

## Haris Golemis

### Concluding Remarks

1. Following the advice of my comrade Natassa Theodorakopoulou, I have decided not to speak in my native language. This means that interpreters have to correct my English. I sympathise with them.
2. We have come to the end of a very interesting conference. This meeting was not intended to be a communication exercise, but a real workshop in which participants would present their analyses of the present state of the crisis in Europe and exchange their views regarding the way to deal with the problems of debt and austerity in Europe, including concrete proposals, alternative to the neoliberal ones that are implemented throughout Europe. (Experiences from outside Europe). We are really happy that this is what has actually happened and we are sure that we need many more similar discussions in the future.
3. On behalf of *transform!*, I want to thank the EL for giving us the opportunity to co-organize this event. It is not the first time that we cooperate in big events, of which the most notable case is the Summer University, which this year will take place in Germany.
4. But what came to my mind is a similar conference on debt, which took place in Athens, in 2011.
5. As we all know, many things have changed since then, especially in Greece, not only in terms of the extent of social destruction but also regarding the collapse of the traditional bi-party political system and especially of social democracy and the spectacular rise of SYRIZA. The election of Alexis Tsipras as candidate of the EL for the presidency of the European Commission is a product of these developments. And, we believe that this symbolic candidacy will empower the forces of our Left in other European countries as well.
6. Coming back to acknowledgments, I would like to thank first all of you who are present right now in this room. You are the champions. Of course we thank the organizing committee (Pedro Marcet, Maite Mola, Christine Mendelsohn, Natassa Theodorakopoulou from the EL, Walter Baier, Elisabeth Gauthier from *transform!*) all speakers and participants for their excellent presentations last but not least, the staff of the Brussels office of the EL and of the Vienna office of *transform!*, the interpreters, who, as usually, are one of the main pillars for the success of international meetings. They have made a great job.
7. To a large extent, a first synthesis of the EL proposals was made this morning by Yannis Milios and a few moments ago by Frederic Bocarra, who presented the paper

of the EL Economists. We believe that these proposals will be enriched and elaborated even more, following the contributions made during the Conference, so that they become as convincing as possible to national electorates, together of course with the specific proposals of our national parties.

8. In many of our countries, the EL member parties are on the rising and SYRIZA in Greece will be, most probably the first party in the forthcoming European elections. The EL, also, as a single entity, is now much stronger than some years ago and this will also be proved on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May.
9. However, we have not become arrogant due to our advance, which in fact is, on average, still rather moderate compared to the ambitions that we should have in view of the fact that social democratic parties are hardly distinguishable in terms of economic policies from the conservative political forces.
10. We know that in separate countries, and eventually in Europe, social transformation can only happen through taking power.
11. But we know also that, although being in government is possibly a necessary condition, a first step, towards the target of taking power, it is certainly not a sufficient condition.
12. Presently this is a real possibility only in Greece and the success in the European elections will be a first, but decisive, step towards this target.
13. We also know that taking power is a long process, that needs the action not only of our parties, but of the masses of people and the various ways that these are acting in a collective way (through other left parties, trade unions, social movements, networks), but also through their individual participation in spontaneous events..
14. We must not forget this, in the process to the institutional “battle” of the European elections. We should ask from our social and political allies and the peoples of Europe not only their votes, but their active participation in common struggles.
15. For *transform! europe* and the EL, the forthcoming European elections are a critical moment in a non-ending struggle for the transformation of our countries and Europe.