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Lead-up to Presidential Elections 2017

"Citizens' Primaries": the Authority declares itself incompetent to address ACDN's questions

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The Authority in charge of "Citizens' Primaries" did receive ACDN's message of 11 December, but refused it as being outside its area of competence.

Here is our message:

Saintes, 11 December 2016

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Considering that

- ▶ Nuclear weapons represent the gravest danger to human beings, including French citizens;
- ▶ Their abolition, i.e. their banning and total elimination under strict and effective control, is the only solution that can seriously end this danger;

Recognising that

- ▶ In the coming days the UN General Assembly will pass a resolution convening a conference in 2017 open to all States and to representatives of civil society for the purpose of creating a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons;
This resolution (L41) has already been adopted in the UN's disarmament committee, on 27 October 2016, with 123 votes in favour, 38 against, and 16 abstentions;
- ▶ France voted against;
- ▶ Over 100 French MPs and senators, disavowing that policy, have so far signed an Appeal for a Referendum on the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and a Parliamentary Bill to organize a "shared initiative" referendum (parliament and citizenry) on the question: « Do you want France to negotiate and ratify with all the States concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective? »;
- ▶ The signatories of the Appeal and Bill represent all the parties of the left and thus have made, on this particular issue, a "United Left" in Parliament;
To use the referendum path on a matter of such import is in full conformity with the declared will of most parties, including the Parti Socialiste, to democratize public life;
- ▶ No press organs, no mass media, and no candidates for the Socialist Party's primaries have made mention of this parliamentary initiative, despite its unprecedented character;

Considering that

- ▶ This silence is a bad omen for the campaign, as once again the President's role as "atomic button-presser" is very likely to be excluded from the presidential debates, through a tacit agreement between right and left;

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- ▶ Thus France's citizens and taxpayers will, despite themselves, remain accomplices in the preparation of crimes against humanity, accomplices in their possible execution, and possible victims of a retaliatory strike if not a preventive strike;
- ▶ The question absolutely needs to be raised in the Primaries debate.

Observing nevertheless that

- ▶ The so-called "Citizens' Primaries" invite all citizens to take part as voters, provide they declare that they recognize "what they understand as the values of the Left and of the ecologists"; yet it is not clear what those values consist of or where one can learn to understand them;
- ▶ On the other hand, no individuals recognizing these as their values are able to stand as candidates - unless they have Parti Socialiste membership cards or are presented by another of the parties on the committee, not even if supported by an NGO, not even if accepting the sponsorship conditions set by the PS for its own members;

ACDN asks the Authority for Citizens' Primaries, in the interests of coherence and clarity, to:

- Rename these primaries as "Socialist Primaries" or "PS Primaries", since their purpose, according to article 6.4 of the party's statutes, is to "designate the socialist candidate for the next presidential election" and their operating rules were defined solely by the National Council of the PS on 2 October 2016;
- ▶ Alternatively, to decide and announce that citizens without party affiliation who accept the values of the left and the ecologists are authorized to be candidates, under the same conditions as the PS members;
- ▶ Inform the validated candidates, whoever they are, that their commitment (formulated thus: "I undertake to publicly support the candidate that is designated as a result of the Primaries and to be involved in that person's campaign") does not imply that after the primaries they would have to support even a candidate who refused to have France participate in the process for abolishing nuclear weapons, or that they can themselves commit to retain France's nuclear strike force as François Hollande had done in his 60th point of 2012, let alone modernize it. That programme, contrary to international law, would also infringe the Declaration of Human Rights, the French Constitution, and the motto of the Republic, and consequently would not conform with the values of the left and the ecologists.

Awaiting your reply, messieurs Mesdames, we affirm our attachment to the values of the Republic: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

for ACDN,
Jean-Michel Audoire, Aude Labat, Jean-Marie Matagne, Patrick Moquay

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Reply from the Chairman of the Authority for Citizens' Primaries

Sent: 12 December

Monsieur,

On behalf of Authority for Citizens' Primaries I acknowledge receipt of your mail.

But it is not part of the responsibilities of the Authority to consider the content of candidates' programmes.

Yours faithfully,

Thomas Clay(Chairman(
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Reply from the President of ACDN

Sent: 12 December

Monsieur le Président,

I thank you for your diligence.

You say that "it is not part of the responsibilities of the Authority to consider the content of candidates' programmes.", and we agree.

But it does fall into your domain to make useful clarifications of the rules for these primaries, and therefore to respond to several of the questions raised by our letter. Namely:

1. What does the word "citizen" mean in "Citizens' Primaries"? Does it mean that citizens as citizens can participate only as voters and not as candidates? Do candidates have to necessarily have either a PS membership card or be designated by one of the other parties on the committee?
2. If the winner of the Primaries does not belong to the PS, what does the word "socialist" mean in the expression "designate the socialist candidate for the presidential election"
3. What should be understood by the formula "recognize what they understand as the values of the Left and of the ecologists", a matter which is not spelt out anywhere on the Primaries site? Will citizens - and firstly candidates (one presumes) - who wish to take part in the primaries be committing themselves to these when they sign the list of participants?
4. What is the meaning of the commitment formula required of each candidate: "I undertake to publicly support the candidate that is designated as a result of the Primaries and to be involved in that person's campaign"? Will the defeated candidates be required to be involved in the winner's campaign whatever its programme is? If, for example,

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the programme includes objectives that are illegal, even unconstitutional, will they be forced to support it all the same?

5. The 60th point of candidate Hollande's programme in 2012 was of this kind. As we have just said, as I think I demonstrated adequately in my Request for the Invalidation of candidates Hollande et Sarkozy in 2012, it was contrary to international law, to the Declaration of Human Rights, the French Constitution, the motto of the Republic, and consequently to the values of the left and the ecologists. Can you confirm that such a commitment could in no circumstance be adopted by any candidate for the current "Citizens' Primaries"?

Those, Monsieur, are questions which we as citizens are asking, and which numerous citizens likely to take part in the primaries certainly share with us, questions which I could also put if I were a virtual candidate in these Primaries. They call for a reply, and I thank the Authority in advance for that.

Yours sincerely,

Jean-Marie Matagne(
President of ACDN