

OPENING SPEECH TO THE MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST INITIATIVE

Dear comrades,

We thank you very much for your presence here in Athens and that pleasure you have given us by honoring together the 100 years of the heroic struggle of the KKE.

We would like to note that yesterday marked two years since the death of Fidel Castro, leader of the Cuban Revolution. Comandante Fidel will live on in historical memory and in the collective consciousness of the peoples, of the oppressed all over the world, in the struggle for the abolition of exploitation of man by man, for the final victory, socialism – communism.

Dear comrades,

The formation of the “Initiative for the study, the elaboration of European issues and the coordination of action” in October of 2013 constituted a serious step for the unity and the struggle of the European communist movement. Through the positions that were formulated and the action that has been developed during these years, a response was given to the anti-popular measures of capital and the EU, to the dangerous imperialist plans of NATO and more generally Euro-Atlanticism; anti-communism was countered and it constituted a step in the struggle against opportunism that at the level of the EU is represented by the Party of the European Left.

As was made clear in the previous meeting of the Plenary of the Parties of the European Communist Initiative in Brussels last April, at this point it is necessary for the European Communist Initiative, following the guidelines of the Founding Proclamation, to develop bonds with other parties that concur with our founding principles, as to a great extent our struggle is a joint one and confronts the same enemies despite the geographical contexts.

Given this, we would like to welcome the CP Mexico, the Paraguayan CP, and the Socialist Movement of Kazakhstan to today's meeting of the European Communist Initiative in Athens and to thank them because their participation contributes to the effort to strengthen the cooperation of our parties so that we can measure up to the serious tasks that are facing us.

The experience of this period is important.

20 September: the Festival “100 Years KKE – 50 years KNE” took place with the participation of tens of thousands of working people and the presence of 40 communist and anti-imperialist youth organizations.

On the same day, the meeting of the Editorial Board of the “International Communist Review” on the preparation of the 9th issue took place, attended by other CP's as well.

23-25 November: the 20th International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties took place in Athens where the work of communists in the labor movement was discussed.

Today the European Communist Initiative is meeting in order to evaluate its

work and to enrich its programming but also to discuss with CP's from other continents in an effort to further strengthen the coordination of joint action.

The imperative task of a deeper study of the Marxist – Leninist worldview arises from our experience, along with the need for an intensification of revolutionary action, which are the basic tools communists have in the conflict with the ideological-political mechanisms of the system and opportunism that constitute a powerful erosive force which impedes the development of the class struggle.

Certainly steps in this area have been noted depending on the capabilities of every Communist Party.

However, estimating the developments objectively, we can all agree that the demands are much greater, and as a consequence the task of multiplying the efforts for the organizational – ideological and political strengthening of the parties of the 'European Communist Initiative', generally of the communist movement, is of central importance.

This goal must characterize our action over the next period so that communists can fulfill their vanguard role in their countries, to form stronger bonds with the working class in the workplaces, in branches of trade, to gain the confidence of the working people and to improve their capacity to rally and mobilize workers' popular forces.

This is made necessary by the serious developments facing us.

The bourgeois classes and the political parties that serve their interests loaded the capitalist crisis onto the backs of the workers, but now, under conditions of a weak upturn in the capitalist economy, the aggressiveness of capital is escalating along with the anti-popular policies.

The policies that keep salaries and pensions at low levels are continuing, the downgrading and commercialization of social services, the harsh taxation in the name of competitiveness and the profits of big enterprises, the repression directed towards workers' popular struggles, are all intensifying.

The capitalist staff are concerned; the weak development is precarious, it is passing through the dangerous roads of the sharpening of the intra-imperialist rivalries and competitions; conditions for a new capitalist crisis are being created, there is an increase in the war hot spots and a generalization of conflicts.

The policy of protectionism, the tariffs imposed by the USA against China on hundreds of billions of dollars of commodities and China's retaliation constitutes a commercial, economic war with the prospect of escalation.

The commercial war between the USA and the EU is underway and the EU/USA agreement for control of the situation is fragile; at any moment the competition can escalate even more where the USA reacts to the energy policies of the EU and the agreement with Russia for the supply of natural gas, particularly in regard to the Northern Stream pipeline agreement.

The decisions of the NATO Summit in Brussels last July included very

dangerous measures such as the creation of 30 joint military infantry units, 30 air force units and 40 naval units that can intervene within 30 days on all longitudes and latitudes. The decisions of the Summit are specialized at the NATO command posts and at the recent Summit of the NATO Ministries of Defense a plan was formulated to promote more military forces and resources on the border with Russia, upgrading of the relations of NATO with Georgia and Ukraine, a modernization of the nuclear arsenal based on the dogma of "first nuclear strike". The American-NATO bases are spreading like mushrooms, the presence of NATO is being reinforced in Asia and in Latin America.

Intra-imperialist contradictions are particularly pronounced in the Western Balkans where the so-called Euro-Atlantic integration is being promoted. FYROM's accession to NATO and the EU, and Albania in the EU has boosted relations with Russia, while the developments in Serbia and Kosovo are very worrying, the plans for a change of borders in this area will have very dangerous consequences for the people.

Inter-imperialist contrasts are particularly pronounced in the Western Balkans in which the so-called Euro-Atlantic integration is being promoted. FYROM's accession to NATO and the EU and Albania in the EU is conflagrating relations with Russia, while developments in Serbia and Kosovo are very worrying, plans to change the border in the region with very dangerous consequences for the people.

In the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean, the conflicts between the bourgeois classes of the states of the area are increasing, especially between the bourgeois class of Greece and that of Turkey, which has resorted to constant threats, confirmed by the successive positions taken by Erdogan and his staff. The Cyprus issue which remains unresolved for 44 years, the developments in the EEZ of Cyprus and the rivalry for the control of the energy wealth in the area are sources of very dangerous conflicts.

These developments are taking place alongside the continuation of the war in Syria, the conflict over Idlib, the threats of the USA, France, Britain, German of new attacks against Syria, the aggressive stance of the USA and Israel against Iran and the crimes of the Israeli state at the expense of the Palestinian people.

Overall, it is confirmed that the hot spots are become hotter and are expanding. The escalation of the aggression of Euro-Atlantic imperialism in competition with Russia and China that are acting based on the interests of their own monopolies; on these grounds, the danger of a generalization of war conflicts is on the agenda.

Under these conditions the communists have additional tasks; they are the force that can, with consistency, lead the way in the struggle against imperialist wars and interventions, strengthening the front against the exploitative system that brings war, poverty, unemployment and refugeeism.

The communists, rooted in the workers' popular struggle, can clash with the bourgeois classes of their countries and intensify their efforts for the joint

struggle of the people, against nationalism and also against the cosmopolitanism that mutually fuel each other, which is a common reference point for the interests of capitalism.

Dear comrades,

In recent years the rise in far right, fascist – racist forces in Europe and in other regions, greatly concerns us and we have gained experience from our confrontation with them.

The communists strengthen their struggle against far right forces and at the same time expose the fact that these are the products of the rotten capitalist system, they express the interests of sections of capital against the people, they are fueled by the anti-popular policies of the bourgeois parties and governments, of the liberals or the social democrats that continuously fail to live up to popular expectations.

We emphasize this because especially the forces of social democracy and of opportunism exploit the fear of the popular forces concerning the rise of the far right and they attempt to whitewash their own responsibilities and to entrap popular forces.

The experience of many years has revealed the anti-popular role of social democracy as an expresser of the interests of the monopoly circles and the example of SYRIZA in Greece is characteristic of this. It used fake left slogans, it climbed to power and manages capitalism, implementing extremely harsh policies against the working class and the popular strata. The government of SYRIZA with the nationalist party “Independent Greeks” implement the memorandums, the strategy of capital together with ND and PASOK, together with the EU and the IMF, which has led to a dramatic reduction in salaries and pensions, robbing the people through taxation, maintaining the arsenal of 700 memorandum anti-people laws.

The government has become the standard-bearer of NATO and the EU in our area; it puts Greek military bases at their disposal, it creates new ones and has turned Greece into a launching pad for imperialist wars and interventions.

This experience has international importance not only because SYRIZA relied on PEL and more generally on European opportunism and on international circles but also because the same games are being played by forces of social democracy and opportunism in all the countries, in order to manipulate the peoples and to impede the action of communists.

Activity of the EC Initiative April through November 2018

During the period we are examining since past April, the “EUROPEAN COMMUNIST INITIATIVE” has carried out interventions around important issues.

- At the end of **April** a joint statement was issued on May 1st that highlighted how the working class is the producer of wealth, that it can live better, to satisfy its needs and have the power to struggle to overturn capitalist exploitation, for socialism.

- In **May** we honored Karl Marx and his inestimable contribution, with a statement dedicated to the 200 years since his birth, projecting the importance of revolutionary action and the timeliness of the international call: "Workers of all lands Unite".

-In **June** an intervention was carried out in support of the right of workers to strike and condemned the strike-breaking measures of the bourgeois governments.

- In **July** the decisions of the NATO summit in Brussels were denounced and representatives from parties of the 'INITIATIVE" took part in anti-NATO rallies and mobilizations.

- In **August** a call was issued for the intensification of the struggle against imperialist wars and interventions, against NATO and the EU, for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign military bases from our countries, against the participation of armed forces of our countries in missions outside of our borders.

- In **September** a statement was issued on education and the new school year.

All of this contributes to the strengthening of the intervention of the 'INITIATIVE" and adds to the activities of the previous period.

Today, we reaffirm some of the key commitments that we discussed in April. Specifically:

Firstly, with the responsibility of the CP Turkey it is proposed that on 16-17 February 2019, a meeting of the Parties of the European Communist Initiative be held in Istanbul in order to study important historical issues and to exchange experience from the struggle of the CPs in each country. This event will constitute a contribution to the 100 years since the founding of the Communist International and will allow us to shed light on some historical events with the tool of our worldview, Marxism-Leninism; all of us must approach this task with great responsibility.

Certainly, the completion of 100 years since the founding of the Communist International will constitute a basis for different initiatives, events, relevant articles and in every case we can highlight the importance of proletariat internationalism and the necessity for a unified revolutionary strategy; to carry out this struggle, in contrast with bourgeois and opportunist approaches.

Second, it is a fact that in all of the countries the bourgeois classes and their political representatives confirm that bourgeois, parliamentary democracy is just a dictatorship of the monopolies against the people. We have experience from the use of repression against the struggle of communists and the movement that struggles; we have experienced and we are experiencing the

banning of Communist Parties, restriction in their action and persecution. The battle we are waging must escalate and strengthen the coordination between our parties, to take on greater dimensions within the workers' popular movement. At the same time, there is the need for this coordination to embrace the area of legal support and we will move in this direction over the next period, with the help of militant lawyers and other scientists.

Third, we continue our struggle against imperialist wars, NATO and the military bases and we contribute to building anti-war, anti-imperialist mass organizations where they do not exist. We express our solidarity with the Palestinian and Cypriot peoples, to all of the peoples. We take additional measures against anti-communism, intensifying our support of the communists of Poland and Ukraine and all those CP that are under persecution. We prepare for the 8th of March, the day of struggle of the women, Workers' May Day and May 9th, day of the Anti-fascist Victory of the Peoples.

We highlight the importance and the experience of the Hungarian Revolution of 1919.

The European Communist Initiative was formed to provide an impetus for the ideological – political unity and action of the communist movement in Europe against the bourgeois class and its mechanisms. Among the basic tasks of the “Initiative” is the struggle against the EU that over the next period is linked to, among other things, the battle of the European Parliament elections and the exposure of the role of the EU as an transnational imperialist union against the peoples.

This position is reconfirmed by the daily experience of the working people and the propagandistic mechanisms of the EU and its member state governments cannot bury the truth.

In the EU there are 20 million unemployed and more than 100 million who live under the poverty threshold; millions work under horrendous individual contracts. The EU leads the way in legislating and implementing anti-worker, anti-people measures in order to destroy working rights, among which is the so-called “European Pillar of Social Rights”. It is responsible for the attack on steady work and the expansion of flexible forms of employment, for the intensification of the degree of exploitation of the working class, as is shown by the increase in part-time and temporary employment, of the slave labor offices the attack on Collective Bargaining, the restriction of the right to strike.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was created with the aim of concentrating land and production in a few hands, the control of agricultural production by the monopolies has led to the disappearance of hundreds of thousands of small producers and the worsening of the lives of small and medium-sized farming households.

The EU in cooperation with the governments of its member states abolishes and undermines fundamental insurance rights, it is promoting an increase in the age limit for retirement, to 67-68 and even 70 years; it is implementing a policy of reducing pensions and the privatization of insurance.

The EU together with the USA and NATO, but also within the context of its own planning, paves the way for European monopolies, intervenes in many areas of the world, is behind many imperialist wars, has great responsibility for the uprooting of millions of immigrants and refugees, for the misery that they are experiencing, which is being multiplied by the unacceptable European Union decisions on the refugee issue which the bourgeois governments support, despite their minor contradictions. A characteristic element of the policy of the EU is further militarization, with the creation of dangerous mechanisms, such as the permanent structural cooperation (PESCO), the European Defense Fund and the so-called military mobility.

The EU has adopted anti-communism as its official ideology and engages in systematic counterfeiting - distortion of historical truth, reaching the point of even identifying socialism that has made an inestimable contribution to social progress, with the monster of fascism, while it is known that the Soviet Union, with its huge sacrifices marked the defeat of Nazism and the Communist Parties were in the front line of the liberation struggle.

Communists everywhere can inform, enlighten the people, uncover the role of the EU, the bourgeois and opportunist parties of the monopoly circles. Parties like the so-called Party of the European Left (KEA), parties of Eurocommunism, have done a lot of damage to the working class and the popular strata, and despite their maneuvering around the European elections, they must be held responsible for their actions.

The PEL was created by the EU itself in the context of its plans to integrate the peoples into the aims of capital. Its participation in the advertising campaign of the EU and the support of its anti-people strategy, the cultivation of false expectations, slandering against socialism, the support of bourgeois governments, even the participation in anti-communist attacks, cannot be ignored.

The so-called Group of the Left in the European Parliament (GUE NGL) acts in the same direction, the parties of which support the anti-people policies of the EU and the bourgeois governments that serve capital, buoying up the delusion that the EU can supposedly be improved.

The people have the right to struggle for a road of development that serves their own interests, the satisfaction of their needs, to struggle for socialism and disengagement from the EU and from NATO, for the creation of terms that will allow the promotion of mutually beneficial relations between countries and peoples.

The Communist and Workers' Parties independently of whether their countries are members of the EU have the obligation to contribute to the struggle against this union of capital and all together to support the CPs that are consistently battling against the EU of the monopolies and to highlight the fact that Europe can be a Europe of the peoples; when it becomes Europe of socialism, when the power passes into the hands of the working class.

The responsibility of our parties is to expose the anti-people character of the European Parliament as an organization which promotes the anti-worker

policies of the EU and its governments, a tool of capitalist barbarism.

Dear Comrades,

Today's meeting with the presence of comrades from the CP Mexico, the Paraguayan CP, and the Socialist Movement of Kazakhstan is a contribution to the effort for the revolutionary regroupment of the communist movement, which also charges us with serious tasks.

For the defense of our worldview, Marxism – Leninism, the highlighting of the history of the communist movement.

For the preparation of the working class and its allies against the monopolies and capitalist exploitation, for socialism, without double-talk and confusion around management methods that exist within the walls of capitalism.

For the rejection of the participation or the support by communist parties of bourgeois governments, struggling against neo-liberal and social democratic political forces and exposing the games they play against the working people.

For the support of the October Socialist Revolution and its everlasting message in the struggle for workers' power and the abolition of exploitation of man by man, the defense of the socialism of the Soviet Union and the other countries of socialist construction, the great achievements and the satisfaction of people's needs and the critical examination of mistakes and deviations, of the causes of counterrevolution and capitalist restoration.

For the projection of the laws of socialist revolution and construction of workers' power, the socialization of the means of production and central planning and the rejection of positions that project that socialism can be built with a market, with the maintenance of capitalist enterprises and mechanisms.

For the strengthening of the struggle against every kind of imperialist alliance that is formed with the interests of the monopolies at its core on all continents, showing the peoples that they can struggle for their own interests, with their own flag and not under the flag of the bourgeois classes and the imperialist unions.

We strengthen the efforts to enrich the guidelines of action of the "INITIATIVE" by utilizing today's discussion; we aim to widen our cooperation with Communist Parties outside of Europe and continue our struggle.