

Another Europe

Alexis Tsipras MP

In 2014, for the first time, the elected European Parliament is asserting its right to elect the President of the European Commission. Previously, the Commission President was appointed by member states. Alexis Tsipras has been chosen as the Presidential candidate of the European Left. In May, he is standing in Italy for election to the European Parliament. Here he sets out his view of Europe's crisis and what to do about it.

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Europe is at a critical crossroads. And there are two ways to go. The alternatives are clear. Either we stand still. Or we move forward. Either we consent to the neo-liberal status quo and pretend that the crisis can be resolved with the policies that have recycled it. Or we march into the future with the European Left.

Because the peoples of Europe are in danger, democracy itself is in danger. Neoliberalism is a threat to the peoples of Europe. The extreme right is a danger to democracy. And the only alternative is the resistance of the peoples and the strengthening of the European Left.

There can be no monetary union divided by a wall of money. A monetary union indifferent to society and responsive only to the needs of finance capital is a Eurozone prone to uncertainty, instability and crisis – a Eurozone with a short deadline. No monetary union can function without a central bank, acting as such. That is, acting as lender of last resort for member-states and not only for member-banks.

Europe needs its own Glass-Steagall Act, to separate commercial and investment

Alexis Tsipras is the leader of SYRIZA in Greece, which is the official opposition in the Greek Parliament.

banking activities and prevent such a dangerous merger of risks into one uncontrolled entity. Europe needs effective European legislation to tax offshore economic and entrepreneurial activities.

The European political establishment saw the debt crisis as an opportunity to rewrite Europe's post-war political economy. It is for that reason that they reject our proposal for a European Debt Conference, modelled on the London Debt Conference in 1953, to give a definite and viable collective solution to the problem. It is for that reason that the European political establishment – a voluntary hostage to Mrs Merkel – insists on imposing on the entire Eurozone South policies that have worsened the initial problem.

We have to stop austerity. Current policies create pain, disappointment, unemployment and disaster in Europe. We have to create hope. Europe needs a 'New Deal' to fight unemployment and to finance its future. If Europe is to survive it needs redistribution and solidarity. Those are the foundations of a totally new Europe that we are fighting for; in place of a Europe that redistributes income to the rich and fear to the poor.

A monetary union which divides its member states, divides the societies of its member states, increases unemployment, poverty and social polarisation would have to be reconstructed or collapse. With the active solidarity of a broad European anti-austerity movement, we shall win that fight. Because, for the European Left to grow and influence in a decisive way the everyday lives of ordinary people, it needs the broadest possible social and political alliances.

The European elections present a good chance to change the balance in Europe. If we succeed, we will no longer be a marginal political force. We will be in the field fighting to aid the peoples of Europe in favour of citizens, employees and young people for the future of Europe. We have to co-operate and bring the message of hope and change in every European country. Firstly, create resistance. Give hope to disappointed people that we can win and change the conservative policies and political parties that divide Europe. We want to unite Europe.

My candidacy for President of the European Commission is on behalf of each and all of you – on behalf of the European Left – for the Presidency of the European Commission. It is more than a candidacy, it is mandate for hope and change in Europe. It is an honour for Syriza and the Greek people who are in the front line. It is a roll call for democracy, in which every generation deserves to participate, in which every generation is entitled to live. However, let me assure you, my candidacy is not just a candidacy of the south of Europe, but for all of Europe.