

## **The Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left**

The Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) is the fifth largest group in the European Parliament with 41 MEPs - and acts as a forum for cooperation of left-wing parties. The Group says it wants to build "Another Europe: a social, peaceful, democratic, feminist, ecological Europe in solidarity with all the peoples of the world."



As a political group GUE/NGL was established at the beginning of the fourth parliamentary term in 1994. But, before this date parties to the left of the Socialist Group had worked together in other formations. With the fourth enlargement of the EU to Austria, Finland and Sweden in January 1995, representatives from leftist parties in the Nordic countries joined the group. Consequently, the group now combines two subgroups: the European United Left and the Nordic Green Left.

In the last EP elections, June 2004, almost 9 million people voted for GUE/NGL parties. At present the party has 41 MEPs from 14 Member States. In terms of size the German and Italian national delegations are most important with seven MEPs respectively, followed by the Czech delegation with six MEPs. Other delegations vary between one and four MEPs. One committee president and four committee vice-presidents are from the group, as well as one of Parliament's 14 vice presidents.

The membership represents 16 different European communist, left and socialist parties. The Group also has four associate member parties, two of which are from non-EU member states Norway and Switzerland. The diversity can lead to different approaches over some questions. For the group it is important that each component party retains its own identity and policies while pooling their efforts in pursuit of common political objectives.

### **Europe can build bridges between civilisations**

The chairman of the group is the French Communist Francis Wurtz, an MEP since 1979. Elected to the post in 1999 he is now on his second legislative term as chairman.

"Europe can, and must be, about something other than cutbacks and unemployment. In an increasingly interdependent world, Europe, with the right political will, has the capacity to change the circumstances of ordinary people for the better," says Mr Wurtz. He also thinks Europe can play an essential role in the international arena, contributing to the building of bridges between civilisations. "But to enable such an ambition to become credible would imply breaking free from those who, while behaving as masters of the world, are actually leading it to the brink of the clash. And it also implies the implementation of the same international law in all states, without exception, particularly in the Middle East - an open wound, and an endless source of the poison of despair."