



# A New Deal for Europe

on the road to a European Democracy

Newsletter n. 1, December 2013

## Newsletter of European Citizens' Initiative for a European Special Plan for Sustainable Development and Employment

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## EDITORIAL

### The significance of the "European Citizens' Initiative" for A EUROPEAN SPECIAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Five years after the longest and deepest financial and economic crisis that the Europe has faced since the end of the II World War it is more and more evident that the existing European governance has not yet set up an effective European economic policy to overcome the crisis.

The current EU is on its way to a political and economic decline and that is causing an incredible impact on the social cohesion, moral crisis and identity of Europe. The huge growth of youth unemployment and the loss of competitiveness of European industry are the obvious signs of a deep crisis. And the explosion of the anti-Europeanism and populist movements represent the symptom of this decline.

The Eurozone's national governments are mainly responsible for this failure. To date, they have not been able to build a federal government, a real shield against the international crisis. On the contrary, they preferred to maintain a fictitious sovereignty on the economic policy which prevents Europe on having an adequate budget to boost investments and development. And they continue to feed the illusion that it is possible an "economic growth" operating at the national level.

It is a farce. First, the national resources are lost in a thousand streams of expenditures, therefore they are scarce and ineffective. Second, the supply of certain public services at the national level (e.g., defense and energy) represents a huge waste of financial resources. On the contrary, a unified European defense and a European energy network would guarantee huge savings to be diverted to finance large investments, to reduce the taxation for

citizens and businesses and to maintain a high level of welfare state.

Two are the consequences of the lack of a European democratic government, the only one able to face successfully the crisis. First, the political hegemony of the stronger countries is assured. Second, these last ones are pushed to impose on the weaker countries neo-liberal policies, market oriented and therefore able to guarantee a hegemonic order inside the European Union.

We need to change deeply these policies. By starting from a strong demand to place the rationale of the European public interest into the economic policies and consequently by requesting the creation of European public goods. For this purpose a European democratic government is necessary, to bring out this "interest", to perform the relevant actions and provide such goods. And by starting also from a mobilization of the European citizens for claiming such different economic policies by the European Institutions.

The "European Citizens' Initiative" for a "European special Plan for sustainable development and employment" which we are going to send as soon as possible to the European Commission, according to Art. 11 of the Lisbon Treaty, represents the first actual request, based on participatory democracy, to change the austerity policy in Europe.

The special Plan that we are claiming highlights four key-concepts. First, It has to be *European*, that is it has to be managed by the European Commission directly. Second, it has to be *extraordinary*, that is managed outside the current EU budget which can no more be increased. Third, it has to be oriented

to *large investments* in the areas of Research & Development, technological innovation, European infrastructures, environment and alternatives energy's sources, social cohesion and youth employment. And last but not least, it has to be financed by *own resources*, such as the financial transactions tax (FTT) and the carbon tax. These taxes can be utilized directly to finance the investments and/or as a guarantee to back the issuing of project bonds finalised to specific investments and financed by collecting capital on the international market.

If one million European Citizens will go to sign the request for such a Plan, a new political scenario will arise in Europe, by the intervention of a new actor into the political game: the European People. And nothing will remain as before.

Such a change depends by each one of us. First of all by the willingness, coming from the more advanced social layers in Europe, to assert the right to have its own European government, able to face the economic and social crisis, and to act from the perspective of the European public interest and no more from a market-driven intergovernmental policy of the European Council.

We are inviting you to join the *Campaign of European Citizens' Initiative "New Deal 4 Europe"*, for having a Europe able to give a concrete perspective to the young generations, thanks to a "European Special Plan for Sustainable Development and Employment".

## THE ECI CAMPAIGN'S COMMITMENT

### **We, the national Committees for a European Citizens' Initiative for a European Special Plan for a Sustainable Development and Employment**

- given the seriousness of the crisis in the European economy and the growth of a "social question" comparable only to the recession and social crisis of the thirties of the last century;
- given the ineffectiveness of austerity policies and of public spending cuts so far implemented to reduce the deficits and to solve the of sovereign debts' crisis;
- convinced, on the one hand, that nation states are powerless in facing the crisis and recession and, on the other hand, that the absence of EU policies of sustainable development have brought about an increase of asymmetries between the different EU countries to the point of almost breaking the monetary union;
- noting with great concern the evidence of distrust and disaffection of an increasing number of European citizens towards the project of European unification and the emergence of populist and eurosceptic movements in several countries of the Union;
- convinced of the need and urgency of initiatives aimed at promoting a new deal based on a special European plan for sustainable development and employment;
- convinced that these initiatives can be built "from below", through the methods of participatory democracy in the decision-making process of the EU;

#### *consider*

that Art. 11 of the Lisbon Treaty enables one million EU citizens to propose a legal act to the European Commission through a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI);

that national committees for the promotion of a ECI on a European Special Plan for Sustainable Development and Employment have been established in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Greece and Spain, and contact-points have been established in different other countries

#### *emphasize*

the importance of the ECI as a strategic action for implementing the European democracy in order to pave the way towards an European Federation, confirmed by the number and the quality of personalities and associations which have joined to the committees and supported them: civil society movements, NGOs, trade unions, including the President of the European Parliament;

#### *commit themselves*

to actively support the campaign for the collection of one million signatures.

### **MEETING OF THE ITALIAN COMMITTEE IN ROME, 11TH NOV. 2013**

The Italian promoting committee organized a second meeting on 11th November 2013 in Rome. The meeting was chaired by Emilio Gabaglio, former secretary of ETUC. The Italian committee decided 1) to propose the presentation of ECI to the European Commission by the end of 2013 in order to obtain registration by the end of February 2014. 2) To increase, using their European networks, contacts with the political forces, trade unions, civil society and local authorities, in order to further broaden the support for the proposal. 3) To send an appeal to the political parties to put, in their programs for the European election campaign, the launch of a special European plan for sustainable development and employment. 4) To ask Italian government to include the development plan proposed in ECI between the priorities of the Italian presidency of the EU (2nd semester, 2014). 5) To ask the European Parliament an ad hoc hearing to discuss in detail the content of the plan. 6) To hold the next meeting of the Italian committee, in February 2014 when the European Commission will accept the registration of the ECI, to decide the plan for the collection of signatures. The Italian committee was set up in Rome on February 11, 2013, at the proposal of the European Federalist Movement and is currently composed of: ACLI-FAI, AEDE, AICCRE, Altramente, ANCI, ARCI, ASEGE, CESI, CGIL, CIFE, CISL, European Alternatives, FLARE- Libera, Legambiente, MFE, Movimento Europeo, UIL.



Rome, 11th November 2013. Second meeting of the Italian committee. From left to right: Weldemariam, Gubbiotti, Costi, Gabaglio, Dastoli, Levi, Borgna, Beschi, Di Giacomo, Panizzi, Vukovic

### **MEETING OF EUROPEAN PROMOTERS IN BERLIN, 15TH NOV. 2013**

On Friday, 15th November in Berlin, a meeting of the coordinators of national committees promoting the ECI for "A European Special Plan for Sustainable Development and for Employment" took place. People from Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and Portugal attended the meeting. The Spanish group was briefed the following day. The aim of the meeting was to present the latest developments of the campaign, to decide the names of the people that will be designated for the European Committee, and to decide when to submit the ECI to the European Commission. First of all, a problem was raised: the Bulgarian committee is not active anymore. However, there are good expectations, because activists from Luxembourg and Portugal stated their intention to create a committee in their countries. Moreover, other promoting groups may be created in other countries, on the initiative of some of the participants. We can therefore foresee to have more than 7 committees to submit our ECI. Then a proposal was made by the president of MFE (UEF Italy) Lucio Levi to submit the ECI by the end of this year. This way, the collection of signatures should take place starting from February 2014, and the contents of our ECI will enter the European debate during the elections for the European Parliament. This is one of the main aims of this ECI: if political parties will endorse our objectives we will have already succeeded. The proposal was adopted by the participants.

## EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY FOR THE EU CITIZENS

In the recent years the problem of the democracy in the frame of the existing institutions of the European Union has emerged overbearingly. To cope with this unprecedented crisis, after 2008 several financial means and legislative measures have been set up by the national governments and the European Institutions, such as the European Stability Mechanism, the so called Fiscal Compact, as well as the action managed by the Troika and so on.

It is self-evident that the European Citizens have never had a say in all these cases, the decision making was always compliant to the intergovernmental method of the European Council.

This non-democratic method is feeding more and more euroscepticism and populism in Europe, as well as the demagogic attitude of many politicians who consider Europe responsible for the crisis, while it is clear that the crisis is due to a persistent lack of willingness on the part of the national governments in building a federal finance (a European Treasury) in the frame of a democratic European government.

The fact is that the European citizens have no voice in the EU decision making because democracy is still stuck at the national borders and the citizens undergo the contradiction between globalization and democracy, which still stops indeed at the national borders.

There would be no conflict if sovereignty and democracy are brought at a supranational level, as shows the experience of the federal states where it is possible to transfer the state-sovereignty at the federal level, no giving up on democracy by the citizens.

Until now the reality is different and Europe faces a sort of political trilemma. **We cannot have globalization, democracy, and national sovereignty simultaneously.** We must choose two among the three.

Therefore, it is time to change, to overcome the old thinking of the last century according to which democracy can be achieved only at the national level. We have to build – starting from Europe - a supranational sovereignty, so that democracy and globalization can stand together at the same level.

What European democracy means? In my opinion, the concept itself of “European democracy” highlights four important messages.

First, it says that where there is democracy, there is always a government, responsible towards the people. Nowadays the European Union does not have an actual government, consequently a true democracy does not exist in the EU yet. Therefore Europe needs an actual government which can only be born with the simultaneous creation of the democracy at the European level.

Second, it says that democracy requires the participation of the people for addressing the main issues of the political community at the different levels. Consequently, a democratic Europe can emerge through the action and mobilization of the social movements at a European level. By this way these ones will have a role and a say in the European Project, by contributing to raise also the level of democracy in Europe.

Third, it says that European democracy is the answer and the alternative to the intergovernmental method which rules the EU, to overcome the absolute power of the European Council, by getting either a Parliament with a full-fledged legislative power and consequently a different Commission, in line with the results of European elections.

Fourth, it says that European democracy lives if the citizens will debate which political and economic programs, and which social contents Europe has to pursue. In other words, European democracy means that it is up to the political parties, to the movements of civil society and to the intellectuals to promote a big debate and create a European public opinion around a “government program” for Europe.

By this perspective, the European Citizens’ Initiative for a European Special Plan for a Sustainable Development and Employment represents an extraordinary mean to allow the birth and the growth of European Democracy.

*Antonio Longo*

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## EUROPEAN CITIZENS’ INITIATIVE “NEW DEAL 4 EUROPE”

### THE TEXT

#### *Title*

**FOR A EUROPEAN SPECIAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT**

#### *Object*

A public investment Plan to help Europe get out of the crisis through the development of the knowledge society and the creation of new jobs especially for youth

#### *Main objectives*

- A EU special program of public investments for the production and financing of European public goods (renewable energy, research and innovation, infrastructural network, ecological agriculture, protection of environment and cultural heritage etc.);
- A European Solidarity Fund to create new jobs, especially for young people.
- Increasing the own resources of the European budget through a financial transactions tax and a carbon tax.

#### *Legal basis*

Articles of the Lisbon Treaty

Article 3 of the TEU

Articles 38, 39, 145, 170, 171, 173, 179, 180, 181, 311, 352 of the TEU

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## AND THE REASONS

The existing picture of Europe today is a worrying one and it may be shortly described as follows.

1. Unemployment among young people has reached new heights, due to the social and economic crisis that has taken root in the European society as from the last years.
2. There is a worrying lack of competitiveness in many sectors of the European industry compared to the Asian giants and the emerging countries in the international market.
3. The national and the European budgets dedicated to research and innovation appears completely insufficient to challenge the international players.
4. The national and European budgets for funding the social structures are undeniably insubstantial for the scale of the crisis we are facing.
5. An increase in the “democratic deficit” in the EU due to the fact that the European institutions have been provided, in the recent years, with new competences and powers in the area of budgetary politics, but without a clear accountability towards the European Parliament (for example in the case of the Fiscal Compact).
6. The dangerous mix of the economic and social crisis from one side and the democratic deficit from the other side has triggered the wave of the anti-Europeanism and of the populist movements in the last years.

## THE PLAN IN QUESTION

Faced with the situation just described, we are convinced that there are concrete solutions in order to get out of the crisis which we are facing.

In today’s radically changing world, necessitating a rational and efficient use of natural resources (food, energy), Europe must implement a strict policy of control of resources, in order to bring about an equitable and sustainable transformation of its economic and production system. The route of healthy budgetary discipline for states and sustainable development is one that can be followed only through a common European effort.

It has become essential to launch now a “European plan”, limited but decisive, in order to show Europe’s economic and social actors the direction that has to be followed.

Therefore, we propose, through this European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI), a plan of action called the **“European Special Plan for Sustainable Development and Employment”** in order to ask the European Commission the necessary measures to overcome the crisis.

The necessary resources for financing the plan should come from a financial transactions tax and a carbon tax (according to a mechanism similar to that regulating the assignment of a percentage of the VAT to the European budget) and the issuing of a European loan through Euro project bonds.

## WHY THIS PLAN IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY?

1. Firstly, the European pact for development and employment, as decided upon by the European Council on the 28th of June 2012, is not sufficient to allow a sustainable re-launch of the Europe economy or to fight effectively against unemployment. Only 5 billion Euros have been assigned to financing growth. Put simply, this is just a small drop in a large ocean.
2. Several European countries have national budgets which are insufficient to contribute to the collective effort to get out of the financial crisis. They are unable to play a decisive role in a return to growth and are unable to fight against this epidemic unemployment because of austerity measures decided on a European level (the Maastricht’s criteria, the Fiscal Compact and so on). These measures leave member states with no margin to plan a sustainable growth.
3. Politicians responsible, economists and opinion makers say that Europe must overcome austerity and work towards economic growth. This statement is surely true, but this statement alone is not enough.

Europe needs more: a real collective plan that is not just an add-on to national plans which would be ineffective and costly.

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## **WE, THE EUROPEAN MOVEMENTS, HAVE A PLAN!**

Our “European Special European Plan for Sustainable Development and Employment” is above all a viable project that would be satisfactory for all European countries as well as every European citizen.

This plan highlights four essential points:

- It must be “European”. That is to say that it must be run by the European Commission and aimed at achieving the “European interest” as such.
- It must be ‘extraordinary’. That is to say that it must be run outside to the current European Union budget.
- It must be oriented towards sizeable investments into the domains of research and development, technological innovation, European infrastructures, environment and alternative energy sources, social cohesion and employment of young people, defence of the territory, and the artistic and cultural patrimony of Europe.
- It must be financed by ‘own resources’ – tax on financial transactions and carbon tax. These collected resources can then be directly used to finance investments and/or as a guarantee for the issuing of Project Bond in order to raise capital on international markets. According to our calculations, this Plan may collect at least 130 billion euro per year: it could determine the future of Europe.

The launch of the Plan, with its European wide taxation measures, should be accompanied by a reduction of the costs currently sustained by the single member states in areas of joint action.

## **THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS’ INITIATIVE: WHAT AND WHY?**

1. According to art. 11 of the Lisbon Treaty, “not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties”.
2. To put in place the “European Special Plan for Sustainable Development and Employment”, a strong political commitment is necessary beyond intergovernmental interests that continue to prevail. The ECI represents the only way for European citizens to have their say and to take part in the ‘Special European Plan’.
3. A substantial impetus by all European citizens is essential to mobilise all forces that will be necessary to realise such a plan. Through this ECI the European citizens call for a New Deal to get out of the economic crisis in which we find ourselves largely due to generalised austerity policies.
4. The European democracy has everything to gain through active and continued participation by European citizens. Our ECI provides a concrete possibility to show to the people that “Europe of a sustainable development” is possible and therefore it will be more easy to fight successfully against the eurosceptics, anti-Europeans and populists.

## **THE DIFFERENT STAGES TO PUT IN PLACE THE ECI**

1. The creation of at least 7 national committees (currently, there exist already in Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, Czech Republic, Luxembourg and Greece. The creation of committees in other countries is in progress).
2. The constitution of the European Committee.
3. The collection of funds necessary for the development of the ECI Campaign.
4. The creation of a website dedicated to gathering signatures in support of the project.
5. The creation of campaign’s profiles on the main social networks (facebook, twitter, google+, youtube, flickr).
6. The creation of a Newsletter dedicated to inform the European public opinion on the development of the ECI Campaign.
7. The official presentation of the ECI to the European Commission.
8. The official inscription of the ECI by the European Commission.
9. The start of a communication campaign which aims to gather at least a million signatures through the web, the social networks and public meetings.

## **CONTACT US AND BECOME A PROMOTER**

**The promoting committees of the ECI and the temporary coordinators:**

*France: Jean Francis Billion and Jean Luc Prevel - Belgium: Michele Ciavarini Azzi and Monica Tiberi - Spain : Kolja Bienert and Elena Rodriguez - Italy: Grazia Borgna and Paolo Ponzano - Czech Republic: Ivo Kaplan and Jana Simkova - Luxembourg: Giovanni Rastrelli and Alain Calmes - Greece: Nikos Lampropoulos and Sarantis Michalopoulos.*

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