

TRANSLATION

Dealing with nationalist tendencies

Draft political resolution

*submitted by the Working Group for the Preparation of the 2019 USF Congress
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The European project is under threat

The European Union has failed to respond adequately to two recent major challenges.

First of all, the crisis of financial capitalism, which exploded on the mortgage markets in the United States in 2008, destabilised the world economic system. In Europe, the banking crisis turned into a public debt crisis, with public funds used to sponge up private debts. The sole response the European Union managed to muster in order to stabilise Member States in difficulty was a shock treatment of brutal austerity. The bill has been footed by workers, public services, pensioners, young people suffering mass unemployment and, more generally, people dependent on social transfers.

Then came the migration crisis. Western aggression against Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya has ravaged those countries, causing millions of people to flee, some of whom have sought refuge in Europe. The European 'Dublin' system, which places the onus on Mediterranean Member States to receive those migration flows, has proved unfit for dealing with this kind of situation. And, with the notable exception of Sweden and Germany, the other Member States have refused to accept large numbers of refugees, blocking any attempt to distribute them in a spirit of solidarity. The direct result has been a rise in nationalist and xenophobic forces in most EU countries. They have taken power in Hungary, Poland, Italy, Belgium and Austria. In Germany, France, the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Slovakia, they have risen to dangerous levels. The United Kingdom has decided to leave the European Union.

Popular support for European integration has been shaken. If there is still a majority in favour, it is, at the very least, an extremely fragile one.

It is the weakness of progressive forces which is at the root of these crises. Shared solutions demonstrating solidarity and marking a step forward along the path of social progress were not granted so much as a hearing in the circles of power and popular media. Since the implosion of the Soviet system, socialist or social-democratic forces have failed to maintain any coherence or any objective, or any popular impact in terms of ideas. We are now witnessing the implosion of social-democratic forces almost everywhere in Europe.

The European civil service, in its broadest sense, which also includes other international public services in Europe, is vulnerable on two fronts: firstly, as a public service, it is under the same attacks as municipal, regional, national and hospital services: hate speech, budget

cuts, staff reductions, etc.. Secondly, 'Brussels bureaucrats' symbolise European integration - a target for nationalists. Attacking the European civil service serves populist ideas which are both anti-public service and anti-European.

Governments, even those which are still pro-European, have succumbed to such ideas, applying a policy of austerity to the European public service. The result: job cuts, an increase in weekly working hours to the detriment of work-life balance, blocked promotions, and job insecurity. This often goes hand in hand with an aggressive attitude on the part of management towards the unions, going as far as the dismissal of trade union activists (as in the EPO).

The European civil service is the backbone of European integration. Pro-European forces, be they trade unions, social-democrats, socialists, ecologists, and even enlightened liberals and conservatives, must recognise the fundamental role of the European civil service in European integration, and defend it against nationalists.

It is not only our jobs, and the quality of our jobs, that depend on it; the future of the entire continent does too.

The Union Syndicale Fédérale will seek to unite forces around this vision:

- by trying to overcome the splintering of the trade union forces at our workplaces, starting a new process to unify the trade unions, similar to the process which led to the creation of the Union Syndicale in the 1970s;
- by working hand in hand with the European trade union movement (EPSU, ETUC);
- by working at the European Movement towards a better understanding of the importance of the European civil service for European integration;
- by creating opportunities to bring pro-European political forces together to discuss and join forces, using our communication channels, symposiums, etc.