ELA
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NEWSLETTER

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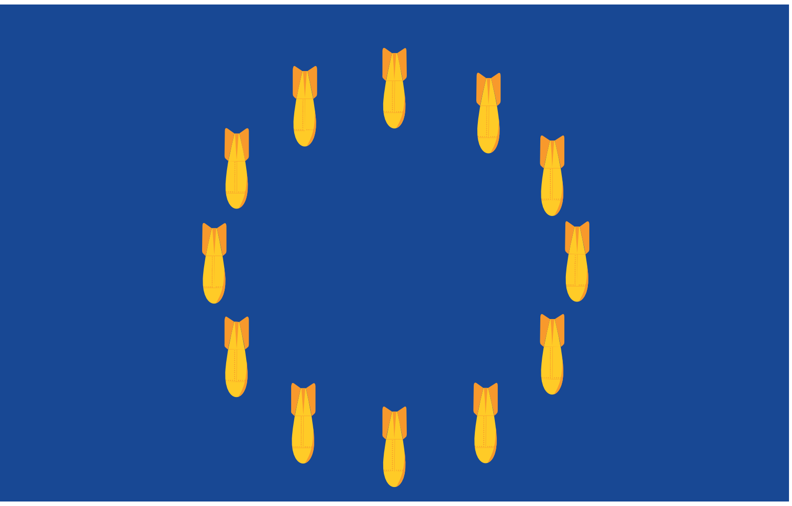
Palestine, stop the genocide

One year after the latest and umpteenth escalation of violence by Israel against the Palestinian people began, Basque workers took to the streets again to demand a ceasefire and the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people.



"Next Generation" Funds

Current European policies are neither green, nor social, nor oriented towards peace, on the contrary they are oriented towards warmongering and increasing military spending while cutting social spending.

The ELA political proposal

The ELA political proposal focuses on two measures to distribute wealth more fairly: achieving competition to establish a salary of its own in Hego Euskal Herria and a fiscal reform that puts an end to fraud, raising taxes for those who have more and increasing revenue to strengthen public services.

PALESTINE

STOP THE GENOCIDE

ELA is joining the demands made by the Guernica-Palestine Platform for a ceasefire and the right to self-determination.

One year on from the start of the last and umpteenth escalation of violence by Israel against the Palestinian people, the Basque workers once again have taken to the streets to demand a ceasefire for the millionth time and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

This total war against the Palestinian people has cost the lives of over 42,000 Palestinians, most of them, children and young people. The violence against the Palestinian community in Jerusalem and on the West Bank and the war crimes committed by Israel are constant and the world is watching this genocide from a front seat on live streaming.

For all these reasons, on the 21st of October of this year, the workers of Euskal Herria took to the streets, called by the "Guernica-Palestine" Platform and by the trade unions to demand:

- An immediate, permanent ceasefire that brings an end to the genocide in Gaza.
- A comprehensive resolution by means of negotiations and dialogue between the parties under the legal protection of the international community.
- The stopping of the sale of arms to Israel, as well as the cease of all activities, be they commercial, economic or of any other type with the bodies and institutions that do not oppose the genocide in Palestine, by the companies, local, state and European institutions (partnership agreements and treaties by the European Union and the Member States) and entities such as universities, social organisations…
- Whereas the institutions of the ACBC and Navarra, as well as the Spanish State present Declarations of Intervention before the International Criminal Court to support the demand already in progress in this institution against Israel.

The European Union is a battering ram for the war regime and militarisation

This can be deduced from the report ELA entrusted to OMAL (Observatorio de las Multinacionales en América Latina/ Observatory of Multinationals in Latin America) where the impact of the Next Generation funds is analysed, confirming that the EU has positioned itself as a battering ram for the war regime and militarisation, to the point that the escalation in armaments is being presented as a way out of the economic crisis.

The report, called ‘EU: olive green and digital agenda at the service of transnational companies ‘shows a detailed list of companies receiving these European public funds, which far from being “non-refundable subsidies that come from Europe”, are conditioned by their return (in the part corresponding to the credits) and they also oblige the receiving States to impose deeply anti-social steps: labour reforms, cutbacks in pensions, taxation in favour of large companies and fortunes and restrictions to hiring, along with public policies. In short, a return to austerity policies, which will come back into force from 2025 onwards.

In fact, receiving the European Funds has forced the Spanish Government to impose cutbacks of 6.1% on pensions from April 2025 (around 11,300 million euros per year). Those who passed the pension reform tried to hide the fact that they were imposing future cutbacks. In April, the European Commission published the Report on Aging: the pension reform passed in 2023 included the fact that every 3 years the pensions would be reviewed in order to adopt new adjustments. The European Funds are an intervention mechanism in state policies and they are framed within the austerity policies that the European Union has been imposing for a long time. The responsibility for this lies with all the parties that made the pension reform possible, amongst which are PNV and EH Bildu, who turned their backs on the demands by organisations to reject the reform.

Cutbacks in pensions to spend on arms

Today, warmongering is at the heart of politics; more military expenditure at the same time as cutbacks in social spending. They want to cutback pensions in order to buy arms. This is the Europe of the European Funds, a lie to favour the interests of the large multinationals. **The current European policies are neither green, nor social, nor are they aimed at peace**. ELA does not want to hide what is happening and denouncing what is happening is essential in order to be able to work towards another Europe.

The report prepared by OMAL reveals that the Next Generation funds are aimed, in Hego Esuskal Herria as well, at the large multinational corporations, with an overwhelming weight in the automotive industry: Volkswagen, Mercedes, Gestamp, Irizar... The Governments of Spain, ACBC and Navarra have become fully invested in rescuing the sector in order to safeguard their business turnovers, with the de facto hindering of the reduction of private vehicles or the promotion of public transport. It also analyses the distribution of the funds aimed at other sectors. It emphasises that enormous amounts are used to swell technological bubbles ('green washing') such as hydrogen (Petronor in Bizkaia, Acciona in Tudela, etc) or to focus on wind energy in a neo-colonial and extractionist logic (generalising the installation of large wind farms as corporate monopolies).

In short the report concludes that the aim of this plan is to recover the profit rate for large companies thanks to public money, at the expense of increasing job insecurity and eco-social unrest.

For this reason, ELA shares the conclusion reached in OMAL's Report, which considers that this "olive green, digital capitalism" must fight against a theoretical rearming and n important mobilisation by the political, social and trade union left wing, at the same time as boosting feasible alternatives, both inside and outside the institutions. The liberation of the people of Europe involves standing up from the outset to the architecture of domination and exploitation that the EU represents today.

ELA'S POLITICAL PROPOSAL

A Basque Official Minimum Wage and a tax on the capital to strengthen the public services

On the 24th of October, ELA held a mass confederate event at La Casilla (Bilbao), where it brought together 4,000 members as the starting point for a campaign of marches aimed at achieving a fair distribution of wealth. As summarised by Mitxel Lakuntza (the General Secretary of the trade union), "ELA's political proposal is centred on two steps to distribute the wealth in a fairer way; on the one hand, obtaining the competence to establish its own minimun salary in Hego Euskal Herria (which would be 1,795 euros in 2024); and on the other, a tax reform to bring an end to fraud, raising taxes for those who have most and increasing the tax collection to strengthen the public services."

Accordingly, Lakuntza announced that "ELA is going to play politics, just as Iberdrola, Petronor or the employers' associations are doing, but in the opposite direction. Because we believe in politics, particularly in the policies that are not carried out, the ones that should be an instrument to improve people's living conditions. Conversely, the priority of politics in the institutions is to not upset the political and business powers."

Very much to the contrary of this, Lakuntza concluded that "the distribution of the wealth is not a peaceful factor; nobody gives up their privileges on the spur of the moment." Therefore, he underscored that "the political proposal that ELA is bringing today directly questions our country's political parties; there is no room for impartiality here, because if we don't commit to improving salaries and distributing the wealth, the inequality is going to continue increasing."

Repsol and the Lehendakari (President of the Basque Government)

He quoted the case of Repsol as an example: "According to its Managing Director, Josu Jon Imaz, paying 10% tax on its 3,000 million in profits due to the energy tax puts investments and thousands of jobs at risk; at the same time, Imaz's plan for 2024 is to share out 10,000 millions amongst its shareholders. And this does not threaten the cohesion and social equality?" "Lehendakari: less servility to the large companies and more concern about them paying 25% of their profits."

Likewise, the General Secretary of ELA was highly critical of the political agreements such as the tax presentation for Guipuzcoa (PNV, EH Bildu, PSE): "They endorse what has been done previously regarding taxation and they do not commit to any change to collect more and to improve the public services: ELA does not understand why left wing parties continue to sweeten the reality to hide what they have decided not to change."

Leire Gallego also intervened (in charge of Social Action), describing the social emergency situation: “The price of rent has risen by 28% since 2014. Meanwhile, there are 70,000 uninhabited houses (around 25,000 in Navarra and 50,000 in the ACBC). We are sure that the large mobilisations for housing will also reach Euskal Herria, and ELA will take these demands to the streets: acknowledging the subjective right to housing, bringing a halt to evictions, mobilising thousands of uninhabited houses, increasing the public housing available and declaring the entire ACBC and Navarra as rent-controlled areas.”

Leire Gallego also asked “who is putting cohesion and social wellbeing at risk. Immigrants who risk their lives for a better future or the large companies? Fascism is fought against with good housing policies, better social services and quality public services.” She was accompanied by the testimony of one of ELA’s delegates in the care industry, **Karla Vidal**: “In 2023 we carried out a general feminist strike to demand a public, free, quality and co-responsible care system, but the governors continue taking advantage of care work to do business and privatise it, putting the interest of the companies first.”

Aitor Murgia (head of the Consultancy Office), recalled that “the tax system is designed to ensure that the companies pay little, or no tax. Thanks to deductions and tax engineering, companies in the ACBC only pay an average of 9% on their profits, when this should be 25%. Once again, it should be underscored that corporate tax is only paid on profits. Not on invoicing. That is to say, it is not such a big deal, and under no circumstances would it affect the feasibility of any company.”
With that in mind, Murgia warned that “we are about to take on a tax reform and the institutions and political parties are levelling the ground to make it serves the employers.” In view of this, he recalled that “there will be no social justice without a fair, progressive tax system.”

Ane Zelaia (head of Unionisation) was in charge of presenting the Official Minimum Wage proposal that ELA is demanding for Hego Euskal Herria, consisting of a new calculation (65% of the GDP per capita in the ACBC and Navarra) that guarantees an effective distribution of the wealth between income from work and capital and that is not limited (as it has been up to now) to a mere comparative indicator between salaries. “This calculation means 1,795 euros per month for 2024”, a figure that would have to be up-dated every year. “This demand is perfectly attainable: in Europe, countries with an economic level that is similar to ours have Official Minimum Wages that are higher: Germany (1,981 euros), Belgium (1,955), the Netherlands (1,934) or France (1,709)”.