

## L'Europa que volem



### The Europe that we want

60 years after the signature of the Treaty of Rome, the European Union faces an uncertain future. The common project has failed when having to face the crisis as it has not know how to offer its own solution, so betraying the spirit of the original project and adopting, with no critical spirit whatsoever, the neoliberal ideology that reigns globally. The financial crisis has, therefore, turned into an economic and social crisis as well as a political one that shakes the basis of the European construction. Deregulation, together with privatization, flexibilization and precariousness, account for a project that conceives social and working rights as merchandise. In turn, this project does not seem to have the ambition to build its own identity beyond the market. As a result, there is a loss of social cohesion, so consolidating a two-speed Europe with more exclusion and social inequality.

Both insecurity and uncertainty have entailed the emergence of xenophobia and racism, rendering an appalling rising of political options drawn on fascism, such as reflected on the other side of the Atlantic with the new Trump government. At the same time, as Brexit has shown, euroscepticism is spreading among those who give their back to the common project, due to the lack of tangible and actual responses to the real problems. Today, a feasible and sustainable Europe, in the mid and long term, needs the confidence, complicity and enthusiasm of its citizens. This Europe must be based on: a) the convergence of both social and labour rights, as well as conditions, to a high stage, so overcoming the difference between states; b) fair integration; and c) full employment, as a pillar of sustainable growth.

Only solidarity can give meaning and future to the European Union, not only with those who seek refuge, but also among states, people and generations. Solidarity plays a key role for building a sustainable project at a social, economic, environmental and financial level. It has to be based on a progressive and fair system that redistributes richness at a social and territorial level, thus making the efforts be shared by all actors, particularly in the framework of a crisis induced by capital. The prosecution of fraud, evasion, and elusion, as well as the fight against tax incentives aimed at low fiscal level, has to make justice and provide the resources needed for the common project in order

for it to regain its social character. This is so since there is no other ground for rooting the European identity than the one based on social and democratic rights.

At the same time, as the ETUC claims, it is necessary to regain work as a central element for the emancipation of individuals, for social cohesion and for an economy that has the internal demand as its main engine. In order to achieve this, what is needed is the following: a) fair salaries; b) good working conditions; c) strong trade unions; d) dynamic social partnership and collective bargaining; and e) good public services, properly endowed with what is indispensable in order to offer quality and sufficiency in the access to the services and allowances that guarantee fundamental rights. A common market of 500 million people is powerful enough to guarantee the feasibility of an economy directed at the service of society. It is time to regain Europe and to turn the tables. It is not for the social model to be at the service of concurrency, but the market at the service of our social model.

In order to make progress in this way the Juncker Plan is not enough, nor the concept of a public lever to activate private investment in Europe. More public investment is needed: in actual fact 2% of European GDP on strategic sectors for competitiveness, but particularly on stability and social cohesion. As the ETUC claims, the priority should be the reactivation of investment, together with a more solid European budget and a European Central Bank with an improved mission, which must include full employment within its main objectives.

The austerity policies and the budget cutbacks introduced by the Stability and Growth Pact, as well as the institutional architecture of the economic governance, in permanent contradiction with the democratic and social vocation of the European project, should be urgently reformed. This reform must:

- Exclude, from the deficit and debt aims, all investments on: green economy, innovation and research, education and training, public services and social infrastructures.
- Offset the European Economic semester with a social semester with minimum indicators that oblige states to guarantee fundamental rights, such as access to employment, education, health-system, and social protection.

Europe needs more solidarity among states and a strong Social Pillar that may regain and guarantee both justice and social cohesion. But the EU must regain as well the pre-eminence of the principle of responsibility, id est. the accountability to its citizens and workers. It must be also accountable when revising its role in the global sphere and more particularly with regard to its commercial policy. In light of the simplifying rhetoric of protectionism, Europe has to promote a fair trade based on the globalisation of rights, specifically ILO international regulations, as well as the control of its multinationals' value chains.

In light of the illegitimate negotiation of agreements that promote competitive deregulation, such as TTIP, CETA, or TISA, it is time for the European Union to use its commercial policy as a tool of development and international cooperation. In this sense, it is indispensable that it helps Decent Work to become an essential key for world social progress. The EU must also extend its solidarity through a strong cooperation policy that may transfer the logics of a convergence to high standards to the global sphere, along with the improvement and progress of the minimum standards. In a world where climate change, violence and poverty take place, with more than 60 million of displaced people at a global level, Europe must firmly take the lead of the United Nations and of all multilateral tables.

This is the Europe that we want. Not a different one. Because of this, from CCOO de Catalunya, we will continue to boost, spread and strengthen the areas of our trade union action and our international cooperation, by:

- Expressing our solidarity with workers from the countries that have strongly suffered the action of the Troika and the dictatorship of austerity.
- Giving visibility and support to the initiatives of the ETUC and the European Federations through the work of our organisation.
- Working in the activation and display of all the potential of the European Works Councils when spreading working rights throughout Europe.
- Giving support to the work of the Interregional Trade Union Councils that develop and promote cohesion at cross-border regions.
- Participating in European projects that, on the one hand, reinforce current networks and relationships, and on the other, help us build the Europe of work as a fraternal space of enriching diversity.

This is our commitment, as well as our will, since **either Europe will be social or it will not exist.**