

“The Exit From The Crisis Is On The Left” („Der Ausweg aus der Krise ist links”)

Auszüge aus den 10 programmatischen Vorhaben von SYRIZA

To remove our country from the crisis needs radical change

1. Getting rid of the stranglehold of the debt

The country's sovereign debt reflects class relations and domination. Taxes are not paid by the rich. By continuing exemptions and credits for high incomes and capital gains, tax evasion and tolerance of tax stealing, interweaving kickbacks, cost overruns in public works and looting of public funds, excessive military spending and pharaonic events like the Olympics huge fortunes were created, public companies were privatized and a debt that cannot be served has been accumulated.

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The national debt today is the lever for enforcing all measures that are strangling us. These measures do not reduce, but increase the debt. In ten years this will be at least as it were at the beginning of the Memorandum. The removal of the debt agreed with the PSI was accompanied by measures which have turned the benefit to cost. Tens of billions will be given to banks; pension funds lose their reserves and universities and hospitals their property. This agreement gives away whatever public property left and lenders take control of the revenue of the state. Their service always comes first. The economic and political forces in Greece and the euro area which, rhetorically, prioritize tackling the debt, in fact pursue only the dramatic decline in income (wages, pensions, etc.) and demolition of workers' and social rights. The sacrifices they seek on the occasion of debt restructuring bring neither salvation nor the country's debt sustainability. The "rescue" programs are meant to increase the profitability of capital and power on labour and the constant reproduction of dependency states from the international banking system.

This vicious cycle must be stopped. The solution is one: selective write-off of the greatest part of the debt owned either by financial institutions or states; suspension of service of the remaining debt until there is economic recovery; service on more favorable terms conditional on growth and employment.

To achieve this result we need to use every means, including a cease of payments.

2. To tax wealth and eliminate unnecessary costs

We are told that there are no resources for a policy shift like the one we need. This is not true. Resources can be found with a radical overhaul of the tax system, the charge, as appropriate, of large incomes and accumulated wealth and reduce costs that do not serve the people's interest.

- Change the tax scale with a significant increase in rates on high incomes to 75% for incomes above EUR 50,000 per year.
- The tax rate for large enterprises should be increased at least to the average of the Eurozone.
- Establish financial transactions tax and to impose a special tax on luxury and conspicuous consumption.
- Abolish the special tax status of the economically powerful, such as the ship-owners and the Church
- Accumulated wealth, whether in Greece or abroad, should be fully registered and large fortunes over 1 million euros should be adequately taxed.

- Remove the banking and commercial secrecy, to provide transparency in trade and combat tax evasion and contribution evasion.
- Prohibit all transactions through off-shore companies.
- Reshape and modernize the tax and audit departments of the State.

Additional resources can be found with the effective utilization of each Euro coming from the EU, not only by raising the absorption ratio but by multiplying their utility; by claiming the German occupation loans, compensation and reparations for victims of occupation; by reviewing all military spending and eliminating all unnecessary expenditure for the defense of the country, starting from NATO spending.

We are told that we cannot tackle tax and contributions evasion and cannot detect large fortunes. This is not true. It is the parties of corruption and clientelism that do not want and cannot do it. Their political existence is based on the favour and financing of the economically powerful. Even today, in the heart of the crisis, while cutting electricity to poor households, they foster concealment of income, the appropriation of VAT and social security contributions, do not collect taxes from past years, and do not hesitate to reduce even further (from 24% to 20%) the tax rate on profits of big business. You need the political forces that will not serve the large economic interests and not be financially dependent on them. The property register can be established immediately with the compulsory declaration on the tax returns of all assets, whether in Greece or abroad, and confiscation of those not registered. Tax evasion and contribution evasion can be captured with the use of new technologies and accumulated knowledge of workers in tax authorities and social security funds.

With these tools tens of billions can flow to public funds each year. Resources with which people who are today crushed can be relieved, new wealth can be produced and Greece can be radically reformed.

3. Shield of protection, in order to bring society off the crisis, standing on her feet

We are already facing a humanitarian crisis. The unemployed and underemployed, low pensioners, indebted households, low-income, homeless need emergency measures to survive. A program of direct application is necessary for reasons of basic social solidarity. The entire state machinery should immediately be mobilized to counter the threat of mass misery.

- The minimum wage should immediately return to the level provided by the National General Collective Agreement.
- Use should be made of buildings owned by the government, banks and the Church, to provide suitable housing for the homeless.
- In public schools to implement the program immediately breakfast and lunch meals for children.
- All health services (medical, dental and optical care) should be provided for free to the unemployed, homeless and low income patients.
- Loans of indebted households should be resettled so that they are granted a grace period, extension of repayment time and readjustment of interest rate. Installments should not exceed 30% of income. Some or all of the debt should be erased if the debtor is below the level of decent living.
- Unemployment benefits should be increased in level and extended to all insured and adjusted for the duration of unemployment. Special aid should be granted to those who have not registered with the unemployment insurance system.
- Immediate steps should be taken to reduce commodity prices with a corresponding reduction or, where necessary, removing VAT. There might be special fees/prices for access to utilities for

vulnerable categories of citizens. The tax hike on small property should be immediately abolished.

- A plan for gradually restoring the purchasing power of wages and pensions should be put in place.

4. Sustainable development of productive, social and environmental reconstruction

The last two decades have been critical to the economic situation in Greece, as in all European Union countries. The single market and single currency removed any possibility of protection of domestic production, either by tariffs or monetary policy, and imposed the fiercest competition. Privatizations, flexible labor relations, cuts and wage and pensions have taken place everywhere. Especially in weaker countries like Greece, deindustrialization and the destruction of whole industries was rapid.

In our country, the policy measures that were included in the Memoranda gave the final blow, leading to permanent, deep recession, unemployment and reduced incomes. The situation cannot be reversed by implementing the remaining measures of the memoranda and agreements signed, but will deteriorate rapidly. The development within the framework proposed by the two big parties is based on the complete freedom of capital, the selling off public wealth, the even greater exploitation of labor, the cancellation of social clauses, and the abandonment of the environment to the profitability of capital. With these measures, we are told, "the Greek economy will be competitive" and will "attract foreign investment." But Greece has always had a very low labor cost and a deficit in foreign trade, and labor and environmental protection were low compared to other European countries. And foreign investment did not come. Therefore, the degrading of labor and the environment is not the solution.

The solution lies in choosing a radically different way to transform Greece in one decade.

To do this we need a radical reshuffling of the political balance of power, a new ruling class coalition and a new majority based on the potential of labor, youth and culture, and the creative forces of our society.

An important tool for the new course is a reformed financial system with banks under public property.

The great crisis that erupted in 2008 has demonstrated that private for-profit banks are harmful for the vast majority of people. The partners of the two-party system in Greece spoke with pride about the privatized banking system, the expansion in the Balkans, for the expansion of credit to employees, for "new banking products." Today, this financial system, which would substitute for de-industrialization and the decline in agricultural production by bringing new investment and jobs and would cover the housing needs in society by providing mortgage loans to all, has been transformed into a plague for society. What has been given to banks in cash and guarantees from the state is several times the value of their assets, and now the two big parties and the troika plan to give them even more.

The financial system can and should become public and be reformed into a fundamentally new system of banks, with democratic and transparent administration and management, with strong social and employee participation and control. This is what we mean by the slogan: nationalization-socialization of banks. Depending on their mission, banks will belong to different public entities, state and non-state, e.g. cooperatives, which will operate under the guarantee and protection of the state. Their sole concern will be the protection of savings and the channeling of resources to development with social and ecological criteria. All speculative activities will be prohibited.

Public investment activity and the financing by the public banking system could revive small and medium businesses which are today crushed by lack of liquidity and demand and by competition from big capital. Support to small and medium enterprises with strict social and environmental criteria is crucial for enhancing domestic production of value added and innovation and for creating new jobs.

The transformation of the productive system and organization of production without major public investment and public enterprises is not feasible. Public Enterprises and Organizations that have been partially or totally privatized (Greek Power Company, Greek Telecom, Railway, Post Office, water, transports) need to return under public control and responsibility. Other production units, which are strategic for economic growth, such as ports, airports, roads, shipyards, mineral and energy resources should also remain or return to public control and responsibility.

We are told that public companies and organizations nurtured corruption and clientelism. It is not true. Corruption and patronage have been nurtured and reproduced by the two big parties. They have thereby consolidated their power and destroyed businesses and organizations that were built with public funds and the labour of workers. In the same way they have destroyed agricultural cooperatives.

We do not want to reestablish the previous situation in the public sector and this is another reason to defeat the partners of the two-party system. We need to reorganize public enterprises and organizations so that they serve the new development process, under public, social and employee control, operating with complete transparency and embedded in the overall democratic planning of the economy. The core of the new policy is the development of public and cooperative enterprises that can and should extend across the full range of production and marketing. New socialized and participatory cooperative units should develop aiming to a truly sustainable development, not based on the virtual growth and speculation, but on a more balanced and democratic management of common resources, and more symbiotic relationship with nature.

The service of social needs, public health and education at all levels, from nursery school to the university, cultural development, restoring and protecting the natural and manmade environment, the care and support of the helpless, assistance to immigrants so that they integrate into our society, prevention and rehabilitation of drug addicts, all these are not just costs for the society. They involve wealth production.

Greek agriculture and industry can produce in an environmentally sustainable way, high quality food for home consumption and export. The development of organic farming with the assistance of the state, universities, the Agricultural Bank and democratically organized cooperative banks could revive the rural, mountainous and island areas, protect the rural landscape that has been shaped by centuries of toil. Especially for the economy of remote islands, it is necessary to maintain the reduced VAT. Our country can develop its tourist industry without destroying the environment with great golf courts and hotels. The long duration of sunshine, wind blowing in the islands, geothermal energy can be sources of clean energy and, by appropriate design, to replace fossil fuels. The assignment of renewable energy to private capital, destroys instead of protecting the environment by the establishment of huge wind and solar parks, without concern for nature and people's needs. The exploration and exploitation of mineral resources and fossil energy sources, as long and insofar as they may need to be designed by the state with democratic control and in consultation with local communities. There is a need for public exploration and design of the exploitation of mineral and energy sources in consultation and agreement with local societies. Public agencies and research institutes should be mobilized to this goal. Our guiding

principle for exploration and exploitation of natural resources is environmental friendliness and peaceful settlement of disputes with neighboring countries through mutually beneficial reciprocal compromises.

Public demand is huge and this gives the state the power to impose ecological and social criteria for the selection of suppliers, as well as on any economic activity supported or subsidized by the state. The restoration and protection of the environment is a wealth-creating activity and creates jobs. But this is not ensured by the market and profit-seeking actors. The latter have already begun to use international crisis so that the resources devoted to environmental protection and assessment of the environmental impact of economic activity are reduced.

A great effort and international cooperation is required to

- Restore the balance of our seas that die from pollution and overfishing;
- Regain our forests which have been burnt or built and protect them effectively;
- Design the replacement of fossil, thermal and polluting energy sources with renewable and mild energy sources and ensure the achievement of specific short- and medium-term measurable goals.
- Reform production in order to save energy and raw materials, replacing short-lived with durable goods and reduce traffic
- Solve the problem of domestic, industrial and agricultural waste.

5. Stable job with decent salary and full social insurance ...

6. Radical overhaul of the state; democracy everywhere; equal rights for all ...

7. Strong welfare state. Nobody alone in facing hardships in life ...

8. Health cannot be a commodity. It is a social good and right for all ...

9. Protection of education and culture from the policies prescribed by the Memoranda ...

10. Independent and peaceful foreign policy ...

They will not blackmail us, they will not scare us. Together we can beat them!

United, with our mobilizations and protests, we have already overthrown the first government of the Memorandum. With this vote, we can provide solutions. We must prevent the parties supporting the Memorandum and their satellites to obtain the majority of votes and create the conditions for a new majority and government with the Left being at its core and leadership.

We have committed ourselves - in parliament, the movements, and trade unions - that we are fighting for the overthrow of the Memoranda and loan agreements. We are committed to the rejection of the new pact for the Euro. Victory in Greece will send a strong signal to Europe that people cannot be blackmailed. It will be a message of hope to European workers.

There are still forces in Ecology and the Left who hesitate or refuse.

We insist:

To unite and defeat them!

If not now when?

If not us who?