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socialist educational international

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Resolution on European Elections 2019

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With the European Elections coming up in 2019, many IFM-SEI organisations in the European Region will be facing a crossroads next year. Against the background of a rising tide of populism across Europe and losses for socialist and socialist democratic parties on a national level, there is a growing concern that the European Elections in 2019 could see a dramatic shift to the right. While the European Union is by no means perfect, we are much more able to advocate for a united, peaceful and socioeconomically conscious Europe if the left parties maintain or increase their seating within the European Parliament. We acknowledge that the outcome of the European Elections could also have consequences on the world stage.

We recognise that democracy and participation is much more than going to the ballot box every few years and we are seeing a shift in society towards movement-based politics and alternative ways of engagement with democracy in the digitalised age¹. Therefore we should be encouraging alternative forms of exercising democracy such as direct action, online activism, participating in demonstrations or involvement in social movements or group work, in addition to voting and traditional party politics. Especially youth organisations and the opportunities they provide for young people to organise, fight collectively for their interests and experience solidarity must be regarded as key institutions with respect to the development of a democracy that is actively practiced and lived. Only with such a multidimensional approach can we challenge the current neoliberal agenda and create a socialist society.

The decisions of our elected representatives and policy changes affect children and young people in the same way as adults. Therefore they should also have the right to have a say on their representatives and have an active voice in democracy. We believe that young people are capable of taking decisions over their political life and should be able to engage in different forms of democracy. Democratic, political and civil education is essential to give all people the tools and knowledge to engage with democratic structures; we believe this should be compulsory in formal education in order to raise the engagement and interest in politics and democracy at a younger age. Civil society and youth organisations should complement this education through non-formal programmes.

¹ <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/young-people-are-less-engaged-in-both-traditional-and-non-traditional-forms-of-politics-than-older-generations/>



While democracy extends to so much more than voting, we see the need to engage young voters from the EU27 countries in the upcoming European Elections. We would like to take this opportunity to launch a campaign on voter engagement in the run up to the European Elections not only with a focus on the elections themselves, but also on voting on local and national level for IFM-SEI members in countries inside and outside of the EU27.

This campaign would also lobby for:

1. Compulsory democratic, political and civil education in schools
2. Non-formal education on democracy, politics and civil engagement led by civil society and youth organisations
3. Votes at 16 (or lower)
4. Awareness of alternative forms of democracy

As an umbrella organisation for socialist youth movements, IFM-SEI should take a leading role in promoting our vision of democracy and democratic engagement at a defining point in European and world politics.

This resolution commits to the creation of a campaign on voter engagement and democratic participation in the run up to the European Elections 2019.

Submitted by IFM-SEI Presidium

