

## National Council Resolution – 15 April 2016

*The National Council has been updating preparations for our Congress. We are now entering a new phase of preparations, well underway since the publication of the common core adopted by the National Council. Today, a document sent out to all Communists presents the text and the four alternative texts validated by the transparency committee in accordance with our by-laws.*

*Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of May, French Communists will vote on adoption of the text that will become the common core for the debates to follow. After this vote, the text chosen will continue to evolve and be enriched to integrate the maximum number of contributions from debates held among all party members. We work on the principal of building unity among Communists to move forward with every phase of Congress preparation.*

*Many comments, contributions and improvements have been suggested and will be discussed and taken on board right up until the Congress.*

*Among the salient points of the debate which require further reflection, there is a desire to give clearer meaning to the communist struggle, to improve the legibility of our project, especially with regard to Europe; the need to push ahead with the debate to examine different points of view on the state of the left, its crisis, relations with the Socialist Party; there are also questions on our analysis of our experience with the Left Front, the reasons for current difficulties, how we might plan to reinvigorate it as well as our strategy for union and reconstruction of the left for 2017 and beyond; the need to go beyond debate on the idea of a “primary”, to clarify our proposal for 2017 on a common platform: making an alternative on the left a real possibility, as well as a single candidate, through a clear political process on content, built through citizen involvement; lastly, a strong desire to define guidelines for change within the party as planned and which are widely shared.*

*The National Council applauds the engagement of Communists in this debate and looks forward to further exchanges.*

*In the spirit of common construction and to advance the debate, the National Council, as was decided in March, has carried out an analysis of the debate underway and changes in the political situation. The following resolution was adopted to include these new topics of analysis in the debate among Communists.*

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## **Communists on the offensive To create a progressive solution on the left**

The National Council calls on all Communists so that one and all may be involved in the preparation of our Congress, to be held from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. Everything confirms the importance of the decisions that we will make there to open a path to hope for our country. The political situation is constantly evolving. Deep contradictions and uncertainties have led the Hollande-Valls administration to make choices that are widely rejected by the French people. The new element that has come into play recently is that a large number of young people and working people have re-engaged with political action and debate.

### **A new situation four months after the regional elections**

The Panama Papers revelations, social movement against the so-called El Khomri law on labour, *Nuits Debout* occupation movements in city squares, and many other signals in society show that in a few weeks, the social and political climate of the country has changed. After the regional elections, the situation seemed to be dominated by danger and fear. Today, some essential ideas are coming back to the fore:

- The Panama papers scandal reopened the debate on the breadth of financial predation on created wealth as organised by multinationals, the global banking system, international institutions and governments that support financial interests.
- Mobilisation for the withdrawal of the El Khomri law also prove that there is a massive refusal of a society based on social insecurity and generalised uncertainty; the people believe that everyone should have social protection in all phases of life.
- The *Nuit Debout* movement shows the growing will of citizens to break into politics, break open the system, and claim the right to think about a different future for society.

As in the case of the constitutional revision, designed to divide society, and finally abandoned by François Hollande in the face of opposition, which we actively participated in, the movement against the El Khomri law may grow and prevent the government from reaching a parliamentary majority on this text. Eleven positive measures in favour of youth have been wrestled into the draft law, and although they are very limited in scope they prove that collective mobilisation can yield results. The 23 youth organisations, including the “JC”(Communist Youth) which was highly motivated, have called for broadening the battle for the withdrawal of the El Khomri law. Trade unions are calling for a new day of mobilisation next April 28<sup>th</sup>. Communists, who are fully involved in these movements, must double our efforts to win this battle.

All of these movements show that forces are available to rebuild hope, and to continue building beyond the urgent battles of today. Will these debates and mobilisations, over time, open the path to a new political hope, new political constructions? And how? These are central questions for discussion during our Congress.

### **The situation is still fraught with danger**

The political situation nonetheless remains paradoxical. In the social upheaval and the general political confusion created by the policies of Hollande-Valls, the left is increasingly discredited, right and far right ideas are omnipresent, new neo-liberal initiatives, such as Emmanuel Macron’s movement are trying to take advantage of the need for political renewal.

We are faced with a strong contradiction. On the one hand, the people of the left have irreversibly broken with the Hollande-Valls administration. On the other, the massive, justified disavowal will

inevitably lead, if a new progressive response that unites many people is not built up, to a victory for the right and the far right, both extremely dangerous for our people. With the voting methods for presidential and legislative elections, and an ultra-presidential political system, such a victory could even lead to a sustained marginalisation or even the removal from the political sphere of progressive, left, social ideas and policies. And at the same time, more and more people, especially on the left, are looking for new answers for democracy and human progress.

Resignation is out of the question, we cannot submit to the upcoming 2017 elections without reacting. Communists have a leading responsibility to the left, to build, for 2017 and beyond, a popular citizens' front that can open a new path to perspectives of hope for our people.

### **Communists on the offensive to open the way to a progressive outcome**

To escape from the trap, we have decided to take all initiatives to build unity in society, in action, in elections, among all popular forces and forces of the left that are seeking a programme for change. We want to build a popular, citizens' political front that will make a majority for change possible. For this, we want to renew the approach of union initiated by the Left Front by reaffirming the ambition for majority representation and a citizen-led movement. Not only are we not turning our back on the Left Front initiative that we founded, but we want to revive it on its essentials, with new ambitions in accordance with the new period the country is going through.

To advance, the National Council reiterates its call to work together on three closely linked objectives: a popular majority, a legislative majority, and a candidate for president who will serve the construction of these majorities.

#### **1- Nothing will be possible without popular, citizen ownership and a new political project for change.**

The project for change that we wish to see – including the abandonment of austerity policies and models of free market competition that do not address the cost of capital – the popular and citizen political front will only be possible if more and more citizens join in the construction of the project in time for the elections. Those who have engaged in protests against the El Khomri law and in the *Nuit Debout* occupations no longer want to be disposed, and they are right. Indeed, this is how we can the defeat political mistrust that has been created by current powers, that has separated the people from the government and disqualified the left in the eyes of so many.

The thrust of our approach is to build projects for and by citizens, up to 2017 and beyond.

So we must seize and create all opportunities to push popular debate towards solutions, on the means needed to make a different kind of politics credible:

- On the Panama Papers: by leading debates with our proposals for taking back control of money the banks and oppose the financial powers;
- On the El Khomri law: advancing proposals for making jobs and training more secure, and pushing our campaign, “No unemployment, for a society of sharing” (*Zéro chômage, pour une société de partage*);
- On citizens' power: what new rights, what public services, what new republic?

More generally, we must enable a maximum of citizens, everywhere and in every form, to express their demands and to say in they own words, “this is what we want for ourselves and for France”.

The National Council proposed that the French Communist Party, powered by the activism of the woman and men who are members or close to us, launch this ambitious effort to enable the popular mandate. This will happen:

- Through work directly with the people on an unprecedented scope. This is the meaning of the “**great citizen consultation**” that we have launched with the objective of speaking with 500,000 citizens. This consultation will take on full meaning when public accounting of the results are given at events where citizens who so wish can participate and follow up. At the Fête de l’Humanité, there will be a national meeting to render the accounts of the consultations;
- Through writing or implementing citizen and social platforms that emerge from social movements, in the *Nuits Debout* groups and wherever citizens’ collectives can be created;
- By involving all citizens engaged in trade unions, associations and politics to participate in this work of collecting and recording, and intensifying contacts, opening dialogue and building together.

In the fall, a big national convergence of citizens’ demands will be assembled. Our Congress must push forward on this point. The French Communist Party must be, at all levels, a force for proposals to further this national convergence of projects. For us, citizen mobilisation must be at the heart of the preparations for the 2017 elections; in this way, we are different from the dominant political parties.

## **2- How can we prepare for the 2017 elections?**

### **As of now, begin the battle for the legislative elections**

Since the beginning of François Holland’s presidential term, we hear a lot about the impotence of politics, and our institutions have been locked tight – the key that shuts us out is the “ultra-presidentialisation” of our system. The legislative elections are this made to look like a mere afterthought to presidential elections, disconnected from the real issues facing the legislative branch.

Legislative elections give us the National Assembly whose purpose is to govern in the best interests of the country – not to provide a convenient majority to execute the president’s orders.

This is a national battle that must unite us and that is rooted in the needs and struggles of the 577 circumscriptions in a unified national coherence.

These elections must be accorded their full importance, and this because of a simple fact: whoever the president, to carry out change we need a legislative majority and members of parliament who are in phase with the demands of citizens, who are accountable to the people, not the president.

In appropriate forms and in each electoral district, we call on Communists to boost local engagement as of now, to foster the development of projects and the emergence of candidates who will be able to bring citizens’ demands into the legislative sphere and elsewhere.

A national training programme will be available for all candidates, their campaign teams and district managers, as of this summer.

### **Ramp up our efforts to find unity behind a candidate for the presidential elections who will offer a real alternative on the left, and who can defeat the right and the far right**

Our goal to unite behind a new project on the left must be realised for the presidential election. We know, given the ultra-personalised nature of the elections, that the association between popular construction and presidential elections is not easily made.

This challenge is all the sharper for the new political cycle that began with the European elections and the National Front's results. The FN threat changes the nature of the elections when only two candidates remain for the second round, and this has an impact on the impetus of the first round of president elections.

The challenge is also heightened by the distress created among people on the left who elected Hollande in 2012 and who are now aghast at the ways in which the offices of the president and the prime minister and the Socialist Party headquarters have twisted the meaning of the "left" and sought to create irreconcilable differences that would divide and destroy the left.

In these conditions, the candidate on the left that we would like to see can obviously not be François Hollande, who is ploughing ahead despite his rejection by the people; nor can it be another representative of the same policies the Socialist leaders have been supporting since 2012.

For an alternative to this policy, we are seeking a candidacy that will be in phase with citizens' expectations for change, on a popular, citizens' base that is as broad as possible. This is why we regret that so many on the left have announced their candidacy and we call on them to join in the necessary collective effort.

Under these conditions, in relation to the 2017 elections, we must unite a maximum of forces available across the spectrum of the social and political left for the construction of an alternative to the policies of François Hollande; we must be available to build a collective citizens' movement, and if it meets the objectives, to hold a citizens' primary on the left.

For us, such a process supposes that we will give priority to the construction of a political project arising from the citizens' debate and promoting popular demands that answer the question: "what France do we want?". At the outcome, there might be a citizens' vote to validate the platform determined by the debates and to designate the best candidate to represent it. If such a process were to take place, Communists will have to decide on engaging in it or supporting a candidate during a national conference, as provided in our by-laws.

The French Communist Party thus solemnly addresses the political and social forces of our country, the women and men in social movements, in associations, and all the available forces to participate in this collective process: let us take action together, beginning with the construction of a phase of debates and citizens' consultations.

We know that many of the signatories of the two calls for primaries, from the "ecologist" and socialist movements, activists from the Left Front and many citizens are in favour of such a process.

We propose to all who seek to move forward to quickly organise the first series of citizens' debates before this summer in the different French departments. And in June, we suggest four national meetings to look into the issues that concern our country: what are the left's policies in regard to employment, wage increases, pensions and minimum social benefits? What policies on banking, monetary and fiscal policy, tax fraud – so that money serves Humans First? What citizens' powers can bring greater democracy to the Republic? What is the alternative left in Europe?

We will thus be able to verify together that such a process responds to the needs and demands of our people.