



# ELECTORAL PROGRAMME 2018-2019

European Transnationalism | Economic Rationalism | Social Emancipation

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## 1. Introduction – For the return of Vision and Dignity

Just as the elections of September 2015 were held to legitimise the capitulation to the country's lenders and to reinstate the local oligarchy, so are the upcoming elections intended to legitimise the standardisation of the Debt Colony that is Greece until 2060. And just as they invested, in September 2015, in the humiliation of the Greeks after the betrayal of the Referendum, so do they spread the perception that, even though nothing will improve, things would become even worse if we dare to oppose the unified front of lenders and local oligarchs.

Those who say this are the same who put Greece into a coma, made this state permanent, and now are calling it... stability. They dare present themselves as pro-Europeans, while they destroy Europe's image in the eyes of its peoples. They pushed our people off the edge of the cliff and they hail our rebound off the hard rock of permanent crisis as proof of recovery. Those who sold off our public property, delivered the reins of the country to the lenders' bureaucrats, and sealed our status as a Debt Colony, patronisingly wag their finger at us. They made a desert and called it peace, and now they appeal to us to re-elect them because of their wise governance.

The greatest threat to Greece is for its citizens to feel that there is no alternative option to that which brings them to their knees. For as long as the cynical blackmail of "Debt Colony or Leave the EU" lasts, democracy's light trembles and elections mean nothing. No hope can take root in a country where those who were elected to break with an unsustainable past have become its most constant and creative champions. At the same time, those who have already made their peace with our lenders are now asking to be re-elected on the basis of policies whose implementation would require a major confrontation with those very lenders; a confrontation which they have ruled out.

MeRA25 is participating in these elections, both national and European, to give citizens the opportunity to say NO to this lie, NO to the desertification of their homes, YES to the realistic alternative that is presented by the Greek patriotic front that is our party, and which is an indivisible part of our pan-European political movement: DiEM25. MeRA25 is a broad, conciliatory, radically Europeanist front against the borderless hegemonic oligarchy.

Citizens are tired of the endless nights of Bailouts which constantly seem to be "ending" while becoming ever more permanent. Their thoughts are drowned out by the cacophony that they face every time they turn on their televisions and computers, or listen to the oligarchy over the radio. Without a realistic alternative, the upcoming elections are not a celebration but the tombstone of our democracy.

This night has lasted too long. MeRA25 arrives to brighten it with realistic, responsible, specific and radical proposals for what must and can be done on "Monday morning" to immediately abolish Greece's Debt Colonisation and to rekindle Democracy and Humanism in Europe.

We call on all citizens to read – and judge – the electoral programme of MeRA25.

## 2. Escaping the Debt Colony: Financial, Institutional and Social Policies

No insolvency has ever been overcome by new loans or by elongating existing ones. To escape from its quadruple bankruptcy, Greece needs a substantial restructuring of its public and private debts. It is the only way for terminating the country's self-reinforcing austerity cycle and for giving its people a chance to breathe again. Of course, while a debt restructuring is necessary for Greece's genuine recovery, it is not a sufficient condition. We also need interventions that:

- protect waged labour from the relentless class war waged against it by the oligarchy, with the support of the troika
- shield creative and productive entrepreneurs from the predatory rent-seeking of the oligarchic establishment
- place public assets in the service of the common good
- transform the state from predator to citizens' ally

The escape from debt bondage demands the formation of a broad front of active citizens and political movements from different (even competing) ideological points of departure. While preserving our ideological differences and visions of a good society, we have converged on MeRA25, determined to fight together against the current impasse. To begin, we have identified seven immediate policies that stand at the core of our initial policy agenda.

### 2.1 Seven Financial and Institutional Policies

#### **POLICY 1 – Primary Budget Surpluses that abolish austerity**

The country today is shackled by permanent austerity until 2060 – to be precise, it is required to maintain primary budget surpluses of 3.5% of GDP from 2018 until 2022, and of 2.2% from 2023 until 2060.

The IMF itself has a) announced that achieving this goal would necessitate the prevention of the economic recovery **necessary for the successful implementation** of the primary surplus target, and b) has calculated that the chances of success for this particular measure is under 4%, not least because of the surrealism inherent in point a).

- MeRA25 will legislate a maximum budget surplus of 1.5% of GDP and a minimum of 0%, depending on the rate of the country's GDP recovery, which will be deposited in a special account from which Greece's lenders shall be repaid

#### **Policy 2 – Restructuring of Public Debt**

Unsustainable debt is the driving force of our Debt Colonisation. It therefore follows that there is no other solution to Greece's predicament than the meaningful restructuring of its public debt.

MeRA25 will legislate (through the swap of bonds/IOUs<sup>1</sup>) that:

- Yearly debt repayments to the troika (ESM-IMF-ECB) which correspond to the rate of nominal GDP increase (see Policy 1) and
- Assessment of the total amount of debt towards the troika (capital and interest) proportional to the size of Greece's nominal GDP

In summary, the proposed debt swap requires a debt haircut that is inversely proportional to the growth of economic activity and total income: Rapid growth would mean a negligible debt haircut towards the lenders. However, the weaker the growth rate the larger the size of the debt haircut. In this way, in practice, the lenders are transformed into partners with an vested interest in our country's recovery, as they recuperate all of their money only if our country recovers at a significant rate.

### **Policy 3 – Public Financial Assets Management Company**

The restructuring of public debt is not enough in an economy where citizens owe 100 billion euros in unserviceable debts, “red loans”, to banks, while the state is owed 50 billion euros from those banks and an addition 100 billion euros from households and companies. It is obvious that a market solution to this situation of generalised bankruptcy does not exist. The troika's obsession with trying to solve the problem using market solutions, by selling the “red loans” at a fraction of their initial value to private enterprises (mostly foreign), which later will receive a percentage of the nominal value of these loans through the threat of home auctions, keeping the profits for themselves, is not only ethically and socially condemnable, but also stupid by the cold rationale of the market

- MeRA25 will establish a Public Company for the Restructuring of Private Debts (PCRPD), with a dual mandate: to protect debtors and their primary residence, but also the banks by restoring their function as creditors.
  - Gradually transfer the worst “red loans” from banks to PCRPD. In return, banks will issue IOUs at an equal nominal value, to be guaranteed by the state, which will be kept in the banks' books as their assets that are to be paid off by the PCRPD in the long term, from its future income
  - Legislate a moratorium on auctions/foreclosures of a) primary residences and b) shops/shopping centres under a certain value threshold
  - Give debtors, whose loans were sold off to private enterprises, the right to buy them back at the same price paid by the private enterprises
  - PCRPD is required to keep in its books the “red loans” until the prices of the mortgaged properties recover to a level close to their original value. Until then, debtors will pay rent to PCRPD (for the right to remain in their homes) which will be determined by the local community (e.g. Municipality) based on their income and local conditions
  - When the market prices of the properties overtake the value of the loans, debtors will have the right to buy off their old loans from PCRPD either in instalments or in a single payment that reflects, in the case of a mortgaged primary residence or SME property, the capital owed (without interest or

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<sup>1</sup> Our current IOUs towards the troika are swapped with new bonds which are tied to the new calculation of repayments and responsibilities

penalties)

By establishing the PCRPD a number of goals are achieved: the protection of the primary resident and of SMEs from vulture funds and from despair, the prevention of a depression in the real estate market, and the return to normality through the injection of liquidity to the economy via the banking system.

#### **Policy 4 – Tax Rates**

The Debt Colony is maintained through the madness of sky-high tax rates, in an economy where private (and therefore also public) income is reduced.

- MeRA25 will:
  - reduce the highest rate of VAT from 24% to 15% and 18%, depending on whether payments are made electronically (15%) or in cash (18%)
  - Introduce progressive taxation for companies, with a lowering of taxes for the (few) large companies from 29% to 26%, for medium-sized companies to 20%, and for small companies to 15%
  - Abolish the pre-payment of taxes within 2-years
  - Abolish the “solidarity tax” for incomes under 30,000€, maintaining the threshold for tax exemption, and lowering the rates for incomes between 12,000€ and 15,000€
  - Create a new special tax on banks (based on the British “bank levy” model) which amounts to a yearly 0.2% of bank debt, and that will be used to support retirement funds
  - Create a new special tax on foreign owners of real estate who have bought property to be given a “Golden Visa” (to which they are entitled based on legislation from the Samaras government) and who rent to foreign tourists through websites like Airbnb
  - re-create a team of “incorruptibles” and the algorithmic check for tax evasion based on the model of 2015, which, if the capitulation of 2015 had not happened, would have revealed hundreds of thousands of tax evaders from the period 2000-2014

The lowering of tax rates will increase the available income of consumers and will reduce the motivation for tax evasion, resulting in an increase in demand, the recovery of incomes, and finally the increase of public income.

#### **Policy 5 – Public Digital Payments System**

In 2015, the troika closed the banks in order to blackmail Greece into accepting its new status as a Debt Colony. Beyond this, the bankrupt banks were operating as a cartel that charged ridiculous amounts for electronic transactions.

- MeRA25 will establish a Public Digital Payments System (PDPS) that will allow all legally recognised citizens to conduct payments between themselves, and with the state, without the interference of the banking system. Each Personal Number has a corresponding account on TAXIS, in which a citizen or businessman could credit and

debit money digitally. The benefits of PDPS are mainly five:

- Mutual cancellation of debt
- Possibility for the state to borrow directly from taxpayers, in return for tax-reductions
- PDPS will compete with private banks on online transactions, thus forcing them to lower their transaction fees
- Possibility to create liquidity for the funding state programmes
- Decreasing the threat of Grexit, since the PDPS would significantly lower the cost (and therefore the fear) of Grexit

## **Policy 6 – Conversion of Greece’s Privatisation Organisation into a Development Bank**

The state today is bound to continue the liquidation/fire-sale of Greece’s public assets for peanuts, which are thrown into the black hole that is the country’s debt.

- MeRA25 will legislate:
  - The issuing of a banking licence to the Privitisation Organisation, transforming it into a Development Bank; what the country really needs
  - The new Development Bank will maintain the public property, using as guarantee in order to attract resources which will be used to fund: a) public investment which upgrades (and increases) public property – in cooperation, at times, with private enterprises – and b) private investments
  - All privatisations are frozen until, at least, the property market recovers. Public assets like energy, water, beaches etc. are exempted from any sale
  - The stocks of the new Development Bank are given to pension funds, strengthening their capitalisation
  - In case some public asset is sold, the following conditions will apply:
    - Minimum amount of investment is agreed with the buyer
    - Labour rights, including collective bargaining, is allowed and protected
    - Guarantees for the benefits of local communities
    - Maintenance of a proportion of stocks by the state, whose income will be channelled to pension funds, in order to permanently support them

## **Policy 7 – Protection of waged labour and creative entrepreneurship**

**Waged Labour:** For years, the main conquest of the working class in Greece; the right for waged labour to be seen as something more than goods or a service provision, has been lost. Waged labour is now presented as a service provision by an external partner who works in the basis of the infamous “note book”. MeRA25 will immediately abolish this practice that condemns workers to insecurity, while exposing them to eye-wateringly high income tax rates.

- MeRA25 will:
  - Introduce the immediate and obligatory inclusion of all waged workers working more than 8 hours per week into the public pension fund
  - Establish a framework for flexible collective bargaining
  - Abolish recent measures which, in practice, suppress the right of the majority

of syndicate members to decide to strike

**Creative Entrepreneurship:** In a country where approximately 75% of SMEs' profits go to tax payments and state insurance fees, recovery is a fool's hope. Beyond the reduction of tax rates and the abolition of the prepayment of taxes (see Policy 4),

- MeRA25 will legislate:
  - A ceiling for the total contribution to pension funds and taxes by companies, that corresponds to no more than 50% of their profits
  - A 5-year moratorium on social security contributions for start-ups

## 2.2 Always with the Weak: Resolving the humanitarian crisis, labour laws, pensions

**Humanitarian Crisis:** Every society is judged by the way in which it deals with its weakest members. In the last ten years, the greatest cost of the crisis was laid on the shoulders of the weakest. This national shame must end.

- MeRA25 will legislate for the establishment of a basic guaranteed income for those who are officially below the poverty line, without withdrawing any of the current grants
  - The basic guaranteed income will be deposited in everyone's PDPS account (see Policy 5 above)

**Labour Laws:** Austerity cannot crash waged labourers if first it has not stripped them of their rights.

- MeRA25 will legislate a) the gradual increase (by 10% annually) of the basic guaranteed income, until it has reached 800 euros per month, and b) flexible but powerful collective bargaining using the model of German industrial workers as a prototype

**Pensions:** Beyond the basic guaranteed income, also the agreement of the current government to lower pensions further in 2019, will be declared void. Instead, pensions will be strengthened by the new bank tax (bank levy - see Policy 4) as well as the stocks from the new Development Bank (see Policy 6)

## 3. Green Transition

Recent natural disasters that have struck our country are indicative of a bitter truth: we are collectively responsible, as a society, for the post-war disrespect we have shown nature, and our failure to live harmoniously as part of it.

The post-war development model was based on the plundering of natural resources. Even today, with the crisis having limited our pillaging, the booming tourist industry threatens to destroy all the unique qualities of our country that have made it a major tourist destination. In addition, the crisis and the priorities of our lenders and the oligarchy are pushing the country to forsake its international duty to limit climate change.



Lenders, oligarch, and local interests are demanding daily the surrender of our remaining natural wealth to private enterprises, which will not only be unhelpful for the resolution of the crisis, but will make us poorer in the long-term, as natural resources will be wasted and used up. **Just as we will not allow the conversion of our country to a Debt Colony, we will not allow for its natural resources to be plundered.**

- MeRA25 is proposing a **Programme of Green Transition** that includes energy, transportation, industry, tourism, agricultural policy, waste disposal etc.

**3.1 Energy:** The world's ability to grow from oil extraction and use has been exhausted. Growth in the future will come from technological innovations which achieve zero, or even negative, greenhouse gas emissions. MeRA25 commits to:

- A programme that will allow us to transition away from fossil fuels by 2040:
  - Expanding sources of renewable energy based on an economy of scale and the principle of natural preservation
  - Exploit local capacities: geothermal, solar, hydroelectric, biomass and wind energy
  - Producers of renewable energy can range from the national energy company to citizens' collaborative initiatives, as is the case in other European countries
  - Emphasis on the local production of energy through bioclimatic architecture and other innovations

**3.2 Transportation:** A necessary aspect for the design of sustainable cities that contribute to the global campaign for the containment of global warming, is the limiting of kilometres travelled by private vehicles and lorries, coupled with a transition to electric transportation (private and public), cycle lanes etc.

- MeRA25 plans to renegotiate the privatisation of the public railway company, the enforcing of petrol companies to provide charging station for electric vehicles at their petrol stations, the taxation of ships based on their pollution impact, and the creation of bicycle lanes in all major city streets

**3.3 Industry:** We support initiatives of small-scale local production and entrepreneurship

- MeRA25 will legislate:
  - Tax exemptions that benefit users of clean sources of energy
  - Taxation of industries based on their environmental impact, especially in cases when it could be avoided through investment in green technologies
  - Public investment in the cooperation of Greek shipyards with the public electricity company, with the aim of installing off shore wind farms in remote marine areas (as is the case in the Northern Sea) and wave power converters (as in Portugal and Scotland)

**3.4 Waste Disposal:** The future demands the minimisation, prevention and recycling at the source of waste

- MeRA25 will introduce incentives and disincentives in order to:

- Reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste to 10%, thus eliminating the need for creating new landfills
- Use of waste in the form of biofuel, compost etc.
- Obligatory recycling schemes for public institutions, and phased in for private corporations

**3.5 Tourism:** Greece cannot offer large-scale tourism without ruining the very qualities that attract visitors to our country in the first place. Our cities and villages cannot be allowed to be emptied of their residents and professionals in order for their apartments to be offered to tourists.

- MeRA25 will legislate:
  - The limiting of the size and number of tourist resorts
  - The drastic reduction in licenses for the private development of beaches
  - Maximum allowed period for private renting of apartments and houses through websites such as Airbnb will be set at 30 days during the period November-June and another 30 days between July-October, with at least 30 days in between the two periods
  - The creation of a special tax on shipping companies, based on the miles travelled by their ships in Greek waters. The income from this tax will be used to clean the seas from plastic and any other pollution on a yearly basis

**3.6 Agriculture – Farming – Forestry – Fishing:** Just like in tourism, the relative advantage of Greek agriculture is its small scale.

- MeRA25 will legislate based on:
  - Greece's self-sufficiency on quality products which are produced with respect towards nature, biodiversity, available natural resources, and cultural heritage
  - Moderate fishing, with a limiting of fish farms and the imposition of strict rules regarding the feed used and population density of these facilities
  - The systematic curtailing of pesticides and other chemical substances, especially those sold in combination with GMOs
  - The smart use and recycling of water
  - The use of waste for energy, composts etc.
  - The re-organisation of crops based on local conditions

**3.7 Water Resources:** Everywhere in the world where water and its use were privatised, the results have been catastrophic.

- MeRA25 proposes a constitutional amendment that would make the state the sole institution responsible for water and its use. In addition, we will legislate:
  - To abolish the current, infinitely wasteful model of water usage
  - Make the maintenance, use and recycling of water a national administrative priority
  - Introduce desalination facilities in islands where local water resources are inadequate, and which will be powered exclusively through renewable energy

- Institute local water treatment facilities

**3.8 Human & Natural Habitat:** MeRA25 supports the protection of free public spaces, such as the former airport in Elliniko, and opposes the creation of vanity projects.

- MeRA25 will take measures to:
  - Oppose the selling-off of Elliniko, as it constitutes the best example of Greece's fire-sale to the all-consuming oligarchy
  - Acceptance of the political cost of clashing with SMEs who demand the privatisation of public spaces
  - Legislate so that areas such as Mati do not get rebuilt as they were before the fires, as a sign that Greek society learns from its mistakes
  - Finalisation of the forest registry, the use of land, the mapping of forests and marine areas, and the ratification of relevant European treaties for their preservation

**3.9 Animal Rights:** A society that treats animals with cruelty, especially those living in their natural habitat, cannot claim to be civilised or humane.

- MeRA25 will legislate:
  - The criminalisation of tying your dog in your yard, the keeping of animals in cramped conditions, and the feeding of animals with food that is unnatural or unhealthy for their consumption
  - Strengthening, ethically and materially, organisations working for animals, and volunteering that supports the wellbeing of strays
  - Moving away from the killing of living beings for entertainment, and the gradual shift from hunting to hiking, animal photography and other means which allow people to enjoy animals in their natural habitat without harming them

## 4. Education, Culture, Media

At a time when Greece's capitalism is crumbling, it would have been impossible for education and culture not to receive a massive, if unfair, blow, especially since before 2010 they were largely financed by oligarchs who depended on state funds. At the same time, in a country where culture and aesthetics are damaged daily by the oligarch-controlled media, whose preservation is dependent on the liquidity provided by the troika, it is to be expected that the preservation of the Debt Colony will be at the top of the media priorities. On the other hand, the crisis has brought with it a blooming of cultural, extra-systemic actions which bring hope.

**4.1 Education:** MeRA25 believes that the degradation of education in the Debt Colony that is Greece is so deep, and its roots so strong, that no government could bring about the educational revolution that we need.

The numerous pathogens afflicting Greece's educational system require the creation of a long-term, non-partisan national council which will plan, and propose to parliament, regular reforms in the field of education.

- MeRA25 will establish the National Council for Learning and Education (NCLE)
  - NCLE will set the policy outline for education through constant, non-partisan dialogue in which citizens beyond the field of education and political parties will participate
  - To ensure the independent functioning of NCLE, its members will be made up of 300 citizens, with 100 being randomly allotted professional educators (10 kindergarten teachers, 30 from primary schools, 30 from high schools, and 30 from universities), another 100 will be randomly allotted from the general population, and the last 100 will be appointed by each party based on their electoral strength. These 300 citizens will elect the 9 members of the presidency of NCLE, with 3 members coming from each of the three 100-people cohorts.
  
- Alongside NCLE, MeRA25 will support:
  - Democratic and anti-authoritarian schools which teach respect to diversity and universal values, that promote the culture of dialogue and of multiculturalism, constitutional patriotism, collective identity, while promoting the particular identity of each locality and cultural group (especially of minorities)
  - The replacement of passive learning with methods of active learning which maintain the interest of the student
  - School programmes which include course choices from younger ages
  - Theoretical and practical environmental education at all ages
  - Abolishing mandatory homework and all-day schools for all students
  - Extension of “Gymnasium” by 1 year, thus increasing mandatory education by a year
  - Differentiation between general and specialised high schools, with general high schools being open to any citizen over the age of 16
  - The upgrading of professional high schools with more relevant technical education
  - General high schools which prepare students for university studies
  - Entry to universities based on exams given 3-4 times every year, over the two final years of high school
  - The meaningful independence of universities from the state (with the state funding each university based on the number of courses provided and the academic research produced)
  - Research to become the basic priority of all higher education institutions
  - Three fields of education to be made a priority, in which Greece should become a world leader: (a) software coding (with mandatory coding classed from 7<sup>th</sup> grade until university), (b) shipbuilding and maintenance, and (c) green technology
  - Protecting freedom of speech at universities and the right to asylum through the creation of a voluntary student-led Asylum Protection Service
  - Teaching evaluation through peer-to-peer assessment and not questionnaires
  - INTERNAL VOTE OPTION 1 - Conversion of medical and law schools to exclusively postgraduate schools, according to the US and Australian models, with students being obliged to complete another undergraduate program

before joining the Medical or Law Schools. The aim is to relieve 18-year-olds from the social pressure of becoming doctors or lawyers just because they were admitted to these schools, and to open up the possibility for other young people, who hadn't been admitted to these schools at 18 years old, to take the place of those who no longer wish to pursue a medical or legal education.

**4.2 Culture:** MeRA25 focuses not only on “official” culture (opera, theatre, classical music, fine arts, dance, film etc.) which of course must be supported, but also on amateur art and social movements which are often overlooked and underestimated.

MeRA25 does not believe that art is an industry, but instead a cultural contribution which cannot be measured through the harsh prism of the markets. Artists must be free and unfettered in order to serve democracy and society, and culture must be free from any form of nationalism which wishes to label it as exclusively “Greek”, “Italian” etc. Every cultural product is ecumenical: European transnationalism (which is one of the three core principles of our party) is at its best when applied on culture.

The crisis has brought cultural production to its knees. Art, culture, museums, all are being privatised. States are slashing cultural budgets and turn hopefully to the charity of individuals. Across Europe and beyond, art, music, and culture are in danger.

MeRA25, under these harsh conditions, believes in the strengthening of public investments in order to secure the creation of cultural work from the effects of capitalism, as well as of invested political interest. Creators cannot create for free, nor can they depend on the mostly uncultured oligarchs.

- MeRA25 will establish the National Council of Culture (NCC)
  - The NCC will design national policy on culture, just as NCLE will on education
  - To ensure the independent functioning of NCLE, its members will be made-up of 90 citizens, of whom 30 will be allotted randomly from among artistic creators, 30 will be allotted randomly from the general population and 30 will be appointed by each party based on their electoral strength. These 90 citizens will elect the 9 members of the presidency of NCLE, with 3 members coming from each of the three 30-people cohort.
  - NCC will have its own budget, independent of that of the Archaeological Service and of archaeological museums, and will decide on how to invest it on cultural works
- MeRA25 will also establish the Cultural Creators Solidarity Fund (CCSF)
  - Creators will have the possibility to pay their taxes in the form of a sponsorship for a cultural project in a field other than their own, with the precondition that the recipient has not received a similar fund in the previous year
  - CCSF will be administered by creators, on a voluntary basis, who are responsible for the use of these funds without the involvement of the state
- MeRA25 will establish the Organisation for the Promotion of Greek Cultural Products abroad, as well as assisting in securing foreign productions in Greece

- MeRA25 will protect national cultural and artistic production by securing exposure in Greek media through the introduction of guidelines for radio and television that considers both quality and quantity of work (set by the NCC)
- MeRA25 will introduce a 2% special tax on the sales of smartphones, tablets and computers to counterweigh the scourge of piracy that is damaging the livelihoods of cultural creators
- MeRA25 will bring back the standard book price (based on the German model) and will return taxes on books, theatrical and dance performances, opera and concerts to 6%
- MeRA25 will establish artistic and musical high schools throughout Greece, while creating higher education institutions specialised in all arts

#### 4.3 Media: **“Today a country belongs to whomever controls the media”** (*Umberto Eco*)

The Media in Greece have, for decades, been a tool of the oligarchy. At the same time, public television is controlled by the government.

With the aim to make the access to truth and freedom of expression a universal human right, and to convert the media from propaganda machines to channels of information and creativity,

- MeRA25 will establish the National Council for Media (NCM) with the mandate to:
  - Reassess the criteria for the reception of television licences, also based on the quality criteria decided by the NCC
  - The socialisation of ERT which, in order to become a truly public television channel, must be governed by a Board of Directors which will be elected by the NCC and which will report exclusively to that body, without any interference by the government
  - The conversion of the National Audiovisual Archive into an independent public institution, under the jurisdiction of the NCC
  - The reassessment of the contract with Digea which is at the same time a network provider and a content provider

## 5. Healthcare

Just like our education, our healthcare system was majorly hit by the economic crisis. At a time when their finances were collapsing, citizens were called to contribute as much as 50% to the expenses for their medication. At the same time, while the National Health System (NHS) is faltering, and despite the heroic efforts of nurses and doctors, half of all medical students into whose education our state invested, are emigrating abroad, to offer their services to other countries and people. This is yet another completely unsustainable situation which MeRA25 refuses to tolerate.

MeRA25’s vision for healthcare is that of any citizen: public, inclusive, patient-centric and free. From its infrastructure and access to treatment, to our approach to drugs and mental

health, we aim for an equal access, high quality, transparent and effective National Health System.

- MeRA25 will legislate a special tax of 2% on private hospitals and clinics, as well as on sugar-heavy products, processed meats and dairy. These funds will be directed to the NHS in order to co-fund:
  - Call for applications for auxiliary doctor posts to cover basic posts
  - Increase places for nursing students and immediately hire new nursing staff
  - Decrease the percentage of patient financial contribution for medication to pre-2010 levels
  - Reopen health centres shut down by the crisis, and establish new ones
- For First Tier Healthcare, MeRA25 will push for the following institutional reforms:
  - Standard income rates for staff members in mountainous areas, islands and borderlands
  - Panhellenic digital system for the handling of the medical files of all patients
  - Digitalisation of all archives within five years.
  - Evaluation of all doctors every three years, and of all other staff members annually
  - Finalisation of psychiatric reform, with an emphasis on closing all remaining psychiatric hospitals and the investment in societal healthcare
  - Special workshops on basic nutritional knowledge for all staff members
- For Second and Third Tier Healthcare, MeRA25 will move ahead with:
  - Reassessment of entries into medical schools based on the capacity of each school, and the professional needs of the NHS
  - Administrational coordination of military and university hospitals by the Ministry of Health. University and military doctors become fully employed
  - Reassessment of the effectiveness of all hospitals, at all levels
  - Introduce state educational grants for medicine students, to counter the influence of grants from pharmaceuticals and healthcare corporations
  - Modernisation of medical education across Greece
  - Mandatory training in key skills such as “dealing with grief” and working with minorities
  - Creation and promotion of a free package for anonymous tests on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
- Internal Vote: In order to end the scourge of drugs that takes lives, pushes young children to robbing their parents, friends and neighbours, empowering various mafias and gangs, MERA25 will legalise marijuana, creating many small public health units that will anonymously provide heroin to anyone who asks for it, in a safe and hygienic environment, while at the same time strengthening rehabilitation centres for those who choose it. In this way, all drug dealers go bankrupt, there is an end to the meaningless deaths, and we free users from the abuses of dealers, while ending users' abuse of relatives, friends and neighbours.



## 6. From Oligarchy to Democracy

### 6.1 Institutionalisation of Participative National, Regional and Local Councils

MeRA25 will establish Participative National, Regional and Local Councils, similar to the NCLE (see 4.1), the NCC (see 4.2) and the NCM (see 4.3) which will combine appointments by lot and elected representatives, and which will offer a socialisation of governance beyond the reach of oligarchs and political parties.

### 6.2 Reclaiming Basic Governance Structures for the People

During the years of the Debt Colony, a key action has been to essentially abolish Constitutional legality and shift sovereign powers to the troika (and through it, to the local oligarchy) and to lead Greece to its “Kosovification”. One of MeRA25’s priorities is the reclaiming of peoples’ power over the institutions of the state which have been, in the last eight years, delivered to the troika: chief among which are the “Independent” Public Revenue Authority, the “Greek” Financial Stability Fund, the “Greek” Statistics Company, and Greece’s Privatisation Organisation (which is to be transformed into a Development Bank, see Policy 6)

- MeRA25 commits to legislate immediately on the institutional setup of these four institutions
  - Abolition of any involvement of the lenders (e.g. EuroWorking Group, European Commission, European Central Bank, IMF) in the appointment of members of the Board of Governors or their presidents
  - Direct reporting of these institutions to the new participative National Councils and, of course, to the Hellenic Parliament

### 6.3 Constitutional Reform

Article 110 of the Constitution makes reforming the Constitution a painstakingly long and difficult affair, in which citizens play no role whatsoever. Instead, Constitutional Reform is the exclusive right of politicians, their constitutional lawyers, and political parties.

The Constitution must be the central code, the social and political contract, based on which the people decide how society should be governed. In the current Greek Constitution, the Greek people have no right to propose a change to its content.

- MeRA25 will propose the reassessment of article 110 of the Constitution, so that the next Parliament can reform paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of article 110 in order to put the reforming of the Constitution solely in the hands of citizens: by their initiative and following a referendum

### 6.4 Local Self-Governance

Local self-governance is the area where direct democracy is most applicable and where citizens can have the most effective participation in order to effectively improve the quality of their own lives. Environmental protection, public health, social solidarity, public spaces



for entertainment, sport and cultural events are all topics which determine the quality of life of citizens and hence are areas where they should have an active and effective say.

MeRA25 encourages the decentralisation of governance of municipalities and local communities. To this end:

- MeRA25 suggests the redesigning of municipalities and communities in order to allow for the effective application of self-governance

Certain topics which involve economies of scale can be determined by establishing cross-municipal councils with special powers and mandates.

- MeRA25 will change the taxation on properties into a municipal tax which will be allocated entirely to local municipalities that will set the tax rates based on the principle of progressive taxation.
- MeRA25 will establish local councils which will decide on the use of the municipal budget, as well as the administration and maintenance of public spaces

Social services of municipalities have a powerful role to play in the maintenance and development of our social web.

- MeRA25 will establish institutions that will aid citizens at the local level, in their own neighbourhoods, without social stigma

As for the electoral process:

- MeRA25 will introduce proportional representation in Municipal and Regional Council election, which will then elect mayors and Regional Governors

## 6.5 Parliamentary and Corporate Legal Immunity – Legal System

- MeRA25 will demand the immediate abolition of parliamentary legal immunity and of the legal protection of current and past ministers

It is unacceptable that citizens should enjoy less legal protections than a member of parliament and a member of parliament less than a minister. Members of parliament and ministers should be treated equally and as exactly what they are: citizens like anyone else.

- MeRA25 will establish the Agency for the Fight Against Political and Corporate Crime, which will operate separately to the executive powers and will be enhanced with powerful technological tools

No legal system can function when each trial takes place two or three times. In this way, we are making a mockery out of justice and especially minor courts, while overbearing on the higher ones to the point where they are incapacitated.

- MeRA25 will seriously limit the right to ask for appeal

## 6.6 Human Rights

**Matters of Public Order:** MeRA25 will replace the terrorist laws with a modern framework for the successful fight against organised crime with respect to the rights of the accused, including the right to a fair trial

**Minorities:** MeRA25 will a) immediately ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe, b) guarantee the dignified access of Roma people to housing programmes as well as access to education, healthcare and work, without stigma or discrimination and c) for the minorities of Thrace, the creation of an electoral system which will allow the election of muftis on behalf of the electoral body of the minority. Finally, the abolition of the judicial responsibilities of muftis and the centralisation of all legal matters under the Greek state and its legal system for all citizens of the country, regardless of minority identity or sex.

**Penal Matters and Prisons:** MeRA25 will work for the containment of hyper-penalisation of small offenses, as well as of the criminalisation of misdemeanours. We will explore the radical reform of the prison system, including the introduction of alternatives to penitentiary punishment and the introduction of rehabilitation systems.

**Conscientious Objectors:** Until the abolition of the mandatory military service, MeRA25 will equalise the option of social service to that of a military service in terms of time spent serving, and will put it under the jurisdiction of a separate state agency and not of the Ministry of Defence. There will also be an immediate cease of legal persecution for any conscientious objector, and all penalties will be cancelled.

**Sexual and Gender Rights:** MeRA25 recognises the right to a civil wedding for all citizens regardless of gender, with full rights to adoption. We will also continue the effort to improve legal procedures for the recognition of their gender identity, and improve the ease with which state documents can be changed to reflect one's gender

**Fighting gender violence:** MeRA25 will establish a special department in the Ministry for Citizens' Protection which will receive reports from citizens and will be responsible for dealing with matters of homophobic or sexual harassment both from other citizens or from police forces, and will publish an annual report on the proper implementation of the legal framework on relevant matters. We will broaden the Anti-racism law to include anti-sexist, anti-transphobic, anti-homophobic laws to deal with the corresponding types of harassment and attacks. We will establish a Public Checking Mechanism for the Ministry of Education, staffed by expert social workers, who will have access to schools and universities in order to deal with cases of offensive language and behaviour of teachers.

**Citizens with Disabilities:** MeRA25 will unify all disability grants into one, and will reform the special social pension into an institution which will allow for a dignified life for all recipients. There will also be improved access to educational centres that cater to the needs of students with special needs, within public schools (with specialised teachers, entry courses, second educator in class etc.).

## 7. Greece in Europe

### 7.1 2015 Will Not Be Repeated!

No logical economic or social policy (e.g. the reduction in VAT rates) stands a chance if its implementation is made conditional on Eurogroup approval. Whichever Greek government goes to the Eurogroup with responsible proposals will hit the wall of the creditors' lack of interest in Greece's recovery. The creditors' functionaries care deeply only about one thing: How to reproduce their new power grid and rent-seeking practices at a Pan-European level, based on the new structures and 'rules' they constructed during the past decade in the wake of the troika and the Eurogroup.

The 2015 experience will not be repeated. The SEVEN POLICIES will be introduced to Greece's Parliament without any prior negotiations with the Eurogroup. And when the threats begin to be issued by Brussels, Frankfurt and Berlin, the answer they will receive is: CONSTRUCTIVE DISOBEDIENCE! This means:

- Immediate implementation of the SEVEN POLICIES
- While the Eurogroup refuses to accept our SEVEN POLICIES as Greece's basic development plan, the Greek government will follow General De Gaulle's 'empty chair' policy: it will refuse to send a representative to the European Council or to the Eurogroup. Meanwhile,
  - All repayment to the IMF, ECB and ESM-EFSF are suspended
  - Domestic transactions continue unimpeded by means of debit/credit cards, web-banking and the activated *Public Non-bank Payments System* (See Policy 5 above)
  - Existing euro liquidity will be used judiciously to import essentials and to support Greece's exporters

Thus, Greece will be kept within the eurozone as long as it is necessary before "official" Europe chooses, once and for all, between: (A) accepting the SEVEN POLICIES as the basis of Greece's recovery within the eurozone, or (B) the huge cost of Grexit (that will be incurred if they insist on their rejection of our SEVEN POLICIES).

While (A) would be mutually advantageous, there is no guarantee that Europe's political establishment will act in the interests of a majority of Europeans. From Greece's perspective, however, the implementation of the SEVEN POLICIES is our best strategy *whatever 'official' Europe's response might be* (see next section).

### 7.2 Our Position on the Euro

Greece should never have entered the eurozone. The euro's design guaranteed the eruption of banking crises that (in the absence of institutional shock absorbers) were always going to turn the European Union into an iron cage of self-reinforcing austerity. Behind its iron bars, forged by Europe's self-serving pseudo-technocracy, a relentless class war and the ritual

humiliation of Parliaments were inevitable. The idea of Europe as a democratic realm of shared prosperity was, therefore, doomed the moment the ink dried on the Maastricht Treaty.

However, once inside the eurozone, the cost of exiting is very large, both for the exiting country and for Europe at large – as its disintegration threatens the Union with a postmodern version of 1930s-like deflation. This is why DiEM25 has produced an economic and social agenda framework, our EUROPEAN GREEN NEW DEAL, whose purpose is to demonstrate how existing institutions can be redeployed, within the existing legal framework, to civilise the eurozone – to turn it from an iron cage into an area of recovery and green development.

DiEM25's EUROPEAN GREEN NEW DEAL will be put to European voters, across Europe, in the next European Parliament elections. In the meantime, as far as Greece is concerned, our position is simple: The extension until... 2060 of our debt bondage (which is what 'official' Europe is proposing) is Greece's worst fate; a prospect far, far worse than the threat of Grexit.

Political parties that have capitulated to Brussels' and Frankfurt's directives (e.g. SYRIZA, New Democracy, PASOK) may disagree with one another as to how therapeutic these directives are<sup>2</sup> but, nevertheless, agree that the worst possible outcome for Greece is an exit (or expulsion) from the euro. Other parties (e.g. KKE, Popular Unity) consider Grexit the optimal solution. MeRA25 disagrees with both of these rankings: Grexit is neither the optimal nor the worst possible outcome for Greece!

More precisely, we rank the three potential outcomes as follows:

1. Our most preferred outcome would be the implementation of the SEVEN POLICIES within the eurozone (while progressive European forces cooperate to implement DiEM25's EUROPEAN GREEN NEW DEAL across Europe)
2. Second best (or worst!) would be the implementation of the SEVEN POLICIES followed by the expulsion of Greece from the eurozone by the unbending Deep European Establishment
3. Our worst scenario, indeed our nightmare, is the perpetual reproduction of Greece's debt bondage within the eurozone, as guaranteed by the current policies and political system.

### 7.3 How the Troika-Dominated Political Establishment Will React

"Here they go again!", we already hear them mock us. "They want to take us back to 2015. Another Kougi, another Zalogo."<sup>3</sup> Another supposedly heroic negotiation that risks Greece's

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<sup>2</sup> For example, some in New Democracy and PASOK, even within SYRIZA, consider the implementation of the troika's directives as the best available strategy for Greece's recovery. Others (e.g. the majority of those who remain in SYRIZA) consider it a necessary evil.

<sup>3</sup> Kougi and Zalogo refer to two episodes in the Greeks' resistance to the Ottoman Empire, well before the Greek Revolution of 1821. On both occasions, the rebels met their heroic deaths, after having lost battles against the Epirus-based occupying forces.

place in Europe.” They will call us naïve, if not treacherous. They will accuse us of wanting to put Greece in “jeopardy”, yet again.

However, they forget that:

- Kougi, Zalogo, the resistance to the Nazis in the 1940s, the Athens Polytechnic uprising of 1973 – none of those acts “put Greece in jeopardy”. It was the Ottoman & Nazi occupations, the Colonels’ Junta, that did!
- Clashing with the troika and the oligarchy does not imperil Greece. Succumbing to their ludicrous tax rates and their austerity, accepting their annulment of workers’ rights, yielding to their Bankruptocracy, nodding to their narrative of the Bailout’s end (just because the troika will change its name) – that’s what imperils our country and its people!

The worst kind of adventurism is, to sum up, the ossification of Greece’s debt bondage!

Greece’s Triangle of Sin (Developers-Bankers-Media Owners), and the political establishment representing their interests, will lash out against us. Their loathing will, however, prove our strength.

- We understand that the loans afforded by the troika (directly or indirectly, though the money markets) are essential to them, as they draw their power from them
- We recognise that the troika process underpins the mechanics of their power, erected upon our debt bondage
- We sense their need to demonise CONSTRUCTIVE DISOBEDIENCE so as to save themselves while sinking the country – like stupid viruses who kill the organism in which they live
- We look sympathetically upon the urge of those who have surrendered to hate those who refuse to capitulate.

For this reason, stoically, without fear, passion or loathing, we welcome *their* loathing, *their* hatred, *their* contempt as omens that we are on the right path.

#### 7.4 We Do Not Stay in Europe. We Are Europe!

MeRA25 has emerged from the flesh and bones of the first authentically Pan-European internationalist progressive movement: DiEM25. As a radically Europeanist party, we highlight the anti-Europeanism of those who identify Europe with the Unholy Alliance (of Europe’s Deep Establishment and the rent-seeking pseudo-Technocracy) that is damaging Europe daily.

Those who wrap themselves in the European flag, before threatening us Greeks with all sorts of awful punishments if we dare legislate our SEVEN POLICIES, must surely have a terrible view of... Europe! The Europe of its peoples, that DiEM25 is part of, is as one with us and struggles tooth and nail against their Unholy Alliance.

MeRA25 will not accept policies that sacrifice the Greek people in the name of supposed European interests. Nor will we propose policies that aim at benefitting the Greeks at the expense of other peoples, in Europe or beyond.

- Our policies will always be in sync with those DiEM25 proposes in the interests of all European peoples – policies that will allow the Greeks to breathe in a European Union that recovers socially and morally
- As an internationalist front, MeRA25 sees the interests of the people of Greece as fully in sync with the needs of people in need from across the globe. To this effect, MeRA25 will *never* accept European policies that cause Europe’s humanism to evaporate and injure the Greeks’ soul – e.g. the scandalous EU-Turkey Treaty on the treatment of refugees being washed up on Greek islands.

Many argue that the disintegration of this wildly authoritarian European Union is the solution. It is not! However flimsy its foundations, authoritarian its ways, and classist its policies may be, the disintegration of the European Union boosts bigotry, reinforces deflationary forces, and strengthens the most regressive political forces on our continent. This is why, today more than ever, radical democrats must also think and act like radical Europeanists.

Others claim that, whatever we may think, the disintegration of this European Union is inevitable. They may be right. The European Union will be democratised or it will disintegrate! In both cases, Greece’s suffocation must end. Greece’s democrats will work in unison with progressive democrats from across Europe whether the European Union disintegrates or not.

It is this Pan-European, radical democratic project that MeRA25, today, makes its own by adopting DiEM25’s strategy of: IN & AGAINST – In the European Union. **Against this** European Union!

## 7.5 The Proposals of MeRA25-DiEM25 and of “European Spring” on the Euro Crisis and the Democratisation of Europe

Progressive, Europeanist democrats must answer a simple question: why is the European Idea dying? The answer is simple: the lack of good quality jobs for young people, which forces them to abandon their homes or to accept a life without ambition and a feeling that (as Schäuble himself admitted) democracy cannot be allowed to change anything in Europe.

Thus, whoever wishes to save Europe from the Establishment that is fragmenting it and the new Nationalist International which wishes for its disintegration, needs to provide solutions for the immediate creation of millions of good quality jobs and for the democratisation of the EU. DiEM25, of which MeRA25 is a part, has proposed such policies in the European New Deal which has also become part of the Manifesto of European Spring, our single, pan-European electoral list with which MeRA25-DiEM25 will participate in the European elections of May 2019. In short, our three basic proposals are as follows:

- In the short term, a pan-European investment programme of 500 million euros annually which will be injected into Green Transition across Europe. The money will

come from the European Investment Bank and the issuing of necessary bonds which the European Central Bank will guarantee. The projects to be awarded the investment will be selected and supervised by a new European institution created with this mandate

- Agreement by the European Council that the profits of the European System of Central Banks will be used to finance a pan-European programme for the fight against poverty
- The launch of a pan-European constitutional process from the peripheries and country capitals to Brussels, with the aim of combining all proposals of citizens and experts into a single European Constitution for a Democratic European Federation: the only alternative to the painful and dangerous disintegration of today's oligarchic and deeply undemocratic EU.

## 8. Greece in the World

Greece's relationship with the world has, since ancient times, been of imperative importance for the development of Hellenism and its position as a global cultural power. Hellenism was strengthened every time it was in dialogue and exchange (cultural, trading, habitational) with other peoples and cultures.

The politics of MeRA25 regarding Greece's position in the world keeps this tradition as a compass, and moves along the axis of our Political Charter which, among others, also mentions our vision for a Greece and a Europe that is:

- Peaceful, resisting destabilising forces, the sirens of militarism and all kinds of expansionism upon European soil and beyond; while positing cultural engagement and exchanges as the appropriate tool for de-escalating geopolitical tensions
- Open, because it appreciates that walls, barbed wire and electrified border fences are inconsistent with proud, confident countries
- Social, in that its members judge our society's civility in terms of how it treats the weakest citizens, the 'other', the 'different'
- Ecological, setting Green Global Transition in energy, transport and material production as one of its foreign policy aims
- Decentralised & Pluralistic, a Greece and a Europe of diverse regions, ethnicities, philosophical views of the good society, languages, cultures, identities of persons and groups

### 8.1 Two Basic Principles of Foreign Policy

The two basic principles of MeRA25 for Foreign Policy are:

1. We never equate governments with a country's people and always counter aggressive and authoritarian governments with attacks of friendship towards their people, while trying to strengthen democratic and progressive movements in those countries, thus weakening regimes and governments that threaten their own people as much as Greece.
2. We recognise the right to self-determination for all communities and states, but differentiate this right from expansionist and irredentist rhetoric and policies which



endanger peace and good neighbourly relations between countries and their people.

## 8.2 Greek-Turkish Relations and Broader Relations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Turkish regimes create illusory tensions as a diversion for internal problems of their state. Erdogan's authoritarian regime has been no exception. It is our duty to show calm without feeding the nationalist narrative of the Turkish regime, which misleads large numbers of the Turkish people against its own interests and of course against the interest of our country. Through this prism, any anti-Turkish voice from Greek sources, state-led or not, is a gift for the Turkish regime which uses it to further reinforce its narrative.

MeRA25's stance is that anything that damages the work of Turkish democrats, damages Greece. With this in mind, it is destructive for the interests of our country to refuse any form of cooperation with Turkey which could benefit the Turkish people and expose them to a reality where our peoples can be partners and friends.

For example, the proposal for a joint oil extraction operation with Israel in the Eastern Mediterranean (at a time when the slaughter of the slow national cleansing of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories is ongoing), which side-lines Turkey, gives Erdogan the right to present Greece to the Turkish people as an enemy, thus enhancing the tensions in the Aegean.

MeRA24 notes that the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean are increasing worryingly, and not only because of Turkey's usual strategy. The Trump administration has targeted the collapse of Iran at a period when, unfortunately, the only countries that can remain operation and reactive in the region are Turkey and Iran.

MeRA25 considers our association with Israel and American oil companies, while side-lining Turkey and other countries of the region, misguided and unnecessarily provocative. This stance would also subtract from our international standing as a pacifying force in the region and undermine our negotiations for our maritime border with Turkey, and the matter of Cyprus.

In addition, MeRA25 concludes that even if there are deposits of oil and gas in the Eastern Mediterranean, their extraction would damage Greece in a number of ways: (a) it would increase tensions in the region, (b) it will open a source of income for no one other than the local oligarchy, who will ensure to Hoover up anything left behind by the American multinationals, (c) it will whet the appetite of our lenders who will demand the immediate repayment of our debt, and (d) it will have dire consequences for the environment, and will delay further our transition from fossil fuels. With this in mind:

- **INTERNAL VOTE OPTION 1** MeRA25 is against the extraction and co-exploitation, together with problematic regimes and multinational corporations, of the hydrocarbon in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, the Cretan or the Ionian Sea. Instead, MeRA25 is dedicated to economic growth through green technologies and innovations in the field of modern technologies in cooperation with all peoples of the region.



### 8.3 Cyprus

MeRA25 suggests that in order to tear down the last wall in Europe, it is imperative that the Turkish and British armies leave the island permanently. Cyprus must, finally, be given to the Cypriots: whether of Greek, Turkish, Armenian or any other ethnic or cultural background.

MeRA25 notes that there are three factors which obstruct the resolution of the Cypriot question: 1) The Turkish Deep State 2) The imperialist views of the USA and UK which follow a divide and conquer strategy 3) The misguided sense of superiority of a part of the Greek-Cypriot population which refuses to share power with the Turkish-Cypriots

- MeRA25 is in favour of a federal resolution to the Cypriot question, with a political union of the island that would entail common political formations, made up of members of both communities with a common political vision and agenda. This would also help the two communities come together politically, beyond their ethnic and religious differences

### 8.4 Macedonia

MeRA25 notes that:

1. Ancient Macedonian was, obviously, absolutely Greek – as Greek as Sparta, Thebes, Athens and Ephesus
2. The geographical location of Ancient Macedonia is today not entirely Greek, but is instead split between three nations (with the largest part being located in Greece)
3. For centuries, from Byzantine and Ottoman times, the Slavic settlers of Ancient Macedonia defined themselves as Macedonians (with their largest population living today in FYROM)
4. 40% of the citizens of FYROM are ethnically and culturally Albanian and do not speak the Slavic dialect of the majority
5. The only thing stopping a civil war in FYROM, which would also be very dangerous for Greece, is the principle that Albanian and Slavic citizens both consider themselves Macedonian
6. The right to self-determination as Macedonian does not translate into a right for FYROM, which only occupies a small part of what was Ancient Macedonia, to equate itself with Macedonia, thus monopolising a name which is Greek
7. The right to self-determination as “Macedonian” is given to anyone who lives in the geographic area that used to be Ancient Macedonia, but irredentism (which leads to expansionism) is condemnable
  - INTERNAL VOTE OPTION 1 MeRA25 welcomes the composite name of the Republic of Northern Macedonia as an agreement that is advantageous for all peoples of the region, including Greeks. MeRA25 calls on Skopje to immediately cease any attempt to monopolize the concept of Macedonia and condemns any form of irredentism or a hysterical, nationalist narrative. At the same time, MeRA25 will oppose the hysterical nationalist narratives in

Greece that divide our people and that do not allow us to ally with the people of FYROM, despite our common interests.

## 8.5 Defence Spending

In our geographic area, the defence of our country is a matter of vital importance. However, it is also vitally important that our country discards the shackles of Debt Colonisation which threatens it with social and financial desertification. This means that maintaining our defence spending at 2% of GDP is absolutely not sustainable.

The size of our defence budget must be proportional to certain parameters, such as our strategic goals, the geopolitical situation we find ourselves in, and of course the financial capabilities of the country.

In order to cut our defence expenditure, we must strengthen the role of the European Defence Agency and other similar institutions, in order to relieve the stress on member states, and especially those of the periphery. There is also a need for the formation of a common defence policy for all members of the EU, coupled with a realistic plan for its implementation.

- MeRA25 suggests responsible constructive disobedience: the smart use of our veto in the EU and NATO, for as long as the “great powers” refuse to guarantee our borders

## 8.6 Military Spending

From the perspective of the defensive capabilities of our country, and in general the use of human and material resources, the institution of a mandatory military service is utterly irrational. This is, after all, the reason why mandatory military service has been abolished in almost all developed nations. It is time for it to be abolished in Greece too, so that officers can stop acting as baby sitters for recruits who are serving against their will, and our armed forces can concentrate on developing smaller, but much more efficient and capable units.

- INTERNAL VOTE OPTION 1 MeRA25 will abolish Greece's mandatory military service, while creating attractive new jobs and educational opportunities for young men and women in the armed forces, in order to balance quantitative losses with qualitative improvements.

## 8.7 Migrants in Greece

MeRA25 notes that:

1. The differentiation between migrants and refugees is outdated and unacceptable for a civilised country, especially one with our ancient culture of hospitality: when our fellow humans are choosing to endanger their lives and the lives of their loved ones, under atrocious conditions, in order to get to our shores, then it makes absolutely no difference whether they did it in order to avoid a bullet in a war, or starvation in poverty

2. The agreement between the EU and Turkey is part of the migration problem, not its solution. It makes it impossible for political refugees and people in great need to be registered as such, and instead creates bureaucratic hurdles for them and those who are trying to help them.
3. Greek society reacted to the humanitarian drama of the last years with a wave of solidarity towards refugees. However, local communities are in despair, and a small part of society has grabbed the chance to abuse this situation in order to obtain power and influence, through the cultivation of racism and xenophobia
4. On the one hand we have the planned pauperisation of these people, as a deterrent against future arrivals, and on the other there is an institutionalised lack of solidarity towards the people of Chios, Lesbos and other island, whose islands have been turned to prisons
5. A country like Greece, whose history is woven with the experience of being a refugee, an immigrant, and a proud member of the Diaspora, has a responsibility to create immediate infrastructure in order to welcome the refugees who already live here.
  - MeRA25 will create a pan-Hellenic decentralised network of solidarity and support towards refugees, with the creation of many, small, humane for the hosting and servicing of refugees, in order to properly welcome these thousands of people who seek asylum, giving our islands space to breathe and end their status as concentration camps
  - MeRA25 will legislate the Advisory Assembly of Refugees (AAR) which will be made up of their own elected members in order to give them an official and powerful voice in society, based on democratic procedures for which the Greek state will exercise overview.
  - MeRA25 will legislate the granting of work/residence visas to anyone who has spent two years in our country as a worker, to anyone who has spent ten years without working, to all children who have been born in the country. After two years of possessing a work/residence visa, these people will also be eligible to apply for Greek citizenship
  - MeRA25 will withdraw from the unacceptable EU-Turkey Deal, which is condemned by international law, and will from now on exercise veto to any similar decision. We will also oppose any military “solution” to the refugee problem (e.g. bombing Syria)

## 8.8 Diaspora

Greece has sent away its children many years over the course of its history, by pushing them towards emigration. Today, after some decades that made us believe that those days were behind us, the regime of the Debt Colony is urging thousands of young people abroad, to enrich foreign economies and societies, while contributing to the desertification of Greece. The least that their homeland should do for these people is to ensure them certain political rights.

- MeRA25 will legislate so that the fifty MP seats which are given to the party that comes first in elections as a “bonus”, are instead allocated as representatives of the

single constituency of the Diaspora. These fifty seats will be divided into sub-constituencies based on the number of Greek voters present in the following eight geographical regions: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, South America, Australia-New Zealand, Asia, Africa.

#### 8.9 Relations of Greece with the Rest of the World

Greece should have a multi-focal foreign affairs strategy. As an indivisible part of Europe, Greece must create cultural, ecological, and trading/business relations with all the peoples of the world, based on the principle of transnationalism: the only antidote to globalisation and isolationism.

## 9. Epilogue: Dignity and Prosperity Go Together!

Today we live in a Debt Colony. The only ones who benefit from this regime are the parasitic, nepotist oligarchy which supports – and is dependent on – our lenders, and that will do anything to extend our colonial subjugation as the means through which to ensure their own power over a people that they betray through anti-social policies and additional loans with which they further indebt it.

The mainstream parties of the Right and the Left sacrifice on the altar of “compromise” all of their ideals and principles: both New Democracy’s neoliberalism, and the Keynesian Marxism of SYRIZA are equally humiliated while they continue to cooperate with the troika.

At MeRA25, we meet from different paths, as a broad alliance of democrats from the Left, from the Greens, from the Liberals, from the Feminists, with a common goal: a single priority, above all else, that our country has to abolish the regime of Debt Colonisation, and the pathetic feature it produces for our country and its people.

History teaches us that the best moments of Hellenism have been at the zenith of its major crises: at that moment when all seemed lost, Greeks find the courage to shake off the fear of defeat, to resurrect hope and embrace a responsible disobedience against those who do them wrong.

With this in mind, and the realistic and innovative Electoral Programme of MeRA25 in our hands, we will give our electoral fight against the only real enemy of Greece: the desperation and disappointment which roots its citizens to the sofa. Our vision for our country is our effort to rekindle the hope that has brought Greeks to the streets, and to victory, for centuries.