the European campaign by member parties was unequal. This is true also concerning the election

69 platform of the EL and its logo, which were used unevenly. It will take a greater effort, if we decide
70 to have a common candidate next time, to lead a truly European campaign.

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73 **Our strategy of Alliance Against Austerity**

74 The campaigns around the AAA (Alliance against Austerity) is deemed useful by the parties
75 to conduct struggles against the neoliberal and capitalist nature of the European Union by rejecting
76 austerity and structural reforms, as well as the blackmail of the debt, and to raise the level of
77 European confrontation. Activities around AAA shall be expanded.

78 The involvement in social movements at a European level such as the European Social
79 Forum or the European Forum for Alternatives, has been constant from the first day. The EL has
80 collaborated and participated in the implementation and development of major social platforms
81 claiming another Europe.

82 The relationship with social movements has developed positively with our regular and meaningful
83 participation in the WSF, the Altersummit, the euro-demonstrations, or the Citizens' Initiative
84 against TTIP.

85 The openness to several forces shall be reproduces also at the level of the relation with the
86 world of the trade union, at European level – sharing the mutual participation in multiple meetings
87 as has been done in the ETUC congress for example – as well as at national level.

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89 The relationship with the GUE / NGL must continue to grow and consolidate, with more
90 frequent exchanging of ideas and shared actions.

91 New links have been forged with new left political forces and others which are evolving.

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93 The Assessment of our political initiatives of cooperation is that the EL expanded its scope
94 of cooperation with the political and social forces, with trade unions. DiEM25 and Plan B are
95 spaces where the EL must work with the objective of broadening contacts with what is moving on
96 the left in Europe.

97 *The Forum of Southern Europe:* Organized for the first time it was a great political success
98 giving a valuable political orientation with a substantial final declaration. We also noted that our
99 ability to do a good job with the Greens is open and very rich. It is a path that the EL should
100 continue to explore and above all trying to consolidate with mutual respect and ongoing

101 collaboration.

102 *The European Forum for Alternatives* got mostly positive remarks, even when this opinion
103 was not unanimous. Attendance was not general, and at the same time, most parties are convinced
104 that this activity must be newly proposed, perhaps articulating the topics and considering more
105 specific and practical ways and influences. A European, rather than a national representation is
106 required to prepare the next Forums, and the same applies to the organisation. The limit of the
107 initiative lies mainly in the lack of "follow-ups" after the event itself.

108 *Parlacon* was considered quite positive but not all parties were able to send
109 representatives. It would therefore be useful if we could organise this with more representatives and
110 in a more open manner. For this event, it would be advisable to extend the relations with the
111 GUE/NGL group in order to request their collaboration on this matter, especially for those countries
112 that do not have representatives in the institutions but could have close connections with European
113 members of Parliament (for a geographical delegation or a commission subject).

114 As for the EL's core activities, *the Summer University* is considered positive and all parties
115 who responded to the questionnaire wish for it to continue. Most parties took part in it; however, we
116 should address the possibility of more people taking part and review the method, or find other
117 solutions for funding parties which would like to take part yet cannot afford the financial costs.

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120 **The relations between the EL and its members**

121 The relation national party / European party

122 Our parties shall build a very special and tight relation with the Party of the European Left to make
123 our common work effective and useful at a national level. There cannot be any European campaign
124 without the national involvement of the parties.

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126 *Relationship with the Direction. Decision making process:* The parties have been in contact
127 with all structures of the EL, but the institution regarded as more remote is the Council of
128 Chairpersons. The Presidency of one President and four Vicepresidents has been rather symbolic.

129 *The Working Groups:* in general, the existence of EL working groups and networks is
130 known and valued by the parties, but especially when these deal with specific problems related to
131 the parties' regions. The information about the work that working groups and networks carry out
132 reaches people in an irregular manner, according to the various groups. The parties can be more
133 active within the working groups, especially if they want their country to be a subject of discussion

134 in their context.

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136 Decision making process, information and transparency

137 - The parties inform of EL activities through newsletters, mailing lists, articles in the parties'
138 press, parties' websites and social media, forums and press conferences, flyers, festivals and
139 in their political gatherings. Others, however, state that there is a lack of communication by
140 the EL and therefore use the dissemination of news at a European level directly through the
141 institutions' information.

142 - The parties are aware of the decisions of the EL through the reports and other materials sent,
143 especially those of the Executive Board related to the structures and the WGs and networks'
144 specific actions. But they also receive information from the leadership of each party.

145 The parties are informed of the EL's public activities through the updated information
146 available on the EL's website. It's certainly true that a distribution with different locations
147 for each member party and different sections on the EL website could help.

148 On parties' websites the translation remains a non solved problem, even when efforts are
149 made to inform the countries. E-mails are important as well and the social networks should
150 be updated more frequently.

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152 - The components of the different structures of the EL should inform the parties' leaderships
153 regularly of the decisions made and the discussions held at different levels; as well as their
154 participation in each Executive Board meeting and the cooperation between different parties
155 of each country.

156 - The entire decision-making process must be transparent. The reports of each meeting of EL
157 bodies (notably the Secretariat, Presidency and Council of Chairpersons) should be sent to
158 the parties and the Executive Board. All decisions pertaining to policy, delegations and the
159 use of funding must be made democratically.

160 It is also important to send the Executive Board and Council of Chairperson all documents
161 sufficiently ahead of the meetings, but for this to take place, the parties must also send their
162 documents in advance and think about having more modern and effective means of
163 communication, such as online TV, online journals (with advertising space for the member
164 parties), etc.

165 It is also important that the parties distribute the information to the leadership, as well as
166 draft summaries of the bodies' activities (Executive Board, Secretariat and Council of
167 Chairpersons) so that these are made public.

168 **First Proposals for the evolution of the EL**

169 Political orientation. The EL discourse

170 *Raise our voice in front of the denied democracy.* The political alternative represented by the
171 EL, with the GUE/NGL group, is potentially appropriate regarding the formation of an opposition
172 to the governments currently in power, which enforce right wing policies. Now is the time to adopt
173 a more aggressive style, one that suits Europe's current situation and that of the European
174 Commission which is imposing central decisions on national governments, ignoring social policies
175 as well as the increasing development gap between European States, etc.

176 It is necessary to intensify the political debate. EL should play a more active role in the discussion
177 about European policy and political alternatives regarding also questions like the future of the
178 Eurozone. It is necessary to share our struggle even more, and specially to reach a common
179 proposal which provides answers to the refugee crisis as well as to possible problems of nationalist
180 answers deriving from contexts such as the Brexit.

181 As for the other events, we need to think about the fact that we are not just a party but also a
182 culture, a political heritage and a way of life. Without central events, there is no representation or
183 thoughts regarding these matters.

184 *Deal with the new dimensions of the crisis.* The party was right in placing the fight against
185 austerity in the centre of its strategy; the fight against the Troika, the struggle in favour of the
186 women's movement (against sexist violence, for labour gender equality, for the freedom of decision
187 regarding motherhood). Yet it's also true that the EL should find a common position with regard to
188 the EU's current crisis, its future development and the refugee issue. It is difficult to issue common
189 statements, but this is necessary as it is having concrete proposals on the different subjects.

192 Political initiatives

193 Considering the diversity that the EL represents, it's clear that each party does not always
194 agree with the type of activities that enable us to assess the advantages of common campaigns such
195 as the one against the TTIP.

- One of the main priorities of the EL is to campaign at a European level against the TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership). For this, the EL participated in the construction of a broad social and political front, with trade unions and civic associations, through organized events and collecting signatures for the European initiative.
- Lancement d'une campagne pour un programme d'Investment politique orienté vers une transformation sociale et écologique de l'industrie, de raccordement ainsi initiatives des syndicats européens
- *To set up the European initiative for Central and Eastern Europe*, as was done with the group for the Mediterranean.
- *Participating in a campaign for a European tax on large fortunes and against tax havens.*
- *Organise political solidarity.* There should also be events to denounce neoliberal demonstrations against communism, the ideas of the left and the left wing forces in general.

Ideas about changes in the EL structures

In order to improve the proximity between the parties and the EL, in addition to continuing with the communications in a more regular manner through e-mail, we propose to jointly organise common actions -not just let the organizing country to do it by itself-. We ought to prepare events together more in terms of organisation rather than just at the level of representation.

A further step should be taken in the organisation of the working groups. The idea is to try to create more professional groups, with more organised work so that the experts, and also the best of these, can work together. Since meeting in person isn't always possible, Skype calls or video-conferencing could be favoured. Meetings could be organised during conferences or festivals. New working groups should be created to encourage the campaigns (ex.: TTIP, Women...). The majority of them should be maintained and there is a need to revive those who have not gathered -or very little- in recent years.

Communication. The development of direct communication by the EL leadership with the member parties (for instance, the existence of an on-line journal, an on-line TV point, etc) would be a positive tool. Communication could be improved through more detailed discussions at the Executive Board, information material and also small meetings of the working groups. Communication has to be improved especially concerning the website.

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231 **EL structures**

232 The EL should be more efficient in terms of the distribution of funding and its running.

233 The EL should strengthen its links with the elected representatives in the European
234 Parliament, who are doing a good job, though their contributions are not well enough known and
235 used.

236 We need more "militant", European campaigns which would enable the EL members to
237 support them in their local and daily activities. It would be interesting, for example, to find ways to
238 organize more 'rank-and-file' militants to take part in the different EL activities.

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