

New report: Portugal shows that left wing governments can win inside the EU

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A new report authored by Hilary Wainwright, a leading left wing academic and writer, has found that Portugal's socialist government has had major success in delivering a radical anti-austerity manifesto within the EU.

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- Labour urged to adopt Portuguese approach and fight for its radical policies from within the EU, backing Remain and Reform.
- New report by leading left wing academic takes left wing government in Portugal as case study for the possibility of standing up to EU austerity diktats
- Portuguese government has had major success in delivering effective anti-austerity policies initially opposed by the EU, report finds

A new report authored by Hilary Wainwright, a leading left wing academic and writer, has found that Portugal's socialist government has had major success in delivering a radical anti-austerity manifesto within the EU.

The Portuguese Socialist Party government took office in November 2015 under Prime Minister Alberto Costa, and in alliance with the Portuguese Communist Party and the Left Bloc. Its election followed a period of austerity.

The report concludes that the Portuguese government has reversed austerity and successfully challenged EU leaders with its determination to fight "in and against" the institutions, and with popular support and the backing of a serious mass movement.

"The Socialist Party government in Portugal successfully united the party and the country around a positive alternative to austerity and inequality and stood up for these policies against right wing forces in the EU. The Labour leadership could do the same to unite Labour and the country here in the UK," concludes the author Hilary Wainwright.

Clive Lewis MP, writing in the forward to the report, writes:

This is a significant intervention for those on the left who argue for a Brexit, or "Lexit". Many of the rules that are seen as obstructive to the socialist vision, whether on public ownership, outsourcing or state aid, are either misunderstood, have been superseded or are flexible. It will be enlightening, too, to any of us who have been conditioned to understand negotiations with the EU as a test of strength, and a tedious one, in which 27 will always be stronger than one. Perhaps that is the experience of nations who don't know what they want. For those with a clear agenda, that they make a sustained, rational and ethical argument for, conclusions are anything but foregone.

"Yet the more fundamental conclusion is this: you do the EU no favours by ignoring its faults, but it

is not a fixed entity, and what look to be its long-term strategic goals are subject, always, to the will of its members. It can only realise the ambitions of its founders, of peace, reconciliation, solidarity and broadly distributed prosperity, if its component nations are fighting for those ends.”

The report carries a forward by Clive Lewis MP, and is backed by the London School of Economics Civil Society Research Unit, Another Europe is Possible, the Transnational Institute, Europe for the Many, the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and the LSE Civil Society Research Unit.

Campaigners and researchers are urging Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party to adopt the Portuguese strategy and a Remain and Reform platform.

The report finds:

- The left wing government in Portugal successfully stood up to EU negotiators to reverse austerity measures
- The result of its efforts was the reversal of all austerity measures introduced by the Troika, while remaining within the EU’s 3 per cent deficit limit
- The Portuguese government’s success relied on strong civic resistance to the previous government and the existence of a mass movement to support it
- Parties to the left of the Socialist Party played a key role in pushing the government
- Also key were the rulings of the constitutional court of Portugal against some austerity measures
- Reversing austerity has led to increased consumer confidence and expectations, boosting the economy and contradicting the neo-liberal assumptions at the root of austerity politics
- The Portuguese government has created a space for left wing reform of the EU, with the potential for reinforcement from countries like Spain and the UK

Notes

1. For more information please ring Michael on 07964791663 or email [michael anothereurope.org](mailto:michael.anothereurope.org)
2. The full report can be viewed here under embargo: <https://www.europeforthemany.-com/portugal-report.pdf>
3. Hilary Wainwright is a well known left wing academic and writer. She is the editor of Red Pepper magazine, an ally of Jeremy Corbyn, and a fellow of the Transnational Institute.

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