

Europe will be democratised,
once its oligarchy is overthrown!

A MANIFESTO FOR DEMOCRATISING EUROPE

For all their concerns with inflation, migration, populism, climate change, pandemics, security and terrorism, only one prospect truly terrifies the Powers of Europe: Democracy! They speak in democracy's name but only to deny, exorcise and suppress it in practice. They seek to co-opt, evade, corrupt, mystify, usurp and manipulate democracy in order to break its energy and arrest its possibilities.

For rule by Europe's peoples, government by the demos, is the shared nightmare of:

- Big Tech, Big Pharma, permanently bailed out bankers, fund managers, insurers, the security-military-industrial complex – in short, the resurgent tapestry of cartels perpetually contemptuous of the many and their organised expression
- Their army of unelected bureaucrats, 'technocrats' and lobbyists pulling the strings of governments in general and of EU institutions in particular
- Political parties appealing to liberalism, democracy, freedom, environmentalism, social justice etc., only to betray their most basic principles when in power
- Governments whose policy of socialism-for-the-financiers and harsh-austerity-for-everyone-else fuels nativist populism which these same governments audaciously pretend to rail against
- Corporations that use terms like "sustainability" and "net zero" to continue with business-as-usual, greenwashing their planetary-scale vandalism
- Media moguls who have normalised disinformation and weaponised fear-mongering

At the heart of the resurgent authoritarianisms, both 'liberal' and 'populist', there lies a guilty deceit: A highly political, top-down, opaque decision-making process is presented as 'apolitical', 'technical', 'procedural', 'neutral' and, yes, 'democratic'. Its actual purpose is to prevent European residents from exercising democratic control over their communities, workplaces, environment, money, technologies and impact on the rest of the world. Raw exploitation of people, animals and our planet becomes the hidden purpose, the sole motive, the only compass.

The price of this deceit is not merely the end of democracy, but also the permanent economic decline, societal stagnation, technological backwardness, xenophobia and climate destruction – a frightful, wholesale defeat of European civilisation.

There must be another course. And there is! It is the one 'official Europe' resists with every sinew of its authoritarian mind-set: A democratic revolution!

Our movement, DiEM25, was formed in Berlin on 9th February 2016 to call forth just such a revolution. We came from every part of Europe, and beyond. We are *united by different* cultures, languages, accents, political party affiliations, ideologies, skin colours, gender identities, faiths, abilities and conceptions of the good society. The one simple, radical idea that had brought us together became the foundation of DiEM25: *Europe will either be democratised or it will disintegrate!*

Since then, the success of our ruling classes at preventing Europe's democratisation has confirmed our prediction: Brexit, the new East-West divide that emerged while the North-South chasm deepened, the inhuman treatment of refugees, the abandonment of young and old, the patriarchy's suppression of women's and LGBTQIA+ right to self-determination and freedom, the greenwashing of the fossil fuel industry's practices – that's the legacy of democracy's pan-european defeat.

Democracy means 'rule by the many' who are, by definition, the poorer. Its opposite is oligarchy which means 'rule by the few', by definition the richer. Europeans are told that we live in democracies, unlike those to our East who are under the thumbs of slavish oligarchs. This is a lie. The rule of law is, thankfully, better established in Europe but, in reality, Europeans live in harsh oligarchies featuring occasional elections whose results are ignored if they clash with the interests of Europe's oligarchs.

In the shadow of this sorry legacy, DiEM25 is now updating our simple radical idea: *To democratise Europe, the people must overthrow its united oligarchy!*

How Europe became a democracy-free zone

Directed by the US hegemony and abetted by native oligarchies, post-war western Europe surrendered to a cartel of financial institutions and heavy industry (later co-opting farm owners) whose initial purpose was to fix prices and re-distribute oligopoly profits through a Brussels-based bureaucracy. The emergent cartel, and its EU administrators, feared the demos and despised the idea of government by the people.

Patiently and methodically, a process of de-politicising decision-making was put in place. The result? Important decisions from our Parliaments to an EU democracy-free zone where decisions are cloaked in a pervasive pseudo-technocratic fatalism. National politicians were rewarded handsomely for their acquiescence. Anyone opposing this de-politicisation process is labelled 'un-European' and treated as a threat to European unity!

The creation of the Euro proved a historic moment: never before, since capitalism prevailed, had any oligarchy managed, so decisively, to deprive governments of tools by which to redistribute income and wealth substantially. A monetary union by the oligarchs for the oligarchs, where no state could touch their accumulating wealth, is an oligarch's dream come true. Margaret Thatcher's fear that the euro was 'federation through the back door' was utterly misplaced. Why endanger their immunity from democracy by allowing for a democratically elected federal government?

The Crash of 2008 triggered a banking freefall that the oligarchic euro was not designed for. As the bankers-of-the-world united to force governments to bail them out, continental European governments were directed to transfer the bankers' losses onto the shoulders of the weakest Europeans: socialism for *banksters*, cruel austerity for the masses. The result? A massive flare-up of pre-existing fissures between Northern and Southern Europe, between Europe's East and West, between Brussels and London, – and, of course, between the haves and the have-nots in every country.

As soon as Europe's crisis broke out, the Brussels cartel, the ECB, all the Powers of Europe, along with the IMF, sent armies of bureaucrats to confiscate the property, the pensions, and all the remaining Commons of weaker people. They disguised the massive bank bailouts as solidarity with the Greeks, the Irish, the Portuguese, etc., when in reality it was solidarity with the banksters – the most bankrupt and corrupt of the banking sector.

When the Greeks staged their Greek Spring and voted to say "No" to the transnational oligarchy, their democracy was snuffed out. Since that moment in 2015, the writing has been on the wall: Democracy cannot be allowed to change anything that the oligarchy wants preserved!

To this purpose, our oligarchies-without-borders have been cooperating harmoniously to turn proud peaceful peoples against one another: Northern against Southern Europeans, Eastern against Western, everyone against the alien 'others'. Even within the Left, a gross division emerged between those who wanted to disband the euro, or the EU, and those who did not. The familiar divide-and-rule strategy had allowed the euro-oligarchy, which had caused the crisis, an opportunity to present itself as its only saviour and remedy.

Oligarchic power deepens further with the enlistment of corporate cloud-based, Artificial Intelligence, technologies for the purposes of privatising health, education and all remaining Commons; as opposed to pressing technology into society's service. Never missing a chance to exploit a crisis (e.g. a pandemic, a war in Europe's periphery), our euro-oligarchy finds ways massively to boost expenditure on its favourite misanthropic technologies (from surveillance to armaments) while simultaneously imposing harsh austerity on the majority of Europeans and our environment.

Year in, year out, the triumphant oligarchy is proving ready and willing to change everything if this is what it takes to ensure that everything... stays the same!

Why DiEM25?

DiEM25 emerged when Europe's crisis and decline became impossible to miss: Bankers were uniting across borders to secure more bailouts. Europe's political rulers were conspiring to pay for these bailouts by imposing universal pan-european austerity. Racists, even outright Fascists, were rearing their ugly heads. To stop them, and to prevent the Powers of Europe from irreversibly dividing and ruling over the peoples of Europe, on 9th February 2016 we formed DiEM25 – the first transnational movement in Europe's history. Our idea was obvious: Financiers, bureaucrats and bigots were joining hands across borders. The time had come for progressives to do likewise.

Our 2016 Manifesto marked a radical departure from the lazy and deeply offensive account of a clash between the Germanies and the Greeces of Europe, between the 'ants' of the North and 'grasshoppers' of the South. It explained, instead, that Europe was disintegrating (a prediction which Brexit confirmed months later) because an almighty alliance of the oligarchic grasshoppers (of the North and of the South) were unloading their gambling losses upon the weakened shoulders of the hard-working ants (of the North and of the South).

Our 2016 Manifesto clarified that xenophobia was the mirror image of the class war unleashed by Europe's transnational oligarchy against the underprivileged residents of every European country. It described how the ultra-rightists and the oligarchy's stooges were the opposite sides of the same coin. It revealed that they needed each other, with the oligarchs' stooges imposing the austerity that yielded the discontent which fed the ultra-right, while the prospects of the ultra-rightists winning government were causing voters to keep voting for the oligarchs' stooges.

Our 2016 Manifesto provided the foundation for several key innovations that made DiEM25 a novel movement:

<p><i>Transnationalism-in-action</i> – Every policy, even if specific to one region or country, is decided by an all-member pan-european vote, making DiEM25 a genuinely unitary, transnational movement</p>
--

Constructive disobedience – We commit to *disobey* every ethically or politically unacceptable directive, or policy, of the status quo; e.g. austerity, fossil fuel extraction and burning, but, we also commit to table alternative directives, policies and proposals that are constructive (i.e., rational, moderate) and have the capacity, even within the current framework, realistically to improve the lives of the many. e.g. DiEM25's comprehensive Green New Deal for Europe, which was developed as a collaborative effort of countless Europeans contributing from many different countries.

Rational rage – Do we expect the euro-oligarchy to endorse our constructive proposals; e.g. DiEM25's Green New Deal for Europe? Certainly not! So, why propose them? Because, it is important to demonstrate to the people of Europe, especially those who suffer in today's regime, that there is a realistic alternative to their suffering – an alternative their rulers and 'business as usual' elected leaders turn a blind eye to. Only armed with this realistic alternative will the hearts and minds of the many fill with the rational rage that is the prerequisite of the political revolution Europe needs.

Transform, not reform – Reformism is another word for acquiescence or cosmetic change without real change. Today's Europe cannot be reformed, but it can be transformed through clashing with, and overthrowing, its oligarchy - before building an authentic democracy.

DiEM25's task

Many Europeans reject the idea of a federation. They resist the pooling of sovereignty. They fear that it is not in their interest to allow more 'integration'. As long as power remains in the hands of a tiny transnational oligarchy, they are right. To this day, those calling for "more Europe" have almost always meant more centralised power in the interests of the euro-oligarchy.

DiEM25's task is to convince them that the solution is not hermetically to seal our national borders – because doing so will not prevent the loss of their remaining power.

DiEM25's duty is to persuade them that the solution must be to overthrow the euro-oligarchy eating into their sovereignty, autonomy and freedom to choose their projects and partners.

DiEM25's responsibility is to forge the transnational alliance across Europe, and beyond, that can democratically overthrow the oligarchy and build the institutions of an authentic, decentralised, participatory democracy.

DiEM25's vision

Traditional green and left parties limit themselves to tampering and tweaking the current system. Many formerly radical parties today make a virtue of avoiding grand visions and, instead, concentrate on proving themselves better managers of the existing system whose owners they seek to reassure. DiEM25 does not care for this.

To democratise Europe, DiEM25 aims at transforming the oligarchic regime the people labour under. To transform it, we need four things: An understanding of how the present system works. A vision of an alternative economic system we want to replace it with. A blueprint for democratic governance. And, a plan for forcing our envisaged transition to a post-capitalist society upon a resisting euro-oligarchy.

Our current system – We live in a time of transition from rentier capitalism to something even worse, to a form of technological feudalism: technofeudalism.

Our economic vision – We envision a fully decentralised economic system based on cooperative flat-management enterprises (based on the principle of one-person-one-share-one-vote) promoting: (1) de-growth in sectors that harm humans, other animals and the environment (e.g. limiting pollution, factory farming, the advertising industry, the production of cement, the number of private cars, the industrial military complex). (2) The growth of renewable energy, public health, mental health, social care, unlimited education and culture. (3) An unconditional basic income and a job guarantee provided by democratised central banks, in a world where international trade and money flows are managed so as to iron out imbalances (e.g. trade deficits/surpluses) and, in the process, fund real green and social public investments in the less developed parts of the planet.

Our political vision – We recognise that Europeans have given up on their politicians - and they are right! To empower the people of Europe we envisage new layers of deliberative democracy (e.g. democratic deliberation councils comprising randomly selected residents) between the voters and elected representatives (e.g. Parliament, local and national governments). At a pan-european level, DiEM25 is committed to a series of constitutional people's assemblies – along the same principle of democratic deliberation councils – that will hammer out a democratic constitution of a European Republic.

Our digital vision – We envisage a digital commons in which persons fully own their data, platforms currently operating like digital fiefdoms are socialised, commercial services are purchased for modest sums (ending the 'free' services that, currently, turn us into Big Tech's commodities) and a Universal Declaration of Human Rights that bans all autonomous AI-based weapons while protecting every human's dignity and right.

Our cultural vision: We recognise that culture, in all its forms of expression through art, music, thought, and sport, can be a powerful instrument of change. We see culture as a necessarily participatory and inclusive means of social transformation. *méta: the Centre for Post-capitalist Civilisation* is the international arts and culture platform for DiEM25, coordinating with MeRA25 and the Progressive International. Through art and research, argument, and poetry, *méta* strives to help society to break with a dismal present to imagine the world anew. With DiEM25's ideas and mission at the forefront, *méta* engages in the diagnostics of our current era and formulates a vision for a postcapitalist future via the medium of arts, and by becoming a platform for performances, campaigns, talks, and conversations.

Our plan for change – DiEM25 commits to forge broad alliances with movements that share our method of Constructive Disobedience for the purpose of putting the Demos into Democracy everywhere. We shall do this in every neighbourhood, workplace, city and region. But, to change Europe we must also change the governments serving the oligarchy's interests. Where it is needed, DiEM25 will set up its own political party (MERA25) to contest key elections. In other countries, we shall contribute to electoral alliances consistent with this Manifesto. Program-wise, DiEM25 will rely on our medium-term policy agenda (the Green New Deal for Europe) as well as on our longer-term vision of a democratic, ecological, feminist, peaceful, non-exploitative system that is free of capitalist bosses, domineering state bureaucrats and any tendency to colonise.

Our call

We call upon people in Europe and beyond to join us so that, together, we stem the onslaught of authoritarianism, both its 'liberal' and populist variants.

We invite people of conscience to recognise that, together, we can tear down the paper tiger that is today's seemingly invincible euro-oligarchy

We bid people who share our vision to work tirelessly until a Deep Democracy spreads into the corporate system, our money and credit system, our local councils, our Parliaments, our governments and all our institutions - and culminates in a transformed European Union.

We urge the public to see that, what starts as mere opposition to socialism-for-bankers and austerity-for-the-rest, will produce a world where our advanced technology works to help us control our lives, to run our corporations on the basis of one-member-one-share-one vote, to found Deliberative Democracy Councils that draft legislation for our Parliaments to approve; and even to evaluate the social and ecological worthiness of corporations and other institutions.

Our call to disempowered and exploited masses who are permanently held behind is this: Unite to act! We have nothing important to lose. But we have a continent to win!

Our pledge

We are inspired by the vision of a non-exploitative Europe that nurtures Reason, Freedom, Tolerance and Imagination made possible by real Solidarity, comprehensive Transparency, and authentic Democracy. We aspire to:

1. A **Democratic** Europe in which all political authority stems from Europe's sovereign peoples
2. A **Postcapitalist** Europe that practises democracy at the workplace and in all aspects of life, not just in electoral politics
3. A **Social** Europe that cherishes not only freedom from interference but also the basic income, care and goods that render one free from need and exploitation
4. A **Sustainable** Europe that lives within the planet's means, minimising its environmental impact through living harmoniously with all living beings, conserving and restoring biodiversity, eliminating pollution, and leaving all fossil fuels deep inside the earth
5. An **Ecological** Europe that leads a green and just transition world-wide
6. An **Internationalist** Europe that treats non-Europeans as ends-in-themselves and works in active solidarity with exploited peoples across the world
7. A **United** Europe whose peoples show as much solidarity across nations as they do within them
8. A **Pluralist** Europe of regions, ethnicities, nations, languages, philosophies and cultures where one can be, at the same time, European and patriotic
9. A **Diverse** Europe that celebrates difference and ends every discrimination based on social class, education, gender, skin colour, age, national origin, philosophy, faith, disability or sexual orientation
10. A **Decentralised** Europe that uses central power to maximise democracy in towns, cities, regions and states
11. A **Transnational** Europe in which political representation transcends national borders
12. A **Transparent** Europe where all decision-making takes place under the citizens' scrutiny
13. A **Sovereign** Europe that presses its home-grown technologies into the service of solidarity

14. An **Honest** Europe that seeks a bright future without hiding from its imperialist past
15. A **Cultured** Europe that harnesses its people's rich cultural mosaic and promotes not only its invaluable cultural heritage but also the work of Europe's dissident artists, musicians, writers and poets who contribute to a progressive democracy
16. A **Creative & Technologically Sovereign** Europe that releases and safeguards the innovative powers of its citizens' imagination
17. A **Peaceful** Europe de-escalating tensions in its Eastern, Mediterranean and Aegean regions, ending its colonial projects in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere as well as acting as a bulwark against the sirens of militarism and expansionism everywhere
18. An **Open** Europe that is alive and attractive to ideas, people and inspiration from all over the world, recognising fences and borders as signs of weakness thus spreading insecurity in the name of security
19. A **Welcoming** Europe that recognises that, after centuries during which Europeans colonised or dominated the politics of the rest of the world, it is now necessary to welcome migrants and refugees
20. A **Liberated** Europe where privilege, prejudice, deprivation and the threat of violence wither, enabling people in Europe and beyond to be born into fewer stereotypical roles, to enjoy even chances to develop their potential, and to be free to choose more of their partners in all aspects of life, work and society

Carpe DiEM25

www.diem25.org