

Europe against Austerity Action Conference : an International Conference Report

Monday 29 October 2012, by [HUDSON Kate](#) (Date first published: 22 October 2012).

Over a hundred delegates packed into the Coalition of Resistance's conference at the Unite the Union headquarters in London on Sunday afternoon, to strengthen anti-austerity coordination across Europe.

The event followed a massive anti-cuts demonstration on Saturday 20th October, called by the British TUC. Speakers included parliamentarians Marisa Matias MEP, from Bloco de Esquerda in Portugal, Stefanos Samoilis MP, from SYRIZA in Greece, and Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP from the UK. Other participants included trade unions from across the continent, as well as left and green parties and representatives from a wide range of social movements.

Sessions included Eurocrisis – Into the Abyss, a very informative debate on the economy including representatives from CADTM, NEF, SYRIZA and Elisabeth Gauthier from Transform and the PCF; The Shape of the Resistance, which included representatives from OLME in Greece and Front de Gauche in France, plus a lively contribution from Florian Wilde from Die Linke in Germany; No to neo-liberal education, which included representatives from teachers' unions, the NUT, DOE and FSU; and Actions, co-operation and the timeline to Athens 2013 which addressed concrete steps in our joint work. Speakers included Natalie Bennett, leader of the Green Party in England and Wales and Vladimir Nieddu from SUD Sante in France. Frederic Leplat moved the conference statement on behalf of the Coalition of Resistance.

The conference expressed strong support for the ETUC Day of Action on 14th November and there was extensive discussion about the role of different types of action in taking the movement forward, including general strike action. Whilst Europe has seen a large number of one day general strike actions over the last year, it has not been sufficient to bring an end to austerity programmes. Britain itself has not seen a general strike since 1926 but it is now on the agenda at the highest trade union levels, including consideration by the TUC itself. Discussion also focused on the need for a clear and positive alternative to austerity and the vision of a different type of Europe, in the interests of ordinary people, which we can achieve if we work together. The importance of international solidarity was repeatedly stressed especially with regard to Greece. Delegates from Greece emphasized their urgent need for an increase in solidarity action, particularly from the trade union movement. The conference concluded by committing to working towards the Alter Summit in 2013.

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P.S.

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