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Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking Transform Europe for the highly honorable invitation, but also the extremely timely debate on the transitions and changes taking place at a global level and the challenges faced by the workplaces and the syndicates. Particularly for the opportunity given for the thoughts of SYRIZA and the Greek government to be heard.

Let me start with an observation. In this room, we all understand that, referring to Greece, we are talking about a country that is trying to find **the way to a regularity**. That means becoming a normal country again. At the same time, however, I want to emphasize that by saying this I do not mean that we are seeking to return to the same **status and model that we had before 2008 and 2009**. We believe that this model is responsible for the great **crisis** we have been experiencing with great effort and enormous social sacrifices that we still try to overcome. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

I would like to continue with another observation. The very concept of transitions accepts as a **prerequisite a structured situation which needs to be re-adjusted** in order to respond to the new challenges. And more specifically, by discussing the future of the labor, the **question** formed is, **how should the institutional protection systems of labor and the syndicates be adapted** in order to respond to the new challenges, so that they are effective in their role. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

But I think that if we take a step back we will find that **core labor protection institutions**, fixed labor protection data **have been shaken vigorously, if not completely dismantled**. I am talking about the **rapid deregulation experienced mostly by national labor protection systems over the last two decades**, for two main reasons. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

Firstly, because of **the growing economic integration in Europe, which has not been accompanied by parallel mechanisms for the harmonization of social systems**, the latter have been failing in their attempts not to hamper economic integration. Secondly, because of **the great economic and financial crisis that broke out in Europe in 2008 and the recipe that has been applied mainly to the countries most hit by this crisis, the southern countries**. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ) The recipe of internal devaluation, which is neither new nor foregone, is **the core of the neo-liberal model**: a recipe requiring that the competitiveness deficit that characterizes the **economies that have been hit harder should be addressed through internal depreciation** (monetary union in the case of the eurozone does not exist as an option), meaning the reduction in labor costs, which should be achieved not only through the reduction of wages but also through the general restriction of **workers'**

rights which are perceived as factors that increase a company's operation cost. This was briefly the recipe that was also **applied in Greece - but not only in Greece** - and which the period 2010-2014 in a series of measures that laid out fundamental elements of the national system of labor protection.

(ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

Therefore, when we are discussing about the changes and challenges faced by the labor, we must also focus on the past, the **things that have been deregulated and the need for their rehabilitation.** The **need to re-establish basic institutions that have been restructured,** such as the institution of collective bargaining. This is the first challenge.

(ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

But **is the concept of restoring the "acquis" lost enough to deal effectively with the challenges that have a negative impact on the labor?** The answer is **clearly no.** (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

Restoration, although necessary, certainly is not sufficient for the progressive political forces to face the growing challenges. And that is true for **two reasons.** (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

I have already hinted the first and is no different from European economic integration. Even if we restore basic institutions that have been restructured, we will again not be able to respond to the growing challenge posed by the free operation of capital at European level. The restoration of collective bargaining in Greece - although necessary - cannot respond to the challenge raised in the labor rights by the integrated market. I think that **the case of workers' extortion in the framework of the free provision services in the EU has demonstrated in the most characteristic way the failure of national labor protection systems to respond to the challenges posed by economic integration.** The first reason, therefore, that the idea of rehabilitation is not enough, is economic integration in Europe and the transnational operation of capital, to put it schematically. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

The second reason is that, **while the concept of rehabilitation of the acquis can be extremely important for some workers, for others it may mean absolutely nothing.** That is because the latter have never experienced this protective framework that has now been broken down or suspended. I am talking about the **self-employed, the undeclared workers, the migrant workers, the workers in precarious forms of labor.** What exactly can these workers say to the term restoration, the term acquired? Absolutely nothing.

(ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

That is why I think we should start to discuss in a more **visionary** way that, although it will include the idea of restoring core labor protection institutions, it will not just stay there. That is why we must proceed with even more courage to **revolutionary interventions in favor of**

those who have no voice, young people, precarious workers, immigrants, to take radical reforms that through the right to work it will give voice to the invisible, will make them visible and through the right to work all social rights will gain content. It is this kind of interventions, which will create and cause cracks, and free our thinking from the limitations of the present. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

And this need for radical interventions concerns both progressive political forces and, above all, syndicates. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

Regarding syndicates, movements and political forces, especially **the Left**, let me express a few thoughts before I finish my speech, mainly concerning their response to the challenges posed by European economic integration. **"Downstream" competition in working conditions has created new data in the field of industrial relations.** On the other hand, of course, **profound interdependencies of labor-capital are obviously not overturned, nor does the world of labor lose any economic power.** (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

What seems to be lacking today in the syndicates' plan is a reconstruction strategy that will make them a powerful opponent of the globalized capital. And such a plan cannot remain embedded in strategies and practices that have developed in the industrial age and have apparently been overcome. The basic inertia is that **syndicates' operating mechanisms remain trapped on the border of the nation state**, and they are called upon to cope with **an opponent that is beyond the scope of their actions.** (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

Today, the rival of the capital cannot be exhausted in organizing labor forces within the limits of the nation state. Labor's internationalism has to **move from the level of symbolism**, a motto to which it has been moving so far, into **the phase of determination and activation.** With what purpose? What request? **With the "upward" harmonization of levels of labor protection and upward convergence of wages.** That is why the debate on the upward convergence of wages in Europe is, in my opinion, of the utmost importance. In the same direction, **it is of primary importance that syndicates include issues of labor protection with a purely transnational character, such as the workers extortion, on the agenda.** Such initiatives are important because they prevent the perpetuation of a culture of national protectionism that is not only foreign to European traditions, but it also proves totally ineffective against ever-increasing social dumping. In the same direction, we should seek to strengthen at Union level the role of social competitors in defining the rules governing industrial relations, and here I am talking about nothing more than **conducting collective bargaining and binding CLA's (Collective Labor Agreements) at EU level.** (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

So, we must act in a way both **thoughtful and bold**, thinking about what the **workers have claimed over the past decades**, and founded the national social states, which today are unjustifiably deregulated, but also think in a visionary way, one that will not mix up prescriptions, **will not make repetitions in history**, but will experience new responses, **creative responses to challenges**. Because if the crisis has taught us something, that is that we have come to a new world, **and our approach to labor protection cannot be static but constantly transforming itself into the social dynamics that are shaping up in Europe**. If we accept this fact, it is our responsibility not to defend the past unprejudiced but to think creatively about the future. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

As I said before, it was not a new recipe but a strong expression and time-consuming application of neo-liberal ideology that economic growth should be achieved based on labor crush. Of course, this position often embraces a social mantle. There are a few times when we heard during the negotiations of the fiscal adjustment program in Greece, the representatives of the IMF demanding the elimination of basic protective institutions of labor in the name of the defense of the unemployed, on the basis of a truly unstable argument that the less protective and organized a system of labor protection is, the lower the wages, the easier it will be for the unemployed to find a job, or as the delegates of the IMF said, the "outsiders" of the labor market to become "insiders". **A perception that proved not only socially damaging but also economically ineffective**. The case of Greece is the most characteristic: with **unemployment rising to the nightmarish 28%, creating a whole generation of working poor**, and the risk of poverty and material deprivation of a large part of the population taking the **dimensions of a humanitarian crisis**. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

As you know, **in August, the third program, the third loan, ends**. This does not mean that the country will automatically come out of the crisis. But it will **be able to apply its own policies in the economic space** that will gradually recover it.

In my opinion, **the truly difficult period for SYRIZA and the government is starting now**. I am not just talking about politics in post-Memorial times. I am talking about the **need for a total reconstruction of the country**. To implement a new productive model that will shield the country and society from crises like the one we have experienced but will also ensure a sustainable future.

The success of this plan will mainly depend on whether we can firstly make real measurable steps towards the creation of new stable jobs with full rights. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)

In conclusion, a simple and at the same time a common comment. The Greek government and SYRIZA are planning and envisioning, proposing and trying to implement their plan. NEVERTHELESS. The necessary correlation, the political

association in Europe is not only lacking, but it also becomes more and more unfavorable every day.

We must do everything we can to change it. (ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΔΙΑΦΑΝΕΙΑΣ)