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Portugal

Political resolution of the national leadership of the Left Bloc

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This resolution was adopted unanimously by the National Leadership of the Left Bloc in Lisbon on October 18, 2015 following the elections on Sunday 4 October.

These elections gave a parliamentary majority to parties defining themselves as on the left: the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Left Bloc. [1] Since then while these parties have been discussing the possibilities of an agreement to allow a government expressing this parliamentary majority to be formed, the Portuguese president has declared that it would be impossible to allow parties that do not accept the EU rules to be close to the government in Portugal, and has invited the rightwing coalition which has the biggest single group of MPs to form a government. [2]

The fate of this government will be decided in a vote of confidence on 10 November. [3]

Political Resolution of the National Leadership of the Left Bloc

1. The Left Bloc is the party that, even before the elections, emphasized the need for a political dialogue with the aim of interrupting the cycle of impoverishment of the country and restoring income from work and pensions. The challenges and the conditions posed by the Bloc, particularly by Catarina Martins to António Costa, marked the pre-election debate.

2. By the will of the people, the Bloc is now a force that is indispensable for a solution that puts an end to the present cycle of the right in government: that is what has opened the way to the present negotiations. Today as yesterday, proof has been given that such concepts as "useful vote" and "arc of governance" have no content. At the moment of finding solutions to end austerity, the contribution of the Bloc has been the one that appeared earliest and most clearly.

3. In the context of these negotiations, the Left Bloc is united around the goal of bringing about fundamental political change, starting by removing the right from government and by affirming a majority that is committed to the protection of employment, wages and pensions. It is an ongoing process, in which we see advances and outstanding difficulties, but one which requires decisions that provide clarity.

4. To the permanent invocation, in the public debate, of the need for a "commitment to stability", the Bloc responds with its clear mandate: concerning the setting out of a government programme, as also the vote for every state budget, the Bloc is a guarantee against any attack on wages, pensions, now and in the future, or jobs. The stability that we defend is that of people's lives, it is that of the restoration of the income from work and public services that have been attacked in recent years. It is not the Bloc that will be found lacking for a majority that would meet these objectives.

5. In these elections, the PCP has obtained a positive result, strengthening its parliamentary group and declaring itself to be available for the development of an alternative government to the PSD/CDS minority, something which is fundamental for such a possibility to materialize. We take note of this readiness and, in the framework of the dialogue that the two parties have established, the Left Bloc has already met with the PCP to analyze the process of

negotiations that each of them is conducting with the Socialist Party.

6. The Left Bloc is now faced with essential choices concerning the Presidential elections to be held in January 2016. The Bloc had decided at its National Convention that it "would be ready to support an independent candidacy which would be placed unambiguously in the anti-austerity camp, for a break with the Fiscal Compact [4] and for the implementation of the Constitution [5]. The Bloc does not exclude the possibility of presenting its own candidate."

7. Three months away from the presidential elections, we see that there has not been a left candidacy that is strong, mobilizing and broad enough to confront the right in the context of this election. That is why it is time for the Bloc to launch its own candidate.

8. After ten years of the presidency of Cavaco Silva, who has played the role of leader of a faction and has repeatedly violated the Constitution, the right appears as the big favorite in this election. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, with the advantage of being well-known thanks to the hegemonic television coverage that he has been given, is aiming for a first-round victory.

9. It is the left that has the responsibility of giving more density to the presidential campaign, imposing a debate around themes that are essential in choosing the President of the Republic, by mobilizing the electorate and unmasking the conservatism of the candidate of the right. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa represents the PSD and the big economic groups, as well as the conservatism that has opposed essential conquests of human rights, such as the decriminalization of abortion.

10. The Left Bloc faces this responsibility with a candidacy focused on three fundamental themes: the questions of sovereignty, faced with international treaties and trade agreements that were not subject to referendum, and with powers devoid of legitimacy that endanger democracy and national decision-making; the fight against conservatism, for the defence of human rights, equality and freedom; popular mobilization for political participation and democratic decisions.

11. It is Marisa Matias that we have chosen to embody this candidacy. Her political experience and the fact that she is a well-known figure on the national and international levels, her extensive knowledge of European affairs, her dedication to human rights causes, provide guarantees for a campaign that is extremely competent and capable of mobilizing people. This candidacy contributes to greater electoral mobilization on the left in the first round, to thwart the ambitions of the right. And it is a fundamental contribution to popular participation in the debate on the major issues of the present political moment.

So, the National Leadership of the Left Bloc decides:

â€¢ To present a motion of no confidence in the government programme of the PSD/CDS alliance, should Passos Coelho be chosen as prime minister by the President of the Republic;

â€¢ To defeat any motion of no confidence presented by the right against a Socialist Party government programme;

â€¢ To continue negotiations with the Socialist Party for the inclusion in the government programme of fiscal policy principles consistent with the protection of employment, wages and pensions, with the perspective of the establishment of a government with parliamentary support from the left;

â€¢ To continue the dialogue with the PCP on the process of negotiations with the Socialist Party and the challenges

that the anti-austerity left will face in the coming period;

â€¢ To organize meetings to present the candidacy of Marisa Matias to the Presidency of the Republic;

â€¢ To promote open and public debate and proposals, in contact with the local population, social actors and militant organizations, making it possible, without fixing priorities in advance, on the one hand to make an inventory of initiatives that organize people, of direct experiences of solidarity and of social movement organizations, and on the other to take forward the discussion on the political strategy of the left and the creation of networks for coordinated intervention

Lisbon, October 18, 2015

[1] See International Viewpoint [The loss of the rightwing majority and the rise of the Left Bloc](#), October 2015.

[2] See *International Viewpoint* [The Portuguese election: quicksand in the center, an emboldened left and a desperate president](#), October 2015.

[3] See *Links* "[Portugal: â€œEurope is very concerned' as new gov't likely short-lived](#)".

[4] The European budget pact, officially called the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance: a mechanism agreed to by 25 of the 28 member states of the European Union, on the convergence of their economic and monetary union, in particular the euro zone. The treaty, signed on March 2, 2012 by the heads of state and of government, came into force on January 1, 2013.

[5] This refers to the campaign for the organization of a referendum in Portugal on this treaty. The Bloc argued, against the right and the Socialists, that the Portuguese Constitution allowed such a referendum, because the treaty concerned not only the budget, but the very question of the organization of power within the European Union.