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Portugal

The alternative left strategy in Portugal elections

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The electoral campaign in Portugal will be marked by speculation about the future parliamentary “geostrategy”, which anticipates the scenario of a 'relative majority' for the SP (ie the SP will be the largest minority in parliament). Francisco Louça, who leads the Left Bloc list in Lisbon, was interviewed by Esquerda, the party's new newspaper.

– Is the Bloc ready to participate in an SP government?

Francisco Louça: The Bloc is not a candidate for government. The Bloc is presenting a political alternative and that's what it has to be faithful to. It isn't standing in order to play the game of sharing out ministerial portfolios. And it will take the responsibilities that are given to it by the strength of the votes it receives.

It would be completely irresponsible, if we weren't elected to govern, to accept posts in a government. Besides, we don't know exactly what is the government programme of the Socialist Party and from the little that we do know, it's in contradiction with ours. That's why we respect our engagements to our electors and we'll fight to build social and political majorities in support of our programme.

– Does that make a parliamentary agreement impossible?

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Chico1.jpg>]

On August 31 2004 Francisco Louca was one of three parliamentary deputies who tried to get the abortion facility ship Borndiep into Portuguese waters, but was stopped by the navy. Read story at the [Women on Waves site](#)

FL: A permanent agreement, certainly. We will look for one-off agreements in order to find the necessary majorities on the causes that we defend. And if these majorities enable us to get closer to what we defend, if that means an improvement in the political, social and moral situation of the country, we will always be ready.

On the causes that are important in our eyes we won't at all stick to an attitude of “all or nothing”. And that's not new. It's what we did under the previous Socialist Government. Look at what happened with the measures to change the policy on drug addiction. Look at the tax reform, which Guterres ended up by throwing in the dustbin.

– The Bloc is proposing ten measures for a hundred days. Is at a platform of demands in order to be able to support an SP government?

FL: No. It's what we consider as a minimum programme, an emergency programme, applicable by any decent government. It's the demonstration that the Bloc wants to intervene on concrete questions, independently of the change in the relationship of forces on the left. We say this: it is possible to change the law on abortion without waiting. It is possible to go forward with a programme to fight against unemployment in the short term. It is indispensable to change the rules of allocating teaching posts. For that it is not even necessary to change the Portuguese political scene, nor to go forward with major reforms. It's enough to have political courage.

– But isn't it already a retreat, which leaves out fundamental programmatic measures like the 35-hour week?

FL: the fundamental axes of the Bloc's proposals are explained in its electoral programme, which includes the 35-hour week. Most of these measures require a full legislature, a profound change in the Portuguese political and

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social scene or a big investment of money, will and social mobilisations. What we are proposing in the measures for the first hundred days is something else: it's a starting point, which clearly indicates in what direction we are preparing to go.