

# **Sao Paulo Forum-Party of the European Left**

## **8th Seminar: Shared Visions from the Left**

**(Brasilia, June 29-30, and July 01-02, 2023)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Gleisi Hoffmann - President of the Workers' Party - PT (Brazil).**

Good afternoon, comrades, and a very warm welcome to this panel. I would like to greet Walter Baier, president of the Party of the European Left, because it is a great pleasure to have him here. I would also like to greet my friend Maite, who I have known for a long time and who has been with us on different occasions. Also, Carlos Vega, who is going to speak about climate change, together with Iñigo Martínez. Then there will be a talk on migration in the next panel.

Well, I would like to say good morning to everyone, to say how important it is that we are here at the Sao Paulo Forum at this meeting, and how important it is that the European Left Party is participating with us here.

Today I met the delegation from the Communist Party of Vietnam, which is participating here. In a discussion of the organisation of the Forum, I told them that the Forum started from an articulation of the left parties of Latin America, but that it has been expanding and that today we have delegations from many parts of the world: from Europe, Asia, the African continent, also from the USA.... and I think that we need to expand it more and more. We need a strong international organisation of left-wing parties especially to enable a confrontation with the extreme right, which also has an international movement. I had the opportunity to be here in the morning at another seminar on communication, where many of you were also present, during Fernando Mate's presentation on how the network of the extreme right works to frame and disseminate what they think is important to de-characterise and attack the left, to deconstruct the role of the left and its organisations. We need to have a counter-offensive to that.

We cannot think that just the moves we have made so far are going to be enough to carry out this confrontation. They will not be enough. We should organise ourselves better, communicate better, to confront what is happening in the world and in Brazil we have felt very much in recent times.

It was very positive and encouraging that we managed to win the elections with President Lula. However, although we won the election and defeated Bolsonaro, Bolsonarismo is organised and alive and will continue its political agenda. So, we also need to engage in this political struggle.

I would like to welcome this panel on Climate Change. I think this discussion at the Sao Paulo Forum is very important. It is a global debate, reflecting planetary concern about

a crucial issue. President Lula has put the question of Climate Change as a priority in his agenda, including in the relationship with international organizations.

A great effort has been made for COP 30 to meet here in Brazil in 2025, in the Amazon, which is a topic of great international debate. Our concern is how to guarantee the preservation of the Amazon and, at the same time, maintain the national sovereignty of the countries that are part of the Amazon region, whilst also analysing how developed countries can collaborate effectively on this issue.

President Lula's concern has been that the pressure from developed countries on developing countries regarding the preservation of their forests and waters has been exacerbated and that this is not correct. In the speech he made in France on his visit there, he affirmed Brazil's commitment to this issue. But, at the same time, he demanded a commitment from the developed countries in relation to their past responsibilities. Another important fact to remember is that Brazil was ready to sign the agreement between Mercosur and the European Union, and it has been suspended precisely because of clauses that we believe, along with the president, are exacerbated in relation to environmental responsibilities.

I would like to pass the floor to Walter who is with me at this table, so that we can start the debate. Thank you very much.

### **Walter Baier - President of the European Left Party (EL)**

Thank you very much, it is a pleasure and an honour to be here with you today. Thank you to the Sao Paulo Forum for hosting this seminar together with the Party of the European Left, which is an umbrella party with around 40 parties from 25 European countries, and which is represented in the European Parliament with 39 seats.

Today in Europe we find ourselves in what political scientists and scientists call a "poly-crisis", in which we are seeing the growth of radical neo-fascist parties across the European continent. Around 93% of EU citizens are concerned about the rising cost of living, 82% about poverty and 81% about both Climate Change and the war in Ukraine. The number of people feeling pessimistic about the future has reached historic levels. It is this pessimism and fear of the future that has led to the rise of radical neo-fascist parties. The radical left in Europe is fighting against this climate, being a force for political struggle and alternative solutions.

In Europe, we have seen in the last month the extraordinary growth of strikes, social protests, struggle movements, the mobilisation of the women's movement and particularly of a young generation whose future life is literally threatened by the climate crisis. So, this is the challenge on the eve of the European elections in 2024.

How can we transform the impetus of the movement into a political force capable of changing the balance of power in Europe?

There are already successes that the movement has been able to achieve, which are also reflected at the political level in the EU guidelines for introducing minimum bases: the

initiative aimed at equal pay for men and women, equal pay for equal work, or the proposal to create minimum social protection for the 28 million employees in the "GIG economy".

As you know, during the pandemic, the European Commission suspended the so-called "Stability and Growth Pact", which had caused much damage to societies through the imposition of brutal austerity measures in the interests of the extremely wealthy and the financial sector. The suspension of this pact was a good decision. For the moment, it seems that the European Commission has moved away from neoliberal orthodoxy, providing significant resources to its most vulnerable member states through "community bonds", something the left has been proposing for decades. However, the "beast" of austerity in Europe is not dead yet, as we have the possibility of the "Stability and Growth Pact" being re-invigorated, a request recently raised by German finance minister Lindner: a decision that would again have catastrophic impacts on the EU's peripheral societies.

Obviously, the progress we need can only be achieved against the logic that has been established in the European treaties and against the capitalist character of the current system. The same applies to the climate crisis. In fact, "green capitalism" is an oxymoron, insofar as the accumulation logic of capitalism, by its very nature, does not seem to be sensitive to putting any limits on the exploitation of people and nature. It is an established fact that the owners of 10% of the world's resources are responsible for 50% of CO2 emissions. This shows that equality is a class and gender issue.

The European Trade Union Confederation a few weeks ago adopted a platform at its congress, which, in many respects, converges with the proposals of the European Left Party. It is a platform that aims at a green transformation of European industry, leaving no one behind, that creates security and decently paid work, that is linked with a qualitative expansion and extension of public services and that brings those enterprises that should serve the public interest into public ownership.

Dear comrades,

unfortunately, all the progressive reforms we are talking about in Europe and its future are overshadowed by the war in Ukraine.

The Party of the European Left clearly condemned the invasion of the Russian Federation, which has cost so much death and destruction. War also causes ecological disasters. Climate researcher Leonard Leclerc calculated that the war has caused 120 million tons of CO2 in its first year, which is equivalent to the annual emission of a country the size of Belgium. This must be stopped. The war has shown, in recent months, how easily nuclear plants can get out of control, and how part of the world's biggest nuclear arsenal can fall into the hands of "warlords". We are literally on the brink of a general human catastrophe. This must stop.

It is difficult to express the extent to which the people of Europe owe President Lula a debt of gratitude for his political initiative to end the war. Something that the leaders of

the European Union and its member states are incapable of proposing. This failure is a tragic mistake in the face of a world facing increasing difficulties.

Whether by choice or disaster, we are seeing the birth of a new multipolar world order. Whether it will be a fairer and safer world is not yet clear, insofar as it will depend on how it is shaped. We must work in that direction and the relaunch of Unasur is excellent news.

Petro's historic victory in Colombia, and the goal of "total peace" in Colombia, as well as the possible victory of progressive forces in Ecuador and Argentina, give us new hope for moving towards a world of equals and peace, without blockades or arbitrary biases.

The "People's Summit" taking place in Brussels on July 17-18 is an alternative to the official EU-CELAC summit. The Sao Paulo Forum and the European Left Party are working together with European, Latin American and Caribbean organisations to create a new common working space. We look forward to welcoming them to debate, exchange analyses and plan the struggles to come.

Finally, in Madrid in November we will have the next edition of the "European Forum of Left, Progressive and Ecologist Forces", in which we are involved as European Left Party, and in which we also hope to meet again and receive a large representation from the Sao Paulo Forum.

Dear comrades,

globally, the situation in Europe is not easy. The recent elections in Europe have shown that the advance of neo-fascism is an imminent threat. We can evade this danger, if we succeed in building unity among the left and progressive forces. This is the strategic line of the Party of the European Left.

Thank you very much. Hasta la victoria siempre !

**Gleisi Hoffmann - president of the Workers' Party - PT (Brazil).**

I just want to take this opportunity to thank you for your presence, Walter, and for the great solidarity and support we have received from the European Left Party and its organisations for the resistance we have made here in Brazil. Both in relation to the coup against President Dilma, the imprisonment of President Lula and then also in the electoral process. To the European Left and all the parties that are here, I said yesterday at the opening that we would not have achieved our victory without this international solidarity. So, thank you very much. I would also like to announce the presence among us of Deputy Lindbergh Farías, he is welcome. And I pass the microphone to you, Maite.

## **FIRST PANEL**

### **CLIMATE CHANGE: the proposals from the Left**

#### **Moderation: Maite Mola - Head of IR of the European Left Party**

What I am going to do is to moderate the panel, and as we have little time, I am going to give the floor directly to Carlos Vega.

#### **Carlos Vega - Hostosian National Independentist Movement - MINH (Puerto Rico).**

We must first recognise that human beings are first and foremost Nature and that there are no natural disasters. Nature is not disastrous, it is generous. There are social disasters in Nature, which are the responsibility of human beings, not all, but some.

We must be aware that what happens to the rest of Nature will impact on human beings. This obliges us to develop a harmonious relationship between human beings and the rest of Nature, a respectful and affectionate Coexistence that ensures stability and Happiness.

Human beings are the only living beings that transform nature and use it as raw material to satisfy various needs and generate what is known as wealth, which is a social category, not a natural one. For a long time, this process of transforming nature into goods for use and consumption depended on animal and human energy, waged, enslaved, or forced. For a long time, it was thought that nature's capacity to absorb pollutants, in soils, rivers and oceans or in the atmosphere, was infinite. The smoky chimney was the great symbol of progress. Forests, mines, marine life, in short, everything that would be processed in industry, were also seen as infinite.

For more than 4.5 billion years the Earth has received energy from the Sun, producing life, without any pollution. But almost three centuries ago, humans began to produce energy to run machines in factories, using non-renewable and highly polluting fossil fuels. The burning of these fuels causes certain gases, such as carbon monoxide, methane, and nitrate, known as Greenhouse Gases, to be released into the atmosphere. **This has been occurring mainly since about 1850.**

In this regard, the **essential difference** between solar energy and that produced by burning fossil fuels is that the sun's rays penetrate the atmosphere, heat the planet, and then leave, as if they were bouncing back, **leaving no polluting trace**. In contrast, the gases generated by burning fossil fuels - coal-oil-gas - accumulate in the atmosphere - they do not leave - and produce a progressive warming effect on the planet; precisely the same thing that happens in a conventional greenhouse.

Over time, climatic changes occur on Earth, caused by natural causes. This explains the millions of years of frost in certain continental regions, the formation of deserts in regions where vegetation once existed, and so on. The current situation is different. It is man-made, with catastrophic consequences.

These greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere by many industries, motor vehicles, gas cookers, burning of foam, rubber, use of paints or other chemicals in aerosols, chemical thinners and others.

When we refer to **global warming**, we are talking precisely about the process of global warming caused by the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. When we talk about **climate change**, we are referring to the consequences of global warming on the planet. According to the United Nations, climate change refers to long-term changes in temperatures and weather patterns.

The impact of global warming/climate change **is an issue of the present**, not that it will or may happen in the future. It has planetary consequences. The effects of the warming of the atmosphere include: melting of the polar ice caps and high mountain glaciers, major droughts and floods, rising sea levels, disappearance of low-lying coastal areas, alteration of climatic seasons, arbitrary modification of agricultural production seasons, development of hurricanes of unprecedented intensity, and the worsening of the food crisis in many countries. The advance of seawater inland will diminish freshwater for consumption. Many species will not survive the temperature rise.

The impact of global warming/climate change threatens the **progressive destruction of the planet**, specifically in the biosphere or sphere of life, where we humans and the rest of Nature live. Not so much in the subsoil, nor in the interior of the planet. In many cases the deterioration caused is irreversible.

Absurdly, the great political, economic, and social controversies in which we usually engage are insignificant in the face of the threat, which is already a fact, of global warming/climate change.

Although this is a problem that, as we indicated earlier, began mainly during the second half of the 19th century, and although there has been full awareness of the seriousness of the case for decades, some political leaders, such as former US President Donald Trump, insist that it is a plot to harm the economies of the great powers. Likewise, industrialised capitalist countries such as the United States and Germany and others such as China are major contributors to global warming/climate change, due to the extraordinary greenhouse gas emissions of their industries, with no sign of them taking a stand for the planet in the foreseeable future.

**Puerto Rico is a major contributor of these gases** in the Central American and Caribbean region. Our archipelago is home to some three million motor vehicles and numerous polluting industries, which continuously release polluting gases into the atmosphere.

The intensity of Hurricane Maria, the coastal problems in various parts of the country, and the long periods of rain and drought that we have experienced over the past few

years, are clear signs that Nature is offering us about the dislocation that the planet is facing. In recent weeks we have experienced a heat wave, unprecedented in the history of our country, with the consequences it has on humans, other species and the environment.

Climate change is already expressed in evident transformations in the current climate that will intensify in the future. Available evidence shows that climate change manifests itself in increases in atmospheric and ocean temperatures, changes in rain precipitation patterns, decreasing ice and snow cover, rising sea levels and changes in extreme weather patterns.

Climate change is, from an economic perspective, a consequence of a global negative externality. That is, economic activities emit into the atmosphere, at no economic cost, a set of greenhouse gases that cause climate change. Therefore, the specific geographical location of these emissions is not relevant, and they are associated with the development model. Climate change entails a temporal paradox in that, as a long-term phenomenon whose effects will be even more intense in the second half of this century, it requires urgent action in the present in order to solve it.

Climate change is a global phenomenon but doubly asymmetric for Latin America. Latin America is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and, at the same time, its historical contribution to global emissions is relatively small, although it has been gradually increasing. The current model of development in Latin America does not represent sustainable development, as exemplified by consumption patterns, which have a direct impact on climate change. Climate change requires appropriate risk management, which will only be possible in the context of sustainable development. In this sense, this transformation of the development model requires the configuration of a new matrix of public and private goods and services and a more egalitarian society. Thus, adaptation and mitigation processes are more efficient in a more egalitarian society, with a better social protection network and where, for example, the public transport system predominates in urban mobility.

**Global events such as COP 27** (the UN-sponsored climate summit recently held in Egypt) are important initiatives of the international community, which nevertheless have very low expectations, due to the indifferent and even irresponsible attitude of many countries. These events bring together leaders and scientists from all over the planet, where, by the way, due to its colonial political status, Puerto Rico is absent, although we are equally earthlings.

Available evidence shows that various climate manifestations already exist and that the mitigation commitments made by countries at the United Nations are still insufficient to achieve climate stabilisation. Adaptation to climate change includes any deliberate adjustment in response to new climate conditions, both actual and expected, and may include social, cultural, administrative and process changes, behavioural modifications, construction of new infrastructure or use of technologies, and public policy transformations, in order to buffer or take advantage of new climate conditions.

In our Caribbean region, Cuba has strengthened its policies to address climate change. It has adopted a 100-year plan, "Tarea Vida", to address it. A plan that combines the assumption of science in law, natural and national solutions, and community participation. Because of the difficulty of accessing international sources of funding, Cuba has resorted to national solutions that may be relevant to the rest of the Caribbean and other countries, especially with the indebtedness that many face. In the Dominican Republic, the "National Council for Climate Change and Clean Development Mechanism" was created in 2008, which aims to formulate public policies and strategies necessary to prevent and mitigate greenhouse gases and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, ensuring that public entities and key actors in Dominican civil society achieve a high degree of information, awareness, education on its causes and consequences, as well as a commitment to mitigate the phenomenon.

And in my country, Puerto Rico, Act 33 of 2019, known as the Puerto Rico "Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience Act", was adopted. The law created a Committee of Experts whose functions and duties are aimed at instituting and promoting the development of a public policy, with quantifiable metrics, establishing coordination and integration of different sectors, in the development of a strategy against the effects of climate change. However, the absence of real powers in the colonial government does not allow its full implementation, the interests that move our capitalist system, directly dependent and subject to the U.S., cause the policies that are adopted to respond to interests contrary to the collective welfare. The environmentalists of the country have asked the government for a moratorium on construction in coastal areas and areas of agricultural interest, in areas with legal protection: the responses have been a greater relaxation in the permitting processes and a faster processing of authorisations, without the need for the preparation of environmental impact studies.

We are called upon **to adapt** to this grave situation, as if it were in fact **inevitable**, as if it had no solution. We are proposed to apply **resilience**, which is nothing other than conformity and resignation, accommodation with what, deep down, we are told we will not be able to transform. Of course, we need to take diverse and urgent measures to deal with the immediate consequences of global warming/climate change. But not because we are resigned to this dreadful reality. Our great objective must be the organised and constant struggle to impose new political, economic, social, and cultural paradigms that will make the threat to life on the planet and to humanity disappear forever.

We must denounce the discourse of the neoliberal currents that permeate the narratives of many governments in relation to climate change, seeking to impose solutions from developed countries on the rest of the world, without taking into consideration the problems of developing countries or small nations, especially in the Caribbean and the Pacific, which are already facing the serious consequences of climate change. We must combat policies that run counter to real solutions, policies that promote and perpetuate environmental injustices. We must combat the arms policies of capitalism that provoke



the wars, that also have an impact on the decisions that are made in relation to climate change.

Few initiatives can be more **patriotic and humanistic** in our times than the fight against global warming/climate change. The threat, which is already becoming a reality, of the destruction of the planet due to the petty and selfish interests of a few, is something that concerns us all. It is not possible to wait or put it off until later. Every second that passes, our planetary home takes a blow. This is not a cataclysmic vision. It is the reality.

We must insist that a harmonious and respectful relationship prevails between humans and the rest of Nature. This is where the life of planet Earth and the life of entire humanity is at stake. Thank you.

### **Iñigo Martínez Zatón, Member of the Basque Parliament (Ezker Anitza).**

Good afternoon, it is a pleasure to be here, and although it is impossible not to return to some of the ideas that our colleague has so brilliantly espoused, I will try to avoid repetitions.

We believe and affirm that this system in which we live has declared war on life, with this climate chaos, with scarcity linked to goods that are finite, with a violation of social protection (a social protection that, asymmetrically, affects according to class, age, gender and origin). At the same time, we live a situation of extreme degradation including serious attacks on democracy, through cuts in social and economic rights that were hard fought for by previous generations. We have wars, we have forced migrations, both internal and international, extractivism and expulsion. And all this has led us to have and to live a profound crisis of values, of democracy, justice, and peace, and a very important breakdown of humanism, which the ultra-right itself, a denier (in this case of climate change as well as of other scientific evidence), explicitly defends through authoritarian, misogynist, racist and violent solutions (to climate change). This can lead to a certain social despair, and I will try to talk about it.

The year 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of a report "Limits to Growth" by Professor Donella Meadows, a report that warned, 51 years ago, on the serious ecological consequences that industrial capitalism, fossil capitalism, would have if there was no change in the production system. And she warned that if urgent measures were not taken, industrial society would collapse by the middle of the 21st century.

We cannot say that nothing has been done in the last 50 years, and especially in the last 30 years, but it is totally insufficient. Insufficient because the sustainable development of this "green" capitalism has not substantially curbed emissions and, above all, a totally unequal and irrational model of consumption. The conflict between capital and life, as I said at the beginning, is becoming increasingly crude. Green capitalism, if it continues to be based, just like fossil capitalism, on extractivism and the

extraction of materials from developing communities so that already developed societies can continue to develop, does not seem to be the solution. But despite all this, as I said, we believe that there are societies, both in the global north and the global south, that have enough knowledge, enough goods and resources to be able to change and turn this around. Responsibilities for this are clearly not shared equally, neither at the global level, nor at the level of states, nor within societies. The extractivist model, promoted by the global north, counts for approximately 50% of greenhouse gas emissions, and more than 90% of the loss of biodiversity on the planet. This is according to IPCC data. If we look at resource use in terms of per capita income, we see that North America, mainly because of the United States, is clearly at the top of this consumption, with 30 tonnes per person in 2019. This is 1.5 times higher than consumption in Europe, and up to 7 times higher than in Africa. And to give an example that concerns me, if the whole world had the consumption system of the Spanish State, we would need between 2.5 and 3 planets to support this consumption model and, clearly, this indicates that it is totally unsustainable.

The global North has been responsible for 92% of cumulative carbon dioxide emissions since 1850. The United States alone is responsible for 40% of these emissions, while the countries that currently make up the European Union are responsible for 29%. In other words, we could say that this "Atlanticist" axis, this axis of NATO, the USA, and the EU, has been responsible for 69% of emissions since 1850. And, at the class level, we can talk about a proposal that a British economist, Kate Raworth, calls the "doughnut economy", which is that we must guarantee a social floor to ensure decent lives for all people, but that this social floor must be within the ecological ceiling, that is, within the limits of the planet. That safe and just space for humanity is what we should work for.

And most complicated of all, logically, is the lack of political will and majorities to take decisions that are adequate for the moment we are going through. This is the main problem we have now: we have an asymmetry in terms of our capacity for transformation. But this may be reversed, if we continue with these proposals that are on the table. With the Paris Agreement's proposal that by the end of the century the temperature of the planet should not rise by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Whilst the IPCC, the United Nations panel of experts, already warning in 2021 that if more drastic measures were not taken, the rise would be more than 2.7 degrees.

Therefore, and I am finishing with this, our socio-political goal necessarily involves a de-escalation of the material dimension of the economy, to the point of placing it within the limits of the planet. And this does not mean that everyone, as I said before, must tighten their belts. There are people, the northern societies, who will have to tighten their belts urgently, the multinationals and the powerful and rich. But other people must, logically, have better lives. Because this growth, this lowering of the material dimension of the economy, is going to happen. And the choice is: whether we plan it, all of us, or someone else plans it for us. And the authoritarian and eco-fascist way out is logically what we must fight against.

To sum up: a proposal to change the economic model, consumption aimed at satisfying human needs (as I said, not everyone has to tighten their belts), what must decrease a lot is the global use of finite goods, a general reorientation of production towards activities that have a lower intensity and lower ecological impact and that also satisfy human needs. And here, another wedge: the ecological transition must be socially just and just for the working class, but it also has to be feminist. And this ecological transition must include the debate and solutions to the care activities crisis and the use of time. That is why we think it is necessary to protect public services, an issue that was mentioned in the first speech. A clear example is public transport, but education and health are fundamental. Our colleagues from Uruguay also spoke to us about the water crisis they are suffering now. And we need, of course, a new human security. This forum has worked a lot on proposals for peace. Human security is not tanks or armies: it is peace, dialogue and, above all, equality. It means putting an end to the greatest war we have at present, the system's war against impoverished people.

And I do want to end with this sentence: many times, at least in Europe, we are often accused of being apocalyptic, that we are scolding people, that we are accusing someone else of something or other. It is true that the outlook is sometimes discouraging, but we must be pedagogical and call for hope. It is not a question of blaming people, but of assuming the collective responsibility we have as a society to transform it. As Yayo Herrero said (who I have already quoted her a lot and highly recommend you read her), guilt is sad and paralysing and generates anxiety, both individual and social. Responsibility, especially if it is collective, is strength, power, and the capacity to act, that is, social empowerment. Therefore, with this dialogue I hope that we come out stronger, with new proposals to fight against this eco-social crisis, and that the way out is decided by all of us and not decided for us.

Thank you very much.

## **SECOND PANEL**

### **The Migration Phenomenon: Proposals from the Left**

#### **Moderator: Jorge Drkos, Frente Transversal, Argentina**

Welcome to the panel "The migration phenomenon: proposals from the left". We have the presence of Cyril Benoit, from the International Department of the French Communist Party, and comrade Aída García Naranjo, from the Socialist Party of Peru, who has been a legislator and ambassador of her country in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

So, we are going to ask on this occasion, as in the previous panel and respecting the similarity and balance in the composition of the speakers at the table, comrade Cyril Benoit to begin his presentation, so that comrade Aida can conclude.

**Cyril Benoit, member of the IR Commission of the French Communist Party.**

Good afternoon, thank you for the space. I will start by clarifying that, as there is in the brochure, MEP Manu Pineda was down to speak. As you will notice, I am not Pineda, but I will try to stand in for him briefly. And I also clarify that I am not the secretary for international relations, but I am part of the secretariat.

This issue, as you know, is very important in the world today, but especially - among other regions - in Europe. Although migration is a human phenomenon as old as mankind itself, in recent years it has become one of the central themes of public debate in the European Union. It arises mainly through tragedies and polemics. Today, the anti-migrant discourse is one of the central axes of the extreme right, one of its main driving forces, but it is also conquering other sectors, from the "liberal" right to the centre, and sectors on the left. We might think of the situation in Denmark, for example, with social-democracy implementing harsh policies against migrants. But it also goes to other sectors of the electorate. The anti-migrant discourse has permeated many sectors of society. For example, in France, which is the case I know best, today almost 50% of left-wing sympathisers say that there are too many immigrants in the country, a jump of 21% in five years.

So, it is a discourse that is already very developed, and that can also generate some discomfort within the left and left parties themselves, because it has become a bit like "common sense", but also because there is this concern not to play into the hands of the right by going into their field. I think President Lula 's comments a couple of days ago in his speech to the Forum, that the left has lost its hegemony on migration issues was correct. However, this does not mean that we have abandoned our battle flags on this issue, nor have we given up on having alternative proposals, based on respect for human rights, human dignity, and the interests of workers and peoples.

Before I start, I want to give some figures, just to situate the debate. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees identifies 108.4 million forcibly displaced people in the world, including 62.5 million internally displaced persons and 29.4 million refugees. Among the non-Palestinian refugees (they are considered as a separate category), in the international figures the main host countries are Turkey, Iran, Colombia, Germany and Pakistan. In other words, Europe is not the first region to receive refugees, and most of the forced movements are between countries in the South. And I think this is important, because there is a lot of talk of submersion, of invasion, but if we look at the figures, the reality is different.

For the left, I identify three urgent needs that we must respond to.

The first is to denounce the European Union's migration policy and to act for a policy of humane reception and solidarity. The (real) sharp increase in the number of people seeking refuge on the continent, especially since 2014/2015, has led to policies of the authorities of the Union and the vast majority of states to try to build a "Fortress Europe", by militarising the borders of the continent, or of the EU at least. This has led to migrants taking increasingly dangerous routes, especially across the Mediterranean (but also to some extent the Atlantic), from Turkey, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, following the construction of more than a thousand kilometres of walls on the EU mainland, particularly in the Balkans.

The sea route is much more dangerous and since 2014 there have been an estimated 27,000 deaths trying to cross the sea to reach Europe. That's 2,500 people in 2022 alone... which are shocking figures. And this mass death has become banal for many, despite the occasional hypocritical whining of the European authorities when a catastrophe happens that cannot be hidden, such as the shipwreck of a boat with more than 700 people a couple of weeks ago, near Greece. Even though Frontex planes (the European agency) identified the ship, they did nothing, and today there are hundreds more dead. We should also remember the repression of migrants who tried to cross the border into the Spanish enclave of Melilla, in Moroccan territory, which caused the death of 23 people a couple of years ago.

Another mechanism that has been implemented and has led to many human rights violations are the agreements with third countries. That is, with non-European countries, for them to manage or block migrant flows, which has resulted in violations, the most repugnant of which has been the enslavement of thousands of black Africans in Libyan militias. This, apart from these violations, has led to the submission of European governments to the interests of autocratic governments, such as Turkey, but also Morocco. And this blackmail on migrations has resulted, for example, in the change of position of the Spanish government on the self-determination of Western Sahara. So, we are also seeing results at the political level.

This situation will not about to improve if we continue like this. Moreover, it may get worse with the "Migration and Asylum pact" that has been being drafted and negotiated by the European Commission and member states since 2020 and which they want to conclude next year. This pact would further lower the standards for the protection of migrants, by establishing accelerated procedures that reduce the guarantees for the processing of asylum claims and facilitate expulsion to third countries, which often are not even the countries where the migrants come from.

Another aspect of this pact is that it would legalise the refusal of some of the most reactionary countries in the EU, including Hungary and Poland, to take in a single migrant. Migrants who are not white, because for Ukrainians there are not many obstacles (and that's fine), we appreciate that they have taken in people who fled their country. But when they come from Africa or Asia, the borders are totally closed. And well, they could refuse to take in anyone just by paying 20,000 euros per person and avoid their responsibilities.

We, on the left, believe that this policy has already failed. Although we live in a period of history where mobility has never been so easy, nor so highly valued as a personal trajectory, at the same time it is when borders are closing the most. But it is illusory to build walls to stop a historical phenomenon. And it only generates death and violations of fundamental rights and favours the companies that build the walls, the cameras, the drones, as well as organised crime. That is why we are advocating a break with the current policy, i.e. militarisation of borders, etc., to instead open legal and safe pathways for people who want to live in Europe, whatever the reason, forced or voluntary. And to guarantee procedures for asylum seekers, so that each person's situation is studied individually and not in groups, that the right of appeal and subsidiary protection is guaranteed.

This update, this change in procedure, goes hand in hand with a necessary solidarity between European countries, because today the **“Dublin regulation”**, which establishes that the first country where the asylum application arrives is responsible for taking on the entire procedure, resulting in "the burden", being poorly shared between countries. Countries such as Spain, Italy, Malta, Greece, which are already facing difficult situations, have had to assume a disproportionate load, in addition to the local communities, in Lampedusa, in Lesbos, which have already been hit. So, it is important to work so that everyone plays their part.

To conclude this part, another demand we have is **to put an end to the criminalization of solidarity** whereby individuals or organisations that help rescue people at sea, and provide humanitarian aid to migrants, are criminalised and assimilated to human traffickers. We believe that it is urgent to put an end to this policy.

The second urgency, but I will be briefer because we have discussed it a lot, is to act on the causes of forced migration, building a fairer and more peaceful world. We affirm that international mobility must be a right, but also that it is a right to be able to live in one's own country without having to flee because of poverty, climate change, war, oppression, etc. So, I see three main axes here.

The first is **co-development**, which breaks with the logic of capitalist/imperialist domination in the world, in which the European Union is embedded. This means, for example, moving towards new trade treaties that do not act for the benefit of the profits of big capitalist companies, but that establish fair mechanisms and support for the industrial and food sovereignty of the countries. Strengthen multilateralism and put an end to the clubs of countries, of great powers such as the G7, and work within the framework of the UN. We need monetary sovereignty, for example putting an end to the CFA Eco Franc, which impedes the economic sovereignty of West Africa. We also need a conference on debt, so that it ceases to be a mechanism for the subjugation of peoples and for speculation by the big financial groups.

The second axis is the **application of international law** without double standards, applying the UN resolutions in all their aspects, starting for example with Palestine and Western Sahara, but also the cessation of illegal armed aggressions.

Today we are seeing that most of the refugees come from three countries, which are Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, three countries at war, and we know the responsibility of the imperialist countries in these wars. Not to mention, for example, the aggression against Libya, which destroyed the country, which destabilised the whole Sahel region, and which today is giving rise to these violations that I spoke about earlier. So, it obviously means ending the alignment with the United States and NATO, which are the main perpetrators of these wars, and working for peace-building mechanisms in the world and in Europe, especially today, about the conflict in Ukraine.

I also wanted to mention another urgency, which for me is very urgent given the situation in France now, which you may have seen, which is to **fight against racism** and for open societies. Because migration is not just about migrants passing through and going elsewhere. There are migrants who settle in a country, who build their lives there, have their children, and become part of society, in Europe and in other countries of the world. Today the dominant discourse presents these migrants as a threat to security and even to European "identity". This is nothing new, but the rise in hate speech, and concepts that were once marginal to sectors of the extreme right are gaining ground and have become banal in the public debate. I don't know how to translate it well, but for example the concept of "great population change", which is a conspiracy theory that assumes that there is a plot to replace the European population with Africans orchestrated by unknown forces, but real.

Or the concept of "**de-civilisation**", saying that the arrival of migrants leads to a return to a primitive state of society. Which is a revival of the concept of the "clash of civilisations", but applying it to European societies themselves, saying that there are sectors of the population that because of their skin colour, or their religion, or their culture, will never be part of the nation, even if they were born here and their children were born here, but that their presence is incompatible with European existence.

So, I believe that we have to defend an open and political conception of the nation, i.e. a community of destiny where everyone fits in, and not as an ethnic or religious entity, which is exclusionary. This also means openly affirming the decisive role played by immigrants in our societies, which is not often heard in the European debate. This became clear during the pandemic, when we saw that among the "frontline workers", as they were called, many were migrants, nurses, care workers, labourers, waste collectors, all those professions that are the worst paid, the least valued, but essential to social functioning.

I think this is important, linked to equal rights in all aspects. Wages, political rights, housing, education, health... because in this way we are fighting against the policy of division and confrontation between workers that is promoted by the extreme right, but which is also promoted by many political sectors in our countries. It is by extending rights that we will fight against the over-exploitation of these immigrant workers and aim for workers' unity. There is an example. In France, in the last 30 years, there have been 22 laws on immigration, and these laws always come when the government wants to create a diversion. Recently there was a very big mobilisation against the pension

reform, and as soon as it weakened, the government came in with the issue of migration. So, it is clear what the goal is.

I conclude by highlighting the role of the **anti-racist struggle**, which goes beyond migrants, but goes towards the people of our country who were born there. They are accepted when they score goals in the World Cup, but when they just want to live, to work, they are rejected and denied their participation in the nation. This generates great violence for entire sectors of our countries, with urban relegation, schooling, discrimination in employment, etc., the relationship with the police, and it is generating very deep fractures in our society, and this is what we are seeing today in France. I see that also in Belgium this frustration and this violence produced by these fractures is spreading a bit.

And so, it is a call to confront our colonial past and it is a democratic and social challenge. The future of the continent will depend on how we resolve this challenge.

Thank you.

### **Aída García-Naranjo. Socialist Party of Peru**

Thanks to you. Good afternoon, everyone. It's a pleasure to be at this panel, and the first thing I want to express is my appreciation and greetings to the Sao Paulo Forum, and to Mónica Valente, its Executive Secretary. But not as a formal act, as we have all done this morning in each session, but because it is the first time that in the Sao Paulo Forum (my party, the Socialist Party of Peru was the founder of the Sao Paulo Forum, 33 years ago) we have climate change and migration policies at the center of the debate. It is without a doubt an advance and a success, together with the set of elements that were advanced yesterday regarding regional integration.

The issue of migration also has to do with regional integration. It is a dynamic that we must incorporate into the regional integration process, when we have talked about the social subject of integration, that is, people. I want to propose that this reflection should have the following as its objective:

In the first place, to have a common reading of the migratory problem.

And secondly, to have an articulated strategy on how to face it, how to approach it.

This is the orientation which I want to give to this presentation, making a kind of introduction to this general framework of migration policy, so that we have precisely that **shared common vision**. And then, in this common articulated strategy, we cannot leave the current context. That's the reason why the Sao Paulo Forum will be present in Brussels, in the Latin America/European Union discussion, with neither more, nor less than 33 nations of America and 27 European nations. It is a fundamental moment, and it is a moment in which the issue is positioned, in the meetings of civil society, youth, organizations, and social movements, as well as in the states and in the "People's Summit" (on which comrade Alejandro Rusconi will report later), we are part of the



political commission of the "Summit of the peoples" with all the political and social articulations. With that premise, I want to say the following.

In the introduction presented to us today, it was said that 72 years have passed since the preparation of the Convention on the Statute of refugees in 1951. But since we want to provide a legal framework, and a quantitative and qualitative framework for migration, we must say that migration policy in the world has a universal character. It does not refer merely to the refugee status of 1951. Rather, it refers to the **new world pact for orderly, legal and safe migration**. That is the global framework that governs migration today and was **approved in Marrakesh in December 2018**. And this is the regulatory framework today. And I say that we must take this world pact into account, because it is the one that governs us. In other words, Bolsonaro withdrew from it, and Lula immediately joined the Global Migration Pact. Our countries are signatories to that pact, both those of the Latin American countries that are going to the summit, and the European countries that are attending the summit.

Therefore, we have a regulatory framework. And, although it is true, we Latin Americans know that many times there are treaties that are ink on paper, that many times there is indeed a long way between what is said and what is done, the reality is that the law and the universal declarations have a symbolic weight. A regulatory framework that must effectively be enforceable from our countries, from our states and, above all, from the migrant population.

The second thing I want to say is that the migrant population in the world is close to 300 million people who migrate. Therefore, one could say that it is a population that could be assimilated by almost 200 nations that the world has. What happens is that this percentage, which exceeds 2.5, that could be absorbed, is not dispersed in 200 nations, but is concentrated in **5 large migration corridors**. 3 towards the European-Asian side and 2 towards the Latin American side. I am going to put a little more emphasis on the issue of Latin America, being part of that continent of ours.

The comrade from France said well, indeed, that it is not that Europe has to be concerned or that the 300 million migrants are there, because that is not the reality. However, we are in a critical situation, where the Mediterranean has become a tomb for migrants. It is something that cannot continue to be allowed and we must be clear about that.

And it is not that they have gone to Europe, indeed this migrant population is located in the five migratory corridors. The United States is the first destination for migrants in the world. We are not talking about another continent. We are talking about the United States as the first migratory destination here, in America. The second, in Europe, is Germany. And the third is Saudi Arabia. Those are the migratory destinations that this population has.

In the case of South America, currently we have **Argentina and Brazil as the main migratory destinations**. And it is important to take this into account for the Forum,

insofar as the significant weight that our southern countries also have, that they are a migratory destination. And Sao Paulo, as a city, is currently going through a migratory crisis. There is a crisis in one of the important towns, where officials from here who deal with migration issues have had to move, specifically, to deal with this problem in the Brazilian case, the destination of the main migrants from the south.

Then, we effectively have the main **countries of origin**. In the case of Latin America, Venezuela is the main country of origin. Here it is important to point out one thing as Peruvian. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, president elected in 2016, had a strategy to create the Lima Group, and to become an attraction for the Venezuelan migrants, to confront the Venezuelan government. And indeed, in the Peruvian case, the presence of 1.5 million Venezuelan migrants has been generated. But these Venezuelan migrants moved to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and of course Pedro Pablo Kuczynski organized the activity of the Lima Group to effectively confront Venezuelan politics and generate, from outside, an anti-Venezuelan mobilization based on the migratory social base that had displaced and that had Guaidó, as the head of that representation.

Let us remember that, in the Peruvian case, we have had ambassadors from Guaidó, recognized by Kuczynski. Ambassadors that were receiving at Starbucks, at Starbucks coffee. Because indeed Venezuela did not leave the properties it had in terms of its consulate, its embassy, its residence. A Venezuelan migrant earns 1/3 of the Peruvian, and therefore, although it is true that Peru had a "cheap cholo" as they say, today we have a Venezuelan much cheaper than the Peruvian. In other words, the objectives were political, and they were for the economically active, working population, at the service of the business sector, with extremely cheap costs for production in Peru. That effectively generates problems in Peru.

So, we go south. Today we are going to Brazil, Argentina, as main destinations, and Chile as a third destination. In other words, in South America alone, which would be the base of Unasur (because it was very important to define what Unasur is), we have more than 11 million new migrants. And our states have neither the budgets to serve them, nor even less the characteristics of the policy, that is, the rules, regulations, and trained personnel. What's more: immigration policy is overseen by the interior ministry, it is not handled by the foreign affairs ministries, treating the migrants as criminals. And therefore, militarizing borders. Closing borders. Criminalizing migrants. And expelled migrants, as we have just seen with the migrants expelled from Chile last month, generating a great crisis. So, this change in the migratory pattern has occurred, and this issue must be tackled.

To finish, as all the politicians have said, in the morning, yesterday, every day, as a team that has met to deal with migration, we are presenting 20 points to the European Union. For reasons of time, I am not going to raise the 20 points, but only some of them.

The first is the following. Almost a quarter of a century after the so-called **Europe-America bi-regional Strategic Association** began, between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, we can see that in this period Latin America and the

Caribbean has not been a region prioritized by Europe, nor by the foreign policy of the European Union. Despite the good intentions already included in the declarations of the process of the previous summits of heads of state of the European Union and Latin America: Rio de Janeiro in 1999, Madrid in 2002, Guadalajara in 2004, Vienna in 2006, Lima in 2008, Madrid in 2010. These bilateral meetings came to a standstill, we are resuming them, but we must know that this association of political dialogue, economic relations and development cooperation has not substantially modified the asymmetrical nature of these relations.

The next thing I want to say is that **Free Trade Agreements** in general, and by the EU in particular, have not produced the positive impacts announced in government and corporate discourses on employment and well-being for the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regarding the autonomy of the peoples, indeed the 2030 agenda is important. We must continue with the political and financial cooperation of the two regions, and, within the framework of multilateral processes, we must guarantee the effective enjoyment of human rights and the fight against climate change. We need to approve migration policies in a comprehensive and concerted manner among the countries. We must establish fiscal and tax policies and public spending really aimed at achieving fiscal justice.

And finally, we must support the creation of legally binding instruments on transnational corporations and businesses in relation to human rights. We must know that the global migration pact of which we have spoken, although it is true that it is signed by our countries, by those of us who attended the EU-CELAC summit, is not binding. Therefore, we must advance to national, local, and territorial regulations that effectively guarantee **rights to migrate for all and migrate with rights**. Thank you so much.

**Moderation: Jorge Drkos, Transversal Front (Argentina).**

Many thanks to Cyril, and Aida. Let's see if there are any questions or comments.

## **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

1. I think that some revision should be made about the figures of remittances in Central America. In the case of El Salvador, for example, I understand that up to 18% of the budget comes from remittances. [Corrected by the public: 30%]. 30%! There are more than 40 million Latin Americans, Caribbeans, in the US. A call to strengthen the initiative that the Sao Paulo Forum has generated for years in this immense population, that is even greater in number than the Afro-descendant, Afro-American population.

With a growing political, economic, and social influence. We have an enormous responsibility as the Sao Paulo Forum.

And third, in the particular case of Puerto Rico, due to its status as a colony, we usually do not appear in these statistics. We are US citizens, we are not officially emigrants, we are migrants, and what happens? That then they are not counted. The reality as it is. There are more than 5 million Puerto Ricans living in the United States, a figure that is higher than the number of Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico, which has 3.2 million inhabitants. In other words, the situation of economic and social crisis, the collapse of the colonial model of the Commonwealth, has led to one of the great options for the Puerto Rican population being to emigrate to the United States. And I warn you and I assure you, as I was saying this morning to the Mexican comrades, this passport, the citizenship status, can be used so that when you cross the airport gate you do not have to go through customs. But once you enter the United States as a Puerto Rican, you are another Mexican, in the words of Donald Trump. You are another Latin American and Caribbean who faces and suffers the same circumstances. In such a way that I would like to incorporate into our conscience the fact that there are more than 5 million Puerto Rican compatriots in the United States, as a consequence of the crisis of the colonial model, which by the way turns 125 on July 25, the date on which we were invaded militarily by the US. Thank you so much.

2. Very important all the figures that the comrades handled, the proposals about the environment, what was there at the beginning. But a question that we would have to propose for a later answer and perhaps as a work item for next year: a statement made by our beloved Mocha (Aida) kept me bouncing.

There are 54 nations in Africa, she said, that have migration problems. Or they have problems that their citizens go elsewhere. Those from Afghanistan, those from Syria, the war, everything we know about what is happening there, what caused the migration. Isn't it time that we start to think about what are the causes that generate these problems in the countries of origin? That we begin with the European Left to analyze, from the part that corresponds to the Europeans and the developed world, the actions that cause in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America, in all places, that cause massive migrations to take place in the world today? Because if not, we are going to continue doing analysis, of numbers, of figures, of everything, which is very good, what she says is very correct. But what happened in Venezuela, it must be said that it was an act of war, in this case an economic war, against a sovereign nation, which caused what it provoked. And the same is happening in Africa.

What role have the central European States played in the hollowing out of the African States caused by the thousands of migrants there? Because they complain when they cross the Melilla border and what Mocha was saying, but we ourselves have not been able to make an in-depth analysis of that and start denouncing that this is happening, because there is a whole interference of the developed world in our countries that causes this situation.

3. In the United States they treat us as living dead, and that has not been considered. As migrants we are in the slavery of the 21st century. Where you have no rights to anything. Where there have been migrants for almost 40 years (and I agree, mentioning what the comrade says), we should all have the right to migrate and migrate with rights. However, that does not happen, and we must denounce it now.

Our rights are being violated in the US, not only those of almost 40 million Mexicans, as the largest minority, but Latin America and the Caribbean are also in the United States, and they are enslaving them and violating their rights. The question is: could we make a pronouncement? Because today the caravan of support for Florida arrived from San Diego, and which several comrades organized. I preferred to come here because it is important. Make a complaint and raise your voice, as the comrade says, about the fact that the rights of human beings who have migrated are being violated. Because it really is a law, the SB1718 law, which criminalizes not only migrants who are working. But also, those who provide shelter, food, transportation, whatever. It is an inhumane law. It is simply the violation of basic human rights. Because there is no power to say "the right to migrate and migrate with rights." So, is it possible, as Sao Paulo Forum, to make a pronouncement, or raise our voice, make a complaint? Not only with what is happening right now, but with what the comrade says, people die there, and nothing happens because they are migrants.

**Moderation: Jorge Drkos, Frente Transversal, Argentina**

We appreciate the participation of those present and we give way to the next panel, to speak and explain the next meeting between the European Union and CELAC that will take place in Europe and the parallel "Peoples' Summit".

**THIRD PANEL**

**On the EU/CELAC People's Summit, Brussels.**

**Maite Mola - head of I.R. of the Party of the European Left.**

We have been working on the social summit for almost four months now, with some problems as you can imagine. Organizing an activity in July in Brussels is completely absurd. Also, the president of the government of my country did it on purpose, because he didn't want to do it in Spain. Because if he had done it in Spain, well, with the number of people there, with the language, etc., everything would have been easier. But in July, in Belgium there is no one. July is the month of vacation that Belgians take. Therefore, this was done on purpose to lower the level of the People's Summit.

Well, the work of the Sao Paulo Forum is essential at this summit, because there are migrant organizations in Belgium, France, Spain, Luxembourg, etc., that are doing a good job. But the real political weight lies with the Sao Paulo Forum. That is why the presence of Alejandro Rusconi, in this case appointed by the Forum, is so important, because the Forum is, let's say, the entity that has the greatest capacity to unite all of us here.

The Party of the European Left is going to have a low profile, because we believe that it is a social summit of peoples, and above all we want to promote the whole trade union issue, the issue of movements, etc.

There is going to be a very important event in the European Parliament where we hope that a president (as far as I know there is a progressive female president in Honduras) can participate. Therefore, I repeat, the Sao Paulo Forum is the one with the greatest capacity. And also, in conclusion, we thank the Belgian Labor Party, which is doing an extraordinary job. Thank INTAL. Thank the youth organizations for the excellent work they are doing and in quite difficult conditions. Nothing else. Thank you.

### **Alejandro Rusconi, International Secretary of the Movimiento Evita (Argentina)**

Thanks. Well, as a first step, I would like to thank Mónica Valente for appointing us to work with this team. And when I use the plural, it is because comrade Aída García Naranjo (Mocha) was also accompanying us, who just took the floor, comrade Juan Carlos Frometa, and the role that the embassies of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela also played, important for the link with the civil society of the countries that make up the Sao Paulo Forum.

And they have been, to date, difficult discussions, because we have a war and there are different positions. What we have resolved is that we were not going to discuss those issues on which we did not agree, based on unity in maximum diversity, as we say at the Sao Paulo Forum. So, I also want to thank the Belgian Labor Party, and well, also the role of the comrades, I extend it to the European Left Party, the Spanish Communist Party as well, José Luis, Maite and all the comrades with whom we have been working.

I am going to summarize how this summit has taken place, in this current context of global transformation, of overlapping crises, of progressive recovery from the post-pandemic.

The relationship between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean has the potential to promote sustainable development and human rights. For this, we believe that civil society must be involved as a fundamental actor, in order to promote inclusion, transparency and the effectiveness of the processes. And, from this continent, we transfer there the inputs of what was the social CELAC. We also want to deliver the

statements, as we did in Buenos Aires in January of this year, to the pro-tempore president of the European Union and to the pro-tempore president of CELAC.

We say in our document that after a relative silence on the bi-regional agenda, it had been agreed to renew the strategy of the EU and CELAC summit (to be held on July 17 and 18 in Brussels). It has been published that this June 17, a joint commission will be working on a new agenda for relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, on what are the priorities and actions of the European Union in key areas. And for the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean are a very important outlet in terms of investment, trade, and collaboration in crucial areas such as biodiversity, renewable energy, agricultural production, the defense of multilateralism and strategic raw materials. For this reason, an agenda has been set with 6 priorities, which are:

Intensify political dialogue, complement the network of trade agreements, cooperate on transitions (whether green, digital or social), address security and justice challenges, promote peace, democracy and human rights, and build people-focused partnership.

The European Union has launched its global strategy to boost investment and infrastructure worldwide and proposed a specific investment agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean to be adopted at the summit. And that Latin America becomes the testing ground for that agenda. However, a horizontal bi-regional governance structure, the commitment to demanding processes, due diligence, and a measure of its impact, in inequality of its project, and the participation of civil society around this initiative, are completely absent.

As if that was not enough, there has been a reduction in civic space in many of the countries in the regions, aggravated during the pandemic, with an unprecedented increase in attacks against activist organizations and human rights defenders, which has generated displacement, violence, impunity, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable people.

The new relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean offer an opportunity to prioritize an approach based on human rights, allowing the co-construction of protection and promotion mechanisms at the bi-regional level, a firm commitment to protect and expand civic space in all countries and reverse the political, administrative, and financial repression of social organizations and defenders of human rights, the environment and territory.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the gap between poverty and extreme wealth, together with the high rate of inflation, has increased in recent decades, generating multidimensional and intersectional inequalities. While most people live in vulnerability, billionaires have seen their wealth increase, post-pandemic, by 21%. It is crucial to address these inequalities, promoting social protection, comprehensive care systems, progressive taxation, decent work, resources for basic services, and a feminist bi-regional relationship. A green and just transition is essential to address the climate

emergency and organize societies and economies based on human rights and labor principles, considering planetary limits, and well-being for all. For example, promoting a transition towards an agroecological system and the cancellation of foreign debt. Predictable and adequate financing is needed to support and combat poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We say that the presence of civil society is important. But today it is conspicuous by its absence. Because in a global context of democratic regression, restriction of civic space, growing social protests and a crisis of citizen confidence in political and state institutions, the participation of an active, independent, and diverse civil society is crucial to protect human rights, promote pluralism, articulate the needs of citizens and contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies. The spaces for effective participation of civil society allow the incorporation of a plurality of social actors in the decision-making processes, not being restricted only to groups with power of influence.

Thus, increasing transparency and accountability and helping to reduce the democratic deficit. Civil society organizations promote peace, facilitate conflict resolution, encourage innovation, build social cohesion, and mobilize in favor of the most disadvantaged people.

The conclusions of the Council of the European Union on the commitment with civil society in foreign relations in 2017, recognize the multiple and varied functions of civil society, which perform as promoters of democracy and defenders of the rule of law, social justice, and human rights. It also underlines its importance for compliance with the global strategy of the EU 2030 agenda. However, in practice, effective mechanisms have not been established or implemented within the framework of EU/CELAC relations to comply with this responsibility and facilitate an enabling environment for the participation of civil society organizations.

And based on the historical contribution, the current relevance, and the legitimacy of the work of the civil society organizations and networks that make up the group of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean and other allied civil society organizations, we are working to organize around four specific issues, which are: civic space, democracy, inequalities, the green and just transition, and trade and investment agreements. And we propose priority and concrete recommendations for the renewal of relations. These issues are a priority, and we want to offer an alternative and critical vision, but one that is constructive to the logic of reasoning that governs relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean.

So, comrades, we urge you to participate as much as you can in Brussels. It is very difficult, Maite said so. It is made in Brussels, fleeing from Spain. It is also very difficult for the comrades from Spain because they have elections the following weekend. But we are going to try to contribute to the discussion, and as I told you before, trying to take that bi-regional unity beyond the diversity that we can find. Thanks a lot.



## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **Mónica Valente, Executive Secretary of the São Paulo Forum (FSP)**

Dear comrades, first I would like to thank everyone who is here participating in this eighth edition of the "Shared Visions" seminar between the Sao Paulo Forum and the European Left. And, to thank the comrades of the European Left Party and our comrades Drkos and Rusconi, who are also in the *Liaison Commission* that prepared this seminar of Shared Visions.

With this edition of today, we have been following this path of exchange of ideas for at least four years. But more than exchanging ideas, managing to prepare common understandings and prepare joint actions, because that is what helps us influence the issues that concern us, on this side of the Atlantic, and on the other as well. So, the only thing I would like to say is that, firstly, thank you all very much, we must continue on this path, and secondly, summon everyone to Brussels. It is very difficult, we know. But summon everyone who can, to participate in this event. Because it will coincide, if I'm not mistaken, with the summit of the presidents. And we have the news that President Lula is going to Brussels. So, we will be there, just as we were at the CELAC summit in Argentina in January in Buenos Aires, being it will also have a very strong strategic and symbolic importance.

Thank you very much to all. As you can perceive I am very tired. I started to speak Portuguese, I lost the words of the little Spanish I know, but you know that we, as the Sao Paulo Forum, Executive Secretariat and member parties, are very committed to this process of Shared Visions. Thank you so much.

### **Marco Consolo, Coordinator of the EL Latin America and Caribbean Working Group**

Good afternoon to all of you. I am glad, because this 8th seminar seems to me to be following a path of quality, and I want to really, sincerely congratulate the speakers, all the comrades who have made their presentations at this event.

As Mónica said, it is our eighth seminar and I believe that there is material to do much more. Maybe more frequently. Maybe virtually. For example, today the issue of integration came up, and I told many comrades that European integration must be studied so as not to repeat the same "mistakes", let's call them that. So that could be a content of the next seminar, which could be planned.

Naturally, I would like to thank the Sao Paulo Forum once again for its exquisite reception. Thanks to Mónica, and all the comrades from the Workers' Party, the Communist Party of Brazil, etc., who have been here actively working to make this a success.

It is very difficult to draw conclusions from a debate that has been very rich, very broad, I mean it sincerely. We should have more time. But I want to highlight a few points. You will excuse me for the schematic conclusions.

First, the issue of climate change, as a common problem, obviously, and not just one or two countries, or one continent, or another.

Secondly (and you'll excuse me, I tried to take notes), someone talked about fear of the future. I think comrade Baier, our president, was saying it. The fear of the future, which is also an element of the growth of the right, the growth of a-political, anti-politics, which perhaps we live on both continents.

Regarding the climate crisis, obviously the question of war is central, not only because of the dramatic damage in terms of human lives, destruction, etc., but also because of the effect on the environment, at a time when we are, really, on the threshold of a nuclear conflict. Perhaps in Europe we are very concerned, because we live a few kilometers from the conflict. But I believe that, if we go that way, there are no kilometers, there are no walls, there are no borders that matter. So, I make a call to strengthen the peace movement, which has to do with the climate issue, and naturally it has to do, as has been explained very well, with the issue of migration.

Many things have been said here. But the central thing seems to me that must be rescued is the need to change the development model and the fight against fossil capitalism, that's how comrade Iñigo defined it. Towards a sustainable development, but with public policies. Which is what has been lacking in many of our countries about climate change, global warming, etc. Obviously thinking on a reconversion of the productive model, energy reconversion, which cannot be at the expense of other countries.

I mention this because, for example, you may remember that the German Prime Minister recently came to Latin America with two main interests. First, to convince that the war effort had to be supported. Second, because they are interested in resources so that the European energy transition can be carried out with Latin American natural resources. So, I think it's another of the common issues that we must work on. We need public policies. Not only as governments, and here we had the example of Cuba and its mission "Tarea Vida", but also with citizen participation, from below, etc. Also changing consumption habits, not to tighten our belts, those of us who have always had them tight, but so that others can tighten their belts as well.

We must fight the **battle of ideas**. Yes indeed. As Comrade Fidel said, we continue in the battle of ideas towards a good life (*buen vivir*), towards a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, to face the eco-social crisis. I was left with the doubt, but we leave it for another time, about the "resilient community", of which one of the speakers spoke, due to the limits of the planet's resources, but perhaps that would be part of the deepening of the issues that we are tackling.

On the issue of migration, some myths have also been demolished here. That Europe was the center of migration, the issue of remittances, etc., etc. Here it has been said very clearly that armed conflicts, as well as environmental crises, are some of the causes of migration. And our governments and those of Latin America are facing this with a militarization of the borders, with walls and walls that are not going to work, because there are no walls that stop human transhumance. Recognizing the right of asylum, fighting against the logic of "Fortress Europe" that comrade Cyril was talking about, but attacking the causes of migration. I loved the "right to migrate and migrate with rights", which comrade Mocha said. Recognizing the right to asylum, she said, and attacking the causes of migration and forced migration. Towards co-development, towards more egalitarian, multilateral relations, attacking and canceling the historical debts that the "Paris Club" and the rich countries continue to cash.

There is a key element, it seems to me. Not only in Latin America, but also in Europe. It is the issue of the **growth of fascism** as a result of manipulating migration. Here what is called "ethnic substitution", the "plot" for ethnic substitution has been recalled. That it goes hand in hand with "identitarianism"; who knows what "identitarianism" is, because we are all very mixed, luckily. So, claiming identity versus the migrant, versus the alien, versus the other, is another of the elements that has allowed the fascist right to grow not only in Europe, but also in other countries. And it is obviously used in a manipulated and instrumental way.

The need for equal working conditions, equal conditions between migrant and non-migrant workers, has also been mentioned. And the need to fight against the conception of "war among the poor", which migration often unleashes, and the perverted use of the fascist right of the war among the poor.

There has been talk on remittances, the economic impact of remittances, I believe that these are important data that will have to be studied, and more work should be done. It seems very positive to me, I say it sincerely, that Latin America organizes its own migration conference, as proposed by President Petro, and I know that AMLO is working together with Petro on that. It would be nice if the whole region got on board. But I insist, it is not only a government effort, but also ours, as parties, as social organizations, as a trade union movement, etc.

And the need for concerted migration policies, binding regulations, as Mocha recalled, and I want to recall here as well, one of the elements that, especially in Latin America, has caused migration. Carlos remembered the looting of Africa, etc. I remember the so-called "sanctions" (more precisely "**unilateral coercive measures**"). The blockade. The "sanctions" against Venezuela are one of the main elements, it seems to me, of the Venezuelan migratory flow, for example. So, the fight against sanctions is also part of the immigration issue.

To close, because I'm making it long, I want to say two more things. One: today a Uruguayan comrade, Agustina, asked us: "how can we help you" ? Let me say it in a provocative way, I don't know if the times of solidarity are over, because solidarity is

always present, but it is time to continue working on a common agenda. On a common program between the left of the two continents, as we are trying to do. So, my word of encouragement to keep working on it.

And the other thing I want to say, and I'll end with this, is that sometimes we underestimate the contribution of our migrant comrades, even political contributions. I'm thinking about Italy, about the Communist Refoundation Party, my party, where we have Argentine, Ecuadorian, Peruvian, Chilean, Brazilian comrades (by the way, different comrades from the PT cell in Rome are Rifondazione militants). So, they are comrades with political experience, union experience, social experience, etc., who have contributed, in fact, to the development of our political forces and of the left in general. And that's not a detail. We highly value that.

And finally, I want to thank you for your patience and your presence. We are going to upload this seminar to the networks, to the Forum and the EL websites, so that comrades can disseminate and follow it.

Thank you and see you next time.

**Joint declaration Sao Paulo Forum-Party of the European Left**

<https://forodesaopaulo.org/declaracion-conjunta-entre-el-fsp-y-el-pie-esp-y-eng/>