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Peace and International Policy Task Force

Building a New Pillar on Peace and International Policy

Our Perspective



Democracy in Europe Movement 2025

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Introduction

We have worked in accordance with the principles outlined in the DiEM25 Manifesto and took into account the work already done by other pillars. As an initial contribution to building a new DiEM25 pillar on Peace and Foreign Policy, we have collectively produced the present text and a questionnaire already available to all members.

The text below contains an introduction presenting our philosophy followed by our views on some of the main issues identified during our debates. It is organized under four broad headings:

I. Europe and the World

II. Peace and Security

III. Global Inequality: Fight Extreme Wealth

IV. A Global Movement

The replies to the questionnaire and the all-member consultations that will follow shall be the basis for producing a DiEM25 Green Paper on Peace and International Policy. The debate will go on for months and all DiEMers will be able to contribute to it if they wish to do so.

Once we reach a consensual position, we would like to open further consultations with groups outside DiEM25. We believe that this collective effort of defining DiEM25's policy line on global issues will provide a good basis for debate and participation within the Progressive International.

Peace and International Policy Task Force
June 2020

Our Philosophy

The philosophy guiding our work is as follows:

1. We strive for a democratic, non-aligned Europe, independent from imperial pressures, a federation of nations promoting peace in Europe and the world, a federation based on mutual respect and cooperation rather than confrontation, in the fight for social justice, against climate change, in which conflict-prevention and resolution, disarmament and a trust-basis for de-nuclearization rank among the top priorities.
2. We strive for a responsible all-European Federation fully committed to solidarity, and the eradication of poverty and gross inequalities within Europe and beyond. A federalist model of organic coordination and cooperation based on subsidiarity within the Federation, would allow decisions taken from bottom-up and from the lowest possible level, to resound and take effect in a newly implemented model of politics. This model of democracy promotes decentralization of power and of space, self-management, returning autonomous power to local communities, municipalities and cooperatives.
3. A new people-centered model must guarantee the well-being of all citizens, countries and peoples: their dignity, self-determination, and their quality of life ("*buen vivir*") via just sustainable and socioeconomically re-distributive policies, adapted to each country, caring for all people. We share a vision of an open Europe, which puts an end to its colonial and neo-colonial history. This will be a Europe centered on people, instead of the current neo-liberal consensus based on unlimited free markets, exploitative trade, arms trade, conformism to the Washington Neo-Conservative agenda, and financial speculation. We want Europe open not only for exchanging resources, ideas, arts and culture but also enabling the mobility of people.
4. All European states must fully respect the UN Charter and international law and actively promote a solidarity-based international system governed by the precepts and limits of international law. An international common ground needs to be created that facilitates respectful and peaceful coexistence and joint efforts to tackle global human security concerns posed by gross inequality, global warming, violence, organized crime, health pandemics, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), nuclear disaster and other threats.
5. The EU can finally learn from its history and ban war as a means of politics and renounce the rule of force. This does not mean passivity or looking away when people are threatened. To the contrary, the EU should stress its civilian character and actively ensure the peaceful mediation of all disputes, seeking to reconcile interests with more than chatter and instead of military confrontation, respecting the rights and culture of all countries in the international arena.

6. We strive for a European security system inspired by the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and replacing NATO. Since its inception, the US has used NATO as an instrument to dominate Europe and turn it against Russia, thus endangering our continent. A future European Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) must be under full parliamentary control, restricted to a peaceful and solidarity-based foreign policy, strengthening its civil conflict-resolution capacities, promoting disarmament and sustainable development.

We know that there is a long road ahead of us, but are ready to engage on this path with all of you. Please go through the questionnaire and let us know your views.

I. Europe and the World

I.1 Reinventing Europe

Europe must reinvent itself as a peaceful federation, independent from foreign imperial interests, while committed to a relationship of mutual interdependence between its members and with the world. This federation should embrace internationalist politics towards progress, a future without warfare or poverty.

We feel an ethical imperative to recapture the federalist spirit of visionaries like Altiero Spinelli,¹ and predecessors among the socialists who stood against the cartel conservatives, at the inception of the European Union at the end of the Second World War (WWII). Reclaiming this federalist tradition means rebuilding a federation, in order to not only defuse the possibility of war among European states, but also in the rest of the world.

There cannot be true transformation and peace in Europe if other parts of the world live in misery, conflict, and war. There will be no peace as state actors increasingly resort to militarized and surveillance tools in order to maintain the neoliberal status quo. No peace as long as the trade rules perpetuate old colonial exploitative patterns, as long as externally enforced austerity and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank "structural adjustment" regimes exacerbate poverty and inequality. No peace as long as trade and even "development" aid are tied to market liberalization conditions – biased against both the poor and working classes, the poorer nations and former colonies of the earth.

¹ The visionary founder of the European Federalist Movement, Altiero Spinelli was a Communist resistance fighter jailed in 1927, when he was 20, and released in 1943. Spinelli abandoned Communism and devoted his life to Federalism in thought and action; he saw a future European Federation as the only path towards permanent peace in Europe and as a step towards a world federation. Since the 1940s, he defended a European Political Union built through a Constituent Assembly method, composed of representatives of the citizens. He formed a militant federalist movement which had a crucial influence in the process of European integration.

I.2 UN Democratization

From the start, DiEM25's motto on Europe has iterated "the EU must democratize or it will disintegrate". It is high time to reform the United Nations.

In the UN we have a valuable, unique mechanism: the only multilateral institute offering representation for all nations to dialogue. We must preserve it. Nowadays the UN is generally perceived like a dinosaur, unable to move forward, attacked by many arrows. Urgent renovation and democratization seem direly necessary.

At present, *raison d'état* and inter-governmental methods are increasingly visible in the UN system, couching an "America first" unilateralism which arguably began long before Trump shed the formal illusions of US participation. Though the world seemed to be moving in the direction of a multipolarity in the early 21st century with the rise of the BRICS, that process met a rapid reversal in recent years. Today, the UN harbours a disordered multilateralism: this disorder is driven by regional hegemonic powers (Russia, NATO, China, India, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and more recently Brazil) which de facto block the necessary invention of a stronger global governance to face the 21st century's challenges.

A democratizing force becomes pre-eminently vital and needed, to rebuild "counter-power" to the paralysis and volatile conflict-seeking of the antagonizing powers. A democratizing force could push the global institutions – the UN first of all – to reform according to the needs and possibilities of the era.

More democratic representation of the different nations on global fora would allow civic activists, minorities, stateless peoples and opposition movements to have a stronger voice and to express their needs and aspirations.

The idea of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA)² might represent a first step towards the long-aspired, radical ideal of a World Parliament, where *peoples* of the world come together, rather than only governments (as it is the case of the UN General Assembly) – precisely as it happened for the European parliamentary assembly which later became the European Parliament, with representatives elected directly by European citizenry, instead of by delegations from the national parliaments (a relevant first step nevertheless).

But representative democracy cannot satisfy. We need democratic platforms at the planetary and at national and regional levels, to keep citizens' control over influential institutions in the lapse from an election to another one. Recent transnational activist meetings have also brought up the idea of a World Citizens Initiative on the model of the (still to be reformed towards

²<https://en.unpacampaign.org/>

more efficiency) European Citizens' Initiative – a prospective future means for world citizens to exert influence upon UN decision-making.³

Finally, it remains the most difficult of the reforms: the reform of the Security Council, the “supreme” organ of the UN system, where the real equilibrium of powers is incorporated – now appearing to more and more nations as a relic of an old past. Now is the time finally to address its reform in view of a new international order.

In the run-up to the UN's 75th anniversary in October 2020, this could be one of the main battles of DiEM25 together with the Progressive International.

DiEM25 could support the request of many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to reform the bureaucratic structure of the UN and its “oligarchic system” of remunerations and distribution of tasks, which turns UN bureaucrats into a sort of supranational modern nobility not accountable to the people.

II. Peace and Security

Supporting peace and opposing war means, simply, favoring life, a life in dignity, a life worth living. We put at the center of our analysis the main factors which threaten our lives and put humanity at risk of extinction, factors generated or amplified by neoliberalism: gross wealth inequality, global warming and weapons of mass destruction (WMD's).

Human security is not about militarism. Human security is about health, education, decent work and equal opportunities. Human security is the recognition of diversity, it is about “*el buen vivir*” (a good life). Nuclear, chemical, bacteriological, explosive or autonomous weapons will not make us safer but could lead to extinction of the human race.

The current pandemic allows a new perspective on the threats facing humanity. The futility of conventional and nuclear weapons was never more obvious. The war rhetoric does not change the fact that the common invisible “enemy” is not a molecule, so much as the ideology that hollowed out public healthcare systems in Europe and abroad while accumulating weapons.

II.1 Undemocratic Foreign and Security Policy Fueling Insecurity

The current Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) lacks democracy. Militarization in the form of the EU Defense Union and the deterrence industry of “Fortress Europe” in the Mediterranean, in Africa and elsewhere, are no substitute for sound social policy and the response to the authoritarian resurgence in several EU member states like Hungary or Poland. Militarization is poor means of guaranteeing our security. Further vast rearmament – as

³ www.federalist-debate.org/index.php/current-issue/item/1247-a-world-citizens-initiative-the-case-for-a-global-participatory-democracy

proposed by the EU president⁴ – points in the wrong direction: towards Europe again becoming a theater for Great Power wars with WMDs.

II.2. Dismantling NATO

The anachronism of an anti-Soviet alliance system called NATO, which persists and expands after the fall of the USSR, could also be replaced by what Mikhail Gorbachev originally proposed: a “Eurasian security system” without military blocs, called a Common European Home. As Noam Chomsky explains the C.E.H: *“No military blocs, no Warsaw Pact, no NATO, with centers of power in Brussels, Moscow, Ankara, maybe Vladivostok, other places. Just an integrated security system with no conflicts”*.⁵

We view with great concern the rapid militarization of the EU, the NATO’s 2% target, the EU “defense union”, the reflections on a “nuclear EU” or an “intervention army”, the EU’s unnecessary confrontation with Russia and the EU military participation in missions such as those in the Sahel zone, the Mediterranean or the Horn of Africa.

II.3. Booming Military Industries

Military industries have boomed in the last years. “The US government, along with its NATO partners as well as US and European weapons manufacturers, continue to flood the world with the deadliest weapons. The top five arms exporters (Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, and General Dynamics) are located in the United States. These five firms alone account for 35% of the top 100 of the world’s arms dealer sales in 2018 (the most recent figures); the total US arms sales account for 59% of all arms sales that year. This was an increase of 7.2% over the US sales in 2017. These weapons are sold to countries that should instead spend their precious surplus on education, health, and food programs. For example, in West Asia and North Africa, the greatest threat to the people is not only the terrorist in his Toyota Hilux, but it is also the arms dealer in an air-conditioned hotel room”.⁶

These industries threaten humanity with extinction and promise continued armed conflict. “The United States accounts for almost 40% of global military spending, it already has the largest military arsenal and the widest military footprint in the world. The US government spent at least \$732 billion in 2019 on its military (not counting secret disbursements of funds to the massive intelligence wings). From 2018 to 2019, the US increased its military budget by 5.3%, the amount of which is the same as the total German military budget. The United States has a combined total of more than 500 military bases in almost every country on the planet. The United States Navy has 20 of the world’s 44 active aircraft carriers, while other US allies have

⁴ www.express.co.uk/news/world/1232290/european-union-eu-army-ursula-von-der-leyen

⁵ www.counterpunch.org/2017/03/03/most-of-the-world-is-just-collapsing-in-laughter-on-claims-that-russia-intervened-in-the-us-election-an-interview-with-noam-chomsky/

⁶ www.thetricontinental.org/newsletterissue/21-2020-bouficha-appeal/

21 of them; this means that the US and its allied states have 41 of the 44 aircraft carriers (China has two and Russia has one). There is no question about the overwhelming superiority of US military force”.⁷

Importantly, and less known, military industries are also a great environmental polluter. The United States, insisted on an exemption for reporting military emissions in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol,⁸ but is polluting more than 140 world countries combined.⁹ The US Air Force (USAF) is the largest single consumer of jet fuel in the world. Military bases create ecological havoc, with no provisions for environmental cleanup. European armies, especially UK and French troops, being nuclear powers, together with the non-nuclear but militarily involved abroad Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark are also great polluters.

II.4. Banning Arms Exports

As a matter of fact, EU States have increased their exports of conventional weapons to countries committing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and serious human rights violations. European countries must put an end to exporting violence abroad and must abstain from hiding themselves behind the counter-terrorism and national security narratives.

II.5 Surveillance and Democracy

Since the beginning of the 21st century, digital giants and intelligence agencies have built, in secret and without our consent, a system of near-universal surveillance with the tacit approval if not connivance of the imperial powers (US political establishment, and US allies). This alliance produces disinformation and propaganda, subverts and contravenes national and international law in order to control us better; and the military and weapons industry are their privileged associates.

The “war on terror” acted as a catalyser for these developments and led to the securitization of our lives and the steady erosion of basic rights and freedoms all over the world.

Now Covid-19 brings the promise of a new “shock therapy”, an even deeper descent into control and authoritarianism with the aid of digital technologies and sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities, such as facial and pattern recognition: we might be soon “facing the nightmare of a world of total automated law enforcement”,¹⁰ a world ruled by the

⁷ www.thetricontinental.org/newsletterissue/21-2020-bouficha-appeal/

⁸ <https://stanvanhoucke.blogspot.com/2019/07/us-military-is-bigger-polluter-than-as.html>

⁹ <https://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/02/08/pentagon-pollution-7-military-assault-global-climate/>; www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/world-military-expenditure-grows-18-trillion-2018; www.military.com/daily-news/us-military-budget

¹⁰ An AI-equipped surveillance camera is no more a mere recording device but an automated police officer, a true “robo-cop” actively seeking out “suspicious activity”, Snowden, page 196

entrenched and unelected digital and intelligence elites, with the connivance of our own governments.

We can no longer remain in small dissenter ghettos, in a reactive mode, denouncing the oppressive and repressive neoliberal systemic misuse of technology. Instead we should be building alliances with all those who resist compliance in grass-roots, worldwide post-capitalist movements for digital decolonization. Indeed, the information whistle-blowers have provided has opened the eyes of many all over the world, and we would all greatly benefit if a Chinese Assange would have reported on developments in Wuhan.

Edward Snowden writes: “The privacy of our data depends on the ownership of our data. However, there is no property less protected, and yet no property more private”.¹¹

In spite of the 2016, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which promised whistle-blower protection, EU states continued cooperating with the US surveillance efforts. The EU states, posing as human rights and the rule of law defenders, have not contested the inhuman abuse that the UK government and the UK and Swedish judiciary have inflicted and continue inflicting on Julian Assange. The EU appears colonized by the imperial tech corporations.

Moreover, now for more than a decade, the EU is following the US steps strengthening its defense and security sector, and like the US, privatizing it.¹² This helps to implement easy fix surveillance solutions to political problems. For instance, the “solution” to migration-related issues consists in “guarding” and “fending off” migrants and refugees fleeing war, conflict and deprivation with total disregard of their fundamental human rights.¹³ This new “security” concept has also infiltrated development assistance as discussed below.

III. Global Inequality: Fight Extreme Wealth!

III.1 Wealth Inequality

The richest 1% continue to own more than the rest of humanity combined. In 2019, the world’s billionaires, only 2,153 people, had more wealth than 4.6 billion people. At the top of the global economy the influence of this elite grows exponentially over time, with little effort regardless of whether they add value to society.¹⁴

¹¹ Edward Snowden, *Permanent Record*, Mcmillan 2019

¹² <https://euobserver.com/investigations/136310>

¹³ <https://euobserver.com/priv-immigration/121454>; www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/04/drones-replace-patrol-ships-mediterranean-fears-more-migrant-deaths-eu

¹⁴ Most of the data in this chapter is extracted from the Oxfam 2019 and 2020 Reports: <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620599/bp-public-good-or-private-wealth-210119-en.pdf>; <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620928/bp-time-to-care-inequality-200120-en.pdf>

By contrast, at the bottom of the economy, the unpaid care work or work for poverty wages of women and girls, – especially women in poor and marginalized communities – adds value to the economy of at least \$10.8 trillion,¹⁵ three times the size of the world’s tech industry, possibly much more. Yet most of the financial benefits accrue to the richest, the majority of whom are men. Men also predominate in positions of political and economic power, and globally men own 50% more wealth than women.

The great divide between the superrich and the rest, and the continued discrimination of women has little to do with merit, innovation, or intelligence as they proclaim. It does have a lot to do with fraud.

The top 1% are hiding at least \$7.6 trillion in their tax havens, an annual evasion of around \$200 billion in tax with developing countries losing at least \$170 billion each year.¹⁶ In the year 2018 the wealth of billionaires rose to \$762 billion, the highest increase in recorded history. This amount could have ended global extreme poverty seven times over.

Approximately two-thirds of billionaire wealth is the product of inheritance, monopoly, and cronyism. The excessive influence of powerful private business over government policymaking gives them the ability to manipulate public policy to entrench existing monopolies, create new ones, and keep maximizing gains. Privatization deals, natural resources traded below fair value, corrupt public procurement, or tax exemptions and loopholes are all ways in which well-connected private interests can enrich themselves at the expense of the public, eroding workers’ rights, social cohesion and people’s trust in government and institutions.

Recent analyses of global financial flows conclude that developing countries have effectively served as net creditors to the rest of the world.¹⁷ The money they lose mostly ends up in banks in developed countries or in tax havens. Unrecorded and illicit capital flight constitutes the largest chunk of these outflows.

Developing countries lose trillions of euros in revenue via the unrecorded, illicit capital flight that ends up in tax havens - the majority of which are controlled by western countries - interest payments on debt and tax base spillovers. These are all fundamental drivers of inequality.¹⁸ To this could be added the income that western extractive industries and other companies repatriate back home from the Global South.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ <https://gfintegrity.org/press-release/new-report-on-unrecorded-capital-flight-finds-developing-countries-are-net-creditors-to-the-rest-of-the-world/> <https://gfintegrity.org/issues/>; www.gfintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Financial_Flows-final.pdf

¹⁸ Between 1980 and 2012, developing countries lost around \$13.4 trillion via unrecorded, illicit capital flight. Interest payments on debt amounting to \$4.2 trillion cash directly transferred from developing countries to big banks in the US and EU since 1980.

We therefore demand that the EU closes down secrecy-jurisdictions and tax-havens, penalize illicit outflows, cancels the excess debt of poor countries, and imposes a global minimum tax on corporations.

Imagine if \$4-6 trillion spent in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would have been put to good use: maybe we would see a flourishing greater Middle East from Syria to Afghanistan. What then are the links between the propagation of these wars, and the simultaneous rise in the wealth and “net worth” of billionaires and oligarchs? Every escalation or war-threat notoriously comes accompanied by euphoria and anticipation measured on the DOW Jones and other stock exchanges. Can war be made unprofitable for all?

III.2 Poverty and Sustainability

In recent decades millions have been lifted out of extreme poverty (i.e. those living on less than \$2 a day), a success registered in countries like China, India, and Brazil. Global poverty-reduction rates halved since 2013. The bad news: over a billion people have been left behind, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa where the plunder of the continent continues unabated. Before Covid-19, more than half of the world’s population lived on a \$5 daily average and was heavily indebted. With the post-pandemic recession hundreds of millions are slipping back into misery.

With the current level of inequality, and our mode of production, raising the income of the billion poor above the daily \$5 poverty line poses enormous challenges to our species’ survival. Furthermore, 90% of the world population lives in emerging markets, and people aspire to the standard of living of Europeans or US citizens, fulfilling this aspiration is clearly unsustainable. This exponential growth would overwhelm our planet’s physical boundaries and lead to ecological catastrophe. Green capitalism, green growth is unable to halt climate change.

Forget business as usual as an option. On the path toward a new model able to avert human and ecological extinction, we need a more integrated and inclusive analysis of global sustainability beyond CO² emissions. There are two options: scientific discovery of new, much cleaner, affordable technologies or a change of economic model, possibly both. This analysis should link ecological transition to local poverty and livelihoods of producers, and envisage a massive redistribution of money (basic income), taxation (on capital instead of labor), time (a shorter working week), space (an urban exodus allowing the return to rural areas), more local production, and of course, clean technology.

But we face a common enemy: neoliberalism, an ideology that declares the market as the supreme value, and which authorizes market interests as the ultimate arbiters of our politics and of all social and human relations.

III.3 A Global Trade Regime biased against the Poor

The IMF, EU and World Bank demand adherence to their neoliberal agenda before financially assisting countries in need. This agenda is filled with conditions: austerity, liberalization, resource extraction, privatization and reduced protection of domestic industries, elimination of subsidized food, a “flexible” labor market, currency devaluation, and increased interest rates.

Developing countries, burdened by debt, are forced to align their economies to global demand, and to compete before their productive sectors are ready. This involves concentrating on exporting cash crops, commodities and raw material whose price and quantity are determined externally, and disregarding domestic needs.

Under the banner of “free trade”, and regardless of the North-South asymmetries, Europe and other wealthy regions, have insisted on “reciprocity” in trade relations with less developed countries, to compel them to open up (liberalize) their markets. This “reciprocity” is highly selective; it is designed to benefit the countries with developed manufacturing and service sectors while in fact denying poorer countries the space and flexibility to develop their own industries. “Reciprocity” excludes areas where the Global South has an advantage and would profit greatly from export, for instance agricultural production.

International financial institutions (IFI) do not include in their economic analysis the long-term environmental and social costs which the industrial options they impose in the global South entail. These costs are extremely high. For example, industrial farming entails high biodiversity, soil and water costs, it renders the production of nutritious food unsustainable over the long term but these costs are not included in the IFIs calculations. Neither are the costs of marginalization of small farmers that agribusinesses generate: a spiral of land dispossession, poverty, malnutrition, debt, migration, and often suicide.

These costs are considered “market externalities”, a consequence of “market failure”. In reality, this is how neoliberal “markets” fail humanity and nature, by letting private interests hinder effective production and the fair use and distribution of public goods.¹⁹

III.4 Food, Agriculture and Agrarian Reform

Food and agriculture are of utmost relevance as they are life-sustaining activities. Small farmers and agricultural laborers comprise 70% of the world’s poorest billion people. In developing countries agriculture employs on average 60% (ranging from 20 to 90%) of the population.²⁰

¹⁹ You will find a full analysis in www.jacobinmag.com/2020/05/coronavirus-global-south-pandemic-food-production-farmers

²⁰ <https://ourworldindata.org/employment-in-agriculture>; In the global South some 50 million people leave rural areas every year in search of alternative livelihoods. As a result, valuable knowledge on locally optimal, traditional and sustainable farming is being lost and food security threatened while rural migrants augment the ranks of the urban poor.

By contrast, agriculture employs less than 5% of EU citizens and generates just 1.6% of EU gross domestic product (GDP).²¹

Instead of promoting a more sustainable small-scale agriculture which can generate higher yields over the long term and lead to more equitable and sustainable growth, the EU spends almost half its budget on agricultural subsidies via its common agricultural policy (CAP).

The CAP enables producers to keep prices artificially low, often below production cost, making it impossible for small farmers in poor countries to compete in world markets – and even for Europeans within their own markets: as often the main beneficiaries of subsidies are not Europe’s small farmers but its largest landowners. Subsidies spur overproduction in the EU and the global dumping of cheap EU agricultural surpluses.²²

Europe must stop subsidizing agribusiness, factory farms and wealthy landowners. These funds should be used for rural rehabilitation – for small farmers and sustainable agriculture, nature conservation, agro-forestry and rewilding. Europe should promote agrarian reform across the board instead of generating unfair competition with poor farmers in the Global South.

Pandemics do not only begin in exotic and surreal markets of Wuhan or Kinshasa – the likelihood of a bacteriological mutation inside European meat factories, might prove conducive to future outbreaks of disease unless we act soon. The dense, overcrowded and sorrowful mechanized meat-and-egg factories in Europe stand as a monument to overproduction, while pushing out and blocking trade with small-scale farmers outside Europe.

We therefore propose a foreign policy that stimulates international agrarian reform, as a matter of social-economic justice. Furthermore, seeing the “Green” benefits of small-scale agriculture, we cannot seriously contemplate a GND without a program for agriculture and foreign policy in solidarity with international agrarian reform. The GND ought to be for everybody and not just for Europe and North America.

III.5 Development and Foreign Aid. What development?

A faith in “development”, unlimited material and scientific progress, and capitalist growth since the Enlightenment became deeply rooted in western collective mind. Helping others to develop or to eradicate poverty is the objective of official development assistance (ODA). But under this altruistic disguise, development policies became and remain a fundamental pillar of post-World War II neo-colonialism.

²¹ www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11216061#howspent

²² You will find a full analysis in www.jacobinmag.com/2020/05/coronavirus-global-south-pandemic-food-production-farmers

Mainstream development policy blames backwardness in countries classified as poor (though often resource rich) on their choice of economic policies and on their leaders' lack of implementation capacity. This belief drives the development plans of governments and international financial institutions (IFIs). Ignoring the impact of recent colonial history, modern (wage and wage less) slavery, neo-colonialism, and foreign military intervention, development institutions have imposed and continue imposing neoliberal economic strategies and supporting dictatorships.

The IMF, the World Bank, and EU used these assumptions to introduce structural adjustment programs across the world. These experiments resulted in tragic outcomes for the ordinary people, workers and peasants of the “recipient” countries and populations. Since 2008 the periphery of the rich North, the so-called P.I.G.S. (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain) got a taste of equivalent austerity recipes, fueling dispossession, expanding poverty in the affluent EU. Such “donors” and the European governments were never held to account by the people for their bad advice.

Nowadays Western aid programs are shifting the focus from fighting poverty to “security”, and in particular development aid is geared to fighting migration through militarized means.

For instance, the prevention of irregular migration has become a goal for development cooperation: the EU's 2021-2028 budget allocates 10% of the new development fund, the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), worth nearly €90 billion to “migration”. This funding can go towards projects marked as “development aid” but in fact are designed to strengthen border controls, help the Libyan coast guard to intercept migrant boats, and introduce biometric passports so that migrants can be identified and sent back more easily. The EU's current migration policy allocates funding to the areas with the most “potential migrants”, rather than those that need the most help.

European development aid designed to “tackle the root causes of migration” is not promoting development, but actively undermining it, as illustrated in the Annex. In the name of “aid”, the EU's “Deterrence Industry” reinforces police state and deportation regimes. The EU President may invoke a “European way of life” needing to be preserved from the fear of being invaded by immigrants. Politically, this new form of development assistance provides instead a justification for the Right. It also belies an even deeper fear among ruling elites: the dread of any confrontation or change in the power of the financial institutions (IMF, World Bank) whose “structural adjustments” leave populations few options other than attempting migration.

On the basis of bioethics and of colonial history we object to the imposition of biometric passports and other methods of “biometry” (which should have been left in the 18th century where such science originated).²³

Sadly, well-intentioned aid, aimed at “helping others”, the famous “drop in the ocean”, often proves toxic as it legitimizes and strengthens rapacious elites who exploit and prevent the supposed beneficiaries from reaching their full potential, from developing.

Development policy erects a smoke screen: as argued before, the bulk of this exploitation hides behind international economic and trade policies and practices which are biased against the poor. Only those developing countries that adopted independent policies managed to break the vicious circle of poverty: those which did not repeat IMF and EU mantras.²⁴

III.6 Who is Helping Whom? Justice and Solidarity not Charity

Europe has played a central role in reinforcing economic exploitation and inequality that mirrors and perpetuates old colonial patterns. Proof of the neocolonial structures at play is that at present, financial outflows from developing countries far outweigh incoming ones, with the result that poor countries are effectively developing rich ones, for instance through capital flight to tax havens or secrecy jurisdictions as explained before.

In other words, Official Development Assistance (ODA) or aid amounts to the Global North handing back to the Global South a tiny fraction of what it takes away via unjust trade and economic policies, the brain drain and the “migrant” drain.

Nobel economist Joseph Stiglitz estimates that rich countries cost poor countries three times more in trade restrictions alone, than their total development aid. In the agricultural sector, the North’s policies are estimated to cost the Global South fivefold the level of development aid for agriculture.

The aid industry transnational bureaucracies mainly made of technocrats, neoliberal managers and security consultants, has, at its base, an “anti-corruption” inspectors’ discourse – which today sounds all too familiar to Greeks and other Europeans after the Troika’s and Eurogroup’s usurpation of national sovereignty in the name of “anti-corruption”.

The Global South doesn’t need more secular missionaries or more expatriate technocrats selling neoliberalism – for ex-colonies have long memories, and know all too well that

²³ As Alexander Barder argues “imperial and colonial contexts function as a laboratory in which techniques of violence, population control and economic principles are developed which are subsequently introduced into the domestic society of the imperial state. . . . the diffusion of norms and techniques is [not] a one-way street from the imperial metropole to the dependent or weak periphery”. www.routledge.com/Empire-Within-International-Hierarchy-and-its-Imperial-Laboratories-of/Barder/p/book/9780815377184

²⁴ The EU has been the top world aid donor, however the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) “beneficiary” countries with which the EU entered a “development partnership” since the 1960s still contains the “bottom” billion poor whereas countries in Asia or Latin America registered major progress in poverty reduction. China lifted 300 million people out of poverty, some Indian states like Kerala saw similar progress, President Lula’s basic income programs effectively reduced poverty in Brazil, as did President Chavez in Venezuela.

dependence, exploitation and subjugation comes at the end of European rhetoric. The Global South needs justice and solidarity, not charity.

Official development assistance (ODA) should be re-designed, to democratically reflect the choices of those it is intended to help; ODA should be re-deployed and enhanced but only in tandem with democratic policy reform, to restore and enable self-sufficiency and self-determination instead of perpetuating dependence.

European Union countries are using development aid and technical cooperation as part of their foreign policy. Vaguely defined concepts such as “institutional development” or “governance” are in fact a gateway to impose neoliberal trade and economic cooperation, and their patented technologies. These policies respond to the North’s neoliberal agenda, not to local needs and capacities in key areas such as food security, environmental sustainability, healthcare, education, research or industrialization. Meanwhile, the North is fully profiting from the South’s brain-drain, another South-North flow which robs the South of the qualified workforce it desperately needs.

III.7 Universal Basic Income, Universal Basic Dividend, not Aid

We view the Universal Basic Dividend (UBD), –truly universal, global–, as an efficient mechanism for social justice. A universal basic dividend could redistribute part of the wealth gleaned by transnational capitalism, to people in all countries.²⁵

Establishing a UBD in Europe could set an example which other regions in the world might wish to replicate. However, a worldwide UBD needs a system of global democratic governance involving all countries in the world. Until this is achieved, and having in view the urgent objective of eradicating poverty for the billion poor, we propose to replace Official Development Assistance (ODA) with a universal basic income (UBI). If the EU adopts this policy, other “donor” countries might follow. This basic income would establish a threshold against extreme poverty – the pandemic before this pandemic

We need another “development” model, and a substitute for the aid industry, and UBI could facilitate the transition towards a new, sustainable model in which the UBD would be a solid pillar. Growing evidence from development analysts and researchers shows that handing out cash is much more effective than other forms of aid,²⁶ and that free money *does not* make people lazy.²⁷ An unconditional, universal basic income meets the demands for fairness in terms of

²⁵ Universal basic income is a brilliant idea'. Here's why. | Yanis Varoufakis | Big Think, Mar 27, 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8B4U7o9kvg

²⁶ “Cash grants to the poor have proven to be an effective form of aid for reducing poverty. Direct cash assistance is inexpensive to administer and allows recipients to buy what they want and need, rather than what experts think they need. Recent research shows that cash grants also work well for assisting refugees”. www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/publications/policy_briefs/2015-2016/20160225_impact_cash_assistance.pdf

²⁷ Rutger Bregman, Utopia for Realists

redistribution. It avoids a system which helps solely the poor, driving a deep wedge between them and the rest of society and turning the welfare system into a bureaucratic monster of control and humiliation.

Money would be readily available if the rich paid their fair share of tax, by reducing defense spending, and also by opening borders. This money could also finance the green transition and a new international order. A UBI does not replace, but it is a temporary complement to these essential policy measures, including the introduction of a universal basic dividend (UBD).

The prevailing neoliberalism also stimulates the arms and surveillance industries, the development and trade of weapons and mechanisms for repression. Political destabilization generates dependence in the South and extra-profits in the North. This is why the business community has long referred to destabilization and authoritarianism in the global South as their cynical opposite: “stability”. It is inhuman to finance a military-industrial complex that halts economic and social advancement and creates havoc in the global South. Refer to the annex below on what the “foreign aid” actually sponsors today in West Africa.

IV. A Global Movement

If we want a future in peace in our globalized, interconnected world, international solidarity and cooperation are more needed than ever.

Before the Corona Virus crisis, millions of people were taking to the streets. A wave of demonstrations and protracted protests in France, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq, Chile and in many other countries attested of a global resistance and discontent. Spanish health workers had been protesting for years against the dismantling of the health sector. The silent majority was raising a voice, reminding the few in power that the current levels of wealth inequality and environmental destruction are unsustainable. The Covid-19 pandemic temporarily silenced these insurrections, but all of these dispersed voices are gathering anew, so that we, the common people can be heard. The current worldwide protest against systemic and institutional racism and police violence is just the beginning.

There is a need for a system of world governance that represents the interests of the large majorities so as to respond to present day realities and reignite a global debate on democracy, freedom of expression and information. In this regard, a global conversation on digital technology and surveillance is crucial and urgent. In this spirit, we demand an international agreement on technological governance and universal free internet for all, guaranteeing the access of all citizens to information and communications so as to leave nobody behind. If we want a future in peace in our globalized, interconnected world, the construction of a global public space, towards a democratic cosmopolitan era would be the possible main road for a shared long-term vision.

We, citizens of the world, acknowledge our common destiny as humankind. We are conscious of the importance of cooperation in view of ending the current, unsustainable, levels of wealth inequality and environmental destruction. We are fully aware of the fact that our neoliberal production model is responsible for this state of affairs and therefore need to mobilise beyond the current sterile antagonisms in the struggle to build a post-capitalist era. In this perspective, we fully support the incorporation of ecocide into the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a crime against humanity. How could the emergence of such a civic activism on the planetary stage become possible? The action of the Progressive International, promoted by DiEM25, seems paramount in that respect, towards organizing forces and citizens globally.

Equally crucial would be the action of a democratized, politically unified European Union – under the pressure of movements like DiEM25 – with a truly harmonised foreign policy that could favour on one hand, popular pro-democracy movements inside the EU and abroad and, simultaneously, seek the reform of international institutions, especially the United Nations agencies and Security Council, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO.

ANNEX

Development Policy and Migration: An Example from West Africa

In West Africa tougher borders restrict the free movement of people and goods and are a danger to migrants, but also hamper economic development throughout the region.

In Nigeria alone, more than half of all European migration funding goes to border control measures, this “aid” ultimately threatens economic development in West Africa – where people have traditionally moved between countries such as the Ivory Coast, Algeria and Libya in search of work – rather than supporting it. The vast majority of these migrants have no intention of making the journey to Europe. This phenomenon, known as “circular migration”, is a survival strategy for many young West Africans. They may work in construction in Nigeria during the dry season and then move to Niger during the rainy season to work in the fields, for example.

Instead of making people less vulnerable to exploitation or poverty, focusing on tougher borders actually leads to more exploitation of migrants and more dangerous migration routes to Europe. For example, migrants journeying from Niger to Libya through the Sahara have long used old caravan trails, which pass through well-known oases in the desert. But these routes are now being patrolled by border guards trained and equipped by the EU, forcing migrants to take new, more dangerous routes through unfamiliar terrain with little access to water.

In fact, the region boasts an economic union, ECOWAS, and a free movement protocol that predates that of the EU. Before the refugee crisis of 2015, talks between ECOWAS and the EU focused on how to make this protocol even more effective. Everyone agreed that increased mobility would lead to greater economic development. But since 2015 free movement in west Africa breaks down ... in order to protect free movement in the EU.

Development projects that focus on tightening border control in West Africa – drills like training customs officers, equipping remote border posts with new software, and instructing police to patrol migration routes – are actually disastrous for development in the region. They prevent West Africans from using the survival strategies they've used for centuries.

We must remind the world of the disastrous colonial origins of these borders, and the consequences they have had since the 19th century in Africa.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of those who gave valuable input and feedback during the drafting process, namely: Arturo Desimone, Michele Fiorillo, Hans-Joachim Körting, Jacob Lim, Igor Mijatović, Friedrich Naebring, Mohammad Khair Nahhas, Aleksandar Novaković, Franz Piribauer, Sona Prakash, Susana Roson, Marcel Stilger, Robert Wittkuhn.