

**STUDIEN**

**THILO JANSSEN**

**THE PARTIES OF THE  
LEFT IN EUROPE**

**A COMPARISON OF THEIR POSITIONS  
ON EUROPEAN POLICY LEADING INTO  
THE 2014 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS**

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#### **IMPRINT**

STUDIEN is published by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

Responsible: Martin Beck

Franz-Mehring-Platz 1 · 10243 Berlin, Germany · [www.rosalux.de](http://www.rosalux.de)

ISSN 2194-2242 · Editorial deadline: December 2013

Copy-editing: Linguatransfair, Berlin

Translation: Phil Hill

Layout/Production: MediaService GmbH Druck und Kommunikation

Printed on Circleoffset Premium White, 100% recycled paper

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## INTRODUCTION

“Greece could be the spark for defeating austerity across Europe.” (Tsipras 2013a) In June 2012, it seemed that Alexis Tsipras and his leftist party SYRIZA might be able to win the parliamentary elections in Greece, and challenge the EU’s austerity policies with an alternative reform programme. Although the results ultimately did not bring about a change of government, they also showed that a left party could become a serious electoral alternative to the social democrats. Tsipras became the international media face of the parliamentary side of leftist resistance to neoliberalism in Europe.

Overall, however, the left parties in the EU are not exactly operating from a position of strength. Since the European elections of 2009, the left group in the European Parliament, the Unified European Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE<sup>1</sup>/NGL), has represented approx. 4.5% of the electorate in the EU.

Where does the family of left parties stand as Europe prepares for its parliamentary election of 2014? This is the question to be examined in the present study. In

the following pages, the positioning of the left parties on European policy is to be examined on the basis of sixteen case studies. The vast majority of the parties belong to the GUE/NGL; many belong to the European Left (EL).

Chapter 1 describes the situation in the EU as of the spring of 2013, with respect to the upcoming European electoral campaign. In Chapter 2, the theoretical positioning of left parties with regard to European policy is placed in perspective. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the European structures in which left parties are active, with detailed examinations of the two most important ones, the European Political Party EL and the European Parliamentary Political Group GUE/NGL. Chapter 4 addresses the national parties individually with regard to their key statements on EU integration, programmatic content with respect to the EU level, their alliance strategies, and the priority which they accord to EU policy. Finally, in Chapter 5, we provide an assessment with respect to the common European electoral campaign of the left parties in 2014.

<sup>1</sup> For *Gauche Unitaire Européenne* (Fr.): Unified European Left.

# 1 THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT IN THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO THE EP ELECTION

## 1.1 A EUROPEAN ELECTION IN A TIME OF CRISIS

One year before the elections for the European Parliament in 2014, the EU is still mired in an economic and social crisis. Unemployment averages about 10%; in Greece and Spain, it reached 27% in April 2013, and in Portugal, 17.5%. In Spain and Greece, more than half the people below the age of 25 are unemployed (cf. COM 2013). Since 2007, according to the Euro-Barometer of the EU Commission, the majority of people in the EU see the economic situation as thoroughly negative. In November 2012, this was the assessment of 72% of the EU population; only in six EU member countries, Sweden, Germany, Luxemburg, Austria, Finland and Denmark, do people evaluate the economic situation as "good". In all other twenty-one member countries, the economic situation is seen by more than half the people as "poor"; in Spain and Greece, this is the view of 98 and 99% of the people, respectively (cf. COM 2012a). Economic and social instability are also having a political effect.

In many member countries, early elections have been called. Trade unions and social movements are protesting against the neoliberal austerity course of the EU's crisis management policy. Examples are provided by the numerous demonstrations, strikes and general strikes against the austerity policy in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Romania and Bulgaria and the protests of the Occupy Movement, or the *Indignados*. The protest actions reached a climax with the first cross-border general strike on November 14, 2012 in Portugal and Spain, which was accompanied by protests and demonstrations throughout Europe. In June 2013, parallel to the meeting of the European Council of heads of state and government, trade unions, social movements and political foundations held an "Alter-Summit" in Athens to demonstrate against institutionalized austerity policies and to draft alternative proposals for a social and democratic EU (cf. Alter-Summit 2013).

## 1.2 THE POINT OF DEPARTURE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: ELECTORAL RESULTS

Given this situation, can left parties hope to make gains? While such forces as the anti-political *MoVimento 5 Stelle* ("Five Stars"), in Italy, right-wing populists like the *Perussuomalaiset* ("True Finns") in Finland or the *Front National* in France, and even outright neo-Nazi parties like the *Chrysi Avgi* ("Golden Dawn") in Greece or *Jobbik* ("the Movement") in Hungary have been able to profit from the crisis situation at least in the short term, the electoral results of the left parties have shown no clear trend. The best result achieved by a left party in a parliamentary election was that of SYRIZA in June 2012 in Greece, with 26.89% (+10.1% over May 2012, and +22.3% over the election of 2009). In 2011, the Spanish

United Left (IU), too, was able to almost double its previous result of 2008, reaching 6.92% (+3.15%) of the votes. The French Left Front (Front de Gauche) achieved 6.91% in 2012 (+2.62% over the previous results of the French CP). In Portugal, however, the Portuguese CP stagnated at 7.9% (+0.04) in 2011, while the Left Block (BE) achieved only 5.17% (-4.64), thus losing almost half their votes. Left parties in other member countries have also suffered losses: the Dutch Socialist Party (SP) won 9.65% (-0.17) in 2012, in spite of having achieved much better results in opinion polls – ranging between 24 and 36% prior to the vote. The Swedish Left Party (V) won 5.60% (-0.25) in 2010. In Italy in February 2013, the Civil Revolutionary Alliance (RC), which included, among others, the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC) and the Party of Italian Communists (PdCI), failed to win any parliamentary seats.

Most recently, a series of elections in north-central Europe has been generally sobering. Although the Czech Communists (KSČM), who had dropped to 11.3% (-1.5) in 2010, have now bounced back to win 14.9% in 2013 (+3.6%), and entered coalition negotiations with the Social Democrats, the news was not otherwise very good. In the German federal elections in September 2013, the Left Party (LINKE), which, with eight MEPs, boasts the largest delegation in the GUE/NGL, won 8.6% of the vote, down from 11.9% in 2009 (-3.4%); their consolation is that they will likely be the largest opposition party. At the same time, the Luxemburg DL (not one of the parties examined in the present study) won 4.94% (+1.65), and thus gained a second seat in the Chamber. And the Austrian Communists (KPÖ; also not examined here) fell further (-0.27%) from their already-low level, to just over 1%; there, as in a number of other member countries, especially in Eastern Europe, no left party is electorally relevant.

Most painful perhaps were the results in Norway (not an EU member), where the centre-left government lost power to a right-wing coalition. The Socialist Left Party (SV) won only 4.1% (-2.1%), barely enough to return to Parliament, and held only seven of its previous 11 seats; the social-democratic Labour Party also lost votes. Moreover, the SV, previously unchallenged on the red-and-green left, now has competition, as the Greens shed their splinter-party status to gain one seat. The extreme right-wing populist Progress Party will, although they suffered severe losses, be part of the new government.

## 1.3 A REFORM OF THE EU: "A LEAP ... TOWARDS A TRULY FEDERAL EUROPE?"

The creation of new institutions such as the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) rescue packages, together with the discussions about the "completion of the eco-

conomic and currency union", (cf. ER 2012) have once again raised the issue of the ultimate goal of the EU: is it to become a single federal state? Or do the economic and social crises, as well as the strengthening of right-wing parties, prove that the only future for the EU is that of a confederation, in which the sovereignty of the member countries remains intact? In November 2012, a majority of the EP demanded that a "leap should be made towards a truly federal Europe" (EP 2012a). They called for a new constitutional convention; moreover, the parties intend to enter the European elections in 2014 for the first time with pan-European candidates for the position of Commission President. In September 2012, a group of EU foreign ministers<sup>2</sup> presented a report with federalist ideas on the future of the EU, proposed "a directly elected Commission President who personally appoints the members of his 'European Government', a European Parliament with the

powers to initiate legislation and a second chamber for the member states" (Zukunftsgruppe 2012). The group leaders of the Greens and the Liberals in the European Parliament, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Guy Verhofstadt, formulated similar goals in their federalist manifesto *For Europe* (Cohn-Bendit/Verhofstadt 2012). The German Social Democrats (SPD) called for a convention to draft a new constitution, which would then be approved or rejected by the citizens of the EU in a referendum (cf. SPD 2013).

However, not all political forces want to strengthen the federalism of the EU. In January 2013, Conservative British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that a referendum would be held in 2015 over whether the United Kingdom is to stay in the EU or not (2013).

These are some of the aspects of the point of departure for the 2014 European electoral campaign by the left parties in the GUE/NGL and the EL.

<sup>2</sup> Those of Germany, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

## 2 THEORETICAL POSITIONING: FEDERALISTIC EURO-SCEPTICISM?

Although it is not the purpose of this study to provide a theoretical explanatory model of the positioning of left parties on European policy, we would nonetheless like to undertake a brief theoretical categorization of these parties. Comparative political-scientific research generally categorizes parties from the leftist party family (cf. Spier 2012) or of the radical left as either EU-critical or as euro-sceptical (cf. E.g. Hooghe et al. 2002; Marks et al. 2007). In their study published in 2002, Hooghe et al. proposed the following hypothesis: "As Ernst Haas (1958) made clear, the EU is the product of party-political actors on the Centre-Right, Centre, and to a lesser extent, the Centre-Left who have dominated decision-making in Europe during the past half century. European integration is primarily a market-liberal project mitigated by some measure of regulated capitalism. The Euro-scepticism of extreme parties arises, therefore, not only from their opposition to the EU's policies but also because they reject the ideology of the EU's construction. So we expect a party's support for European integration to decline with its distance from the centre of the Left/Right dimension."<sup>3</sup> (Hooghe et al. 2002: p. 969).

For the left parties, this means that their EU-critical positions could be explained by their programmatic positions based on the societal cleavage between capital and labour (cf. Lipset/Rokkan 1967): the EU, as a project of negative market-liberal integration, would thus be seen as "fundamentally inhospitable to radical-left policy goals" (Cf. Hooghe et al. 2002: p. 774). According to the Hooghe-Marks model, social-democratic centre-left parties assume that the EU will prove to be reformable in key policy areas, for which reason they support an integration in cohesion policy, social policy, unemployment support and environmental policy, while centre-right parties support negative market integration, but reject positive regulatory policy at the EU level (cf. Hooghe et al. 2002: pp. 772–773). Left parties on the other hand assume that "[e]ven EU institutions that facilitate regulated capitalism will not provide the kind of policies radical Leftists deem essential to curb market forces: public control over capital flows, extensive public investment in industrial policy, a statutory right to work, and a statutory reduction of the working week. And so the radical Left comes to the same conclusion as the radical Right, but for very different reasons (ibid.: p. 974)."

However, if we shift the focus of comparative analysis from the macro-level of all party families in Europe to the level of the left party family alone, and then compare its member parties with one another, a very different picture emerges. For during the founding years of the European Community, the 1950s, the communist party family in Western Europe was actually the "most cohesive opponent of the integration process,"

while today the radical left is the most heterogeneous party family with respect to its positioning on EU integration (cf. Almeida 2012: p. 69; Wagener 2006: p. 9). That also raises the question as to how meaningful the term "Euro-sceptic" is as an umbrella term for criticism of the EU in general. A leftist party which rejects the EU in its current constitution as undemocratic and market-radical, but which in principle supports deepened EU integration, all the way to a federal European state, should be categorized differently from a party which, while it criticizes the same aspects of the EU, calls for a Europe of sovereign nation-states.

Volkens (2004), in her study "Political positions of Left parties in the European Parliament: Programmatic agreements and differences in the fifth legislative term", referring to Bell (1996), points out that the EU is a multilevel system so that, for instance, the demand for strengthening the EP is a demand in contradiction to the maintenance of national sovereignty. A party that favours national sovereignty and decentralization must necessarily reject the possibility of making binding decisions at the EU level (cf. Volkens 2004: p. 122). That means that in addition to the substantial policy dimension, in particular policy areas determined by the corresponding lines of conflict, the question of the level at which policy is to be implemented is also an important issue. Therefore, we will in the present study investigate not only the substantive positions of the parties, but also the question of which parties tend toward a more federalist and which toward a more sovereigntist position.<sup>4</sup>

The next questions, then, is: Why would a left party adopt a federalist or a sovereigntist position? One possibility is that within the party family, differences in European policy positioning run along fine ideological divides. Schirdewan for instance (2006) divides the left party family into four ideological subcategories, to which he attempts to assign particular positions on European policy. The parties of his category "New European Left", the Greek Synaspismos (SYN), the main component of the multi-party alliance SYRIZA), the Spanish IU, the German LINKE/PDS, the French and Austrian CPs (PCF, KPÖ), the Luxemburg DL, and the Italian PRC, see the EU as "a basis for their own political action that should not be fundamentally called into question, to which they have a basically positive relationship, not however without at the same time

<sup>3</sup> On a classical scale between the extremes: left ("maximum political control of the economy") to right ("no political control of the economy"). A second scale, the "new politics dimension", measures post-materialist values on a scale from left "Green/alternative/libertarian" to right "Traditional/authoritarian/nationalist", and is used by Hooghe et al. to explain pro-integrationist tendencies among green parties and anti-integrationist tendencies in parties of the new right. <sup>4</sup> Almeida (2012) distinguishes between "hard" and "soft" Euro-sceptic parties, describing the latter position as "[c]ontingent opposition to European integration framed in fundamentally pro-integrationist terms".



criticizing its political orientation and its economic fixation" (Schirdewan 2006: p. 670).

In his "Classical Communist" category, which includes the Portuguese, Greek, Czech and Slovak CPs (PCP, KKE, KSČM, KSS), he sees "no clear orientation" with respect to European policy positioning, although he does ascertain the common position of an "interpretation of the EU as a motor of neoliberalism which causes the sharpening of social rifts within European societies, and a step backward toward militarism and imperialism" (ibid.: p. 671).

The "Trotskyist" parties, including the Portuguese BE, the French Revolutionary Communist League/Workers' Struggle (LCR/LO), the British Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), the Danish ERG, and also certain tendencies within the Spanish IU, the Italian PRC and the Luxemburg DL, "clearly reject the EU as currently constituted, viewing it, similarly to the classical communists, as an exclusively neoliberally characterized political project" (ibid.).

He sees the Scandinavian left parties, including the Danish Socialist People's Party (SF) the Finnish VL, and the Swedish V as a fourth category which sees itself as "mandated to represent leftist Scandinavian posi-

tions," and thus assumes a "critical to openly rejectionist position" (ibid.: p. 672).

If we contrast Schirdewan's categorization with the results of an analysis by Wagener titled "The EU constitutional treaty and the positions of left parties," published the same year, it seems clear that the approach of using ideological differences to explain the heterogeneity within the party family of the left with respect to European policy is insufficient. In his paper, Wagener uses the historic situation that all left parties were at the same time forced to take a position on the draft European Constitution (which failed due to defeats in referenda in France and the Netherlands in 2005). Specifically, this meant taking positions, first, on the question of their positions toward the EU memberships of their own countries; second, on the issue of their own general willingness to support a "different", or "better" treaty; and third, on support or rejection of the then-present draft Constitutional Treaty (Wagener 2006: p. 69).

All of the parties Wagener examined were members of the left Political Group in the EP, the GUE/NGL. He thus arrived at the following differentiated categorization:

**Table 1: Positions of left parties on the draft constitutional treaty (Wagener, 2006)**

Pro EU membership; present constitution	Pro EU membership; against present, for different constitution	Pro EU membership; against any constitution	Anti EU membership; against any constitution
SF	PRC	PCP	KKE
PdCI	PDS*	SP	V
	PCF	Sinn Féin	ERG
	IU		
	KSČM		
	SYN		
	BE		
	VAS		
	AKEL*		

\* Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou (AKEL) Progressive Party of Working People, the Cypriot CP

\* PDS: German Party of Democratic Socialism (since merged into the Left Party)

Source: Own design

Dunphy (2004), in his study "Contesting capitalism – Left parties and European integration," provides a simple explanation for the divergent European policy positions in the left party family. He comes to the conclusion that differences between left parties with respect to European integration can be traced back to the fact that they have different expectations with regard to whether leftist political goals can be implemented within the framework of the EU or not. All nine of the Western European left parties which he examined reject the neoliberal aspects of the Maastricht Treaty and the policy of job cuts, privatizations, cut-backs in social benefits, the erosion of labour rights, and attacks upon the trade unions. However, he notes, they take different positions "on whether the very project of monetary union itself is to blame, or whether it is potentially a progressive one: whether Maastricht

and the Euro should be rejected outright, or whether, for all their weaknesses and failings, they can yet be an instrument in the creation of a more progressive Europe capable of guaranteeing an alternative to US-style capitalism" (Dunphy 2004: p. 169).

Volkens, too, points to the conflict between these two perspectives – the EU as an opportunity vs. the EU as a danger – when, on the basis of her statistical analysis of party programmes, she ascertains a "north-south divide" with respect to welfare-state policy. The Scandinavian left places a stronger emphasis on the national welfare state than do the Greek or the Spanish left. She sees this as being due to the different social policy situations in member countries: depending on what the existing economic and social policy standards in a particular member country are, the EU standards could mean either an improvement or a wors-

ening of that situation (cf. Volkens 2004: p. 123; also Hildebrandt 2010: p. 67–68).

Almeida, in his analysis of the “programmatic responses of radical left parties to European integration” (2012), provides yet another approach to an explanation of the European policy positions of left parties. He arrived at the conclusion that these positions depend to a large degree on nationally specific structures of intraparty rivalry, i.e. on national strategies (generally, of opposition): fundamental opposition to the system on the one hand, and an approach toward social democratic parties and positions on the other (cf. Almeida 2012: p. 92; p. 153). He writes: “[W]hile common genetic ties between radical left parties entail a clear predisposition towards rejectionist or at least sceptical attitudes towards market integration, the explanatory value of cleavage origins is neutralized by centripetal party strategies. As radical left parties downsize the distance separating them from their social democratic competitors, they tend to adopt a pro-integrationist stance at the risk of alienating their supporters and triggering intraparty dissent (Ibid.: p. 71).”

On the basis of his hypotheses, Almeida constructs a model that relates the positions of left parties on EU integration and their original situation in the national contest of parties to intraparty dissent with regard to European policy positions (dissent estimated by experts in 2006<sup>5</sup>). It takes into account whether one or several electorally relevant leftist parties are competing in the respective national party system. He distinguishes between “soft Eurosceptic parties”, which basically support the European integration process, but which reject specific characteristics of the EU, and “hard Eurosceptic parties”, which fundamentally reject European integration. He arrives at the conclusion that in an electoral system with two leftist parties, divergent European policy strategies will be selected. Moreover, it appears that intraparty conflicts with regard to European policy positioning tend to be greater within a leftist party that tends toward a federalist position:

**Table 2: Radical left parties by location in party system, and estimated level of intraparty dissent over European integration (Almeida 2006)**

	RL1	Dis	RL2	Dis	RL3	Dis
Soft Eurosceptic Parties	IU	3.42	PRC	2.00	BE	2.50
	KSČM	2.00			SYN	4.57
	VAS	4.64			SF	4.11
	AKEL	-			PdCI	0.50
	SP	1.25			PCF	2.44
	Die Linke	3.86				
Hard Eurosceptic Parties	V	2.00	PCP	1.60		
			KKE	0.38		
			LO	-		
			LCR	-		
			ERG	2.22		

Source: Almeida 2012.

Dis: Estimated intraparty dissent on the issue of EU Integration (“Data on internal dissent over European integration are 2006 expert estimates (Hooghe et al. 2010). Notes: Internal dissent is measured on a 1 (united) to 10 (divided) scale ...”)

RL<sub>1</sub>: Sole dominant radical left party in the national party system

RL<sub>2</sub>: Radical left party in a system with two left parties, established at the outer edge of the party system, which maintains a rigid policy of opposition and rejection of EU Integration

RL<sub>3</sub>: Radical left party in a system with two left parties, which maintains a pro-eu integration policy, and a cooperation strategy toward the social democrats.

If we integrate the hypotheses of Dunphy, Volkens and Almeida, the following factors would emerge as determinant for the positioning of left parties on European policy: 1. Expectations with regard to the level at which policy is implemented, 2. A cleavage-dependent substantive political orientation, and 3. Strategic positioning within the respective national party contest system.

In order to answer the question of whether there is a perspective for an electoral campaign of the European left parties, we should also examine the extent to which feedback from the cooperative efforts within the EL and the GUE/NGL impact upon the policies of particular parties. Moreover, the effects of the financial and economic crisis on the cooperation between left parties should be taken into account.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the data of Hooghe et al. (2010).

### 3 THE COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES OF LEFT PARTIES AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

The parties of the left party family cooperate at the European level in a number of structures. Political Group associations exist in the European Parliament, in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and in the Nordic Council (NC). In 2004, the EL was founded as an official European Political Party, eligible to receive financial subsidies from the EU. Moreover, there are informal networks such as the Scandinavian-Atlantic Nordic Green Left Alliance, the New

European Left Forum (NELF), the European Anti-Capitalist Left (EACL) and the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (IMCWP) (For a detailed description of the various structures, cf. Schirdewan 2009). The EU-financed network of foundations, Transform! Europe, and such media as the English language Spectrezine, which is close to the Dutch SP, can also be considered part of the array of European and international structures (cf. Wagener 2006: p. 17).

**Table 3: Overview of European and international structures of the Left**

Location/Region	Name	Abb.	Type
European Parliament	Unified European LEft/Nordic Green Left	GUE/NGL	Parl. grp.
PACE/EUR Europe	Unified European Left	UEL	Parl. grp.
Nordic Council	Left-Socialist-Green Group	VSG	Parl. grp.
Europe	Party of the European Left	EL	Party
Northern Europe/Atl.	Nordic Green Left Alliance	NGLA	Network
Europe	New European Left Forum	NELF	Network
Europe	European Anti-Capitalist Left	EACL	Network
Global	International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties	IMCWP	Network
Europe	Transform! Europe		Foundation
Europe	Spectrezine	–	Media inst.

Moreover, there are several interparty European structures, particularly the European party EUDemocrats (EUDem) and the European Alliance of EU-Critical Movements (TEAM) in which leftist parties participate directly (ERG as an observer at TEAM) or indirectly (MEP Søren Søndergaard at the EUDem – cf. EUDem 2008).

**Table 4: Overview of European structures involving MEPs and left parties**

Place/Region	Name	Abb.	Type
EU	EUDemocrats	EUDem	Party
EU	The European Alliance of EU-Critical Movements	TEAM	Alliance

In order to remain within the framework of the present study, it will be necessary in the following to examine only those associations most relevant for the 2014 European parliamentary election, i.e. the Political Group GUE/NGL and the European Political Party EL.

**Table 5: Composition of the GUE/NGL, by parties**

	EL full member	EL observer	EL non-member	EU Dem
Germany	LINKE/8			
France	Front de Gauche/5			
Czech Rep.		KSČM/4		
Cyprus		AKEL/2		
Portugal	BE/2*			
Greece			KKE/2	
Portugal			PCP/2	
Greece	SYRIZA/1			
Spain	IU/1			
Netherlands			SP/1	
Netherlands			Indep.**/1	
Ireland			Sinn Féin/1	
Ireland			Socialist Party/1	
Sweden			V/1	
Latvia			Saskaņas Centrs****/1	
Denmark	ERG***			Søndergaard***/1
<b>Total. 34 MdEP</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>

The number after the/indicates the number of seats.

\* 2009 BE was represented by three MEPs, but Rui Tavares switched to the Greens/EFA in 2011.

\*\* Kartika Liotard left the SP delegation in 2010, but remained a member of the GUE/NGL.

\*\*\* Søren Søndergaard was elected to the EP on the FmEU (People's Movement against the EU) list. He is a member of the ERG, an EL full member, and a member of the party EUDemocrats Europe.

\*\*\*\* SC/"Concord Centre"; widely seen as the party of the Russian minority

### 3.1 PARTY OF THE EUROPEAN LEFT

Seats in the EP since 2009	23, of 34 total in EP Polit. Grp.
Seats in the EP, 2004–2009	29, of 41
EP Political Group	GUE/NGL

The party of the European Left (EL), which was founded in 2004, currently has twenty-seven full member parties and eleven parties with observer status (cf. EL 2013a). While it is possible to hold individual membership not connected with membership in a national party, that status provides hardly any possibility for real influence. Many of the left parties represented in the EL are small, and of little or no electoral significance; moreover, not all parties are from EU member countries: there are also parties from Moldova, Belarus, Turkey and Switzerland. The French PG joined the EL in 2010. With the accession of the Danish ERG and the Finnish VL in 2009/2010, electorally significant political forces in Scandinavia have now also joined.

The Western European parties, especially the Italian, German, French, Spanish and Portuguese parties, have traditionally been the dominant actors within the EL. In 2010, French CP Chairperson Pierre Laurent succeeded former German LINKE Chairperson Lothar Bisky as President of the EL. Fausto Bertinotti of the Italian PRC was the first EL President, from 2004 to 2007 (until 2008, he was also President of the Italian Parliament), but the PRC lost a good share of its significance due to the catastrophe it suffered in the national parliamentary elections of 2008, which was followed by the loss of all of its five seats in the EP in 2009. At the same time, EL Vice President Alexis Tsipras (SYR-

IZA) and French presidential candidate and MEP Jean-Luc Mélenchon (PG) are up-and-coming personalities known throughout Europe who are active in the EL. Like all official "European Political Parties" (EPP), the EL receives financial subsidies from the EU. In 2012, the payment amounted to 835,049 euros (cf. PP 2012c). From the outset, the common goal of the EL parties was to change the EU as a whole: "[T]he Left, if it wants to channel its resistance against the demolition of the social state and of democracy into political alternatives, has to express itself as united at the European level and develop necessary concrete and alternative proposals for a different EU, and a different Europe together" (EL 2013b).

In pursuit of this goal, the EL has developed further programmatically since its foundation: from the common rejection of capitalist globalization, of NATO, and of neoliberal EU polity and policy, toward a number of concrete proposals for constructive action at the EU level. These can be found not only in the Common Election Programme of 2009 (cf. EL 2009), the resolutions of the Third Congress of the EL in 2010 (EL 2010a), or the call of the EL Presidium for a left strategy for solving the crisis in 2011 (EL 2011); they have also been adopted in the Election Programmes of the member parties – albeit to varying degrees. The programmatic demands for restructuring the EU, which the EL has jointly developed since its founding in 2004, can be summarized as follows: The EL has rejected all EU treaties, from Maastricht to Lisbon; it wants them replaced by EU treaties which guarantee "the superiority of fundamental social rights ... over so-called economic freedoms" (EL 2012a).

The essential common programmatic demands of the EL in various areas of European policies are as follows:

**Democracy:**

- The EP should obtain the right of legislative initiative
- Referendums on important EU issues should be possible at the national and European levels
- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights should be made legally binding; the EU should join the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR);
- Democratization of the economy: The rights of collective bargaining, co-determination and to strike should apply cross-border; rights and opportunities of employees to participate in corporate decision-making should be expanded and legally guaranteed.

**Financial policy:**

- Democratic control of the ECB; ECB monetary policy should be committed to the goals of growth, employment and environmental development through selective cuts in interest rates
- Issuance of common securities (Eurobonds)
- Cancellation of part of the public debt of member countries
- Establishment of a European public rating agency
- Harmonization of tax policy on the principle of progressive taxation
- Increased taxes on income and capital (top-down redistribution)
- Taxation of financial transactions and income in order to create a European fund for social and environmental development, to be controlled by the EP
- Control of capital movements and an end to tax havens.

**Economic, employment and social policy:**

- Replacement of the Stability and Growth Pact with a new pact for growth, full employment, social security and environmental protection
- Socialization of public utilities and strategic economic sectors, including the banking and financial system
- Introduction of European standards in the areas of wages, social affairs and the environment
- A 35-hour week, with a weekly maximum working time of 40 hours
- Introduction of a European minimum wage of at least 60% of the average national wage, without calling existing collective wage agreements into question
- Establishment of a comprehensive social security system at the European level
- A European minimum income for people without employment
- European minimum pensions, based on the national minimum wage and automatically adjusted to inflation

- Immigration Law: Abolition of forced expulsions; granting migrants the right to work where they live in the EU
- Investments in public services which should fall within the duty of care of the state (“re-municipalization”), particularly in education, child and youth care, health and old age-care, water and sanitation, energy, transport, postal services and culture.

**Environmental Policy:**

- Intensification of EU climate policy, including a 40% reduction in CO2 emissions in developed countries by 2020 (compared with the 1990 levels).

**CAP:**

- Review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): Global food sovereignty, no liberalization, development of agricultural production and creation of jobs, subsidy policies based on economic, social and environmental factors.

**Security Policy:**

- Abolition of NATO, conflict resolution within the OSCE
- Replacement of the European Defence Agency with a disarmament agency.

**Development policy:**

- Meeting the Millennium Development Goals. In November 2011, the Council of Chairpersons of the EL, which consists of the leaders of the member parties, drafted an appeal entitled “Peoples of Europe, Unite!” (Cf. EL 2011), in which the EL presented its common programme to combat the crisis in the EU, and in particular in the Euro Zone, consisting of the following demands:
  - Immediate abolition of all austerity programmes and memoranda, and their replacement with a programme for social development based on public investment
  - Convening of a conference on debt to solve the debt problems in the Euro Zone (a write-off of part of the debt; transfer of the rest to the ECB)
  - Direct low-interest loans to member countries by the ECB, or a special fund financed by the ECB, in order to avoid the high interest rates on the financial markets
  - Reform of the EU treaties
  - Strengthening democracy, “political unification” and popular sovereignty
  - Transformation of the ECB to a “lender of last resort”
  - Strengthening of the EU budget to combat social and economic inequalities
  - Abolition of the stability criteria with reference to public debt, running deficits, and inflation; public investments in the areas of social development, employment and the trade balance.

### **The EL and the EU policy: European citizens' initiative, the EU budget and the 2014 European elections**

In the following, we would like to present the common current work of the EL on the basis of political events at the EU level. In September 2012, the European party initiated a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) for the establishment of a public development bank for the EU. Moreover, it took a position on the Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU for the period from 2014 to 2020, and the changed modalities for the European elections of 2014.

#### **Social development: The EL's European Citizens' Initiative**

At its Third Congress in 2010, the EL resolved to use the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), which is a newly established instrument under the Treaty of Lisbon, to have the Commission introduce a legislative initiative for the creation of a European Fund for Social Development (cf. EL 2010b). At the same time, the EL emphasized that the fact that they were using this instrument did not mean that they recognized the Treaty of Lisbon. In September 2012, seven project sponsors close to the EL, including EL President Pierre Laurent and EL Vice President Alexis Tsipras, submitted a proposal to the Commission for an ECI, which deviated slightly from the original idea, for founding a "European public bank for social and ecological development and solidarity" (cf. LINKE 2012a), the mission of which would be to enable public investments by member countries severely affected by the crisis. These countries were to be permitted to borrow money for such investments at a very low interest rate, and thus become independent of the profitability requirements of the financial markets. The Commission rejected the initiative with the statement that there was no legal basis for such action under the EU treaties (cf. COM 2012b). The EL for its part saw the rejection of its ECI as proof that such a proposal based on social solidarity was outside of the official dogma of the EU as it currently exists. Clearly, citizens' democracy was not wanted, unless it expressed the official position, or rejected solidarity (EL 2012b).

#### **The EU budget: The Multiannual Financial Framework, 2014–2020**

On February 8, 2013, the European Council adopted conclusions on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014–2020 (cf. ER 2013). The EP, which agreed neither with the proposed budget cuts nor with the structure of the proposal, rejected the bill on March 8, 2013 by passage of a resolution proposed by a number of Political Groups; it was supported, too, by the majority of the GUE/NGL. In a paper of March 13, 2013, signed by the chairs of the EL parties SYRIZA (GR), BE (P), IU (E), LINKE (D), PC & PG (F) and the MEPs of these parties, as well as by the KSČM (CZ), these parties announced: "We are fully opposed to the direction that the European policies have taken for too long.

We utterly reject generalized budget cuts which penalize all European citizens, but first and foremost youth, workers, unemployed, farmers, fishermen, researchers, academics, environmental projects, regions" (Transform 2013a).

The sacrifices that especially poor people and economically disadvantaged regions would, they emphasized, suffer as a result of a dismantling of European redistribution, and could not be compensated for by national measures. They rejected a return to "national-centred policies", as the member-state governments envisioned it, and stated that the detailed stipulations of the Council were an attempt to blackmail the EP, and were an attack on European democracy. They demanded a reform of the EU toward "real democracy" and a "redistributive budget", so as to create a "Europe of all citizens".

In a press release, the EL criticized the European Council proposal for an "austerity budget", pointing out that the cutbacks in growth policies amounted to 24%, 4% each in the areas of cohesion and agricultural policies, and 20% in development cooperation. It stated that the measures against youth unemployment, for which the budget was capped at 6 billion euros, were insufficient. What the EU needed instead, they argued, was a different economic model, "based on job creation and on satisfying the huge social needs." They saw the budget proposed by the national governments as incompatible with that goal (cf. EL 2013c).

#### **Democracy: The 2014 EP election**

In a statement of November 2012 titled "The 2014 European elections: For a democratic re-foundation of Europe", the EL Executive Board described how it perceived the democratic deficit in the EU: "Authoritarianism and the confiscation of powers in favour of the Troika and financial interests are becoming the rule to impose austerity policies: national parliaments, rights and freedoms, trade union activities and even the European Parliament, are excluded from essential choices" (EL 2012c).

To this end, a "re-founded" EU would have to invest its citizens and its parliaments with real power. The immediate occasion for this statement was a "non-legislative report" by the EP on the 2014 European elections (cf. EP 2012b), in which the parliament by a majority vote supported by the major Political Groups called on the European parties to for the first time select one Europe-wide candidate each for the office of Commission President. Moreover, it demanded that as many commissioners as possible be elected from the ranks of the EP, and recommended that the member states introduce minimum thresholds, in order to make it more difficult for smaller parties to gain seats in the EP; this was to guarantee "stable majorities", from which the larger Political Groups, the social-democratic Socialists and Democrats (S&D) and the conservative European People's Party (EPP) would be likely to profit.

The EL rejected all proposals in the report, saying: "These proposals do not respond to the democratic deficit that is getting worse in the EU. Worse, they may legitimize the strengthening of the powers of the Commission, contrary to the necessary democratization of the EU. Presidentializing and personalizing the European political debate will divert it from the real issues" (EL 2012c).

The biggest problem for the EL is the demand by the large Political Groups for the introduction of minimum thresholds for the European elections in the national electoral laws of member countries. New or higher thresholds could make it more difficult for many existing, electorally weak left parties to enter the EP. The EL therefore calls for the introduction of proportional representation in all member countries, with no minimum thresholds, in order to reflect the electoral intent within the EU as precisely as possible.

### 3.2 THE UNIFIED EUROPEAN LEFT/ NORDIC GREEN LEFT POLITICAL GROUP

The GUE/NGL Political Group in the EP is the most influential supranational structure of left parties in Europe. As an association of left parties, it is in two respects different from the EL: its composition is more heterogeneous, and it regularly has to engage in consultations with regard to complex parliamentary decisions. During the 2004–2009 legislative term, it initially had 41 of the 735 MEPs (5.6%, dropping to 5.2% with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007, which temporarily boosted the total to 785). Currently, it has 34 of the 754 MEPs, who come from seventeen parties in thirteen countries, and account for 4.5% of the total. For the first half of the term, the GUE/NGL was the second smallest Political Group in the EP, ahead of the nationalist grouping known as "Europe for Freedom and Democracy" (EFD), which is dominated by the British United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the Italian Lega Nord. However, the EL was then able to attract new members from other groups, while the GUE/NGL lost one member, Rui Taveres, who had been elected on the list of the Portuguese BE, but then switched to the Greens/European Free Alliance group; hence, the Leftists are now the smallest group.

#### Common positions

In the following, we would like to describe some of the common political denominators of the GUE/NGL in those policy areas which the group itself sees as most important:

The most important issue for the GUE/NGL in the current legislative term was and is addressing the financial and economic crisis, and in particular the protests against the strategy for solving it proposed by the conservative majority in the Council, the Commission and the EP. The Left Group maintains that it is on the side of wage-earners and the lower strata of society: "The continuing crisis is impacting hardest upon the weakest, and at the same time, the reaction of the

heads of state and government in the EU to that fact represents a threat to European democracy. In the view of the GUE/NGL, the extreme institutionalized austerity policy is worsening recession and shifting power from national capitals to the European Commission and to the European Central Bank. The results have been catastrophic. We urgently need to turn away from this policy, and to quickly introduce measures for a sensible economic and social policy which will lead to growth, solidarity and new jobs, and ensure that taxpayers no longer have to bear the cost for irresponsible, risky financial transactions" (GUE/NGL 2012a).

#### Financial policy:

The GUE/NGL demands an international financial transaction tax, public control of the banking sector, the abolition of tax havens, hedge funds, and private equity, and rigorous moves against tax cheating. Alternative mechanisms should be found for assessing the indebtedness of sovereign nations by rating agencies. A fiscal system for taxing multinational corporations should be introduced. The role of the ECB should be redefined: it should no longer only secure price stability, but should rather integrate the goals of employment, training and education, research and growth (cf. GUE/NGL 2010).

#### Economic, labour and social policy:

Fiscal consolidation cannot, in the view of the GUE/NGL, be achieved through austerity and cutbacks which hit social programmes and working people. Rather, the EU should become a "social union, ... that places human needs before profits" (cf. GUE/NGL 2012a).

The Stability and Growth Pact should be replaced by a solidarity pact for employment, further education and the struggle against poverty; the flexibilization of the labour market should be terminated. The Group demands an "EU stipulation for minimum income regulations and substitute income systems, including social deductions" (cf. GUE/NGL 2012b); this would include benefits in case of unemployment or minimum pensions. A new EU directive on the "basic needs of each human being for sufficient benefits and payments in order to permit him or her to live a life in dignity" (ibid.) should be adopted to provide the legal framework.

A binding stipulation of goals by the EU should ensure that relative and absolute poverty and social exclusion be abolished. This should include such component targets as the abolition of child poverty and homelessness by 2015. The dismantling of public services and of the welfare state should be stopped.

The GUE/NGL demands a "targeted EU stimulus programme for the next five years" (ibid.), in order to first of all help those countries most affected by the recession to move against economic stagnation and growing unemployment. The EU should invest 1% of its GDP per year in investment in ecological and socially sustaina-

ble development, “so as to support gender equality, full employment through qualified ‘green’ and ‘white’ (i.e. health and social service) jobs, and also improve social and territorial cohesion, flanked by similar measures at the level of the member countries” (ibid.).

#### **Environmental policy:**

In environmental and climate policy, the GUE/NGL supports measures against climate change, and strict CO<sub>2</sub> reduction goals. Aid should be provided for developing countries to enable them to cope with rising global temperatures. A sustainable economy must be developed, and pushed through against the short-term interests of industry and commerce. Renewable energies, recycling, public transport, and the protection of biodiversity, clean water and clean air must all be moved forward (cf. GUE/NGL 2013a).

#### **CAP:**

The GUE/NGL wants to strengthen small and medium-size businesses and cooperatives, and stabilize their income situations, cap direct payments at 100,000 euros, and also introduce a minimum income for small farmers. Local and regional trade should, in the view of the GUE/NGL, always have priority over long-distance trade. Environmental and climate protection should be taken into account in the CAP. Genetically modified organisms (GMO) should not be permitted, due to the associated risks, and GMO varieties which have already “been introduced under pressure from multinational corporations” (GUE/NGL 2011a) should be taken off the market again. The right of developing countries to food, food sovereignty and food security should be recognized. That includes an end to international financial speculation in agricultural products, and an end to the deregulation of the agricultural markets (ibid.).

#### **Security policy:**

In international security policy, the GUE/NGL supports “strict application of the UN Charter and all other instruments of international law” (cf. GUE/NGL 2011b), “respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries” (ibid.), and the assurance of fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms, as well as “measures to ensure economic and social rights” (ibid.). The Group rejects the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the structures created by the Lisbon Treaty, such as the European Foreign Service. However, now that they have been introduced, the structures must be made accessible for democratic control and parliamentary influence. Instead of military interventions, exclusively civil and preventive measures should be used to solve conflicts; the GUE/NGL opposes civilian-military cooperation, and also the dispatch of European military missions for the purpose of providing humanitarian aid. Instead of wars, economic reconstruction, education and health should be funded.

Military expenditures, military forces and weapons stockpiles should be dismantled in all EU member countries. The goal is nuclear disarmament and a Europe free of nuclear weapons (ibid.).

#### **Development policy:**

The GUE/NGL supports an alternative trade policy which would replace free trade with fair trade, and the incorporation of human rights, social rights and environmental and climate criteria in trade agreements. An international financial transaction tax could be used to finance development aid. At a minimum, the Millennium Development Goals should be implemented (cf. GUE/NGL 2011c).

Moreover, the GUE/NGL is attempting to make a mark in other policy areas. Mikeal Gustafsson (V) chairs the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee of the EP, the only committee chairpersonship the GUE/NGL currently holds. The Group sees the struggle for women’s rights and gender equality as a central aspect of its work (cf. GUE/NGL 2012c). In the area of data protection and individual rights in the EU as well as on issues of copyright, which became a matter of great public controversy in Europe in the course of the EU-wide protests against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), the GUE/NGL has developed common positions (GUE/NGL 2012d & 2012e).

#### **Cohesion in EP voting**

Other than the EFD, the GUE/NGL is the most heterogeneous political group in the EP. Confederalism is an important basic principle of interparty cooperation, which prevents the Group from breaking apart over controversial issues. It guarantees that no binding majority decisions will be reached, and that every delegation may at any time present its own position. The Group’s self-description states that: “*Confederalism* for us means respecting and preserving the diversity of identities and opinions of our members” (GUE/NGL 2013b). Nonetheless, in spite of certain deviations, depending on the area of policy and the issue involved, there have been stable majorities in the group which, in the current legislative term, have ranged between 60 and 90%. Former Group Chairperson Lothar Bisky said in an interview in 2012 regarding the processes of negotiation within the Group, “In Political Groups, there are majorities and minorities. The majority takes a decision, that’s a good thing. It would be for the GUE/NGL if the minority were to try to play games with the majority. However, there is a majority in the Political Group which decides on a certain course. No one dictates to them; rather, they struggle together for something, and then they support it together” (Bisky 2012).

During the period from July 2009 to April 2013, average voting cohesion within the GUE/NGL was 79.22%, less than the figure for most other groups. The highest was achieved by the Greens/EFA, with 94.57%; the centrist-conservative EPP got 92.69%, while the social-democratic S&D scored 91.35%, followed by



the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) with 88.94% and the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) with 86.61%; trailing far behind the rest are the nationalist EFD, with 49.79% cohesion. Compared with the previous legislative term, intra-group cohesion within the GUE/NGL has been reduced; overall, it was 85% between 2004 and 2009. The GUE/NGL is thus the only group in the EP in which heterogeneity increased slightly over the previous legislative term (cf. Votewatch 2009a). This is probably due to the absence of the Italian delegations of the PRC and the PdCI, for the MEPs Adamos Adamou, Vittorio Agnoletto and Vincenzo Aita showed the highest rates of individual cohesion with the majority of their own group of the entire EP during the 2004–9 term (cf. Votewatch 2009b). Currently, the GUE/NGL achieves its highest rates of cohesion in the following policy areas:

- A) Gender equality (90.46%)
- B) Justice and home affairs (87.61%)
- C) International trade (86.59%),
- D) Transport and tourism (85.96%),
- E) Employment and social affairs (85.84%), and
- F) Environment and public health (85.67%).

These policy areas primarily involve issues which are not particularly controversial among left parties, such as the defence of social rights, the rights of working people, of minorities and of consumers. The lowest rates of cohesion within the Group occurred in the following policy areas:

- G) Economic and monetary affairs (75.47%),
- H) EU budget (71.63%),
- I) Industry, research and energy (68.69%),
- J) Constitutional and inter-institutional issues (68.04%), and
- K) EP rules of procedure (61.22%).

A hypothetical explanation for the high intra-group discord in the latter policy areas is that these to a much greater degree demand that members address the question of the political level – national or European – at which an issue is to be resolved. In the areas H, J and K, this is immediately obvious, since these areas deal with the competencies of EU institutions per se. The result in Area I may be explained by the fact that there are very divergent opinions on common energy policy within the EU: continental EU grids, or national energy sovereignty?; or, expansion vs. abolition of nuclear power? Policy Area G covers virtually all measures solving the financial and economic crisis in the EU, and hence, too, the debate over the issue of whether or not deepened integration, possibly in the form of an EU economic government, might be able to solve the crisis.

Conflict over recognition of the EU as a legitimate level of policy formulation also affects cooperation within the Group. One of the arguments with which MEP Rui Tavares, elected to the EP on the list of the Portuguese BE, justified his switch to the Greens/EFA Group was that the GUE/NGL had too many orthodox communists and national sovereigntists, and too few pro-European-federalist leftists, which led to the block-

ing of political initiatives (cf. Tavares 2011). One reason (along with his health) that Lothar Bisky (German LINKE) gave for his resignation as Group chairperson in early 2012 was the conflicts within the group, including those around the question of cooperation with other groups (cf. Bisky 2012). Gabriele Zimmer, also of the LINKE, who succeeded him, published an article in November 2012 under the title “Solidarity in the European Left”, in which she stated that the fact that the GUE/NGL brought together such different left parties was both its greatest strength and its greatest weakness. It was, she wrote, a problem that “a number of parties represented in [the GUE/NGL] hardly show any great wish for an increase in the European cooperation and integration of the left. The parties’ executive boards struggle to see themselves as simultaneously local, regional, national, European and global actors. Yet, if parties wanted to learn how to be actors of this type, they would be doing everything to preserve the GUE/NGL, shape and use it as an opportunity for the European integration of the left. They would only nominate candidates for the European Parliament with a capacity to communicate and cooperate” (cf. Zimmer 2012).

However, she added, this was not the case, since many parties did not see the EU as a level at which to engage in political discussion and debate: “It is quite unrealistic to expect of the GUE/NGL, in the way it is now structured, that it can unite its members’ different inherited approaches to politics, i.e. that it can overcome the barriers and differences existing between the different political cultures. This is not the task of the candidates nominated by their parties who are expected to act according to election programmes adopted by the parties. Some parties want to view the European Parliament only as a provider of additional resources for their national agendas and political struggles” (ibid. 2012).

Gabriele Zimmer did not go into any details as to exactly which parties she was talking about. The only party which openly proclaims that it works to oppose the European structures of left parties such as the EL is the Greek KKE (cf. KKE 2005 & 2010a).

### **Policy of alliances at the European level:**

The GUE/NGL has, over the years of its existence, developed permanent structures of cooperation with various actors. These include the World Parliamentary Forum (WPF), initiated by former Political Group Chairperson Francis Wurtz (PCF) together with Brazilian Member of Congress Tarcísio Zimmermann at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001; it is to this day coordinated by the GUE/NGL. The WPF meets in the framework of the World Social Forums; moreover, some MEPs work in the World Parliamentary Network. Members of Parliament from all over the world, mostly from left, social democratic and green parties, took part in these gatherings held in recent years in Cancún, Mumbai, Caracas, Bamako, Nairobi, Belem, Dakar and most recently in Tunis in 2013. The invita-

tion to Tunis in 2013 contains a self-description of the WPF as a “process rather than an event. A number of its members work together in the World Parliamentary Network, and they try to find, year after year, common positions on topics such as peace and a world based on economic justice. The WPF subscribes to the Charter of the World Social Forum, and its aim is to establish better cooperation among progressive parliamentarians interested in working together, and interacting with social movements and existing networks with a view to build up alternatives to the neoliberal globalization” (World Parliamentary Forum 2013).

Participating in the World Social Forum and the World Parliamentary Forum in Tunis in 2013 were nine GUE/NGL MEPs: Gabriele Zimmer and Helmut Scholz (LINKE), Marisa Matias and Alda Sousa (BE), Willy Meyer (IU), Paul Murphy (Irish SP), Søren Søndergaard (ERG), Marie-Christine Vergiat (FG) and Inês Zuber (PCP) (cf. *ibid.*).

The GUE/NGL also has close contacts with trade unions. In addition to formal ties to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and to the International

Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), it engages in regular exchanges with leftist trade unionists from the Forum Social Europe – Network of European Trade Unionists (FSE). Once or twice a year, the GUE/NGL and the FSE organize joint seminars on economic, social and democracy policy issues at the EP. The last joint event took place in April 2013 under the title “Focus on Central and Eastern Europe”, with the discussions focusing on economic, social and political developments in Eastern Europe, and the role of unions and the political left (cf. GUE/NGL 2013c).

The REALPE network, which brings together leftist local politicians from across Europe, also holds regular gatherings (cf. REALPE 2013).

Some left parties which currently do not yet have representatives in the EP are associated with the GUE/NGL. These include the Italian PRC and PdCI, the Finnish VAS, the Luxemburg DL, and parties from non-EU-member countries, such as the Norwegian Socialistisk Venstre Parti (SV/Socialist Left Party) and the Swiss Parti Suisse du Travail (PST/Swiss Workers Party) (cf. GUE/NGL 2012f).

## 4 THE EUROPEAN POLICY POSITIONS OF THE LEFT PARTIES

### 4.1 SYRIZA SYNASPISMÓS RIZOSPASTIKÍS ARISTERÁS – ENOTIKÓ KOINONIKÓ MÉTOPO COALITION OF THE RADICAL LEFT – UNITARY SOCIAL FRONT – GREECE

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2004) <sup>6</sup>
European structures	UEL, NELF, EACL
Results, 2009 European elections	4.7%/1 seat
Results, 2004 European elections	4.16%/1 seat
Result of national elections, 2012	26.89%/71 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	Yes (KKE)

#### Key statements on European integration:

Since the debt crisis and the austerity policies implemented by the EU have caused great economic and social damage to Greece, SYRIZA lead candidate Alexis Tsipras, who is also vice president of the EL, has become the internationally familiar face of the European left. Under his leadership, SYRIZA presented an alternative programme to the austerity policies in the national elections in June 2012, and became the second strongest political force in the country, surpassing the social-democratic PASOK. Since then, Tsipras has been travelling throughout Europe and even to the United States, holding numerous speeches, giving interviews and publishing articles to present his alternative plans for solving the crisis in Greece and the EU; he has appeared in the *Financial Times*, *Le Monde*, *the Guardian*, *the New York Times* and *Die Zeit*. In an article for the British *Guardian*, he wrote in October 2012 regarding the EU: “Europe needs a new plan to deepen European integration. Such a plan must challenge neoliberalism and lead European economies back to recovery. It should prioritize the needs of workers, pensioners and the unemployed, not the interests of multinational companies and bankrupt bankers ... It is the only plan that can restore the European vision of social justice, peace and solidarity” (Tsipras 2012).

The national Election Programme of June 2012 includes only vague indications for an alternative EU policy, mostly with regard to matters directly involving the Greek debt crisis, such as Eurobonds. The goal of the SYRIZA economic programme is Greek “participation in the Euro Zone and the European Union on politically equal terms” (cf. Synaspismos 2012).

In spite of Tsipras’ strategy of continued Greek integration into the EU, European policy positions are not without controversy in SYRIZA, which is an alliance of a number of parties and tendencies. Internal disputes over whether the fundamental policy of the alliance should be sovereigntist or federalist may also have been one reason why the most important SYRIZA member party, Synaspismos (SYN), won only one EP

seat in 2009, rather than the four they had been expecting (cf. Marioulas 2010: p. 279).

#### Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:

The economic programme is the section of the SYRIZA programme for the national parliamentary elections of 2012 with the most reference to EU policy. With this programme, the party has pursued three goals: “The first is to relieve the people who are suffering, the victims of this crisis. The second is stabilization and recovery. And the third is the implementation of a programme of radical reforms and transformations, through which an effective reintegration of our country into the European future and into the international division of labour” (SYRIZA 2012: p. 2).

SYRIZA also demands that the Greek reform policy be embedded into a European framework in order to achieve mutual strengthening. Greece should remain within the common currency. SYRIZA pursues the following concrete measures directly related to the EU:

Interest-free loans should be issued to member countries by way of the European Investment Bank (EIB), or some other programme, to permit these countries to counter the recession by means of investments. The memoranda of the Troika should be replaced by plans for social reconstruction, economic restructuring in fiscal stabilization. Debt relief should be modelled upon the London Agreement on German External Debt of 1953, and there should be a “Marshall Plan” to help Greece and the other countries affected by the crisis build a productive economy. A debt adaptation solution could be found in the framework of a common EU strategy on the public debt of all member countries, and, if that is unfeasible, it should be accomplished by way of bilateral negotiations. Eurobonds should be an additional financial instrument to support the Greek economy. The financial means provided from EU funds should be better used, and especially measures for relieving extreme poverty should be funded.

A pan-European mechanism should be set up to guarantee bank savings. Bilateral agreements for taxing the foreign holdings of Greeks should be concluded with Switzerland and other countries, combined with measures for halting the flight of capital from Greek bank accounts. Cooperation with non-EU countries should also be used to contribute to economic reconstruction (cf. SYRIZA 2012).

#### Alliance policy at the European level:

There exist close contacts between SYRIZA and such social movements as ATTAC, both in Greece and in Europe, and much overlapping of personnel. In 2006,

<sup>6</sup> At that time, as Synaspismos.

Synaspismos and Attac helped organize the World Social Forum in Athens (cf. Marioulas 2010: pp. 278–279). Numerous representatives of the party were also present at the ensuing Social Forums, including the most recent World Social Forum in Tunisia in March 2013 (cf. e.g. Transform 2013). SYRIZA supports the European Antifascist Manifesto (Antifascism Europe 2013), initiated by Greek economist Yorgos Mitralias, with the aid of which a European antifascist movement is to be launched. This is also designed to support immigrants increasingly threatened by the resurgent Nazi party *Chrysi Avgi* (Golden Dawn). In its search for a solution strategy for the difficult situation in Greece, SYRIZA is in close contact and exchange with the German Left Party (LINKE), the French Left Front (FG) and its partner parties in the EL, particularly by way of the EL and especially EL Vice President Tsirpas.

#### Priority accorded EU policy:

SYRIZA's rise to the position of the most powerful opposition force against the austerity policy in Greece, the direct linkage of the national future of Greece with the future of the EU and its political orientation, and the rejection of European austerity policies by SYRIZA, together with Tsirpas' popularity throughout Greece, Europe and beyond, have all contributed to making European policy a central issue for the party. At a meeting in Berlin in January 2013 at which the LINKE and the EL launched their campaign for the year, Tsirpas spoke, and called Greece "a laboratory of neoliberal barbarism in Europe" (LINKE 2013c). Accordingly, SYRIZA calls its own programme a "compass for the European left" and for the entire EU (cf. Synaspismos 2012). At the presentation of the economic reform programme on June 1, 2012, SYRIZA MP Yiannis Dragasakis said: "From the outset we have stated that our programme and our struggle is at the same time both national and European. From the outset we said that we want to change the blueprint, both for Greece and for Europe. And that is why our victory on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June will be a boost for positive changes for the people across Europe. And the path Europe will follow will in turn influence our endeavour" (SYRIZA 2012: pp. 4–5).

#### 4.2 IU – IZQUIERDA UNIDA – UNITED LEFT – SPAIN

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2004)
European structures	NELF
Results, 2009 European elections	3.71%/1 seat
Results, 2004 European elections	4.15%/1 seat
Result of national elections, 2011	7.02%/11 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	No

#### Key statements on European integration:

The United Left Party is an alliance of a number of left parties and groupings founded in 1986, the most

important single member of which is the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) (cf. Heilig 2009). After the Second World War, the PCE, together with the Italian PCI, was an important representative of Euro-communism. In spite of the open conflict within the party regarding the correct course in European policy which has been going on since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the position of the party has generally remained stable: the IU's orientation is "substantively positive toward the process of European integration, and it sees the European level as an extended area for the activity of left politics" (Heilig 2009: p. 145; cf. also Schulz 2005: pp. 365; 367).

The IU pursues a federalist course with regard to the EU, while at the same time rejecting the neoliberal orientation of the existing EU treaties. For instance the slogan for the call for the May Day demonstrations in 2009 was, "More Europe, with more rights and more democracy" (cf. IU 2009a). The IU rejects the Lisbon Treaty, since it stipulates a neoliberal economic policy that gives the governments too much power. Instead, a new, democratic constitutional process should be initiated (ibid.). General Coordinator Cayo Lara announced at the 10<sup>th</sup> Federal Assembly of the IU that the EL should work toward an anti-capitalist majority in the EP (cf. EL 2012d). Codetermination procedures, with the EP and the Council of Ministers as equal legislative bodies, should be expanded, and the relationships between national parliaments and the EP strengthened. MEP Willy Meyer, coordinator for international policy of the IU, announced in June 2012 that the IU supported "a process for the refoundation of Europe in which the citizens would elect a European Parliament which would draft a new constitution that would put an end to the undemocratic structure which has placed Europe under the dictates of the IMF and the financial powers" (cf. IU 2012b).

The IU demands that the EU intervene in such policy areas as labour law, wage setting, and taxation policy, in order to achieve a social transformation of the EU. The ECB should be democratically controlled, and should finance the member countries directly. Moreover, a European Ministry of Finance should be established. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Federal Assembly of the IU, Meyer called for an open conference for the further development of the vision of a social Europe to set a counterpoint to the dominant neoliberal concept, among other things as a contribution to the work of the EL going into the European elections of 2014.

However, there are also tendencies in the party which, in response to the crisis in Spain, are considering sovereigntist concepts for a solution. At the proposed conference on the EU, one of the questions to be discussed is one that former IU General Coordinator Gaspar Llamazares has raised: "[U]nder what conditions should the IU stop supporting Spanish membership of the Euro Zone, in whose name much of the horrors of austerity are being visited on 'peripheral' Europe?" (Nichols 2013).

### **Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

In a declaration adopted by the EU at its 10<sup>th</sup> Federal Assembly of December 14–16, 2012, it is stated that the EU is liberalizing the markets and the financial system, and supporting the privatization of strategic sectors. The common currency, it says, was introduced with no EU Ministry of Finance, and no central bank which could function like the US Federal Reserve Board. An EU integration for the benefit of the people was, it concluded, not possible in this manner.

Rather it said, the ECB should be democratically controlled under a new EU constitution, and be mandated not only to limit inflation, but also to support sustainable development and full employment. Capital should flow into the public sector rather than into the financial sector, in order to finance the productive sector in a manner supporting social and environmental priorities. A public and social control system of the banking and financial sector should be introduced.

By means of a coordinated EU policy of direct progressive taxation instead of indirect taxes, the destructive tax competition between member countries should be prevented. Speculative capital should be taxed, among other things in order to finance a European fund for social development, which should be subject to the guidelines and controls of the European Parliament. Capital flows in the EU could be controlled and taxed. A “Tobin tax” should be imposed to finance initiatives and innovative strategic sectors, in order to enable a sustainable, just development and the growth of employment. The rich, the large companies and the transnational corporations should be taxed in order to achieve top-down redistribution. Value-added taxes should be harmonized EU wide, in order to keep such basic services as water, energy, transportation and communications affordable. Financial crime should be prosecuted in all its forms, and punished; for this purpose, all necessary means should be made available to national tax assessors, and the European tax authority should be created. A massive move against tax havens should be launched.

The IU stated in its declaration that the European left proposes the creation of a mechanism for the equalization of production between member countries in order to reduce the gap between exporting countries such as Germany and importing countries such as Spain, since the existing imbalance is driving the latter into excessive debt and a massive trade deficit. Utilities and strategic sectors, including the credit and financial system, should be nationalized, and privatization reversed. A new system is needed to create general prosperity at the European level (cf. on all these points: IU 2012c).

In its programme for the European elections in 2009, the IU criticized the Lisbon Strategy (the predecessor of the 2020 Strategy) as misguided. Instead, it demanded a “true industrial strategy” for the creation of qualitatively high-quality jobs, environmental compatibility, and the improvement of training, research and devel-

opment. It said that equalized production should be achieved in all regions of the EU. Moreover, the minimum wage based on 60% of the national average wage should be introduced in all member countries. The conditions for wage negotiations and the rights of workers should be strengthened, in view of the rulings of the European Court of Justice (EC J) on the EU Posted Workers Directive, and the right to strike should be explicitly guaranteed throughout the EU. In its European Election Programme, the IU rejected the Working Time Directive, since it permitted total flexibilization of working conditions. It called for a 35-hour week with a maximum of five hours overtime, so that a total working week of 40 hours would not be exceeded; all standards at the European and national levels should be oriented toward that. The retirement age should be 60, although it should be flexible due to the differing stipulations in the different member countries. Minimum incomes and minimum pensions should be coordinated with minimum wages at 60% of average national wages, and should rise together with the latter. Corporations in search of cheap labour should no longer be allowed to exploit immigrants; an ordinance should stipulate that they be permitted to work normal jobs. EU countries should impose an environmental tax on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and international transport in order to slow down climate change and protect the environment and biodiversity (cf. on all these points: IU 2009b).

### **Alliance policy at the European level:**

The IU is a founding member of the EL, and its member, Maite Mola (PCE), is one of the vice presidents; she is also the EL coordinator. The IU has one MEP in the GUE/NGL Political Group, Willy Meyer. Through its member party the PCE, the IU has close ties to Spain’s largest trade union federation Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), the Workers’ Commissions, a member of the ETUC and the ITUC (cf. CCOO; Heilig 2009: p. 144).

The group Alternative Space (EA) was part of the IU until 2009, and at the European level was part of the EACL. After leaving the IU, it formed the Anti-Capitalist Left (IA), in order to contest the European elections independently (cf. EA 2008).

The movement *Indignados* (“the outraged ones”, also known as M15, with reference to the demonstrations of May 15, 2011) was founded in Spain, but is now active Europe-wide. The name refers to a polemic by Stéphane Hessel of France, entitled *Time for Outrage* [2011], and the movement is an important point of reference for the IU. In October 2011, it convened a series of public assemblies to adopt a *Convocatoria Social*, or “Social Call”, an attempt to politically incorporate a social movement into a process of open participation (cf. e.g. Resolution no. 2 for a “democratic revolution” of the “Call”, with direct reference to M 15: IU 2012d). After the Spanish government submitted an application for assistance to the EFSF (COM 2012c) in June 2012, the IU joined the *Indignados*

movement, trade unions and social organizations in a general counter-mobilization (cf. IU 2012e). MEP Willy Meyer was a member of the GUE/NGL delegation to the World Social Forum in Tunis in March 2013 (cf. IU 2013).

**Priority accorded to EU policy:**

The IU traditionally has a strong interest in European policy issues, a fact rooted to no small extent in the “leading role” which the PCE played in the development of Euro-communism among Western European communist parties (cf. Schulz 2005: p. 365). During the financial and economic crisis, and in view of the resulting Spanish state indebtedness, the European policy dimension became more important than ever for all political actors in Spain. While the Election Programme of 2011 contains no specific chapter on the EU, it did contain many demands with reference to EU policy. These are concentrated primarily on common agricultural policy, common foreign and security policy and EU fiscal policy. In the political document of the 10<sup>th</sup> Federal Assembly, the analysis of the crisis of the neo-liberal EU and its implications for the situation in Spain was the most important issue (cf. IU 2012f).

**4.3 BE – BLOCO ESQUERDA – LEFT BLOCK – PORTUGAL**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2005)
European structures	NELF, EACL
Results, 2009 European elections	10.72%/3 seats
Results, 2004 European elections	4.91%/1 seat
Result of national elections, 2011	5.19%/8 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	Yes (PCP)

**Key statements on European integration:**

The Left Block (BE), founded in 1999, has a generally federalist position with regard to the future of the EU. In 2007, the BE demanded in the concluding resolution of its 5<sup>th</sup> Party Assembly that the 2009 elections to the European Parliament be taken as the point of departure for a new democratic development of the EU. After the rejection of the European Constitution, which it saw as an attempt to impose authoritarian liberalism and the domination of the largest EU countries, the BE wanted the EP to submit a new draft basic treaty for the EU, which was to be voted upon in national referenda in each member country after public discussions (cf. BE 2007). In the Election Programme for the national parliamentary election of 2009, the BE called for a social Europe based on common decision-making and the disempowerment of national governments: “A de-governmentalized Europe based on two chambers with the right of legislative initiative is a Europe in which the common interest would weigh greater than in mere negotiations between governments based on the ‘give-and-take’ principle. That would be a Europe in

which the left and the social struggles and movements could unite” (BE 2009).<sup>7</sup>

The BE rejects the Treaty of Lisbon for the same reasons as it did the Constitutional Treaty. In the EU of liberalized markets, public services are being privatized, and government activity subordinated to the private sector. However, the BE sees striving for a social Europe with European public services and policies dedicated to the creation of jobs as being of great significance for Portugal (cf. *ibid.*).

After Portugal was forced to apply for a bailout from the EFSM in May 2011 due to the financial and economic crisis, and to implement a Memorandum of Understanding (COM 2011) which involved a large number of social cutbacks, the BE’s positioning with respect to European integration changed. The resolution of the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Assembly in 2013 sounds much less optimistic about a federal community policy of the EU. Although the BE does call for further centralization of many policy areas, including the communalization of debt, an EU framework for tax policy, minimum social and wage standards, and control of the ECB by elected institutions, it also now criticizes communal decision-making processes in both their variations – within the EU structures, or via bilateral/multilateral treaties – and defends the sovereignty of the member states: “This crisis shows that the alternative between intergovernmentality and federalism as political models for the governance of the EU is false, and that both are authoritarian. A European Union piloted by the intergovernmental game will only bring European deconstruction. European construction should respect the cultural identity and sovereignty of all States” (BE 2013).

In June 2011, MEP Rui Tavares switched to the Greens/EFA Political Group; he had been elected as an independent candidate on the BE list in 2009 along with Marisa Matias and Miguel Portas, who died in 2012 and was succeeded by Alda Sousa. One reason he gave for this move was that he had originally been elected into the EP on a pro-European ticket; however, he said, in the GUE/NGL Political Group, to which both the BE in the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) belong, for each federalist there were two or three national sovereigntists (cf. Tavares 2011).

**Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

The working paper of the Political Commission of the PCE, titled “On the crisis and how to overcome it”, of May 23, 2010 describes the financial crisis and its effects for Greece, Spain and Portugal as a result of finance-driven economic globalization (cf. BE 2010). It identifies three conceivable strategies for the EU for dealing with the crisis: 1. The use of the euro as a means to maintain the domination of financial capital over the economy, which it calls “the Merkel govern-

<sup>7</sup> Translated from a German translation.

ment strategy”; 2. The disintegration of the euro; and 3. Social struggle against the European austerity policy which should result in a reform of the EU. The PE considers an exit from the euro as neither realistic, considering the powerful class interests of the respective national middle classes, nor, due to the possible impact of the working class, as desirable: “The choices before Portuguese left-wing parties are not about leaving the Euro or not, but on how to bring forward alternative policies which create jobs and implement democratic decision methods to fight finance speculation, refusing to accept the European Austerity Plan as a starting point ... The first thing the left must argue for are national alternatives which are also European” (Ibid.).

A resolution of the National Council of the BE titled “A Programme against Debt Tyranny” of July 7, 2012, the financial collapse of Spain and the permanent threat to Italy show that the EU needs a financing mechanism independent of the financial markets. Such a mechanism would have to consist of the issuance of common securities (Eurobonds), and a changed role of the ECB, which should finance the EU countries directly as a “lender of last resort”. The BE rejects the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG, or Fiscal Stability Treaty), since it transfers control of national budgets to the ECB and the Commission, and bans anti-cyclical fiscal policies. The BE wants to abolish the TSCG and replace it with an EU cooperation mechanism for jobs. The BE demands that Portugal terminate the Memorandum signed with the IMF, the ECB and the EU, and the austerity measures it contains, since it believes that these increase unemployment and indebtedness, and force the sell-out of strategically important state enterprises to private investors. Instead, Portugal should restructure its debt, renegotiate the conditions and repayment schedules, and write off debt so as to reduce its total indebtedness to below 60% of GDP. Moreover, the BE has in the resolution identified two fundamental structural problems of Portugal: the lack of financing for the Portuguese economy and the foreign trade deficit. The former should be resolved by means of direct ECB credits (cf. BE 2012).

In the Resolution “The Left against the Debt” adopted at the 7<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of the BE of March 15, 2013 the following five measures by the EU are proposed to solve the debt crisis:

- “The pooling of the debts through the emission of European debt securities
- A more robust Union Budget, which would permit common projects for employment and the ‘upwards’ levelling of social rights
- Combating fiscal dumping throughout the European Union, establishing minimum taxation thresholds on capital and eliminating the tax havens within the European space, and imposing a tax on financial transfers
- Make the European Central Bank subordinate to the elected institutions, centred on the creation of

employment, and guaranteeing the financing of the States

- European social minima, and a policy of coordination for increasing salaries (cf. BE 2013).”

**Alliance policy at the European level:**

The BE is an active force within the EL and within the GUE/NGL in the EP. Moreover, parts of the BE are networked with the EACL. Another part of the alliance policy of the BE is cooperation with international social movements. For instance, MEP Alda Sousa travelled to Tunis in 2013 as part of the delegation of the GUE/NGL to the World Social Forum. The Resolution of the 7<sup>th</sup> National Assembly in March 2013, states: “The left should fight for the peripheries to present a united front.” It also called for a “more dense collaboration with our allies of the European Left Party, as well as with all current socialists, in Europe and in the World, with those with whom we can construct common debates and agendas” (Ibid.).

**Priority accorded to EU policy:**

The recent adjustment of European policy of the BE can be attributed to the economic and social consequences of the conditions imposed by the European Council for handling the Portuguese debt problems. After this experience, the BE is more sceptical toward the policy of community solutions at the EU level that it was in 2009. The BE now sees the federalist concept for the EU with a strong EP at its core, for which it campaigned in 2009, as just as authoritarian as the intergovernmental policy-making procedures of the European Council. Since the escalation of the national debt crisis in Portugal and the application by the Portuguese government for loans from the ESFS/ESM in 2011, fighting back against the austerity programme imposed by the Troika and the European Council as a condition for those loans is the most important issue for the BE. The party is however continuing to support demands for social EU standards and the centralization of fiscal policies at the EU level. Since the beginning of the crisis, the BE has published a number of resolutions and working papers for solutions to the debt crisis, many in English. This shows how important political communications across Portugal’s borders are for the BE.

**4.4 PRC – PARTITO DELLA RIFONDAZIONE COMUNISTA – COMMUNIST REFOUNDATION PARTY – ITALY**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2004)
European structures	NELF, EACL
Results, 2009 European elections	3.38%/0 seats (Anti-Capitalist List)
Results, 2004 European elections	6.06%/5 seats
Result of national elections, 2013	2.25%/0 seats (RC alliance)
National government participation	No
Competing left party	Yes (SEL)

**Key statements on European integration:**

The disastrous electoral defeat of the PRC in the 2008 elections was followed in early 2009 by the split-off of the “Bertinotti faction” within the party, which included the current chairperson of the Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (SEL; see below), Nichi Vendola, and former MEP (until 2009) Roberto Musacchio (cf. Hagemann 2010: pp. 234–235). As a result, two leftist parties, the PRC and the newly founded “Left and Freedom” (SL, forerunner of today’s SEL) ran in the European elections of 2009. Since both failed to achieve the 4% threshold, the Italian left, once the driving force for the foundation of the EL, no longer had any seats in the EP. Until 2009, the PRC delegation had boasted six MEPs, making it the strongest in the GUE/NGL.

For the national elections in 2013, the PRC united with the PDcl and other smaller parties to form the “Civil Revolution” (RC) under the leadership of anti-Mafia State’s Attorney Antonia Ingroia. The PRC was thus not visible in the electoral campaign as an independent force. The alliance achieved only 2.25% of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies and only 1.79% for the Senate, thus again failing to achieve the minimum threshold. In its common Election Programme for 2013, the RC stated that the EU had originally been a project for improving and equalizing the conditions of life for 500 million people; instead, however the austerity policies of the ECB, the IMF and the EU Commission had caused the dismantling of social standards, the elimination of workers’ rights, and poverty for millions of people. In opposition to this, the RC demanded a strengthening of social and federal-democratic integration: “The Europe that we want is a carrier of social justice within its borders, and a supporter of peace in the world. They want to make it independent of the financial markets, and to equip it with truly democratic institutions elected by all citizens of the EU” (RC 2013). These statements are largely identical with the positions supported by the reformist wing of the PRC at the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress at the end of 2011 (cf. PRC 2011a).

**Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

The concluding declaration of the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the PRC states that the EU has stipulated the dogmas of neoliberalism in its treaties; this has led to a gradual erosion of the European social model, which had previously been characterized by the interaction between social rights and progressive forms of democracy. The party’s goal is the new foundation of the EU as a democratic and social union. However, its proposals with regard to EU policy are quite vague at this point, presumably because this position is a compromise. The documentation – three competing position papers – on the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the PRC shows that with respect to European policy, three different camps faced off: one reform-oriented, one traditional and one revolutionary.

The first of these position papers, the “reformist” one, demanded far-reaching reforms of the existing EU. The Statute of the ECB could be changed in order to subordinate it to the democratic control of the European Parliament. Moreover, the ECB should orient its monetary policy toward the goal of full employment, member states should be directly financed through the purchase of government securities on the primary market, and community securities (Eurobonds) should be issued. A financial transaction tax, the abolition of tax havens and the strict regulation of financial markets should be implemented. The GATT and WTO regulations should be supplemented by workers’ rights standards. A common tax system of the EU and the common economic policy oriented toward full employment should be established, supplemented by measures for the prevention of off-shoring (cf. PRC 2011b).

The second, “traditionalist”, position paper, by contrast, stated that the unification of different economic areas such as those in the EU and in the Euro Zone, was not possible under capitalist conditions. The EU, it said, was a “club of capitalists” dominated by the banks and monopoly corporations in the most powerful member countries. The Euro Zone would necessarily break apart, even if some parts of the ruling classes should attempt to prevent this by means of a common economic policy and by Eurobonds – an approach supported, for example, by the social democratic parties. The PRC should oppose all steps toward European integration, since these involved further attacks on the workers’ movement and on the welfare state (cf. PRC 2011c).

The third, “revolutionary”, position paper demanded a break-out from the “imperialist cage” of the EU and the creation of a new Communist International beyond the EL, in order to stand up to the attacks of globalizing capitalism (cf. PRC 2011d).

The RC’s Common Programme for the national parliamentary election in March 2013 largely reflected the demands of the reformist wing of the PRC. In it, the RC demanded that the ECB become a “lender of last resort”, meaning it should buy state bonds on the primary market, and not force member countries already mired in the crisis still deeper into that crisis by imposing neoliberal conditions. A tax on financial transactions should be introduced. Moreover, commercial banks should be separated from investment banks. A debt audit should be carried out, and the Fiscal Stability Treaty renegotiated. Tax avoidance, corruption and the underground economy should be suppressed, among other things, in order to correct Italy’s debt quota, the ratio of the national debt to the GDP. At the same time, and ecological reconstruction of the economy should be pushed forward by promoting resource-efficient and job-intensive projects. Fiscal and wage policy in the EU should be oriented toward convergence. Indicators for the development of social welfare and ecological sustainability should be developed (cf. RC 2013).



**Alliance policy at the European level:**

In the Conclusions of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress, the PRC demanded that the European left stand against the tax by the EU against workers' rights at the level at which these attacks are being launched. For this reason, it would be necessary to strengthen the EU (cf. PRC 2011a). Presumably due to the weak poll results of the RC Alliance prior to the national parliamentary election of 2013, the chairpersons of the PRC's EL sister parties on February 23, 2013 published a call for support entitled "The Party of the European Left encourages the Italian people to vote for the list of Civil Revolution, against neoliberalism"; however, it had no effect (cf. EL 2013d).

**Priority accorded to EU policy:**

The election campaign in Italy at the beginning of 2013 was closely linked to politics at the EU level. This was largely due to the acute national crisis situation, and the inauguration of the Monti government at the end of 2011, which was charged with carrying out reforms without having been legitimized in parliamentary elections to do so. In the documents for the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the PRC in January 2011, too, European policy was very broadly discussed, and in the Common Programme of the RC for the 2013 election, it had priority over all other issues. Even the anti-Mafia policy of lead candidate Ingroia took second place to it, an indication of how large the issue loomed in the election campaign.

**4.5 LINKE – DIE LINKE – THE LEFT PARTY – GERMANY**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2004)
European structures	UEL, NELF
Results, 2009 European elections	7.5%/8 seats
Results, 2004 European elections	6.1%/7 seats
Result of national elections, 2013	8.6%/61 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	No

**Key statements on European integration:**

The LINKE in their majority support a federalist position with regard to the EU integration process. However, they consider the foundation of the EU after the entry into effect of the Treaty of Lisbon as being a faulty design, as they do the, Fiscal Stability Treaty, the EFSF and the ESM (cf. LINKE 2013a). Under the title "How do we want to radically remodel the European Union?", the 2011 Erfurt Party Programme states: "The euro crisis delivered further proof that the EU treaties are of no benefit for a democratic, social, ecological and peaceful Europe, but on the contrary help to exacerbate the crisis" (LINKE 2011, Engl.).

The LINKE therefore wants to undertake a revision of those elements of the European treaties which it sees as "militaristic, undemocratic and neoliberal". It thus

positions itself as rejecting the current political constitution of the EU, while at the same time fundamentally supporting further European integration, and also supporting the EU as a level at which political formulation takes place: "The decisions adopted at the EU level are of crucial importance for safeguarding peace, for economic and social development and for solving the ecological challenges on the continent and beyond. That being so, left policy in Germany now more than ever must take the European dimension into consideration and make suggestions of its own for shaping European policy. The European Union is an indispensable political activity level for DIE LINKE" (ibid).

One important reference document on European policy issues is a 2007 memorandum of the Left Party Bundestag Group (cf. LINKE 2007) which demands an alternative constitutional treaty giving the EU greater weight as a key political decision-making level. In the European Election Programme of 2009, the LINKE demanded that the European Parliament seize the initiative for a new European constitutional process. They wanted a system of division of powers in a federally, subsidiarity-based European governing system. "The European Parliament should have equal rights with the Council in decision-making, and receive the right of legislative initiative. We generally demand the right of co-determination of the European Parliament as soon as an area of policy is transferred to the competence of the European Union. For those areas already under community responsibility, this must be implemented now. The Commission President of the European Commission should be elected directly by the Parliament" (LINKE 2009a).

The political demands in the Party Programme also suggest a federal development of the EU. These include the enlargement of the EU budget and an expansion of regulation by the EU in the areas of the economy, social affairs and taxation. The EU is also assigned an important role at the global scale: It should use its "formative potential in the interest of millions of people all over the world" (cf. LINKE 2011). The EU is thus seen as an important political actor on the world scale – however, only inasmuch as it supports and represents the principles of democracy and social and ecological sustainability, and peaceful conflict resolution.

In spite of the federalistic basic line of the party, there are disagreements within it with respect to its positioning on EU integration. One indication of that can be seen in the first draft for the Election Programme for the Bundestag election of September 2013. There, it is stated that in view of the current crisis policies of the EU and the neoliberal treaty foundations, "there are some who want to hold back in the struggle for Europe in favour of nation-state-based regulations" (LINKE 2013a); that formulation is not in the final version of the Programme. Party Vice Chairperson and MP Sara Wagenknecht, and party Executive Committee Member and MEP Sabine Wils have

expressed tendentially sovereigntist opinions. Wils voiced her rejection of Social Democratic EP President Martin Schulz with the explanation that the EP, "according to his concept, should attain greater weight," with which position, she said, Schultz was supporting "the strengthening of rulership remote from the citizenry, in opposition to national parliaments. For people in the EU, things are not going to get any easier if not only the EU Commission, but also an EU Parliament operating under the cloak of democracy, tries to skin them in the context of the current crisis of finance capitalism" (Wils 2012).

Wagenknecht, herself a former MEP (2004–'09), expressed similar views in an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung*: "nor would it be a good idea to surrender more competences to the European Parliament. A multinational parliament in which the representatives don't even have a common language, and which is also located far from the states and constituencies which they represent, is much less capable of being monitored by the public than the national parliament. It will always be more remote from the citizens, more removed from them, and hence easier to manipulate by well-heeled lobbies" (Wagenknecht 2012).

In the Election Programme an attempt was made to counter the conflict between sovereigntist and federalist views in the party with the formulation that "For the LINKE, it is not a matter of deciding for or against one or the other – we have to struggle for good social standards both in Europa and in Germany." (LINKE 2013d: p. 49).

In late April 2013, former party Chairperson Oskar Lafontaine sparked a continuing debate within the party (cf. *Neues Deutschland* 2013) with an article that demanded "we need a new European currency system", so as to use controlled revaluations and devaluations, together with capital transaction controls, to prevent a 20 to 30% loss of incomes in the Euro Zone countries of Southern Europe due to the economic adaptation process (cf. Lafontaine 2013). That initiative was interpreted as a reaction to the foundation of the right-wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD), which demands that Germany leave the currency union. The two chairpersons of the LINKE rejected Lafontaine's initiative. Bernd Riexinger announced: "A withdrawal from the euro is not going to happen with the LINKE" (Riexinger 2013); his colleague Katja Kipping issued a similar statement (cf. Kipping 2013).

#### **Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

As a reaction to the financial and economic crisis in the EU, the LINKE wants to take risky financial products off the market and ban short-selling, hedge funds and private equity funds. Tax havens should be closed and capital transaction controls introduced. The party demands the introduction of a European tax on financial transactions, the revenues from which should go to development aid. The exchange rate of the euro with

other currencies should be regulated by the introduction of "target zones" (cf. LINKE 2013b).

The Bundestag election programme in 2013 states that the LINKE want to put an end to low-wage site competition strategies among EU member countries ("wage dumping") (cf. LINKE 2013d, p. 6). For this purpose, wage, tax and social policies should be coordinated; a "fresh start toward a democratically controlled economic development" is needed (ibid, p. 50). Since this demand is underpinned with the statement "the German Confederation of Labour, too, demands a 'Marshall Plan for Europe'" (cf. DTB 2012), it is to be assumed that "democratic controls" means public investments. Thus, public and social services and a "socio-ecological conversion" (cf. LINKE 2013d, p. 50) is to be supported. Member countries should make a commitment to "supporting welfare and prosperity for all" (ibid.), by integrating the European social charter of the Council of Europe as a binding provision in the new constitutional treaty. The LINKE "wants to work toward minimum standards for a European wage rate and social system. That means that the specific German restrictions on the right to strike must be abolished" (ibid., p. 51). In this way, the LINKE wants to introduce the right to political strikes and general strikes in Germany via the detour of Europe. Publicly supported media should also be established at the European level, and the standard of basic rights in the areas of data protection, antidiscrimination, legal aid and freedom to travel should be improved. Moreover, the EU should limit weapons exports, and abolish the Mediterranean border protection agency Frontex and the Dublin II provisions on refugees in favour of a "humane asylum system" (cf. ibid.).

#### **Alliance strategies:**

The LINKE sees itself as a party of the movement, and maintains contacts to left-wing trade unionists, ATTAC and peace, anti-nuclear, anti-fascist and feminist movements. The Bundestag Group has established its own Social Movements Coordination Office. The Bundestag Election Programme in 2013 indicated that social and democratic improvements would be achieved in close cooperation between extra-parliamentary social movements and left forces in Parliament.

The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, which is close to the party, works in the same manner by maintaining a "Parties and Social Movements Discussion Group" (cf. RLS undated). Representatives of the party and the Foundation regularly take part in the European and World Social Forums, as well as in such actions as the Alter Summit in June 2013 in Athens, or the Blockupy protests against the European banks and the ECB in Frankfurt (cf. Alter Summit 2013; Blockupy 2013). With respect to alliance policy with the social movements in Germany, the LINKE is primarily in competition with the Greens, who succeeded in recruiting two prominent activists, Sven Giegold, previously of ATTAC, and Barbara Lochbihler, General Secretary of Amnesty

International Germany from 1999–2009, as (ultimately successful) candidates for the European Parliament in the 2009 elections.

#### Priority accorded to EU policy:

The current party Executive Committee sees issues of European policy as being of great significance in the political debate. In the “Electoral Strategy of the Left Party for the Election Year 2013–2014”, the assumption is “that in the 2013–2014 election year, all elections, i.e. the state elections ..., the Bundestag election and the European election, will be dominated by the European crisis. In all cases, the decision will be determined by three issues: What will happen to Europe? What will happen to the euro, to our money?, and What will happen to us? The electoral-strategic answer of the LINKE must be a consistent answer throughout our state, federal and European policies to these urgent questions of the people with regard to their everyday lives” (LINKE 2012b).

In the election campaign in the state of Lower Saxony (election day: January 20, 2013), the LINKE made the regulation of financial markets the central issue in its campaign. On campaign posters, such state-level demands as “Save Our Hospitals” were always linked to the financial crisis in the EU by means of the added statement “Instead of Speculators” (Campaignwatch 2012). Nonetheless, the party suffered a setback, losing its seats in the state parliament.

In the Bundestag Election Programme for 2013, Chapter 2 (pp. 46–51) was dedicated to proposals for EU measures for a solution to the financial crisis (total length of Programme: six chapters, 86 pp.; cf. LINKE 2013d). Since this was a national election programme, this example, too, shows the significance which the party leadership accords to the EU and a solution to the euro crisis. In the Bundestag Election Programme of 2009, there had been no separate EU chapter, only a sub-point at the end of the Programme. Other EU policy demands were scattered throughout the text in 2009 (cf. LINKE 2009b).

#### 4.6 FG – FRONT DE GAUCHE – LEFT FRONT FRANCE, INCLUDING PCF – PARTI COMMUNISTE FRANÇAIS – FRENCH CP, AND PG – PARTI DE GAUCHE – LEFT PARTY

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2004 <sup>8</sup> /2010 <sup>9</sup> )
European structures	UEL, NELF
Results, 2009 European elections	6.05%/5 seats
Results, 2004 European elections	5.24%/2 seats
Result of national elections, 2012	6.91%/10 seats
Presidential elections, 2012	11.10% (Jean-Luc Mélenchon)
National government participation	No
Competing left party	No

#### Key statements on European integration:

The PCF and the PG, which was founded at the end of 2009, stand together in important elections in the framework of the FG, for which reason we are discussing their positions in a single chapter. In 2005, when the European Constitutional Treaty was rejected in a referendum in France, the PCF and its associated trade union confederation, the CGT, were among the leading organizations in the campaign against the Treaty. An analysis by a German think tank, the Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), noted that: “unlike at the time of the Maastricht referendum, ... the core argument of leftist Eurosceptics was not national sovereignty ... Rather, [it] was based on their assessment that the constitutional treaty would open the way to a neoliberal Europe which would not be compensated by competences either in the social or in the labour policy area” (SWP 2006).

This attitude marks the European policy of the FG to this day. Especially in issues of social adjustment and economic regulation, the FG favours a pan-European policy. However, in addition to generally federalist demands, sovereigntist positions are also clearly articulated in the FG, so that no clear line is always recognizable. A return to the sovereign nation-state is a consideration for parts of the FG, at least as a strategic intermediate step, on the way to finally implementing a communal EU social and taxation policy. In the FG’s Common Programme for the presidential election of 2012, the key EU policy demand was: liberation from the Lisbon Treaty and construction of a different Europe. A new EU treaty to be adopted in the popular referendum should ensure social progress and a “new European policy liberated from the power of the financial markets” (cf. FG 2012a). The FG would like to be able to invalidate EU directives at the national level if they are in opposition to fundamental leftist policy. Such national “disobedience” should then spread throughout the EU, and thus provide support to those member nations affected by the austerity measures. The new EU treaty should then contain a clause against the dismantling of social and ecological standards (ibid.). Sovereigntist demands have been raised by the PCF MEPs Patrick LeHyarik und Jacky Henin, together with two PCP parliamentary deputies<sup>10</sup> – regarding the so-called EP Thyssen Report on the future of the Economic and Monetary Union (cf. EP 2012a). LeHyarik and Henin demanded that national parliaments be strengthened so as to “defend national sovereignty and ensure that national institutions can carry out their functions unhampered, and that they not be devalued, or their competences transferred to supranational EU organs” (cf. EP 2012e). The “agreements and treaties regarding the EU membership” should be “abolished”, and the “status of particular countries adapted to the will of their citizens and their actual situations”.

<sup>8</sup> Parti Communiste Français (PCF). <sup>9</sup> Parti de Gauche (PG). <sup>10</sup> Inês Cristina Zuber and João Ferreira.

This should occur by means of national opt-out possibilities from EU law. At the same time, an increased EU budget should redistribute wealth between the member nations in order to promote economic convergence (cf. *ibid.*).

**Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

In a speech to the French National Assembly on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Elysées Treaty, Parliamentary Deputy Jean Pierre Brard summarized the goal of a social Europe as follows: “The economic and financial policy of the EU should be based on a completely different goal orientation: The creation of social convergence, social harmonization, a European budget for the defence of industrial sites, investments in the future, solidarity, and the creation of equalization between richer and poorer regions, a growth pact based on boosting European domestic demand, and targeted protection measures against off-shoring, as well as against social and ecological dumping” (PCF 2011a).

The Programme for the presidential election in 2012 and a programme of 25 immediate measures of January 2013 (FG 2013) contain a number of concrete suggestions for the social restructuring of the EU. There, the FG demands that the ECB be subjected to democratic controls, that public spending be funded, that the expansion of public services be supported, and that the reduction of the development gaps between EU member countries be pushed forward by such measures as a fund for social and ecological development. A minimum tax rate for all EU member countries should prevent social dumping. Measures should be taken against the moving of industrial plants to cheap-labour sites. Capital transactions should once again be brought under control, and capital taxed, for example by means of a financial transactions tax. That should be regulated and a public banking sector instituted in order to expand the issuance of credit. Public debt should be re-examined in the course of a moratorium on repayment, and illegitimate debts cancelled.

Moreover, France should push for the social harmonization of the EU, particularly for the introduction of social minimum wages in all EU member states. Public services should be expanded at the EU level as well. The FG is opposed to any form of flexicurity policy, and all current austerity measures. The liberalization of public services should, according to its concept, be terminated. France should impose its veto against any common transatlantic market, to prevent the EU from becoming a vassal of the United States.

PCF politician Alain Obadia wrote in the September 2011 issue of the PCF magazine *La Revue du Projet*, in an article titled “an industrial policy for a liberating development”, that the European dimension was of fundamental significance for industrial policy. France should fight for a European industrial policy with the goal of a humanist, progressive and ecological devel-

opment (cf. PCF 2011b). The fund for social development proposed by the EL (cf. EL 2010b) could be a key tool for that purpose.

A new European agricultural policy should be oriented toward food sovereignty. It should bring the European farmers together, rather than forcing them to compete, and be oriented toward development cooperation (cf. FG 2012a).

Moreover, the FG supports the abolition of NATO, and calls for a multilateral policy of international law under the roof of a democratized United Nations (cf. FG 2012b).

**Alliance strategies:**

The two parties of the PF are both key actors in the European Political Party EL. Since 2010, Pierre Laurent of the PCF has been chairperson of the European party. In addition to its traditional proximity to and personal linkage with the trade union confederation CGT, which is a member of the ETUC, the parties of the FG also seek contact with the protest movement of the *Indignés* (“the outraged ones”) (PCF 2012). FG politicians were present at the World Social Forum in 2013 in Tunis; they included Laurent of the PCF and MEP Marie-Christine Vergiat of the PG. Moreover, the CGT is a co-organizer of the Alter Summit which took place in June 2013 in Athens (cf. CGT 2012). The chairperson of the International Commission of the German Left Party, Oskar Lafontaine, and MEP Jean-Luc Mélenchon (also the FG’s presidential candidate in 2012) have close contacts. In a declaration of November 2012, they issued a call for a “civil-society revolution” against the neoliberal crisis policies in Europe (cf. Lafontaine 2012).

**Priority accorded to EU policy:**

The focusing of French political life on “one election, the presidential election” (cf. Sahuc 2010: p. 125), does not mean that European politics is not important for the parties of the FG. PCF Chairperson Pierre Laurent has been president of the EL since 2010, and PG Chairperson Mélenchon has been an MEP since 2009. Both in the Programme for the presidential election in 2012 and in the immediate programme of 2013, substantive demands on European policy have played an important part. Particularly the victory in the French referendum on the European Constitution in 2005 and the subsequent circumvention of that vote by the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in the National Assembly have made the EU treaties an important negative point of reference for the common policies of the FG parties. The programmatic modules and the know-how from the campaigns against the EU Constitution and the Lisbon Treaty will be useful for the struggle around the financial and economic crisis and the threatening collapse of the Euro Zone.

#### 4.7 KSČM/CPBM KOMUNISTICKÁ STRANA ČECH A MORAVY COMMUNIST PARTY OF BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA, CZECH REP.

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	European Left Party (observer since 2004)
European structures	UEL, IMCWP
Results, 2009 European elections	14.18%/4 seats
Results, 2004 European elections	20.27%/6 seats
Result of national elections, 2013	11.27%/26 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	No

##### Key statements on European integration:

The KSČM/CPBM pursues a course in European policy located between orthodox-communist conservatism and pragmatic reformism. The lines of conflict within the former communist ruling party are not so much between national sovereigntist and EU federalists; rather, divergences exist between party members who defend the state socialist past on the one hand and pragmatic and reformist members on the other.<sup>11</sup> The KSČM's "soft no" to Czech entry into the EU in 2003 – opposition to accession while recognizing its advantages – can be seen as reflecting a compromise within the party (cf. Handl 2005: p. 420; Holubec 2010: p. 321), which was already reflected in the two programmes adopted at the 5<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1995, five years prior to the Czech Republic's entry into the EU. In its programme oriented toward long-term goals, "The CPBM at the Turn of the Millennium", the KSČM emphasized that it saw "the processes of [EU] integration as leading to greater economic efficiency and contributing to the enrichment of culture. However, [the KSČM] does not overlook the harsh pressures in the present European Union, which are aimed at restricting social certainties, or the mushrooming bureaucracy and rising profits of the biggest transnational monopolies, made at the expense of wide sections of the population. We reject the EU in its current form" (KSČM 1999a).

Instead, the KSČM demands a democratic form of EU integration, and pursues the goal of a socialist Europe. In the second programme adopted at the same Congress, the "Programme of Renewals" in which the short-term political goals of the KSČM were presented, the party no longer questioned the integration of the Czech Republic into the EU. It called for a national referendum on accession and advantageous preconditions, and raised the issue of the use of the money from EU funds. The accession process should be used, it said, in order to improve the living conditions of people (cf. KSČM 1999b).

At the 6<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in May 2004, immediately after entry into the EU on May 1, the party adopted its new Party Programme, "Hope for the Czech Republic" (cf. KSČM 2004). It includes many practical programme points which were to be implemented in the

context of the EU, such as in the areas of research, environmental protection, agriculture and the creation of jobs with the aid of money from EU funds. There are only a few references to national sovereignty, particularly in connection with the defence of the Beneš Decrees, which expelled and dispossessed the ethnic German population at the end of the Second World War, as the party fears that the Sudeten-German associations could raise territorial claims. In other places, with respect to the euroregions, the programme says that they are useful for the cooperation of people in a democratic Europe, as long as they do not call the territorial integrity of nation-states into question. The KSČM sees Czech culture as part of a "humanist world and European culture", in contrast to "uniformity and vulgar Americanization" (ibid.). This is an example that the party's traditional anti-Americanism is very much stronger than its scepticism against a united Europe (cf. also Holubec 2010: p. 320). The chapter of the Party Programme of 2004 specially dedicated to EU membership, titled "The Czech Republic's membership of the EU and international Left cooperation", states that the KSČM would adapt its policies to the new situation after entry into the EU; at present, it was concentrating on the advantages of integration. The member countries should have equal status within the EU institutions, and the EU should base its policies on international law and the standards of the Council of Europe, i.e. the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Social Charter (cf. KSČM 2004). In the European Election Programme of 2009, the KSČM called for more direct democracy and more competences for the EP and the national parliaments, while opposing bureaucracy (KSČM 2009).

The current programme, "Main Tasks & Aims of the Party's Work after KSČM's 8<sup>th</sup> Congress", adopted on June 25, 2012, contains only a few references to EU policy. Under the title "National interests' protection", the party demands equal conditions for old and new member countries, a reduction of EU bureaucracy and a "boosting of democratic decision-making" between the member countries and "within the framework of [the] European Commission". The unification of left forces in the EU should force through changes of a socialist nature (cf. KSČM 2012a).

##### Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:

In the European Election Programme of 2009, the KSČM demanded regulation of the banks at the EU level. Dangerous financial products should be banned, and the financial markets taxed. Price stability should be maintained, and social and territorial cohesion and solidarity between the member countries supported (cf. KSČM 2009). In the 2010 national election campaign, the party demanded that steps be taken with the

<sup>11</sup> On the tendencies in the KSČM cf. Holubec 2010: p. 323.

help of the EU against tax havens, and that tax dumping in EU member countries be stopped. Economically, the Czech Republic should become less dependent on EU markets by increasing exports to non-EU countries (cf. KSČM 2010a). The KSČM claims to be the party of Czech companies, and calls for a “Europe without borders”, for free movement of people, commodities, services and capital (cf. KSČM 2009).

At the same time, the party opposes the dismantling of social and trade union rights. It demands EU measures against tax and wage dumping, and ecologically balanced growth, with green jobs for sustainable development. At the EU level, it wants to implement minimum wages, minimum pensions and minimum unemployment pay. It wants to increase the influence of the state on the economy by building a strong public sector, and promote the restructuring of the economy by supporting manufacturing plants. Workers’ rights should be strengthened in many respects in this process, by works councils, supervisory councils and various forms of worker participation in companies. The party also considers antidiscrimination policies necessary, oriented towards UN and EU standards (ibid.).

According to the KSČM, the EU and Europe should, in their security policy, liberate themselves from the “aggressive policy of the Empire” (cf. KSČM 2010a) of the US. European defence policy should not be subordinate to the interests of foreign powers. NATO is seen as hampering EU integration, and as a relic of the bipolar world order; it should be replaced by a security policy within the framework of the OSCE. The KSČM is opposed to any militarization of the EU, or any EU military forces (cf. KSČM 2004, 2009 & 2010a). It rejects the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, which it sees as having a democratic deficit at the expense of the parliaments: “The democratic deficit reveals itself here, especially in the European Parliament’s and the national parliaments’ inadequate participation in decision-making on security issues. The CPBM supports Europe’s independence from the US. It demands that the EU’s supranational military-security structures, if created, are [sic] under the democratic control of the whole community, its elected bodies and the European Parliament, and operate purely on the basis of a UN Security Council mandate, and are [sic] used to defend the EU communities or take part in humanitarian actions” (KSČM 2004).

In EU agricultural policy, the conditions for Czech farmers should be rendered equal to those of the EU 15 (cf. KSČM 2010a). The KSČM also demands a coordinated and environmentally compatible energy policy of the EU, which it sees as being primarily provided by nuclear power (cf. KSČM 2009 & 2010a).

Alliance policy at the European level:

With four MEPs, the KSČM sends one of the larger delegations to the GUE/NGL Political Group in the EP. The party has observer status at the EL. It justifies its rejection of full membership in the European party among other things with the statement that it cannot

accept the formulation condemning Stalinism in the statute of the EL, and it regrets that not all European communist parties have been invited to join the association, particularly the Russian and Ukrainian parties. As a former communist ruling party, the KSČM regularly participates in the International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties, and remains closely connected to the parties represented there. While reformers such as Miroslav Ransdorf holds seats in the EP, the foreign section of the party is dominated by the conservative Hassan Charfo, who orients the party “more toward the positions of the Greek communists” (KKE) (cf. Holubec 2010: p. 322). For example, in the statement in English issued with regard to the elections in Greece on May 6, 2012, the KSČM praised only the results of the KKE, and wasted not a single word on SYRIZA, although the latter party had won 16.8% of the vote, approximately twice as much as the KKE, and although its lead candidate Tsipras is a vice president of the EL (cf. KSČM 2012b).

There are also traditionally good contacts to the Slovak Communist Party (Komunistická strana Slovenska/KSS) and the German Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS; today the main element of the LINKE). European Social Forums are of no great significance to the party, even if some KSČM members do participate in them. Social movements in the Czech Republic tend to reject the KSČM due to its authoritarian past. One exception was the initiative *Ne základnám* (“No Bases”), which opposed the stationing of a part of the US anti-missile system in the country; the KSČM participated in the initiative, and it cooperated with the party. However, the KSČM-affiliated League of Communist Youth was expelled from *Ne základnám* for “Stalinist agitation” (cf. Holubec 2010: p. 322).

#### **Priority accorded to EU policy:**

In spite of the crisis in the EU, European policy is not of great significance for the KSČM. The programme adopted in June 2012, “Main Tasks & Aims of the Party’s Work after KSČM’s 8<sup>th</sup> Congress”, contains only a few vague references to EU policy. One important issue with a European dimension is a political defence of the authoritarian past in the nations previously ruled by communist parties. For nationalist-conservative parties in the Eastern European member countries of the EU, anti-communism is a means for discrediting the left and the social democratic political competition. To counter its political isolation, the KSČM seeks alliances with other traditional communist parties (cf. KSČM 2011 & 2010b; PCP/KSČM et al. 2010).

#### 4.8 VAS – VASEMMISTOLIITTO – LEFT ALLIANCE – FINLAND

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL associate; no MEPs since 2009
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2010)
European structures	NGLA, VSG, NELF
Results, 2009 European elections	5.98%/0 seats
Results, 2004 European elections	9.13%/1 seat
Result of national elections, 2013	8.12%/14 seats
National government participation	Yes (2 ministers in Council of State)
Competing left party	No

##### Key statements on European integration:

The VAS, as a relatively small left party in a country with a small population (approx. 5.4 million) and few seats in the EP (13 of 754), faces anything but an easy task electing representatives to the European Parliament. The EU policy of the party is therefore concentrated especially on the possibilities open to the Finnish government in the EU Council. In the unicameral Finnish Parliament, the VAS has since 2011 held 14 of the 200 seats, and two cabinet positions in the government.<sup>12</sup> The Party Programme adopted in 2007 criticizes the EU for its neoliberal policies, and concludes “the EU does not deserve the trust of the European people” (cf. VAS 2007). The EU should be reformed and oriented closely towards the Scandinavian welfare state model. The party’s goal is “to reform the European Union in such a way that the EU supports the development of the society on the basis of the Nordic model of solidarity ... Europe needs effective common and democratic regulations which in the whole Union area guarantee civil rights, the position of workers and fair rules in working life, social security, sufficient tax income to support the welfare state and sustainable development. When the Treaties of the EU are renewed, a consultative referendum must be carried out in Finland” (ibid.).

At the global level, too, the VAS accords great potential to the EU: “The European Union must promote the achievement of these goals in the whole world. [The] Left Alliance wants the EU to be a strong builder of peace, democracy and a just world economy” (ibid.).

According to a position paper on the euro crisis (undated, presumably 2011), the EU could, however, “not become a traditional federation”, for its members are too different. Nonetheless, in order to maintain the common currency, the euro, it would be necessary to place the economic and fiscal policies of the EU on a completely new community foundation (cf. VAS 2011a). Hence, the party does not want a federal European state, but does see it is necessary to have key political areas, such as the economic and fiscal policy, managed federally as democratic community policy.

Thus, while the current party leadership around Paavo Arhinmäki, the VAS presidential candidate in 2012, takes a critical position toward the policy of the EU, it does have an overall integration-friendly position.

Debates over the course of European policy are conducted primarily with the former MEP and representative of the traditional wing of the party, Esko Seppänen, who, as a deputy of MEP Silvia-Yvonne Kaufmann (LINKE), represented the GUE/NGL at the EU Constitutional Convention in 2002–’03; Kaufmann supported the draft Constitution, while Seppänen opposed it. The divergences resulted in the party being for a while unable to express any public European policy position. The lack of a coherent position may have been one reason why the VAS failed to retain its seat in the EP in 2009 (cf. Kontula/Kuhanen 2010: pp. 41–42).

##### Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:

In its position paper on the crisis of the euro, the party explicitly formulated its analysis of the crisis and of the European approach to a solution (cf. VAS 2011a). This analysis involved essentially three areas: tax policy, banking regulation, and the restructuring of the banking system, including the ECB, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the bailout system, and called for no forced privatization, or the destruction of economic foundations. Some of the proposals have already been applied in some countries, and many could be implemented immediately, the party stated. Other proposals are designed in such a way that the entire Euro Zone would have to participate in them. In summary, the VAS proposes the following concrete measures in its paper: Capital flight to tax havens should be prevented by a multilateral information system on taxing businesses; Transfers of money to tax havens should be massively taxed, as should all financial transactions within the EU; As many member countries as possible should participate in the common taxation system, and in a second step, even countries outside Europe could join; Common tax assessment limits could prevent taxation competition.

Banks should be split into savings and investment banks in order to prevent speculation with the savings. No bank should be allowed to become “too big to fail”. Bonus payments for short-term profits should be banned, as should business transactions with tax havens, for banks financed by the central banks. Recapitalization by means of tax money should only be carried out under the precondition that the state receive shares in the bank in return. Hedge funds and so-called shadow banks should be subjected to the so-called bank regulation. A public People’s Bank should be created, with a business model oriented not towards profit maximization, but rather towards securing the core business of banks. Financial products should in future be licensed, and the trade in derivatives restricted. This should provide capital for investment in order to promote employment, sustainable infrastructure and environmental technology. The ECB

<sup>12</sup> Paavo Arhinmäki (party chairperson, presidential candidate in 2012); Minister for Culture and Sports; Merja Kyllönen: Minister for Transport and Communications.

should be transformed into a “lender of last resort”. Within a certain framework, it should provide sustainable credits to member countries.

Greece and other countries which received financial help should concentrate on fighting the underground economy, excessive bureaucracy and corruption, instead of on privatization and the shrinkage of the public sector. A transnational “debt reconciliation mechanism” modelled on the legal structure of the United States should be introduced. The rating criteria of private rating agencies should be made public, and a public rating agency created (cf. for all these points VAS 2011a).

At the EU level, Finland should work to put a stop to tax, labour and environmental dumping (VAS 2013a).

The Party Programme of 2007 moreover demands a common, solidarity-based immigration and refugee policy in the EU “which recognizes the EU’s global responsibility” (VAS 2007). The trading in emissions rights should be replaced by a CO<sub>2</sub> tax (cf. *ibid.*).

#### **Alliance policy at the European level:**

The VAS sees itself as “a part of the worldwide Left movement” (cf. VAS 2007). With regard to extra-parliamentary movements, the Party Programme states: “We want to maintain and develop co-operation with the trade union movement and other NGOs in order to strengthen equal participation and democracy” (*ibid.*).

The party stresses the cooperation with the international structures such as the GUE/NGL (until 2009), the EL and the NELF. It is also a member of the NGLA. Party Chairperson Paavo Arhinmäki is a member of the Finnish delegation to the Nordic Council.

#### **Priority accorded to EU policy:**

Although as late as 2008, EU policy was of virtually no importance to the VAS, this changed with the election of the new party leadership under Paavo Arhinmäki. At the end of 2009, the VAS joined the European Political Party EL, and began to address the experiences of other left parties in the EU more intensively (cf. Kontula/Kuhanen 2010). The financial and economic crisis, and especially their effects on the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), caused the party to formulate its own alternative approaches, and particularly as a member of the governing coalition of a country that is a net payer in the EU budget, to take a position on the bailout applications of other member countries in the framework of the EFSF and the ESM (cf. VAS 2011b). Nonetheless, the Election Programme for the national parliamentary elections in 2011 contained virtually no significant European policy references (cf. VAS 2011c). Party Chairperson Arhinmäki articulated his positions most recently in a speech to the party Executive Committee on March 16, 2013. The interests of the VAS in EU policy and other member countries were, he said, derived from two factors: First, the VAS saw itself as part of an international movement of solidarity. Second, Finland’s economic success was based on the

high rate of exports to other EU member states, so that the economic crisis could, eventually, affect Finland. For this reason, a common European solution to the crisis was in the interests of Finland (cf. VAS 2013b).

#### **4.9 SINN FÉIN (“WE OURSELVES”) – IRELAND**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	–
European structures	UEL
Results, 2009 European elections	11.24%/1 seat
Results, 2004 European elections	11.10%/1 seat
Result of national elections, 2013	9.94%/14 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	Yes (Socialist Party)

#### **Key statements on European integration:**

Sinn Féin was a driving force behind the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by the Irish people in the referendum of June 2008 (cf. SFe 2013a).<sup>13</sup> According to its own statements, the party has a “critical, but constructive relationship” to the EU’s policies, which have become ever more important for Irish society. The party considers the numerous and complex developments in the EU on a case-by-case basis, and orients its positions accordingly. Overall, Sinn Féin holds a sovereigntist position: “We want to build a Europe of Equals – a true partnership of equal sovereign states, co-operating in social and economic development in Europe and beyond. We want an EU that promotes peace, demilitarization and nuclear disarmament and the just resolution of conflicts under the leadership of a reformed, renewed and democratized United Nations. Ultimately, we want a future United Ireland to take an active, leading role in such a reformed EU” (*ibid.*).

Sinn Féin supports EU measures for human rights, equality and the “all-Ireland agenda” (cf. SFe 2013b) – i.e., ultimate unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic. However, the party is opposed to the “failed policies of fiscal federalism for stabilizing the Euro Zone”. The transfer of more decision-making power to EU institutions is the opposite of what Ireland and the EU need: “Instead we need greater flexibility for member states to implement policies suited to their specific needs” (SFe 2012a). Proposals in the Election Programme of 2009 for democratizing the EU were for the most part oriented toward giving national and regional parliaments more power, and weakening EU institutions, particularly the Commission (cf. SFe 2009a).

#### **Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

The report “The future of the EU and Ireland’s role in shaping that future,” of 2008, issued following the first referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, in which rejection

<sup>13</sup> The referendum was repeated in October 2009, and this time the opponents of the treaty lost, with approx. 60% yes votes.



won, states that the party opposes an EU-wide corporate tax rate, since that would mean interference with the taxation sovereignty of Ireland, and would also represent an attempt by the EU to gain control of direct taxation. In the report, Sinn Féin calls for a binding addendum to the European treaties with reference to the preservation of the national tax sovereignty of Ireland, and wants to abolish Article 48 of the European Union Treaty, which deals with changes to the treaty (standard or simple amendment procedures) (cf. SFe 2008).

Sinn Féin’s alternative programme against European austerity policy in the context of the EFSF and the ESM, as well as the Fiscal Stability Treaty, for the national elections in 2012, is composed of the pillars investments, debt write-off, cleaning up the European banking system, and securing access to the financial market credits of member countries by the ECB. The party demands an increase in the investment capacity of the EIB. In this way, together with the member countries, major investment projects could be financed to create jobs and growth, and increase competitiveness. New “strict stress tests” should be used to purge the banking system of “toxic papers” (cf. SFe 2012a). In order to restructure, the banks should shed assets and go back to financing the “real economy”. Only then, if necessary, should bank recapitalizations be carried out directly by the ECB. Debt reductions in such countries as Greece and Ireland should be carried out successfully by such measures as massive write-offs; Ireland should write off part of the debt which the state assumed from the banks; the remainder of the national debt should be serviced. The European Council should ensure that the ECB does everything it can to stabilize the market for state bonds and guarantee market access for member nations.

Sinn Féin demands a social progress protocol as an addendum to the treaties, as does the ETUC: “Nothing in the Treaty, and in particular neither fundamental freedoms nor competition rules, shall have priority over fundamental social rights and social progress. In case of conflict, fundamental social rights shall take precedence” (cf. SFe 2008). Public services, for instance in the areas of education and health, should be precisely defined in the framework of the EU, and be removed from economic competition.

In a seminar on the EU subsidy programme Horizon 2020 for research and development activities of small and medium-sized enterprises in January 2012, MEP Martina Anderson argued for the “great potential on an all-Ireland (i.e., including Northern Ireland) basis for SMEs to develop Research and Development” (SFe 2013c; cf. also 2013d).

**Priority accorded to EU policy:**

Since the Irish Constitution provides that changes affecting Irish EU membership be conditional upon a national referendum, European issues regularly take on a key role in national political debates in Ireland. In 2008 in 2009, two campaigns had to be organized

with regard to the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty; and accordingly a large amount of material was produced for that purpose (cf. SFe 2009b). In the summer of 2009, between the two referendums, European elections were held, and at the same time, the effects of the financial and economic crisis impacted upon Ireland to such a degree that the conservative government in November 2010 had to apply for aid under the ESM. For the second referendum, on May 31, 2012, Sinn Féin launched a campaign against the acceptance of the Fiscal Stability Treaty, which it labelled the “Austerity Treaty”. Moreover, in the first half of 2013, Ireland held the EU Council presidency, which provided Sinn Féin representatives both in the Dáil and in the EP with an opportunity to criticize the programme associated with it. MEP Martina Anderson criticized the Irish government for the Council Presidency programme, which she said included “nothing socially progressive, no investment package, no concrete actions to address record unemployment figures”; moreover it contained no “all-Ireland dimension”, or reference to the conflict in Northern Ireland (SFe 2013e).

**4.10 SP – SOCIALISTISCHE PARTIJ – SOCIALIST PARTY – THE NETHERLANDS**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	–
European structures	UEL, Spectrezine
Results, 2009 European elections	7.10%/1 seat
Results, 2004 European elections	6.97%/1 seat
Result of national elections, 2012	9.65%/15 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	No

**Key statements on European integration:**

The SP was one of the driving forces behind the negative results of the referendum on the European treaty in 2005. It pursues a generally sovereigntist course in European policy in which, unlike the case of other leftist parties, Marxist-Leninist theories, such as the goal of overcoming capitalism, are not a factor. With reference to the EU, its use of language is reminiscent of the EU-critical discourse in right-wing conservative parties in Great Britain. For instance, its explanations use such terms as “Eurocrats”, “Europhiles”, “Brussels regulation addiction” or “lobby circus” (cf. Wirries 2010: S. 197). The party does not call for the Netherlands to withdraw from the EU, but it does want to limit as much as possible the policy areas within the realm of European cooperation, and thus keep as many competences as possible at the national level. The EU should be an association for the cooperation between sovereign national states, and “not a superstate”. Such a body would, the SP believes, only serve the interests of the major corporations, who have 15,000 lobbyists trying to influence the decision-making processes of the EU (cf. SPD 2013a). The SP’s central document on European policy, published in 2006, states: “Coopera-

tion in the context of the European Union is at the present time primarily economic cooperation. The time is certainly not ripe for more far-reaching political integration, and there is no support for such among the people of the member states. Other areas of policy can therefore often be better and more speedily regulated on a national level or between a smaller number of states" (SP 2006).

Taking a cue from the announcement by Britain's nationalist Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, the SP demands a national referendum on the conditions under which the Netherlands should stay in the EU. According to foreign-policy expert Terry van Bommel, Cameron is an ally when it comes to stopping the expansion of the competences of the EP at the cost of national parliaments (cf. SP 2013d).

In the Programme for the national parliamentary elections of 2012, the SP stated that it wanted to oppose "Brussels regulation mania" (cf. SP 2012a), and support strict maintenance of the principle of subsidiarity. Important decisions should only be taken after approval by national referendums (ibid.). No additional enlargement of the EU should take place, beyond those Balkan states with which negotiations have already been completed. EU enlargements should be subject to binding referendums in the Netherlands (ibid.).

In June 2010, a conflict between the two MEPs Cornelius de Jong and Kartika Liotard, who has represented the SP in the EP since 2004, caused the latter to withdraw from the SP. She has continued to work for the GUE/NGL Political Group as an independent member (cf. Liotard 2010).

#### **Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

In its Programme for the national parliamentary election in 2012, the SP demands a social Europe in which money is not everything (cf. SP 2012a). In May 2012, Van Bommel called for a "European social growth package", since "antisocial austerity measures" had led to a shrinkage of the economy. The member countries should be given more time for budget consolidation. National investment banks should guarantee credit for small and medium-size enterprises, and the ECB should support growth and the creation of jobs. Richer countries should put an end to wage dumping in order to increase the export opportunities of southern member countries (cf. SP 2012d).

The SP is one of the few delegations in the GUE/NGL that wants a drastic reduction in the EU budget (cf. SP 2012b), saying that money should no longer be redistributed among the rich member countries, but rather only used to subsidize the poorer ones (cf. SP 2011a).

There are plans to transform Europe into a "debt union", said Van Bommel in October 2012; the Dutch government should veto any such plans. The debts of member countries would otherwise become debts of the EU, which would then determine which economic policies would be adequate for the reduction of debts.

The Netherlands would thus become jointly responsible for the reduction of the debts of other countries, while its control over its own national budget would be restricted. "So we could be paying others' debts yet no longer able to decide independently to invest when the economy badly needs it" (SP 2012c). This would be both economically misguided and unacceptable from a democratic point of view.

The party rejects the European economic government, but supports an economic and social coordination between member countries, for instance by way of common standards (cf. SP 2013c). In September 2011, the party put forward a European action plan against speculation, in which it demanded the regulation of financial markets (cf. SP 2011).

The national budget, the social and pension systems, education, health, housing construction and public transport should generally remain under the authority of national governments, the SP believes. The EU should support small businesses, and EU directives should be changed in such a way that they no longer favour multinational corporations. Economic policy for solving the crisis at the EU level should be better coordinated and controlled by the national parliaments and the EP. That would make economic measures possible which would no longer force member countries to destroy their national economies.

Since the competition rules of the EU single market undermine workers' rights, member countries should agree to minimum wages at a level of 60% of their national average income, and minimum tax rates for corporations, and also adopt measures against tax cheating and avoidance. A reform of the procurement law should be implemented to make it possible for national, regional and local governments to stipulate conditions for sustainability and job creation, reduce bureaucratic hurdles for small and medium-size enterprises, and stop creeping privatization.

Lobbyism in Brussels should be pushed back, and the EP should obtain better control rights over it. Civil society organizations and unions should be given improved participation rights in decision-making. The expansion of non-transparent EU agencies should be stopped, and the Brussels bureaucracy restricted. Excessive salaries for European public servants should be limited at the national level, and a single parliamentary venue for the EP should be established. Moreover, the Netherlands should become more active in the Council of Europe and the OECD. The accession of the EU to the European Human Rights Convention should be forcefully promoted (cf. SP 2012a: pp. 59–60).

#### **Alliance policy at the European level:**

The SP maintains European ties to other parties, primarily via the GUE/NGL Political Group in the EP. It is not a member of the European Left Party (EL). In its self-description, the party says that it maintains good contacts to progressive organizations worldwide for exchanges of opinion, and, where possible, cooper-

ates with them on a cross-border basis (cf. SP 2013c). Beyond the Netherlands, the SP communicates using the English-language Internet portal Spectrezine (cf. Wagener 2006: p. 17).

#### Priority accorded to EU policy:

In spite of the crisis of the EU and the Euro Zone, the issue of EU policy was not addressed particularly prominently in the SP's Programme for the parliamentary election of 2012. However, the EU did play a role in the election campaign as a negative point of reference. The conservative German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported on an interview with SP Chairperson Jan Marijnissen, who considered it "a major mistake of other left parties in Europe to constantly demand European solidarity. 'Most Frisians don't give a damn about the Greeks.' He demanded the reintroduction of labour permits for Poles, said that the enthusiasm of some Germans for the EU, which they saw as the project of peace which restricted their own national power, was 'ludicrous', and stressed that Europe could not grow together if people did not know where they came from. 'Just like a diver needs a springboard, a sense of homeland is necessary to become a cosmopolitan'" (Ross 2012).

On the SP webpage, MEP de Jong publishes a weekly column on the happenings in the EP. It appears bilingually, in Dutch and English, which shows that the SP does accord Europe-wide public opinion work a high position (cf. Wirries 2010).

#### 4.11 ERG – ENHEDSLISTEN – DE RØD-GRØNNE – RED-GREEN ALLIANCE – DENMARK<sup>14</sup>

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL (FmEU)
European party	European Left Party (full member since 2010)
European structures	VSG, NELF, EAEL, TEAM (observer)
Results, 2009 European elections	7.20%/1 seat (FmEU)
Results, 2004 European elections	5.17%/1 seat (FmEU)
Result of national elections, 2010	6.7%/12 seats
National government participation	Support for ctr.-left minority government since 2011
Competing left party	Yes (Socialist People's Party/SF)

#### Key statements on European integration:

The Red-Green Alliance (ERG) is one of those left parties that can be categorized as sovereigntist, since they see the possibilities for implementing their own programme only within the context of the nation-state, and explicitly reject any further federal development of the EU. "The Red-Green Alliance is opposed to the construction of the European Union, which we see as a vehicle of European capitalism, and especially to the building of a European state and the establishment of a European army" (ERG 2013a).

The ERG sees the EU, and especially the common currency, the euro, as failed projects (cf. ERG 2012a). It

rejects the Fiscal Stability Pact and the Euro Plus Pact as attacks upon the Danish welfare state. According to its work schedule for 2012–13, the party's resistance – in cooperation with other EU opponents – is directed against the "sell-out" of democracy and national sovereignty (cf. ERG 2012b). Under the slogan "*Nej til EU, ja til internationalt samarbejde*" (No to the EU, Yes to international cooperation), the party demands Denmark's withdrawal from the EU (cf. ERG 2011), which should be replaced by a new system of social, sustainable and democratic cooperation between nation-states. In order to achieve this, the ERG cooperates internationally with other left parties. The ERG struggles against nationalism; however, it sees the EU as the wrong answer to this danger. Rather, the negative results of the neoliberal EU policies are "fuel" for such nationalistic forces as the ethno-nationalist Danish People's Party. In order for "a living democracy" to exist, legislative powers would have to be returned from the EU level, where 80% of the legislative measures are implemented, back to the national parliaments. The national opt-out possibilities for Denmark existing in the EU treaties must be protected (cf. ERG 2011).

The party's work schedule for 2012–13 states that cooperation with the EL should be expanded in order to develop an alternative to the EU, and to push forward joint initiatives to dismantle the EU. The long-term goal of the ERG, socialism, is not attainable in the context of capitalism; however, the EU itself prevents moderate, practical reforms within the capitalist system (cf. ERG 2012c).

In the preparation for the Annual Assembly of the ERG (April 26–28, 2013), the primary controversial issue discussed was whether the party should nominate candidates for the European elections in 2014, or whether it should, as it has done in the past, support the candidates of the Danish People's Movement against the EU (*Folkebevægelsen mod EU/FmEU*). The FmEU MEP Søren Søndergaard (GUE/NGL) is a member of the ERG, and is supported by the party. The FmEU is multi-party movement with the goal "to liberate Denmark from the EU. We want Denmark to join EFTA instead of being part of [the] EU ... As long as Denmark is a member state of [the] EU we endeavour to limit the damage done by the EU and by Danish EU membership to the world at large and to Denmark" (FmEU 2013). In the booklet of motions for the Annual Assembly of the ERG, there were two motions, one on each side of this issue (Motions 5.1 and 5.2). Due to the existing national political situation, with a Social Democratic government that is weak in the polls, the ERG would have a good chance of winning as many as two seats of its own in the EP. In that way, even if the FmEU were to fail to win a seat, it would still be assured that an EU-critical movement would be represented in the EP. On the other hand, as critics pointed out, that could

<sup>14</sup> Official English designation; Literal translation: Unity List – The Red-Greens.

split the FmEU and damage it permanently. Moreover, they added, the ERG had always been a party supported by the social movements and by the broad tradition of EU scepticism in Denmark (cf. ERG 2013b). At the Annual Assembly on April 27, 2013, a majority voted to support the FmEU candidacy (cf. ERG 2013c).

#### **Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

In accordance with its sovereigntist basic position, the ERG has no detailed programme for an alternative policy of the EU. Nonetheless, it supports a number of pragmatic positions. In the area of fiscal and tax policy, FmEU MEP Søndergaard has repeatedly voiced opposition to the EU's having its own resources, such as tax revenues from a financial transaction tax, or an EU-wide VAT. Such an autonomous EU budget would, he said, be beyond democratic control. The financial transactions tax, which he fundamentally supports, should therefore be designed as a "Robin Hood tax": the money should go directly to the member states to finance welfare and measures against climate change, and to fight poverty in developing countries (cf. EP 2012d).

The ERG supports the right to free movement of labour, as long as it is not used to undermine labour law standards, such as the right to strike, wages, or social benefits (cf. ERG 2013d). The globalization currently being pushed by major corporations should be replaced by a "social globalization"; democratic institutions should provide a social framework for free trade (cf. ERG 2013e).

In a paper adopted in April 2013, titled "Proposal for an Agreement on European Policy", the ERG demanded a binding social protocol for the EU, in order to protect the welfare state, wages and working conditions from the negative impacts of the single market. An international minimum threshold for income taxes should be implemented to prevent an antisocial "race to the bottom" between countries (cf. ERG 2013f).

#### **Alliance policy at the European level:**

The international and European networking of the opposition against the EU is of great significance for the ERG. It cooperates closely with the FmEU, which is a member of the European Alliance of EU-Critical Movements (TEAM – cf. TEAM 2012), a network which sees itself as politically neutral;<sup>15</sup> the ERG itself has observer status in TEAM. Although the FmEU is a multiparty movement, the ERG is a dominant force within it. The ERG is also active in the EACL and in the Left-Wing Socialist Green Group (VSG) in the Nordic Council.

In 2012, the ERG hosted a number of international conferences, including study-days of the EU Left Political Group GUE/NGL on the occasion of the Danish Council Presidency from January to June 2012; a meeting of the EL Executive Board; and informal meetings with other left parties (cf. ERG 2012d). The ERG

sees itself as a movement party, both at the national and at the international levels, with "priority in social movements outside parliament – not least the trade unions and student movements" (ERG 2013a). Party members participate in the European and World Social Forums (cf. Johansen 2010: p. 263); for example, Søren Søndergaard was a member of the GUE/NGL delegations both to Firenze 10 + 10 and to the World Social Forum in Tunis in 2013.

#### **Priority accorded to EU policy:**

For the ERG, EU policy means primarily defence of the Danish welfare state against liberalization forced within the framework of the EU Single Market. The free movement of labour within the EU has meant that the ERG has, since the Eastern Enlargement, increasingly had to deal with low-wage strategies by companies which, with the aid of the EU Posted Workers Directive, attempt to circumvent the high Danish wage standards (cf. EL 2013d; Johansen 2010: p. 260). With the financial and economic crisis, the pressure on the Danish welfare state has been reinforced. The ERG's demand for an EU social protocol is an indication that it no longer sees purely national measures as sufficient. That the importance of European policy issues for the ERG is growing is shown particularly by the fact that the party joined the EL at the end of 2009.

#### **4.12 V – VÄNSTERPARTIET – LEFT PARTY – SWEDEN**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	–
European structures	NGLA, VSG
Results, 2009 European elections	5.66%/1 seat
Results, 2004 European elections	12.79%/2 seats
Result of national elections, 2010	5.60%/19 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	No

#### **Key statements on European integration:**

The V upholds a sovereigntist position on the question of European policy. In 1994, the party campaigned against Sweden's entry into the EU; however, the result of the referendum was affirmative, and Sweden joined the EU in 1995. In 2003, when Sweden rejected joining the currency union in a further referendum, the V was on the side of the opponents of the euro. The V Party Programme, revised in 2012, states that the party respects the result of the referendum of 1994, but continues to support Sweden's withdrawal from the EU. Such a step would, however, depend upon political developments, and could only be realized if public support for withdrawal were to grow (cf. V 2012a). Party Chairperson and former MEP (1995–2006) Jonas

<sup>15</sup> In addition to the FmEU, other Scandinavian movements for withdrawal from the EU, and also the right-wing populist UKIP in Great Britain are part of this alliance.

Sjöstedt sees the initiative of British Prime Minister David Cameron for a national referendum on remaining in the EU as a possibility for Sweden to re-negotiate the conditions of EU membership (*ibid.*).

According to V, the goal of the EU is to create a super-state, the United States of Europe, with a common foreign and security policy. However, the V wants to uphold Sweden's military neutrality policy; it believes that ever more power has been shifting from national parliaments to EU institutions. The Lisbon Treaty was an important step in that direction. EU law now has precedence over national law, and the EU increasingly controls legislation. Although the V explicitly recognizes the expansion of the powers of the EP provided under the Treaty of Lisbon, it does not see that as an increase in democracy, since, in its view, the EP has a deficit in legitimacy in comparison to the national parliaments (due among other things to low voter participation). In the decision-making structures of the EU, people hardly have any possibility to call their rulers to account; hence, the EU does not fulfil the minimum requirements of a democracy (*cf. V 2007*).

Moreover, the Party Programme states that the V is fundamentally opposed to all political measures under which competences would be shifted to the EU level. Instead, it is for shifting decision-making powers back to the member countries. However, the party's approach is pragmatic: in areas in which EU directives, exceptionally, promote progressive policies, the latter could be supported on a case-by-case basis, provided the advantages outweigh the negative impact of shifting competences to the EU level. Since, for example, financial transactions and environmental policy cannot be regulated at the national level alone, the V is in favour of EU minimum standards in these areas (*cf. V 2012a*).

The V does not express itself fundamentally against an expansion of the EU, provided new member countries fulfil democratic standards. However, no preconditions should be imposed upon them with respect to financial liberalization or social cutbacks (*cf. V 2013b*).

#### **Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

On its website, the V says that it is "the toughest opponent of joining the euro. From the outset, we warned of the problems that we can now see with regard to the European economic crisis" (*V 2013c*). The V is in favour of giving member countries the possibility of exit from the euro according to a legally formalized procedure. Sweden should have a binding opt-out right from its obligation to join the Euro Zone. At the same time, the V is opposed to any decentralization of economic policy, and sees any supranational oversight over national budget authority as unacceptable. The ECB should however be fundamentally mandated to promote employment. The EU budget should concentrate on green investment policies that create jobs and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The major EU budget lines, agricultural

subsidies and structural funds, should be radically cut (*cf. V 2012a*).

With reference to the debt crisis, the V takes the position that the banks should bear the burden of the debts which they themselves have created. State guarantees should only protect the money of the holders of savings accounts, but not that of financial speculators; indebted countries should write off their debts in order to permit economic development once again; and member countries should have the possibility of leaving the Euro Zone in order to adapt their exchange rates and interest rates to capital market realities. The V does see international controls and taxation of worldwide financial markets as necessary; still, the correct answer to the crisis has always been "more national sovereignty, not less" (*V 2013b*). For the EU, the V says, the basic interests of profitability in the single market are more important than environmental protection, labour law, public health or consumer protection, and the rulings of the European Court of Justice have contributed considerably to that fact; the V wants to reverse this relationship (*cf. V 2013b*). The practical political measures which the V calls for in the framework of the EU therefore include the protection of workers' rights and national collective bargaining systems; these should be incorporated into the EU treaties in a binding social protocol (*cf. V 2012a*). MEP Eva-Britt Svensson, as chairperson of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee of the EP, supported the implementation of an EU Directive for the establishment of a women's quota in supervisory councils (*cf. Svensson 2011*).

#### **Alliance policy at the European level:**

The V states in its International Policy Programme that it uses membership in the EU to deepen its political cooperation with other left parties. However, it emphasizes its political independence: "The political cooperation between left parties must be based on full respect for the independence of each party, a non-sectarian approach and on democracy and human rights" (*V 2012a*).<sup>16</sup>

In addition to cross-border cooperation of trade unions, parties and social movements, the V sees cooperation between countries with progressive governments as particularly important in order to implement "left politics deserving of the name" (*ibid.*). The party wants to expand contacts and cooperation with other parties and movements. For that purpose, the NELF should be developed further: moreover, the party works together with other left parties within the framework of the GUE/NGL Political Group of the EP, in the VSG and the NGLA in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Nordic Council, and with the EL. However, unlike the Danish ERG, the V is neither a full member of the EL, nor does it have observer status. The V maintains close contacts with social movements, and was active

<sup>16</sup> All quotations are our translations.

in organizing the European Social Forum in Malmö in 2008. It also cooperated in the climate network Klimax at the Copenhagen Climate Summit of 2009, and supports the Feminist Forum (cf. Steiner 2010: p. 246).

The V moreover cooperates with the Swedish “No to the EU” People’s Movement (*Folkrörelsen Nej till EU/ FnEU*), which, like its Danish counterpart, is a member of the Europe-wide EU-critical movement TEAM. There is also overlapping of personnel at the leadership level: for example, former FnEU President and current Vice President Eva-Britt Svensson was a member of the EP for the V from 2004 to 2011; there, she was chairperson of the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee, the only GUE/NGL member to hold a committee chairpersonship; her replacement for the seat, Mikeal Gustafsson, assumed that position in October 2011, and thus became the first man to head that committee.

#### Priority accorded to EU policy:

European policy has a lower priority for the V than for any other left party in the EU. Sweden is not a member of the Euro Zone, so that the country participates in the EU’s crisis policy to a lesser degree than do other member countries. The Election Programme of the V for the national parliamentary elections in 2010 did not even mention the EU, which can probably be explained by the party’s alliance strategy with the pro-integrationist Social Democrats and Greens (cf. V 2010; SND 2010; Almeida 2012: p. 93).

### 4.13 KKE – KOMMOUNISTIKÓ KÓMMA ELLÁDAS – COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	–
European structures	UEL, IMCWP
Results, 2009 European elections	8.38%/2 seats
Results, 2004 European elections	9.48%/3 seats
Result of national elections, 2010	4.50%/12 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	Yes (SYRIZA)

#### Key statements on European integration:

The KKE is one of those left parties with a stable parliamentary representation at both the national and European levels, and also one of those which most radically reject the European integration process. The position of the KKE could be called revolutionary sovereigntism. The party’s Central Committee, in its thesis for the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress in April 2013, defined the “character of modern patriotism” as synonymous with the abolition of bourgeois rule, capitalist ownership of the means of production, and the withdrawal from all “international capitalist coalitions and imperialist alliances”, including the EU (cf. KKE 2013a). The goal of the KKE is the revolutionary overthrow at the national level by the working class. The claim that class struggle today takes place

supra-nationally, and cannot be carried out in single EU member countries, is, in its view, a self-justification by “opportunistic forces” for the toleration of such “imperialist associations” as the EU. In opposition to these concepts, the Central Committee of the KKE states: “The struggle must first of all be waged at a national level against the bourgeois class and its power. As is written in the Communist Manifesto ‘the proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie’. The uneven economic development is an absolute law of capitalism. On the basis of this law, socialism can be victorious initially in a few or in only one country, on its own” (KKE 2013a).

#### Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:

The programme of the KKE consists essentially of the hope for an “overthrow of anti-people politics” by the working class: “This overthrow cannot be achieved by a single strike, or a single mobilization, but rather only by hard struggle, until the people in its entirety turns against the EU and the monopolies” (KKE 2012). Accordingly, the KKE has no programme calling for any reforms of EU policy.

#### Alliance policy at the European level:

The KKE considers the EL one of its main opponents. In an open letter to the “Communist and Workers’ Parties in Europe” of December 2010, the KKE called upon those parties to further weaken “this ‘leftist’ EU party”, since it had, under the influence of such parties as Synaspismos and the LINKE, abandoned the goal of communism. The EL, it added, plays a “dangerous role” as a “vehicle to entrap forces within the framework of capitalism and as a ‘tail’ of European social-democracy” (KKE 2010a). The most important international point of reference for the KKE is its ties to other traditional communist parties worldwide, who regularly gather at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties (cf. KKE 2013b).

In the area of international trade union cooperation, the KKE sees the ETUC as an important enemy. In a press release, MEP Giorgios Toussas called the representatives of these unions “labour aristocrats” and “opponents of the workers”, and their organization “a trade union power that represents and serves the interests of the big capital” (KKE 2011). The KKE considers the trade union PAME, which is close to it, as the only true representative of the interests of the Greek working class. The PAME is a member of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the member unions of which come from the environs of traditional communist parties worldwide (cf. WFTU 2013).

#### Priority accorded EU policy:

For the Marxist-Leninist policies of the KKE, the negative reference to the EU, which it sees as a capitalist and imperialist alliance of the class enemy, is of great importance. The dispute with its leftist competitors,

SYRIZA in the European party EL, is an important element in the public work of the KKE. Through the PAME, the KKE is a driving force behind the general strikes and demonstrations against the EU austerity policies and the Greek government. In 2010, the party succeeded in pulling off a spectacular protest action when it unfurled two large banners, one in Greek and one in English, with the legend “Peoples of the world, rise up”, from the sides of the Acropolis (cf. KKE 2010b).

**4.14 PCP – PARTIDO COMUNISTA PORTUGUES – COMMUNIST PARTY OF PORTUGAL**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	–
European structures	UEL, IMCWP
Results, 2009 European elections	10.64%/2 seats (alliance w. CDU)
Results, 2004 European elections	9.09%/2 seats (alliance w. CDU)
Result of national elections, 2011	7.94%/16 seats (alliance w. CDU)
National government participation	No
Competing left party	Yes (BE)

**Key statements on European integration:**

Together with the Greek KKE and the Czech KSČM, the PCP is one of the only conservative communist parties in the EU with a stable parliamentary representation, both at the national level and in the EP. The PCP pursues a sovereigntist course in European policy. At its 18<sup>th</sup> Congress in November 2008, General Secretary Jeronimo de Sousa called for national independence in a Europe of the nations, as a counter-model to a “neoliberal, monetarized, and federalistic” Europe (cf. PCP 2008). At the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the PCP on December 1, 2012, Ângelo Alves, a member of the Political Committee and of the International Department of the PCP, described the position of the party on the EU crisis as follows in his speech: The EU, he said, is reacting to the financial and economic crisis “by sharpening its neoliberal, federalist and militaristic nature, thus making clear the European Union’s objective limits, revealing that it is not reformable, is constantly challenged, and hence is doomed to failure, and that another Europe, which will spring from the struggle, will be built upon the ruins of the European Union” (PCP 2012a).

The PCP rejects not only such reformist efforts as a solution to the crisis by means of deepening EU integration, but also any “refoundation of the European Union”. The PCP, it says, has “always opposed Portugal’s integration within the European Union. And it will be the materialization of the alternative, patriotic and left-wing policy, that the necessary decisions to ensure the indispensable assertion of national interests – namely leaving the European Union – will be placed. [sic] ... [T]he Advanced Democracy that the PCP advocates for Portugal cannot be developed within the

framework of the constraints and imposition of the European Union” (Ibid.).

The PCP’s sovereigntist political position grows from an anti-imperialist ideology, as Central Committee and International Committee Member Guerreiro de Pedro explained at the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress: “In face of imperialism, the struggle for the defence of national sovereignty and independence is an expression of the class struggle, holding an unavoidable internationalist and anti-imperialist content and making clear the importance of the national boundary as a decisive ground of resistance and progressive and revolutionary change” (PCP 2012b).

In its Party Programme of 2010, titled “an advanced democracy on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, the PCP calls for a “patriotic foreign policy” which should protect Portugal’s national interests in treaties, agreements and negotiations, especially in the European Community (EC); wherever the PCP supports transnational cooperation within Europe, it refers to the “European Community”, not the EU, as the relevant actor. There, Portugal should not allow itself to be assigned the role of an “appendage economy”, of a mere tool of the capital accumulation of transnational corporations. Inside and outside the European institutions, the PCP will work to defend Portugal’s national interests by reducing the negative aspects of European cooperation and reinforcing the positive ones. Portugal’s cultural identity, language and values should be upheld. A Europe of solidarity should carry forward the social dimension, the convergence of national economies and advantageous national specialization of production in Portugal. More money from the EU funds should flow to Portugal. The EU institutions should be democratized; however, the PCP makes no precise statements on how exactly that is to happen (cf. PCP 2010a).

**Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

Since 1987, the PCP has stood in elections as part of the United Democratic Coalition (Coligação Democrática Unitária/CDU), together with the Ecologist Party The Greens (PEV). The PCP dominates the CDU. In its programme “For a Patriotic and Left Politics” (CDU 2011), for the early parliamentary elections in 2011, the CDU referred to the measures formulated in the Election Programme of 2009 (CDU 2009), where it emphasized the “three pillars of the current processes of capitalist European integration – neoliberalism, militarism and federalism” (CDU 2009). The CDU announced that it would concentrate its efforts on abolishing the Treaty of Lisbon and re-establishing the sovereignty of Portugal.

A fiscal policy of investment for growth and jobs should, it said, be implemented by all nation-states without limitations of the currency union and the Stability Pact. In order to achieve equalization of economic performance and social cohesion between countries, a “strategy for development and solidarity” (CDU 2009)

instead of the neoliberal Lisbon Strategy (or its successor, the 2020 Strategy, adopted in June 2010) should be implemented. These should be oriented toward the following guidelines:

- The regulation of capital markets, the punishment of off-shoring, the taxation of financial transactions, and the closing of tax havens
- Support for, and securing of industrial production
- A change in foreign trade policy (including in the WTO) by cooperation and support instead of liberalization measures
- Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to create food sovereignty in each country, taking into account the special peculiarities of each national and regional agricultural system
- Revision of the Common Fisheries Policy with regard to the modernization and sustainability of fisheries, and for national control of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) (cf. CDU 2009).

With reference to major international issues, the EC should support disarmament, collective security and peace in Europe and worldwide, and stop pursuing the goal of becoming an “imperialist political-military block”, with the goal of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries.

**Alliance policy at the European level:**

The PCP is a member of the GUE/NGL Political Group in the EP; otherwise, its primary contracts are with other conservative communist parties. The most important platform for this is the International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties; the PCP hosted the 15<sup>th</sup> such meeting in November 2013 (cf. PCP 2013). The PCP has the closest bilateral contact with the Greek KKE: Rosa Rabiais, a member of the Central Committee of the PCP, spoke at a KKE rally in Athens on June 3, 2009, during the European election campaign; on May 7, 2010 Ângelo Alves spoke at a demonstration organized by the KKE in Athens (cf. PCP 2010b). At the PCP-organized annual September political festival *Festa do Avante*, attended by some 500,000 people, representatives of left and communist parties from all over the world gather. According to a list of the PCP, 43 delegations of international representatives were present in 2010 (cf. PCP 2010c).

**Priority accorded EU policy:**

In the context of the financial crisis, and due to the effects of the EU austerity policies on Portugal, the European political dimension is more important than ever for the PCP. Due to its solidly rooted Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the context of the crisis did not cause any change in its programmatic positions, or any further development of its European alliance policy, for instance towards the EL. Rather, the PCP has seen itself confirmed in its analysis of political-economic conditions in the EU by the economic and social effects of the crisis (cf. PCP 2010d). The Lisbon Strategy, adopted on Portuguese soil by the European Council in 2000,

and the Lisbon Treaty concluded during the Portuguese Council Presidency in 2010, both contributed to the popularity of EU policy issues in Portugal in recent years. In May 2010, the PCP held an international conference in Lisbon on the Strategy Europe 2020, the successor to the Lisbon Strategy (cf. PCP 2010e). Issues of great significance to the Portuguese economy, such as the EU fisheries policy, have always been very important to the PCP. MEP Joao Ferreira has several times been the rapporteur on this issue at the EP.

**4.15 SEL – SINISTRA ECOLOGIA E LIBERTÀ – LEFT, ECOLOGY, FREE – ITALY**

EP Political Group	GUE/NGL
European party	–
European structures	–
Results, 2009 European elections	–
Results, 2004 European elections	–
Result of national elections, 2013	3.20%/37 seats
National government participation	No
Competing left party	Yes (PRC/PdCI)

**Key statements on European integration:**

The SEL sees itself in the European policy tradition of leftist EU federalism, particularly that of Altiero Spinelli, one of the leading figures of the EU federalist movement in Italy and Europe. The president of the SEL, Nichi Vendola, stood for the European election in 2004, at that time still on the PRC list. He declined to take his seat, and a year later was elected president of the region of Apulia. At the beginning of 2009, he left the PRC, and at the end of that year was elected chairperson of the newly founded SEL. In 2010, he was reconfirmed in his office of president of Apulia.

In the national parliamentary elections in Italy in 2013, the SEL entered into an alliance with the social democratic PD called “*Italia. Bene Comune*” (“Common Good”). The SEL stood under its own Programme, which describes its plans for deepening EU integration: “Italy must once again become a protagonist in the construction of the United States of Europe, with a central, fair tax policy for the redistribution of wealth and the creation of a European plan for full employment, the transformation of the economy and of production circuits, and toward welfare and participation, and also a minimum income at the continental level” (SEL 2013).

In the view of the SEL, the United States of Europe project is currently being undermined by the financial and economic crisis, and by misguided intergovernmental austerity policies marked by the national interests of certain countries, rather than by European solidarity. At the same time, this is a crisis of democracy: the EP has too little power to act against the ECB and the Commission politically. In order to reinforce the EP and its ties to the electorate, the SEL supports transnational electoral lists for European elections in 2014. Moreover, the party supports a constitutional conven-



tion after the elections, in which the EP should play a major role; it should become the central legislative institution (cf. *ibid.*).

**Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

The Election Programme of 2013 calls for resistance against the Fiscal Stability Treaty (TSCG). The ECB should become a “lender of last resort”, and issue Eurobonds (cf. SEL 2013); moreover, the SEL wants to push forward the taxation of financial transactions. The European Stability Pact should be renegotiated: Expenditures for welfare, ecological reconstruction, labour, innovation and culture should be exempted from restrictions under the TSCG. EU policy should be characterized by social justice and ecological sustainability. The economic union should, in the view of the SEL, have been followed by a common government and common rules, such as a European taxation and redistribution system, as well as minimum incomes throughout the EU.

A “Green New Deal” could constitute the foundation for good jobs and full employment. The construction of Europe should be carried out by left and socialist forces under the leadership of trade unions and the social movements. At the national level, welfare and labour policy should be promoted within the member countries; at the international level, cooperation should be concentrated on development cooperation and the fight against climate change. Mediterranean integration and cooperation should be promoted by trade, cultural exchange, free movement and the decentralized generation of renewable energies (cf. *ibid.*).

**Alliance policy at the European level:**

The SEL is particularly well networked with the social movements in Italy. Marco Damiani describes it as the movement party *par excellence* (cf. Damiani 2011: pp. 378ff). At the EU level, the SEL cooperates with the network “European Alternatives” (EA), which supports a social, federal EU. In June 2012, the SEL and the EA, together with other organizations, organized a flash-mob in Brussels under the slogan, “We are all Europeans, we want a federal Europe now!” To date, the SEL has not tied itself firmly to any party alliance, which is in line with Vendola’s concept of a post-ideological left (cf. Vendola, 2011). In Germany, for instance, Vendola met both with the Left Party and with the Social Democrats, and in the EP held discussions with the Greens. The connection of a left party to social movements with federalist goals with respect to the EU is seen as incomprehensible by large parts of the European left. These conflicts came to a head at the Forum Firenze 10 + 10 in November 2012, held to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Social Forum in Florence in 2002. Posters and banners of the federalists were repeatedly smeared with graffiti or torn down. In the seminars, there were vigorous disputes over dealing with the EU. Finally, the strong presence of the federalists at a forum

otherwise dominated by anti-imperialist, sovereigntist or revolutionary leftists meant that the Forum was unable to formulate any substantive goals of the European left movements in its Final Declaration, beyond that of mere protest.

**Priority accorded EU policy:**

In the national election campaign, European policy was an important issue, due to the Italian debt crisis. Premier Mario Monti, who had come to power without any election, stood as a kind of technocratic candidate of the European Council, while Silvio Berlusconi ran a national-populist campaign against the EU. The centre-left “*Italia. Bene Comune*” alliance of the PD, the SEL and other smaller parties signed a declaration prior to the election in which it promised, in case it entered the government, to fulfil all European and international obligations (cf. Daiber/di Lipari 2013). The alliance won the election, winning 345 out of 630 seats, but lacked a majority in the Senate, so that ultimately the PD formed a grand coalition with Silvio Berlusconi’s party; the SEL, with its 37 seats, remained in the opposition.

Party Chairperson Vendola sees the further development of the EU from a neoliberal project to a project of social civil rights and freedoms as an opportunity for crisis-plagued Italy: “The only way for [Italy] to get back on its feet is to look towards Europe. But towards a different Europe, not the mediocre one that we have seen, but rather a social Europe, a Europe with a radically different immigration policy, education policy and environmental policy” (Vendola 2012).

The National Election Programme of 2013 addresses questions of European policy in great detail. One of the four chapters is dedicated to European integration.

**4.16 VGF – VINSTRIHREYFINGIN – GRÆNT FRAMBOÐ – LEFT-GREEN ALLIANCE – ICELAND**

EP Political Group	–
European party	–
European structures	UEL, NGLA, VSG
Results, 2009 European elections	–
Results, 2004 European elections	–
Result of national elections, 2013	10.9%/7 seats
National government participation	No (2009 to April 2013: 4 cabinet positions)
Competing left party	No

**Key statements on European integration:**

The VG rejects Iceland’s entry into the EU. The Party Programme, which was most recently revised in 2005, states that even possible advantages of EU membership would not justify surrendering the rights to decision-making over interests of the Icelandic nation to the EU. Financial capital and global corporations were, it said, too influential in the EU, which was, moreover, overly dominated by centralism, bureaucracy and the lack of democratic mechanisms (cf. VG 2005). The Conclusions of the Party Congress of 2011 state

that the debate over the future of the euro has led to increased centralization of the EU and to the surrender of sovereignty by member countries in additional policy areas. The Lisbon Treaty has moreover led to a cooperation in foreign and security policy that the VG rejects. It also saw the rights of workers as being under attack in the EU. Educating the Icelandic people about the negative effects of EU entry is a top priority for the VG (cf. VG 2011).

**Programmatic content with reference to the EU level:**

In a number of public events, the party in 2009 discussed what it saw as the most urgent substantive issues with regard to the accession negotiations which were then beginning. At issue were possible negative consequences of the application of the Directive on Services (the “Bolkestein Directive”), the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and the policy on public banks (cf. VG 2009). The Conclusions to the 2011 Party Congress state that the VG wants Iceland to cut its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30%, in accordance with the target set by the EU (cf. VG 2011).

Alliance policy at the European level:

The VG currently sends three MPs to the Left-Wing Socialist Green Group (VSG) in the Nordic Council, the Secretary-General of which, Björg Eva Erlendsdóttir, is from Iceland. With reference to the EU, there was an especially intensive exchange with the GUE/NGL, which travelled to Reykjavik for study-days in May 2011, and invited a number of VG speakers, including then-Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture Steingrímur Sigfússon, and then-Minister of the Environment Svan-dis Svavarsdóttir. Sigfússon, also Iceland’s former Minister of Finance, spoke at the invitation of Andrej Hunko (LINKE) to a meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council (pace) on the issue of “Austerity measures: A danger for democracy and social rights”,

describing the policy of the Icelandic government for solutions to the financial crisis as an alternative to the austerity policy in the EU (cf. page 2012).

**Priority accorded EU policy:**

Iceland’s negotiations for entry into the EU began in 2009, but have still not been concluded. All parties other than the Social Democratic Alliance (*Samfylkingin*) are now opposed to Iceland’s entry. That issue was the cause of the first major dispute within the centre-left coalition between the VGA and the *Samfylkingin* (cf. Erlingsdóttir 2010: pp. 151–152). In the coalition agreement of May 15, 2009, the participating parties ultimately agreed that the Foreign Minister should propose the initiation of accession negotiations with the EU to the *Alþingi*, the Icelandic parliament. However, accession would then only be possible after approval in a national referendum. The parties agreed to respect each other’s positions on EU membership, and to recognize each other’s rights to present their opinions in public (cf. VG/S 2009). In January 2013, the governing parties reached a further agreement with reference to accession negotiations, this time with respect to the electoral campaign for the parliamentary elections on April 27. The agreement repeated the formulation stated in the Coalition Agreement of 2009, and added that work on the four controversial, yet un-concluded negotiation chapters, fisheries, services, free movement of capital, and agriculture, should be suspended until the elections (cf. VG/S 2013). The Conclusions of the Party Congress of February 24, 2013 stated that while the VG did not support Iceland’s entry into the EU, it nonetheless supported the conclusion of the accession negotiation process within a year after the elections. In the meantime, the party wanted to work for a change in the Icelandic Constitution in order to stipulate a national referendum as necessary for any entry into the EU (cf. VG 2013).

## 5 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS IN 2014: WILL THERE BE A EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN OF THE LEFT?

**Table 6: Left parties between federalism and sovereigntism, April 2013**

Federalism	pro EU membership, more national autonomy	Sovereigntism
SYRIZA	Sinn Féin	ERG
IU	SP	V
BE (RC)		KKE
PRC		PCP
LINKE		
FG		VG*
KSČM		
VAS		
SEL		

\* Country not in the EU. Source: Own design

### 5.1 DEMOCRACY IN THE EU: THE QUESTION IS, WHAT LEVEL?

An examination of the core statements on European policy in the family of the left parties shows that the family continues to be split between sovereigntist and federalist positions. Their conceptions regarding the proper level for the implementation of left politics vary widely: the SYRIZA, IU, BE, PRC, LINKE, FG, KSČM and VAS have a fundamental perspective of implementing their goals within the context of a democratized, social EU, while the ERG, V, KKE, PCP, and to a lesser extent, the Sinn Féin and SP, pursue sovereigntist strategies. The financial and economic crisis and the social impacts of the EU's neoliberal crisis policies have however strengthened those tendencies, even within the federalist parties that want to consider sovereigntist strategies. Within the FG, LINKE, IU, BE and PRC, the voices are becoming ever louder who demand a withdrawal into the sovereign nation-state in order to defend social standards and to fight back against the dictates to the neoliberal political majorities in the European Council and in the EU institutions. Representatives of the SP and the V demanded that the governments of their own countries follow the lead of Britain's nationalist Conservative Prime Minister Cameron and hold national referendums on remaining in the EU, or renegotiate the terms of EU membership.

Especially, the confederal GUE/NGL Political Group in the EP brings together parties with a broad range of answers to the question as to which level is the most proper for the implementation of leftist policies. For although the GUE/NGL has stable majorities on most parliamentary issues, it is the most heterogeneous political group in the EP, with the exception of the Nationalists; moreover, that heterogeneity has in fact increased slightly over the situation in the last legislative term, a fact which can be laid by the elimination of the Italian delegations. Intra-group dissent in parliamentary votes tends to be higher in those policy areas which involve political decisions with regard to the

level at which policy is to be implemented. Going into the European election of 2014, the GUE/NGL will presumably not be capable of drafting a common goal for the future of the institutional architecture of the EU.

For the European party EL it does seem more likely that it will be able to formulate a common position regarding the democratization of the EU and its future institutional design. The common understanding of democracy of the EL parties has today primarily rested on the broad and direct participation of the population in societal decision-making processes. The EL demands the "political unification" of the EU, which implies the centralization of decision-making. However, the EL also rejects any personalization of the European electoral campaign by way of the nomination of candidates for the EU presidency by the parties or political groups, since this would enhance the legitimacy of the Commission, and thus contradict the goal of democratization of the EU. The most concrete commonly formulated demands in this respect are those calling for an increase in the power of the parliaments, a right of legislative initiative for the EP, and referendums on questions of European policy at the national and European levels. However, strengthening the EP would mean a further loss of sovereignty for member countries, which some EL parties reject. Pan-European referendums, too, would mean the growth of democratic legitimacy for the EU as a level of political decision-making, regardless of what issue was to be voted upon: the European population could thus express its will directly. Although neither the communist opponents of the EU, the KKK and the PCP, nor the Swedish V are members of the EL, the accession of the Danish ERG to the EL in 2010 means that an electorally significant full member has been accepted which rejects the generally federalist positions of other EL parties, and which sees the EL itself as a project with the aid of which powers currently granted to the EU should be brought back to the national level. At the end of April 2013, the ERG decided to support candidates of the Danish FmEU in the 2014 European elections, as it has in the past. Overall, it does seem possible that the EL may be forced to compromise on even weaker statements with regard to the level of the common implementation of left policies than it already did in the Electoral Platform for the 2009 European elections.

Two parties included in the present study which are members neither of the GUE/NGL nor of the EL represent opposite positions. The Italian SEL aggressively demands the founding of a United States of Europe with a common government, and with centralized taxation and social policy. Since it ran in the Italian parliamentary election in alliance with the social democratic PD, and has thus obligated itself to generally support any and all European agreements with regard to man-

aging the debt crisis, it seems likely that it will associate itself with some European party other than the EL. By contrast, the Icelandic VG continues to reject the accession of the island nation to the EU, which it sees as overly neoliberal, and fraught with centralistic tendencies. Since the change of government there, the country is in any case unlikely to join the EU anytime in the near future. The course which the centre-left government, which included the VG, had taken to solve the Icelandic financial crisis in April 2013, would in any case hardly have been possible within the EU: it protected the welfare state and shielded the industrial sectors, and let the banks and creditors bear the liability for their own risks and losses.

## 5.2 GREATEST COMMON DENOMINATOR: A SOCIAL EUROPE

The family of left parties demonstrates a high degree of convergence with respect to cleavage-characterized substantive political goals (cf. also Striethorst 2010). Measures for the securing and implementation of social rights and standards at the EU level are supported by all left parties, whether to be adopted by way of direct multi-lateral agreements of the countries involved, or within the framework of the EU legislative process. All left parties reject negative market integration, and demand a reform of the EU treaties in order to guarantee the primacy of social rights, to reverse economic deregulation processes, and to manage economic development sustainably in social and ecological terms by means of public investments. This can be seen both in the programmes of the national parties, and in the commonly formulated positions adopted in the context both of the EL and of the GUE/NGL. It can also be ascertained that demands developed in these contexts will find their way into the national programmes of the parties. Substantive feedback does take place. The best examples for that are the demands for a social progress clause in the EU treaties, or the proposal to establish an EU fund for social and ecological development.

A look at the GUE/NGL political group is particularly interesting, since it brings together the broadest possible spectrum of contemporary left parties, and since its Common Programme represents the greatest common European policy denominator in the left party spectrum. The only party that uncompromisingly calls for a national revolutionary overthrow and a break with the EU, and thus supports no reformist programmatic points whatever, is the Greek KKE. However, even this party accepts the fact that common positions will be formulated within the framework of the GUE/NGL, even if it does not support these positions itself.

All left parties examined demand the regulation of the European financial sector, a ban on certain financial products, and international measures against tax havens and tax cheating. The democratic control of the ECB and of reorientation of its monetary policy toward ecological and socially sustainable growth and full employment are formulated as important goals by

most left parties, especially those from the member countries of the currency union. Especially the federalist EL parties call for the issuance of joint securities – Eurobonds – and the direct financing of member countries by the ECB, which would thus be transformed into a “lender of last resort”. The countries would then be able to refinance themselves independently of the financial markets, directly via the ECB. A financial transaction tax is also supported by most parties, albeit not necessarily in the framework of the EU, and not necessarily as a means of generating revenue for an independent EU budget. The minimum taxation of multinational corporations is an issue for many parties; however, there is no unity regarding the issue of whether this should be accomplished by way of multilateral treaties, or centrally, through the EU. Sinn Féin for instance, rejects any binding regulation which would limit the tax sovereignty of Ireland.

All left parties support a social union or a social model of international cooperation. These demands include a social progress clause in the EU treaties that would secure such social rights as the right to strike or to engage in collective bargaining, as opposed to the so-called economic freedoms existing in the EU. This demand is also supported by such sovereigntist left parties as the V or Sinn Féin, since such a regulation could prevent national social standards from being deregulated by means of EU law. Agreements regarding minimum social standards at the European level and the elimination of poverty also are among the common demands of left parties, and have just found their way into the programmes of the GUE/NGL and the EL. The demands include EU agreements on minimum wages, minimum pensions and minimum incomes. However, here too, there is no agreement as to whether the EU should implement these standards legislatively, or whether multilateral treaties should be the preferred method.

Redistribution among the member states by means of a common EU budget is supported by all left parties. However, there are differences: while especially such EL parties as the SYRIZA, BE, IU, LINKE and FG have voiced opposition to the cutbacks in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2014-2020, as planned by the European Council, and instead demanded an increase in that budget and reject a return to “nationally centred policies”, the Swedish V and the Dutch SP demand cuts in the budget. The V wants to reduce the funding for agricultural and structural funds, while the SP demands that EU funding support only be given to poorer member countries, rather than to all disadvantaged regions, as is the case today, saying that the richer countries can support their own poor regions themselves. Another conflict between left parties with respect to the EU budget is that the sovereigntistically oriented parties reject the right of the EU to raise its own finances, since, as they see it, an EU budget independent of the member states would mean a step in the direction of a European federal state.

Both the EL and the GUE/NG call for a socio-ecological stimulus programme for affected states as a way out of the crisis, in place of the deregulation and austerity policies currently being implemented; one tool for this purpose might be a special EU fund. In September 2012, the EL attempted by means of a new instrument, the European Citizens' Initiative, to force the Commission to establish a public European bank for social and ecological development. The proposal was rejected for legalistic reasons.

### 5.3 THE ELECTORAL POINT OF DEPARTURE AND THE ISSUE OF THE CANDIDATES: HEADLESS INTO THE RACE?

The fundamental difficulty for left politics at the EU level is the continued asymmetry between the European party EL and the GUE/NG Political Group in the European Parliament. Such electorally successful parties as the SP, the V and Sinn Féin have to date steered clear of the EL (cf. March 2008). Schirdewan's ascertainment in 2006 that the European left found itself in a "process of catch-up integration forced by the rapid progress of European integration and the situation of competition with other party families" (Schirdewan 2006: p. 682), still holds true for the European election of 2014, in spite of the steps toward integration already accomplished. In some member countries, GUE/NGL member parties are standing against each other in elections; in each case, only one of these has joined the EL. In two countries most badly hit by the crisis, two left parties exist in each, and in both, early national elections were recently held. The voters' verdict was mixed: In the case of Portugal in 2011, the sovereigntist PCP came in ahead of the federalist BE, while in Greece in 2012, the federalist SYRIZA did better than the sovereigntist KKE. In Denmark in 2011, the federalist SF, which sits with the Greens/EFA Political Group in the EP, did better than the sovereigntist EL member party ERG. And in the Netherlands, the SP was in 2012 unable to improve on its performance of 2010, in spite of high scores in the opinion polls prior to the election. The Swedish V, too, stagnated in the parliamentary election of 2010, with a programme which completely ignored EU politics. In Spain, the federalist IU was able to almost double its vote in the national parliamentary election of 2011, and the French FG, too, did better in 2012 than the PCF had four years earlier. Their candidate for the French presidency, MEP Jean-Luc Mélenchon got 11.1% of the vote. Whether the German LINKE can retain the same number of seats it got in 2009 in the upcoming EP election is very questionable. For one thing the number of German seats in the EP is

being cut from 99 to 96; for another, a Supreme Court ruling struck down the existing 5% minimum threshold for representation, which will thus either drop to 3% or be eliminated altogether, thus increasing the number of parties competing for seats. Finally, the setback suffered in the national election in September is not a promising sign.

All in all, however, the EL would appear to stand a good chance of increasing its share of seats within the GUE/NGL, which could contribute to an improvement of the coherence within the Political Group, that would in turn have a positive effect on the parliamentary weight of the Group within the EP, and on its public image.

On the other hand, even within the EL there is the possibility that sovereigntist tendencies within parties which have up till now been federalistically oriented could gain strength. This could have a dampening effect on the programmatic coherence of the EL already achieved, and could also hamper the capacity for action by the GUE/NGL. The neoliberal crisis policies of the EU have caused intraparty conflicts with respect to European policy to be carried out with greater vehemence than was the case going into the European elections of 2009. As a result, the situation being analysed by the political left as a deep crisis of capitalism could cause the European left parties to move further apart from one another, rather than uniting in resistance. The still uncertain question as to the proper level for the implementation of left politics is one possible explanation for the fact that left parties have to date been only sporadically able to profit electorally from the crisis.

One of the most interesting questions in this context is whether the EL will nominate a Europe-wide candidate for the office of Commission President. Although it initially rejected this initiative by other political groups in the EP, saying that such a proposal was not the suitable way to eliminate the deficit in democracy in the EU, the question now is whether the Group is willing for this reason to risk a competitive disadvantage in the elections, in spite of the fact that its vice president, SYRIZA chairperson Alexis Tsipras, or French Presidential candidate and MEP Jean-Luc Mélenchon of the FG are both well-known figures of European stature. Tsipras' omnipresence throughout Europe and in the media, and his frequent appearances at the events of other EL parties, might suggest him as a candidate. Electoral campaigns with common candidates could also strengthen the internal unification process of the EL.

The EL will decide on its joint presentation for the 2014 European election at its Fourth Congress in December 2013 in the Spanish capital of Madrid.

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## DIRECTORY OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ABB.</b>	<b>LOCAL NAME</b>	<b>ENGLISH NAME</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>
AKEL	Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou	Progressive Party of Working People	Cyprus
BE	Bloco de Esquerda	Left Block	Portugal
CDU	Coligação Democrática Unitária	United Democratic Coalition	Portugal
DL	Déi Lénk	Left Party	Luxemburg
ERG	Enhedslisten – De rød-grønne	Red-Green Alliance (lit.: Unity List – The Red-Greens)	Denmark
FG	Front de Gauche	Left Front	France
IU	Izquierda Unida	United Left	Spain
KKE	Kommunistikó Kómma Elládas	Communist Party of Greece	Greece
KPÖ	Kommunistische Partei Österreichs	Communist Party of Austria	Austria
KSČM	Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	Czech Republic
KSS	Komunistická strana Slovenska	Communist Party of Slovakia	Slovakia
LCR/LO	Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire/Lutte Ouvrière	Revolutionary Communist League/ Workers' Struggle	France
LINKE	Die Linke	Left Party	Germany
PCF	Parti Communiste Français	French Communist Party	France
PCP	Partido Comunista Português	Portuguese Communist Party	Portugal
PdCI	Partito dei Comunisti Italiani	Party of Italian Communists	Italy
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Party of Democratic Socialism	Germany
PG	Parti de Gauche	Left Party	France
PRC	Partito della Rifondazione Comunista	Communist Refoundation Party	Italy
SEL	Sinistra Ecologia Libertà	Left Ecology Freedom	Italy
SF	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialist People's Party	Denmark
SFe	Sinn Féin	"We ourselves"	Ireland
SP	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party	Netherlands
SWP	Socialist Workers' Party		Great Britain
SYN	Synaspismós tis Aristerás tōn Kinimátōn kai tis Oikologías	Coalition of Left, of Movements and Ecology	Greece
SYRIZA	Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás – Enotiko Kinoniko Metopo	Coalition of the Radical Left – Unitary Social Front	Greece
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party		Great Britain
V	Vänsterpartiet	Left Party	Sweden
VAS	Vasemmistoliitto	Left Alliance	Finland
VG	Vinstrihreyfingin – grænt framboð	Left-Green Movement	Iceland



**POLITICAL GROUPS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

EVP	European People’s Party–European Democrats (EPP–ED) (Centrist-conservatives)
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) (Social democrats)
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) (Liberals)
Greens/EFA	The Greens–European Free Alliance (Greens–EFA) (Greens and regionalists)
GUE/NGL	European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE–NGL) (Leftists)
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) (Right-wing conservatives)
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy (Ultra-right-wing nationalists)

**EUROPEAN STRUCTURES**

EACL	European Anti-Capitalist Left
EL	Party of the European Left
FmEU	People’s Movement against the EU
IMCWP	International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties
NC	Nordic Council
NELF	New European Left Forum
NGLA	Nordic Green Left Alliance
GUE/NGL	Unified European Left Political Group
VSG	Left-Socialist Green Groups

**INSTITUTIONS AND TERMS**

ACTA	Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement
EAS	European External Action Service
ECI	European Citizens’ Initiative
EFSF	European Financial Stability Facility
EGB	European Trade Union Confederation
EMRK	European Convention on Human Rights
EP	European Parliament
EPP	European Political Party
ER	European Council
ESF	European Social Forum
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
EU	European Parliament
EWU	European Economic and Monetary Union
EZB	European Central Bank
FSE	Forum Social Europe
GAP	Common Agricultural Policy
GASP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariff
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
IGB	International Trade Union Confederation
COM	European Commission
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
Nato	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
TSCG	Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (Fiscal Stability Treaty)
WPF	World Parliamentary Forum
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union

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