



# ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

WITH LAWYERS  
IN 18 COUNTRIES

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt  
EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo  
EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme  
EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

Equality Privacy Social Rights  
No Racism Peace No Torture No War  
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy  
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

London/Düsseldorf, 01 July 2015

European lawyers demand

**Greece: Let the Greek people decide without threats from other Governments, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund**

**ELDH - open letter to the European Commission:  
Respect Democracy in Greece – give priority to social rights and not to financial interests**

On 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras called a referendum in Greece for July 5 on whether to approve a package of austerity measures demanded by the European Union (EU) in exchange for extending loans to avert Greek state bankruptcy. The referendum is provided for by the Greek constitution where a matter of national interest is concerned.

All efforts by the new Greek government to negotiate a just solution have been met with hostility by the EU. After five months of offering constant concessions the Greek government is faced with an ultimatum to accept an “austerity” program that is the most aggressive yet. This includes further layoffs, pension cuts, wage reductions and tax increases on basic necessities such as food and utilities, while eliminating tax breaks to vital sectors of Greek society and economy.

These austerity measures as well as those decided by the previous Greek government violate the democratic and social rights enshrined in European law and international law. As far as the social cuts of the so called Memorandum are concerned they were already in contradictions to the Greek European and international law. Among others Art. 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 12 and 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union Art. 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Art. 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the ILO Principles Concerning the Right to Strike, because collective agreements have been nullified, and collective bargaining have been restricted. These measures imposed by the so called Troika also violate the right to self-determination of the Greek people as guaranteed by common Article 1 of the ICCPR and ICESCR .

The austerity measures are disproportionate and unreasonable because they would still leave Greece with unsustainable debt by 2030 even if it signs up to the full package of tax and spending reforms demanded of it, according to unpublished documents compiled by its three main creditors (published in *The Guardian*, 30 June 2015). Greece needs substantial debt relief for a lasting economic recovery.

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The austerity measures implement neo-liberal ideology which gives priority to financial and economic interests and not to social rights. Therefore it is not surprising to find among those who support the austerity measures are those who are going to profit by these measures and who always wanted to weaken the workers organisations.

The German Government, one the masterminds of the austerity measures already imposed on Greece or demanded from Greece, has refused for 70 years to pay the German debts for war crimes, crimes against humanity, destruction of infrastructure in times of occupation in Greece, and for a forced credit granted to the Nazi regime by the Greek central bank. The Greek President of State has estimated the value of these debts of Germany towards the Greek population and the Greek state to be about 170 Billion Euro. The refusal of the German Government to pay these debts or even to negotiate on them is a clear breach of international law.

There is the strong impression that neo-liberal governments in the European Union and internationally do everything possible to prevent a social solution for the Greek crisis. Their objective is to bring down one of the few left-wing governments in the European Union and to prevent other people in European countries to follow the example of Greece.

- ELDH declares its solidarity with the victims of the policy imposed on Greece by the European Commission, by the TROIKA, but also by previous Greek governments. These victims are in particular the workers, the poor and the middle class.
- ELDH declares its solidarity with Greek trade unions and other workers organisations who try to defend the interests of the workers, the poor.
- In spite of the danger of manipulation of the Greek voters, ELDH supports the project of a referendum against the austerity measures as democratic way to let the people participate in this crucial decision.
- ELDH demands that the people in other countries – in particular in Southern Europe - get the chance to defend their interests against the austerity measures in a democratic referendum in their countries.
- ELDH appeals to the victims of the austerity policy in Greece: stand up for your rights and continue fighting. ELDH and all people in Europe who are struggling against the neo-liberal austerity policy stand on your side.