



# THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

## OUR VIEW

**DRAFT**

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## **THE IDEA UNITING EUROPE**

The idea of uniting Europe is not new. In its history, smaller regional empires and alliances have been successful, such as the Danish Empire in Scandinavia (13th-15th centuries), the Habsburg Empire in Central Europe, the Lithuanian-Polish Empire in Eastern Europe, and the Association of Hanseatic Cities, which was essentially a free trade agreement between the Baltic cities, or the Union of Kalmar. These empires or alliances were able to survive for centuries, until they eventually disintegrated as a result of changes in political power or in the interests that formed the alliance. However, the desire for the unification of Europe has not died down. We can list such aspirations from almost every century, but from the point of view of today's European Union we can perhaps mention Victor Hugo, who raised the idea of a United Europe at the 1849 Paris Peace Conference.

The true European dream, inspired by Goethe or Victor Hugo, only really took shape with the Pan-European League of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi in 1929, the Congress of The Hague in 1948 and the first European Coal and Steel Community of Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman in 1950, of which the European Union is the direct heir. But all these projects were articulated around sovereign and free nations that amalgamated for the common good. Even the 1957 Treaty of Rome respected the principle of unanimous voting so that every nation, however small, would be respected and not dominated. The High Authority, which had become the European Commission, had to play a role as an inspiration for a step-by-step construction of Europe that respected sovereignties. It had not been designed to become, over the years, that technocratic monster who had arrogated the right to dictate to each and every one his own conduct.

The implications came afterwards. General de Gaulle had seen them well, he who had fought against the tendency to replace votes by unanimity with votes by majority. He was suspicious of the European Commission's claim to extend its prerogatives. He had sent Christian Fouchet in 1961 to draw up another European Treaty, with the ambition of making a more political Europe but dependent on the states and not on this "Aéropage of stateless officials." In the field of foreign policy, he proposed replacing the European Commission with a Political Affairs Committee under the Council's supervision.

In the course of the Treaties, what was a Community of sovereign nations and became a Union that interfered with everything. The two pages of the 1950 Schuman-Monnet Declaration became the three hundred pages of the Treaty of Lisbon. The European Commission has become a bureaucratic octopus in the everyday lives of Europeans, from the size of pickles to the manufacturing standards for bathtubs. It has both a monopoly on legislative proposals, a plethora of more than 50,000 officials and equivalent to administer them, jurisdictional powers as guardian of the Treaties and a police role in competition policy.

It is even given powers without real controls in areas where it exercises exclusive powers, such as external trade policy or the internal market, where it has the right to adopt delegated acts without a framework. It has just been given the responsibility to determine what economic activities are "acceptable" from the point of view of climate and environmental protection, with the consequence for non-virtuous activities being the suspension of aid and the difficulty of accessing bank loans! A kind of right to life or death on economic activities, including those of small and medium-sized enterprises and craftsmen, without any recourse for states or business support organisations.

The Maastricht Treaty on monetary matters, the Treaty of Nice and the Treaty of Lisbon on migration, movement of persons and justice have considerably increased European constraints. With the Euro, the states have passed under the control of an “Economic Constable”, functions performed jointly by the European Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) that control their economic policies, distributing good and bad points with serious consequences on their “ratings” (notation for obtaining loans) and possible sanctions.

The reference model for the economic policies of the Eurozone has been engraved in the marble of the Maastricht Treaty as being that of the wealthy states of northern Europe, geared towards globalisation and with the cheaper labour force of the neighbouring countries. Criteria that are not at all adapted to the economic conditions of the countries of the South but that EU intend to impose on them.

With Schengen, borders have been removed without any effective coordination of police forces, leaving a golden opportunity for organised crime and Islamist terrorism to spread throughout Europe. On the day of the attacks on the Bataclan in Paris a Friday evening of November 2015, the Europol service for the European coordination of the fight against terrorism was closed for the weekend. The terrorists had arrived from Belgium and some were even able to cross the border back the same day without any difficulty.

This Union, increasingly restrictive and unpopular, has failed to cope with the 3 major crises that have hit European countries over the last ten years:

- the financial crisis marked by the rout of Greece and the suffocating austerity cure administered to that country against its will;
- the migration crisis that has seen Europe overwhelmed open its borders to millions of migrants in total disarray, for which public safety is still paying the price.
- the epidemic crisis that took European leaders by surprise and demonstrated the ineffectiveness of one incapable of coordinating its policies and ensuring supplies of essential masks and tests.

## THE CONVENTION ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

In 2002, a so-called European Convention was convened to take the integration process forward. The Convention on the Future of Europe was a provisional institution, set up following the Laeken European Council in December 2001. It began its work on 28 February 2002. It was initially scheduled to conclude in spring 2003, at the time of the Thessaloniki European Council meeting (20, 21 June 2003).

*The Convention consisted of 105 members:* 3 per EU member country (therefore the 10 new members from 2004 have changed status) + the 3 candidate countries still recognised in 2004 Romania, Bulgaria and even Turkey! Each country had to appoint two deputies or senators plus one person chosen by its government; 16 members of the European Parliament; 2 members of the European Commission: Michel Barnier and António Vitorino. To these 102 members are added the President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and the two Vice-Presidents Giuliano Amato, former President of the Italian Council and Jean-Luc Dehaene, former Prime Minister of Belgium.

Formally, of these 105 members, only the representatives of the already Member States and the institutions of the European Union had the right to vote. But the presence of three Turkish representatives is noteworthy when we know that the right to vote in the Convention was entirely formal and never actually used. As incredible as it may seem, Turkey has therefore participated in the work of the European Convention!!

Representatives of the Consultative Institutions, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) as well as the social partners at European level were also present as observers.

Pompously inspired by the Philadelphia Convention that led to the adoption of the United States Constitution, it was charged with initiating a debate on the future of the European Union, with a view to convening an Intergovernmental Conference to reform the Treaties.

In principle, the Convention was meant to answer questions such as what the Europe of the future should look like, whether it had a federal structure, or it is rather the cooperation of nation-states. However, it soon became clear that a large majority of those who had been in favor of a federal Europe had been invited to the Convention from the outset and, in that spirit, had finally drafted a European constitution which, as we mentioned, had been rejected by two Member States. However, it is worth highlighting some of the speeches made at the convention to show that many leading politicians have advocated a more realistic, nation-state cooperation.

For example, according to Hans van Mierlo, a representative of the Dutch Government, the time has not come to talk about the ultimate destination of Europe, but to strive to work together where possible and integrate where necessary. He highlighted the lack of democracy caused by the lack of contact between the people of Europe and the institutions in Brussels. Proinsias de Rossa, representing the European Parliament and the Irish Labor Party, emphasized that Europe had to cope with the pressures of globalization on the European economy, social system and culture. Globalization is not a natural phenomenon, but a political and economic philosophy supported by modern technology. However, this is not an inevitable process. Rossa was of the opinion that the Union has the ability and competence to protect the people of Europe from transnational corporations. Lena Hjelm-Wallén, representing the

Swedish government, stressed, among other things, that the democratic basis for cooperation will remain the nation-state and the national parliament for the foreseeable future. Dr. Matjaz Nathingal, representing the Prime Minister of Slovenia, spoke about the fact that the identity of every European state is based on the nation-state, the nation-state is the basis of the European edifice and the common European identity. In an enlarged European Union, the foundations of individual identity must be protected from weakening or merging. The European Union of the future must ensure that the national, linguistic and cultural identities of the European nations are maintained and developed.

In Rome on 18 July 2003, the President of the Convention on the Future of Europe, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, accompanied by the two Vice-Presidents, Giuliano Amato and Jean-Luc Dehaene, officially handed over a complete draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe to the Italian Presidency of the European Council on behalf of the Convention. On the occasion of these meetings with the Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and the President of the Council Silvio Berlusconi, Giscard d'Estaing "paid tribute to the decisive contribution of the Italian members of the Convention, Vice-President Amato, the representative of the Italian Government Gianfranco Fini, the representative of the Italian Senate Lamberto Dini and the representative of the Italian Chamber of Deputies Marco Follini, and their alternates". Valéry Giscard d'Estaing then called on the Italian Presidency to conduct the Intergovernmental Conference "at the highest political level, so as to conclude it under the Italian Presidency in December 2003.

This programme did not come to realization as planned by the President of the Convention, Silvio Berlusconi having been unable to reach a compromise in December 2003. It was therefore under the Irish Presidency that a compromise was reached on a text amended in relation to the draft proposed by Giscard d'Estaing and the Convention, in particular by the addition of a third part which incorporated the provisions of the various treaties signed since the Rome Treaty, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights was drawn up in a form which was not binding on States. Nevertheless, it was in Rome, on 29 October 2004, six months after the scheduled deadline, that the 2004 Treaty of Rome, establishing a Constitution for Europe, was finally signed.

The result was, we dare to say, mediocre both in substance and in form. It was a weak and poorly drafted text, apart from an ambitious preamble that we owe to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Not to displease anyone, no substantive question about the future of Europe can be answered, either on these roots (France having refused, in the name of sacrosanct secularism, a legitimate reference to our Christian roots), or on the borders, or on the model of organisation chosen even if the name of "Convention" was drawn in a way a federalist-type model.

### **The main problems with the constitution**

Firstly, the Convention, despite the figurehead of its President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, has *never succeeded in mobilising public opinion*. However, the mandate, as defined in the Laeken Declaration, did not fail to contain crucial questions which were never really explored in substance.

At a time when the Union was about to enlarge to 12 countries, including the 10 from Eastern and Central Europe, *the Convention's mission was to examine the key issues raised by the future development of a Union close to doubling the number of its Members* and to include

countries formerly members of the Socialist Camp, with no recent experience of democracy and with considerable economic and social backwardness.

*The question of Europe's borders* was also raised. While we could have expected a lot of debate and proposals on this fundamental subject, it was nothing.

*Candidate countries were represented by observers but were not in a position to propose new solutions.* It should be noted that only the *European Economic and Social Committee*, which was also an observer at the Convention, had consulted civil society organisations in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and raised their fears of the "bureaucratisation" of the Union, on the strength of their experience of the socialist regimes. Unfortunately, this expertise was not taken into account.

Although the issue of *the division of competences between the European Union and the Member States* had also been discussed, the binary composition of the Convention, with representatives of national governments and parliaments on the one hand, and the European Parliament and the Commission on the other, did not make it possible to sort out what had to remain or come back to the national level so as not to clog the EU with everyday issues.

In fact, *the composition of the Convention*, with some notable exceptions, notably from the United Kingdom and Denmark, *was marked by "politically correct" self-satisfaction.* The majority movement, embodied by *Valery Giscard d'Estaing, which was above all concerned with consolidating the acquis* of the recent Treaties – Single Market, Single Currency, Schengen, Common Foreign, Justice and Home Affairs Policy – by giving them the form of a *Constitution* by adding a Charter of Fundamental Rights (previously drafted by another Convention). All these were supplemented by some elements considered to be gadgets: European Citizens' Initiatives, Dra motto, anthem. If the last 3 symbols, so dear to Valery Giscard d'Estaing, disappeared with the rejection of the draft European Constitution by the citizens, everything else remained in the *Lisbon Treaty of 2005* which took over most of the work of the Convention, except the decorum of the product of the Convention which was not really a Constitution because it did not emanate from a sovereign people.

The only interesting innovation in the draft treaty (included in the Lisbon Treaty), is probably the addition of a *"European Citizens' Initiative"* which allows those who will bring together more than one million citizens from at least seven different Member States to make proposals for European laws or actions. A good initiative, but very much prepared by the European Commission which, in the implementing regulation, has multiplied the formalities necessary for the registration of these Initiatives in order to make it a real "obstacle course".

Jealous of its prerogatives, *the European Commission is doing its utmost to discourage those who would seek to drive a wedge into its monopoly of the right of initiative.* We will remember in particular the two major Citizen Initiatives that gathered well over a million signatures, the one on the right to water and the one on the Right to Life ("One of Us" Initiative). They ended up in the cupboards of the Berlaymont, headquarters of the European Commission. *What is implausible is that the Lisbon Treaty leaves the unelected college of European Commissioners completely free to decide whether or not to take up the ideas put forward by citizens.* So it's not taking them back!

### **Constitution is rejecting**

Jacques Chirac had the idea of sending this pensum by mail to all the French. What many citizens will discover through this particularly indigestible compilation of texts is the ultra-liberal inclination of the European Treaties with “free and perfect competition erected as a dogma, social dumping presented as an objective in itself with the posting of workers (“the famous Polish plumber”), the negation of public services and finally the austerity of the Maastricht Treaty inscribed in the marble. It was indeed difficult to make more repulsive, despite the real efforts of Giscard d'Estaing to give the whole a beautiful packaging. The verdicts of the French and Dutch people were the right thermometer in this respect.

But the end of history is educational: the rejected project was finally recovered for the most part in a less tonic form under the name of the Treaty of Lisbon, with Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel at the helm. As it no longer needed ratification by the people (except in Ireland), the text was pitifully adopted by the national parliaments, including those of France and the Netherlands! The Irish people rejected the text for the first time and finally, under blackmail, accepted it in a second ballot! While the Convention was designed to involve citizens in the European process, history ended with an unprecedented denial of democracy!

#### **Minority Report**

With the leadership of Jens-Peter Bonde, leader the EP Europe of Democracies and Diversities Group (EDD Group), a minority report was drafted at the end of the Convention. It was signed by eight participants: William Abitbol (MEP, France), Jens-Peter Bonde (MEP, Denmark), Per Dalgaard (MP, Denmark), John Gormley (MP Ireland), David Heathcoat, Amory (MP, United Kingdom), Esko Seppanen (MEP, Finland), Peter Skaarup (MP, Denmark), Jan Zahradil (MP, Czech Republic). In this Minority Report the signatories expressed their opinion, that:

- The draft EU constitution was never drafted through normal democratic methods
- The applicant countries were treated as observers in the Praesidium and had no real say
- Only 3 political families were represented in the powerful Praesidium which drafted the tunnel vision text.
- The members were refused the right to have their amendments translated, distributed, discussed and voted upon
- The Convention had no Members for that half of the population, which rejected the Maastricht treaty in France or the Nice treaty in Ireland.
- Not one single Eurosceptic or Eurorealist person was allowed to observe or participate in the work in the Praesidium, nor any of its assisting secretariats.

The Minority report stated:

The European Union (EU) shall not have a constitution. Instead, Europe should be organised on an interparliamentary basis by means of a Treaty on European Cooperation. This will create a Europe of Democracies (ED) in place of the existing EU. If the EU should have a new name it should be Europe of Democracies. Laws shall be valid only if they have been passed by national parliaments. A national parliament shall have a veto on an issue it deems important.

## FOUR ALTERNATIVES

### Europe as a federal state

A European federation, or a unified European state, is not a new idea, first proposed by William Penn<sup>1</sup> in 1693, then repeated by Victor Hugo in 1949 and Coudenhove-Kalergi<sup>2</sup> in 1926. The founding fathers of the European Union also thought of a federal state, but at the time this was not considered a realistic proposition, so they only refer to an “ever closer union” in the preamble to the Treaty of Rome. This issue was raised again by Joschka Fischer in a 2000 lecture at Humboldt University. He argued that institutions designed to meet the needs of six countries no longer function properly, for example, they are neither sufficient for a common foreign and defense policy in the context of a globalized world, nor do they meet the requirements of a democratic political system. He proposed a bicameral parliamentary system in which one chamber would have elected representatives who are also members of national parliaments, while the other chamber would be a kind of senate, similar to the U.S. Senate. At the same time, he was of the opinion that while it was true that the Maastricht Convention brought fundamental elements of national sovereignty, such as the national currency, internal and external security, within the remit of the EU institutions, it did not mean the abolition of nation states.

Other proponents of the European Federation argue primarily against the nation-state, accusing nation-states of being the cause of wars, of being responsible for the cultural, political and economic oppression of minorities, and at the same time of alienating citizens through their large, centralized bureaucratic organizations.<sup>3</sup>

The European Federation, or the United States of Europe, is supported by many political groups, public figures, and businessmen. The Union of European Federalists, the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas and others have also developed concrete ideas for the constitution of a European federal state.

However a purely federalist vision clashes with the principle of reality today. A federal state (Germany, USA etc.) can only function if there is a unity of culture, identity and language. This is of course not the case for the Europe of the 27, nor even for the Europe of the 6 of the Founding Fathers. Although there may be differences in terms of the level of development in a federal state, they are small allowing professional mobility and the application of a single social model. The EU27 includes income differences that range from 1 to 10 and make any federalist vision infeasible!

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<sup>1</sup>William Penn was one of the founders of the United States and was the only one of them to have envisioned it with a democratic constitution.

<sup>2</sup>Philosopher and historian of German-Japanese descent the founder of the pan-European movement

<sup>3</sup> See in the speech of Javier Solana: "Securing Peace in Europe" Speech by Dr. Javier Solana, Secretary General of NATO Münster, 12 November 1998

## European Empire

What the European Union is moving towards does not correspond to any kind of the federal states, instead Europe gradually slipped from the infeasible federal project to that of an Empire that is very reminiscent of the former Soviet Union. It is a vision that can be called of “imperialist”, of an increasingly centralized Union, governed by an unelected bureaucratic elite, seeking to extend its territory by all means (Balkans, Ukraine), imposing a language (English) which is not spoken by 70% of its inhabitants, claiming to lecture the whole earth.

José Manuel Barroso, then President of the European Commission, did not hesitate to compare the EU to an “Empire”, during an interview.<sup>4</sup> Emmanuel Macron is not far from joining this project when he speaks of "European sovereignty", which he opposes to national sovereignties. It was striking to observe, with regard to BREXIT, how the European elites did everything to make a departure impossible, multiplying the annoyances and diktats vis-à-vis the United Kingdom! How can anyone want to separate from the Empire? This rejection of the democratic vote was found when, after the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands, the heads of state and government agreed on a barely revised version - the Treaty of Lisbon. - without submitting it to a popular vote. An incredible denial of democracy on which the traditional political forces in Europe, left and right alike, have turned astonishingly closed their eyes.

### The differences between a federal state and an empire

The Union cannot be compared to a federal state because federal states (such as the United States or Germany) have a democratic political system, a common language, strong social solidarity, a unified foreign policy and a central budget of 20-25 percent of GDP, to highlight just a few important features of a federal state. The European Union does not have any of these. An empire, on the other hand, is, by definition, a formation of a state controlled by a strong central power (a single-person ruler or a ruling group), geographically extensive, and comprising many countries and ethnic groups, usually held together by military force. This definition fits almost perfectly with the post-Lisbon EU because:

- its population is ethnically, culturally and linguistically heterogeneous, almost all countries speak a different language and do not understand the other languages;
- therefore, there is no "European nation" and no common space of communication, which is an essential condition for a democratic system;
- Barroso called the union a “non-imperialist empire” because membership is based on voluntariness. However, in practice, the European Union, especially its dominant countries, has just enough economic and military power to make the countries around it feel pressured for membership;
- decision-making in the Union is not democratic, as EU leaders have repeatedly pointed out, and decision-makers are not accountable to EU citizens;
- the union is constantly expanding, which is very typical of empires;
- the union has a common currency and, in part, military power;
- with the Treaty of Lisbon, by further centralizing powers, the union is becoming more and more like an empire.

Thus, if current trends continue, the union will increasingly transform from the cooperation of equal nation-states into an empire similar to that of the Roman Empire, the British Empire, the Russian Empire, or the Spanish Empire. The main driving force behind this trend is the narrow business and political elite (the background power), whose will is being transformed by right-wing and left-wing mainstream banks into EU rules. The difference is that while these empires have served the rise of the whole region for much of their existence, the European Union created by the Maastricht Treaty has been characterized by divergence, the backwardness of some regions and, overall, slow development.

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2Ralocq9uE>

### **Europe as a free trade area**

A free trade area is a type of trade integration where the contracting countries do not apply tariffs or trade restrictions to each other. An important difference from the customs union is that the countries of the zone do not apply a uniform customs policy to economies outside the zone. There are currently a number of free trade areas around the world, some of which are better known are the North American Free Trade Area, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), Mercosur, which covers Latin America, the AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area) and the South African COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa). The transformation of the European Union into a free trade area was primarily advocated by UKIP and led to the withdrawal of the country from an increasingly centralized union. An English Eurosceptic group, the Campaign for an Independent Britain (CIB)<sup>5</sup> proposed a model that would build the co-operation of European countries on the willingness of the people of Europe to co-operate and not on the intentions of the European political and economic elite. They are convinced that lasting European cooperation can only be built on the will of the nations involved. Everyone would only be involved in the cooperation in areas that are in their best interest.

A Europe of "free trade" and the "single market" leaned on the initial European project and continues to be the benchmark for reflection in Northern Europe and to a large extent in Germany. This Europe is seen only as a regional division of a globalized world. This is the British vision that has filled the ambiguities of Brussels since the 1980s, while coexisting with more ambitious "Europeanist" integration projects. It was when the cohabitation between a liberal vision and a Europeanist integration project turned out to be more and more difficult because of European political claims to rule everything and that low-wage migrants from Eastern and Central Europe arrived that BREXIT has occurred. But the liberal vision of Europe still animates many circles close to economic circles and also to governments, especially in Northern Europe, Germany included.

### **Confederation of Sovereign Nation-States**

The confederation of nation-states was basically a French idea, raised by De Gaulle back in the early 1960s. According to him, the main task of a French politician is to protect the French nation, which has a history of 2,000 years, which requires strong state institutions. Cooperation between European states is needed, but it must be achieved through intergovernmental instruments and non-supranational organizations. De Gaulle's ideas were put to paper by Christian Fouchet, the Ambassador of France to Denmark. This was the Fouchet plan from which two versions were made, in 1961 and 1962. According to the Fouchet plan, the Union would have four institutions, the Council, with the participation of the Heads of State, the Council of Ministers, with the participation of the Ministers, the Political Affairs Committee, with delegates from the Member States, and the European Parliament, with an advisory role. The preparation and implementation of decisions is the responsibility of the Political Affairs Committee, and the decision itself would be taken in the Council, namely by unanimity. If a country is not present at a decision or abstains, the decisions do not apply to it, but it can join at any time and then the decisions become binding on it as well. The Union would have a budget that would be drawn up by the Political Affairs Committee and approved by the Council. The Union would also have legal personality, ie it could conclude agreements on behalf of the Union in areas for which it has been empowered. The Union would be open to countries that accept the values of the Union (protection of human dignity, democracy, respect for human rights, social justice). The French, especially in

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<sup>5</sup> The website of the organization: <http://www.freebritain.org.uk/>

their right-wing political forces, are still close to this idea of De Gaulle. When Joschka Fischer presented his views on the European Federation at Humboldt University in 2000, then-French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin reacted sharply, saying that the French people would never accept a status similar to that of individual states in the United States or provinces in Germany. “There are strong, vibrant nations for which national identity is important, and that is the value of our continent,” the French Prime Minister said.<sup>6</sup>

Today this option is supported by the governments of Central and Eastern Europe, in particular Poland and Hungary, and could be that of several European political Forces, including the EPP, ECR and ID groups. It deserves to be deepened and reinvented in the light of our 21st century. We could draw inspiration from the Pan European Union of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and the Fouchet Plan of General De Gaulle. Oddly enough, this path has never been seriously explored since then, although it is undoubtedly the most realistic and the one that could meet with the most support from the citizens of our nations. This Union of Free and sovereign Nations must establish as a rule the acceptance by citizens of all its acts and affirm its eminently democratic character. Contrary to what "Europanists" think, it might in fact be the most effective way to restore Europe to its dignity on the international stage. Indeed, a Europe anchored on its own values, functioning on the basis of nations and the confidence of peoples, should have more chances of being respected than an object that is poorly defined, poorly governed and unloved!

### **The main features of Confederation of Sovereign Nation-States**

Never have the circumstances been so favorable for the emergence of a European alternative project to the globalist and federalist vision of European political correctness today. It should not be shameful or hidden, but it should affirm itself as the only alternative to the decline of Europe (political, economic and moral) and the only way to save the ideal of the Founding Fathers. This project must be the subject of a structured reflection at the level of EU CET with other partners, the European and national political groups which are close to us, but also other political forces and associations of civil society which share our values and our vision.

### **Question to be answered and our suggestions**

To move forward in this project, we should need to explore the 3 following major issues

- European values and respect for our identities
- What Europe can and cannot do
- How to govern while respecting the sovereignty of nations and democracy.

We should organize debates and workshops on these 3 fundamental questions and ask for external contributions.

### **Our first reflection revolve around few simple ideas:**

- European value, which are not the global values they want to impose to us. Europe has a common history marked by its roots, Greek and Roman, and its anchoring in the Christian tradition. To want to make a clean sweep, to deny our past is not acceptable. We must also accept the diversity of identities and our national histories, but not at the cost of a materialist globalism that denies our past. A new declaration on

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<sup>6</sup> *Lionel Jospin*, Prime Minister of France between 1997-2002 in a paper published in 2001 (On the future of an enlarged Europe.. Paris, May 28. 2001) stood up for the idea of the “federation of the nation-states”.

European values, based on our History and our Christian Roots, could be our next duty to be proposed to the Treaty, as additional but also to replace elements to the European Charta of Fundamental Rights.

- On European priorities, we believe that everything needs to be reviewed from top to bottom. Europe must stop taking care of the affairs of the people and interfere with the responsibilities of states. On the other hand, we would like it to bring added value to our states in terms of protection against terrorism and clandestine migrants, development of our economic jewels, to fight better together against global warming and for the restoration of biodiversity. , to build up drug reserves and to grow the economy and research through exchange and cooperation. A complementary and strict declaration about subsidiarity should be added as a Preamble of a new treaty
- On the governance of Europe, we must without hesitation ask ourselves the question of the usefulness and the future of the European Commission which combines a monopoly of initiative, the role of a government and a Supreme Judge, all this without being democratically elected. Other bodies, committees and agencies are to be called into question. There should be no taboos. A "debureaucratization" is needed, radical and immediate.
- An Union of free and sovereign nations will also have to look at its place in the world, at the architecture of the European continent with its relations with Russia, on Africa, and in the Mediterranean.

#### **Main feature of a Confederation of free and sovereign states:**

- A declaration on European values to complete and replace partly the European Charta of Fundamental rights
- A Preamble on Subsidiarity
- A strong governance -with unanimity rules – by a Council of head of states and governments, supported by a Political Committee for foreign affairs and a Commission with limited responsibility for the others (but no more Initiative's Right)
- An initiative Right shared by the European parliament and the Council
- The transformation of the European Economic and Social Committee in a "Civil society Platform " where the Citizen's initiatives will be addressed and presented to the European parliament and the Council (with obligation of answer and votes of the EP)
- The Committee of Region becoming advisory body of the European parliament
- The governance of the European central bank and the Court of the Justice of the UE should be reviewed, as well as their mandates

#### **Other ideas**

##### **Flexible cooperation**

There are several ideas for a more flexible system of cooperation. One was developed by the Danish June Movement, proposing that EU decisions should be allowed more flexibility among different members ("variable geometry" or "Olympic circles"). Another proposal, called "Europe a la carte", suggests a construction in which Member States may pick and choose the laws and policies that suit them, thus ensuring diversity and a real choice for the people when it comes to experiencing the 'four freedoms of movement'. A similar concept was developed by Bruno S. Frey and Reiner Eichenberger from the University of Zurich.

They proposed Flexible Overlapping Competing Jurisdictions (FOCJ) which would be based on propositions in accordance with the economic theory of federalism. According to the authors, it is a mistaken concept that Europe should be an integrated and homogenised entity. The essence of Europe is its diversity, given that its strength lies in its wide variety of ideas, cultures and policies. Integration should serve to foster this diversity, whereby even cooperation is flexible for optimal benefits. The concept of FOCJ is described in detail in the Sept/Oct 2008 issue of the EUWatch, see pages 3-8.

**Localization.** By localization, those who suggest this generally mean that what can be produced locally with adequate economy should be produced locally. Localization basically means changing the distribution of power, shifting decision-making powers from non-elected transnational corporations and international organizations to democratically elected local communities. The adjective “local” may mean the nation-state, a part of the nation-state, or a region of geographically connected nation-states, depending on specific issues. The economics of localization is based on the statistically proven fact that the vast majority of human needs can be met economically locally (in the former sense of the word), long-distance trade can be justified primarily by differences in natural geography and the expansion of choice. Comparative advantages can only be achieved through differences in natural geography, because the flow of productive capital and knowledge compensates for differences in other factors of production. Exploiting wage differentials - with the same level of productivity, as differences in productivity are offset by working capital flows - only leads to a reallocation of income, but does not mean a more efficient allocation of resources, an increase in production potential and its wider application leads to deflation.

Technical progress makes it possible for even relatively small plants to be economical, so the constant centralization of productive forces cannot be backed up by economic arguments - that is, the promise of greater efficiency. According to this view, it is particularly important that public services (railways, telecommunications, energy, water, education, health) and that land and raw material extraction are essentially owned by local communities. Localization is not anti-trade, its goal is merely to create diversified local economies and not force all companies to engage in self-exploiting international competition. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that this view was not far from the views of the renowned English economist John Maynard Keynes, who wrote in an essay <sup>7</sup> in the 1930s that “I sympathize with those who want to minimize rather than maximize interdependence between nations. Ideas, science, hospitality, travel - these are what are international in nature. But the goods should be made locally whenever rationally possible and, above all, lending should remain within national limits.”

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<sup>7</sup> John Maynard Keynes, "National Self-Sufficiency," *The Yale Review*, Vol. 22, no. 4 (June 1933), pp. 755-769

### A poll about the political form of the Union

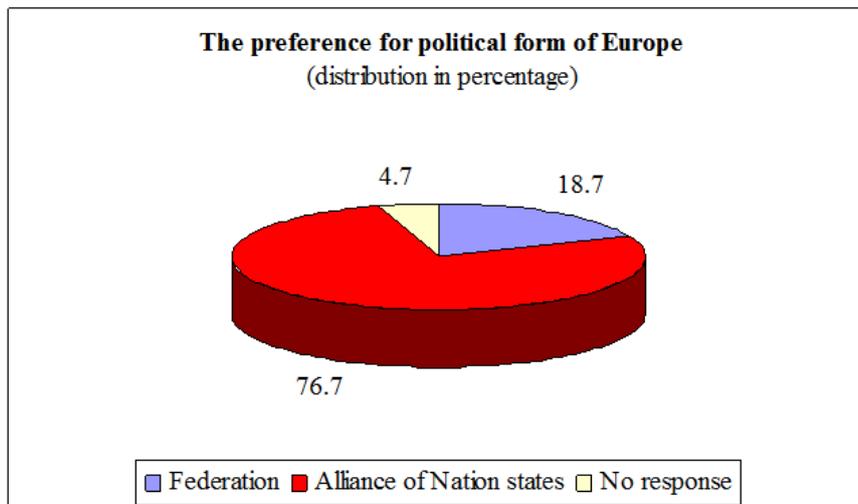
The Hungarian Civil Society Council, the largest umbrella association of civil society organisations in Hungary, has decided to carry out a poll to collect the opinion of its members as regards the future of Europe. This poll is connected to the work of the Convention and the questionnaire was based on the issues that turned up in the debates during the first three month of the Convention. The questionnaire contains 15 issues that cover a wide range of problems, from the political shape of the united Europe to the European values, economic policy or the Eastern border of the Union. **One of them was The political form of the Union**

#### The question

The first and most important question is whether Europe's future should take the form of a federative state like in the German Federative Republic (federation of provinces) or should create a group of independent nation-states where the relationship would be strengthened only when common interests are at stake. At the present, both proposals are before the Convention, the former one has been initiated by German high officials (confederation), the other one gives priority to the alliance of nation-states. During the debates in the Convent, small states have voted for the alliance of nation-states, while representatives of certain larger states argued for the federative construction along with the representatives of the administration in Brussels. What do you think Hungarians should prefer?

#### The answer

It turned out the greater part (some 77%) of the members of our civil society organisation prefer the alliance of nation states to the federal form of Europe. As one of those who answered the questionnaire emphasised, in Europe today the cultural and income differences are too big to incorporate all the European nations in one federation (understanding the federal state to be something like Germany). The United States of Europe might be the result of a successful catching up process in which the nations of Europe are getting closer and closer to each other both culturally and economically. So the immediate goal might be only an Associated States of Europe with a closer co-operation of the neighbouring regions, with the United States of Europe being a goal on the horizon.



Source: Karoly Lorant: The demographic challenge in Europe Economist, Brussels, April 2005

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/inddem/docs/papers/The%20demographic%20challenge%20in%20Europe.pdf>

## **IDENTITI FORMING ELEMENTS**

If the leaders of the European Union, or at least some of them, envision a federal state or a unified state as the ultimate goal of European integration, then we must ask the question of what holds today's federal states or unified states together, that is, what is the basis of the identity of these countries. Such identity-forming elements may include, for example, a common language, a common history, a common culture, common values and common interests vis-à-vis other regions of the world. Let us look at these factors in a little more detail from the perspective of the European Union.

### **Common language**

Almost as many languages are spoken in the Union as there are member states. Of course, there are federal countries - such as India or Brazil - where there are many languages, but there are one or two that almost everyone speaks and that is the language of general communication. The language most spoken in the European Union is English, but with the departure of Great Britain, others only know it because they have learnt it and, with the exception of the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, the language is no longer the language of conversation, or the language of a widely bought newspapers or the TV watched, but a language with which a tourist, with agony, may be able to cope. As a result, the average European citizen simply cannot participate in a pan-European communication space, which also means that they have very little knowledge of what is happening in countries other than their own. This is evidenced by a Standard Eurobarometer survey, taken in autumn 2014, which found that 70% of respondents, according to their own statements, were completely uninformed about European affairs. The situation cannot have changed too much since then. Such a lack of a common language also means that the common affairs of the Union cannot be widely discussed at a citizen level, the democratic election of EU leaders lacks knowledge of the actions and views of potential leaders and other similar difficulties stem from the lack of a common language. For this reason, the lack of a common language is one of the biggest obstacles to the creation of a democratic, federal state.

### **Common history**

A common history and its outcome, a common historical memory plays a decisive role in the cohesive power of an allied state or a unified state. At the center of a common history are usually events that determine the history of each country, such as the founding of the country, wars won or revolutions. However, there is not much common positive historical memory in European history, as in the last thousand years individual European countries have fought bloody wars against each other on many occasions, and what was a glorious victory for one was a painful defeat for the other. The German Körber-Stiftung has published a book<sup>8</sup> on European historical consciousness in its EUSTORY series. One study in this book was written by German historian Jörn Rüsen, who emphasized that if the current integration process is to be carried out without historical consciousness, it will result in a very artificial, soulless Europe. At the same time, a common European historical consciousness cannot be dictated from above, such aspirations are doomed to failure if they are not substantiated in the emotional world of the wider public. According to Jörn Rüsen, the basis of a generally accepted European historical consciousness can be, for example, the Reformation, parliamentary democracy, the declaration of human rights, the ancient roots of Western rationality, Christianity and the like, which make European culture specific to other cultures. A study on the subject is also being prepared at the request of the European Parliament's

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<sup>8</sup> Sharon Macdonald (ed) (2000) Approaches to European Historical Consciousness - Reflections and Provocations, Eustory Series: Shaping European History, Vol 1. Hamburg: Körber-Stiftung.

Committee on Culture and Education,<sup>9</sup> which concludes with three principles: (1) the diversity of historical memories in Europe must be accepted, (2) a common memory can only be achieved on very comprehensive issues (such as European freedom), (3) a completely new European historical memory must be created. Regarding the fact that the European Parliament has identified National Socialism, in particular the Holocaust and Stalinism, as the main factors in historical memory, the study highlights that basing historical memory on events that are considered negative is a rather bold matter and the exception rather than the rule. The question is whether the identity underpinning the process of European integration should be built on condemning the massacres of the past. Jörn Rüsen suggests something else: he is saying that the achievements in the fields of fine arts, music, architecture, technology and science should be at the heart of the events that define European consciousness.

### **Common culture**

In line with Jörn Rüsen's ideas, if something is common among the people of Europe, it is the cultural heritage that begins with Greek culture, continues with Roman state organization and law, works of art in medieval Christianity, huge cathedrals and later European scientific achievements. If we build on a common cultural heritage that is positively judged by all and distinguishes Europeans from other continents, we could really find common ground on which we could work more closely together. Currently, however, the European leadership does not want to strengthen Europe's real common cultural roots. On the contrary, the intention of the Frankfurt school is to destroy, which is apparent from lifting the ideology of "cultural Marxism" up to EU values. Today, the European left, the "cultural Marxists" and the right, representing Euro-Atlantic corporations, for different reasons, both reject traditional European values.<sup>10</sup> This is also one of the biggest obstacles to European integration.

### **Common values**

Common values play an important role in the cohesion of unified or federal states. Over the past two hundred years, sociologists (e.g., Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Shalom H. Schwartz, Ronald Inglehart, Christian Welzel, and others)<sup>11</sup> have made many efforts to define the values that play a role in the lives of societies and the relationships between them. Nevertheless, we cannot say that any uniformly accepted system has developed in this field, but rather that there are as many approaches as there are researchers.

In practice, in the European Union, values can be encountered in two forms. Firstly, as EU values declared by the EU Treaties, and secondly, as values explored and analyzed by the Union's public opinion research institute, the Eurobarometer.

As far as the treaties are concerned, there was initially no reference to European values, at most what the 1957 Treaty of Rome declares, that the High Contracting Parties are committed to creating an ever closer union among the people of Europe. To achieve this goal, the Treaty of Rome was quite sensitive from an economic and social point of view to balancing between countries, advocating balanced and fair trade and committing itself to reducing the disparities

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<sup>9</sup> Markus J. Prutsch: European Historical Memory: Policies, Challenges and Perspectives. Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies European Parliament

<sup>10</sup> See: John Schindler: Who Really Won The Cold War? America's New Left has swallowed up Communism's Old Left, and now it's masticating us all.

<http://thefederalist.com/2015/09/16/who-really-won-the-cold-war/>

<sup>11</sup> Max Weber German economist and sociologist (1864-1920), Emile Durkheim French sociologist (1858-1917), Talcott Parsons American sociologist (1902-1979), Shalom H. Schwartz American-Israeli social psychologist (1940-), Ronald F. Inglehart American sociologist (1934-), Christian Welzel German political scientist (1964-)

that existed between regions at the time. The so-called European values first appear in the 1983 Solemn Declaration, and the 1992 Maastricht Convention already incorporates the 1950 Rome Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms into the EU treaty system. In December 2000, the leaders of the Union adopted the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is the European version of the aforementioned Rome Convention. This later became an integral part of the Lisbon Treaty that is in force today (with equal power).

Eurobarometer surveys have confirmed that people consider what the conventions say to be European values, not least because it is conveyed to them by the media day after day. However, these are rather abstract values, as was recently revealed in the context of the refugee crisis. However, if other questions are asked, such as how attached someone is to their country, it turns out that 90% of those surveyed are very or fairly attached, while, for example, only about 50% say the same about the European Union. For the vast majority of the population, therefore, their own country comes first. However, another study has shown that the population may have a dual identity. The relations that bind people to their own country (language, culture, ancestors, history) are different from the threads that bind them to the European Union (free movement, peace between Member States, economic power of the Union, etc.). Interestingly, despite all its known problems, the vast majority of people (even Greeks) want to keep the euro. This means that, as its former dreamers assumed, the euro has indeed become an integral part of European identity.

European values, that is, what the vast majority of Europeans consider important, are particularly clear when compared with similar surveys on other continents. Thus, for example, a study conducted by the U.S. Pew Research Center <sup>12</sup> found that Americans are, on average, much more individualistic than Europeans, and that a strong social network has significantly less support in America than in Europe.

### **Common foreign policy interest**

In the case of a unified or federal state, the relationship with the outside world is usually quite clear, whatever party is leading the country. In this respect, the European Union is a very different case, as in the last thousand years, the current EU Member States have defined their interests against each other and fought a few hundred small and large wars, a few dozen per century. It was rare for Europeans to fight with non-Europeans. These include, for example, the battles against the Mongols and the Mohammedans of the Middle East, or the Crusades and the Spanish Reconquista, that is, the expulsion of the Moors from Europe. Their memory has survived to this day, for example in opposition to Turkish membership of the EU, especially on the part of the Austrians. Currently, the European Union has no external enemy, its opposition to Russia is much more an expression of the desire of the United States, or rather of some of its ruling circles, to prevent the Union, and in particular Germany and Russia, from forming a close economic unit. The Ukrainian turn also took place with US support - funding - and not for European interests. In this area, the United States can build on the suspicion and dislike of some countries towards Russia, especially Poland, the Baltic States and the United Kingdom. At the same time, most countries are seeking cooperation with the Russians and are not in favor of another Cold War.

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<sup>12</sup> Pew Research Center. Survey report 2012

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/11/17/the-american-western-european-values-gap/>  
(13.08.2015)

The issue of managing mass migration and assessing the integrability of immigrants is most divided between the EU member states, although the dividing line is not so much between individual countries as between the leading elite (Euro-Atlantic background power) and the interests of the European population. In any case, in matters of foreign and military policy, the Member States of the European Union are quite divided, which makes it difficult to develop a common foreign and defense policy, even though this requirement forms one of the chapters of the Treaty of Lisbon.

### **Common ground**

After all, taking into account the identity-forming elements, it can be concluded that if we want lasting European cooperation, we need to find a solution that satisfies everyone, and this cannot necessarily be a federal system, because it has neither economic nor social conditions. Nevertheless, the European leadership continues to push for further integration.

The views expressed in the debates so far, within and outside the European Convention, can in fact be divided into three broad groups:

- (1) One that is forced by the European, or rather Euro-Atlantic, elite (background power) is the federal state, the United States of Europe. Such an idea was outlined, among other things, by Joschka Fischer, then still the German Foreign Minister, in a speech at Humboldt University in 2000.
- (2) The other form of integration raised mainly by French politicians is the alliance of nation-states, a kind of confederation solution, in which case nation-state sovereignty is largely preserved and no new (federal) state is created.
- (3) Finally, a completely loose form of free trade, as proposed by, for example, UKIP (United Kingdom Independent Party), which the British have achieved for themselves with their withdrawal from the Union.

There are several transitions between the above “pure” forms, when the cooperation only covers certain areas of mutual interest. These forms have been given many names, such as Europe by menu, concentric circles, Olympic hoops, variable geometry, multi-speed Europe. Legally, Bruno S. Frey and Reiner Eichenberger's "flexible Europe"<sup>13</sup> have been best developed, where the essence of the proposal is that integration takes the economic development of the new Member States into account and covers only those areas that benefit the new Member State. As catching up progresses, the cooperation can be expanded to more and more areas.

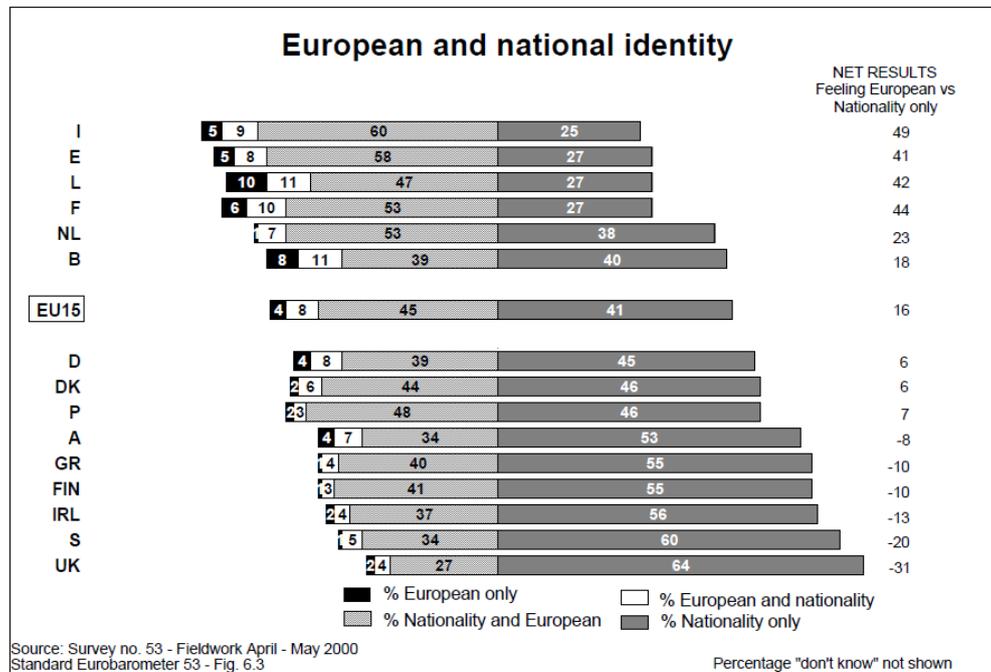
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<sup>13</sup> Institute for Empirical Research in Economics University of Zurich, August 2000

### Eurobarometer survey on European and national identity

This Eurobarometer report presents the results of the Eurobarometer survey that was carried out in all Member States from 5 April to 23 May of 2000. The aim of this report was to give readers an overview of how European citizens feel about the European Union, its policies and its institutions, with a number of other related issues also presented.

In 9 of the 15 Member States, the majority of people say they feel European when asked how they see themselves in the near future, though most people do not regard themselves as exclusively European. Because Luxembourg contains a high proportion of citizens from other EU countries, we once again find that people in this country are most likely to feel European only. In all other countries, less than 10% of the population share this feeling. When we include people who feel somewhat European, Italians top the list at 74%, followed by Spain (71%), France (69%) and Luxembourg (68%). The 5 other countries where people who feel (to some extent) European are in the majority are the Netherlands (61%), Belgium (58%), Portugal (53%), Denmark (52%) and Germany (51%). In the other 6 countries, people who identify only with their own nationality are in the majority, although in some of these countries this majority is very small. National identity is clearly the prevalent sentiment in the UK (64%) and Sweden (60%).



Source: Eurobarometer, Report Number 53, October 2000 (page 82)

## CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Soon there will be a new Conference on the Future of Europe. A first reaction would be to treat it with indifference and contempt, especially as the die-hards of European integration are already "salivating" thinking that they are going to pass their federalist ideas. Will we, as in the case of the Convention presided over in the early 2000s by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France, be dragged into a drift that will further endanger the sovereignty of our nations and the freedom of our citizens? We could believe this by reading the mandate given to this conference, which wants Europe to deal with more and more issues relating to our fundamental rights and our life in society.

But times have changed. The citizens of our various nations have become much more critical, not so much of the European idea, but of the way the European Union works and what it achieves. Several governments, not least those of Poland and Hungary, are considering an alternative to the current EU in the form of a Europe of free and sovereign nations that would return to the fundamental values of the European Founders fathers, namely Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Alcide de Gasperi that prevailed after the war.

The time has come to contribute to a platform for reflection and exchange for all those who want radical change in Europe. Indeed, it is not enough to criticise; we must be able to draw up a credible project that can bring together, to a very large extent, those who want to preserve their national identities and cultures and refuse the dictates of the Brussels bureaucracy. It is not a question of denying the need for close cooperation between our nations, but of building a project that preserves our sovereignty and our identities by, on the contrary, giving them more strength and more ambition in a truly democratic entity.

We want to build this project together! There is no question of us making the same mistake as those who have, lurking in their offices in Brussels, concocted laws and rules in the service of a project aimed at putting Europe at the service of globalisation. This project will have to be debated within our Foundation, with our MEPs, our national MPs in our countries, but also with other political forces and civil society who share these simple ideas: Identity and Democracy.

### A new Conference on the "Future of Europe": origin, content and outline

It is to Emmanuel Macron, at a European Press Forum in the spring of 2019, that we owe the idea of a conference to relaunch the European construction. His strategy of conquering the European Parliament with a group of European "Walkers" was long-lived. Beaten by the Rassemblement national of Marine Le Pen in France, "La République en Marche" , Macron's party found itself isolated after the European elections in May 2019 and had to join the Liberals to form only the 3rd Group of the European Parliament, behind the Conservatives of the EPP and the Social Democrats, led by the Conservatives of the ECR Group and the Group of Identity and Democracy. The federalist speech at the Sorbonne by the newly elected President on 26 September 2017 had in fact received little echo, let alone the attempt the following year to organise citizens' consultations throughout Europe. An initiative that had ended in a bitter failure: only a few very formal conferences held by the Prefects in France and a few small meetings here and there in other European countries, without any real significance.

Finally, persevering, Emmanuel Macron succeeded in convincing Chancellor Merkel and the President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen to engage in a process of reflection on the future of Europe with the aim of making people forget the setbacks of Brexit.

Since then, the initiative has been officially endorsed by the European Council of 12 December 2019 with still unclear outlines and a marked desire to limit the ambition of this conference.

The conference was scheduled to end at the beginning of 2022 under the French Presidency, the year of the presidential elections, a simple German concession to Emmanuel Macron to eventually serve as a “European joker” for his future campaign.

But COVID19 has gone through this... The Conference should have opened on 9 May 2020, now it is expected to open under the Portuguese Presidency in early 2021 and it is not certain that the work will end in the spring of 2021.

On 24 June 2020, the European Council adopted a position proposing the framework for the work to be started “as soon as possible.” The Council’s position makes it clear that the purpose of this Conference is to draw up a report and recommendations and not directly to propose a revision of the Treaties (unlike the Convention on the Future of Europe chaired by Valéry Giscard d’Estaing in 2002).

### **The content of the conference is still unclear**

On the basis of the Position of 24 June and the statements of the European Commission, it is possible to identify areas that the Conference will address, without this being restrictive:

- climate, Sustainability, Cohesion, Convergence, Regional Development, Equality and Social Justice
- Social issues: health, demography, ageing, equal opportunities M/F, social protection and an “inclusive” labour market, the so-called “comprehensive” approach to immigration. (The European Commission’s proposal explicitly refers to the opportunities presented by immigration in the face of the risk of ageing.)
- innovation, competitiveness and digital transformation (“free and perfect competition”).
- Fundamental values and freedoms (democracies, equality, the rule of law, pluralism, freedom of expression, education and culture, combating misinformation and building confidence in institutions (as if confidence could be decreed!))
- international role of the EU in the light of multilateralism, the “green” strategy, trade and value chains, an “autonomy strategy” and border protection.
- this list is not exhaustive, new themes may be added.

In the more elaborated proposal of the European Commission (but not in the Council paper), one finds the questions of the functioning of the EU like the Citizens' Consultations and the question of the “Spitzen Kandidaten” for the Presidency of the European Commission (question of the choice of the President of the European Commission)

As regards the content of the Conference, we find almost all the European clichés that have been haunting the corridors of Brussels and Strasbourg for the last ten years. There is nothing about our identities, our roots, about the security of our citizens. There is very little about our freedoms and democracy. Almost nothing is on relations with the rest of the world and on the question of localism/globalisation. Nothing is on the issue of sovereignty, political or economic.

### **Who will participate?**

A joint statement by Parliament, Council and Commission should determine the mandate and governance of the Conference. It is still blocked because of the dispute over the issue of the Presidency of the Conference. The Council specified that the Presidency of the Conference should revert to an "independent personality", which excludes a current Member of an EU institution. The European Parliament insists, however, that it intends to chair the Conference (A majority of the EP supports the Belgian Guy Verhofstadt, former Belgian Prime Minister and a loyal "Europeanist").

The Council of the Union, on the other hand, proposes a Bureau composed of representatives of the three major institutions, the Council being represented by the country holding the Presidency, the Conference of National Parliaments (COSAC) and the two Consultative Committees (EESC, CDC), which may be invited from time to time.

### **Our suggestion for the participant**

The composition of the Conference, based on the declarations of the European Institutions, should be as follows:

- Up to 135 MEPs with a balanced political representation, among them more than a dozen MEPs from Identity and Democracy Group.
- representatives from the national parliaments
- 1 Minister by Member State (27 ministers)
- 3 commissioners already appointed by Ursula Von der Leyen: Věra Jourová, (left liberal, close to RENEW) Maroš Šefčovič, (SLD) and Dubravka Šuica (EPP)
- 4 Members of the European Economic and Social Committee and 4 Members of the Committee of the Regions
- 4 representatives of the social partners (2-2)

Invitations for consultations to Think-tanks, Foundations, Civil Society Organizations, Experts, Academics will have to be launched on an ad hoc basis without it being known at the present time, the exact form they will take.

The difference between the Convention and the new Conference on the Future of Europe  
There are two fundamental differences in form between the 2002 Convention and the 2020 Conference. The first was a Convention which was to prepare a draft Constitution. The second is a conference that just needs to report. The Conference is not asked to take over as a legacy all the treaties of the past, but to reflect on what could be added.

But the essential difference with 2002 lies elsewhere: 20 years of disappointment with the European project have passed by! European public opinion is certainly not ready to accept another impulsive rush. Polling institutes show that while there is an expectation on the part of citizens for a "Better Europe", this does not mean "More Europe". Times have changed. The flow that we could call "sovereignist" has become, with the ID and ECR groups, the third current of the European Parliament. Several governments and not the smallest, such as those of Poland and Hungary, are active spokespersons, but these ideas are shared by a large number of citizens across Europe. We could say by at least 1/3 of European citizens, if not more. And this aptitude continues to grow.

They will be well represented in the Conference, although not yet in the majority, but large enough to make a different voice heard, especially if they unite around a common platform.

Several movements such as EUCET (European Union Civil Cooperation Council) see in this conference an opportunity to "reorient and rethink the European project based on the cultural and historical identity of nations. But I am convinced that EUCET's position is widely supported among conservative political forces in Europe, as well as a large number of civil society organisations, Think tanks, trade Unions.

They particularly highlight our Christian roots and insist that nothing can be done against the will of the people. They believe that a Europe based on free and sovereign nations will also be stronger to make its voice heard in the world.

It is the whole ambition of our work, including the ID and ECR foundations by the European parliament, to help bring about such a common platform that could use the Conference as a sounding board.

## THE EURO AND ITS CONTROVERIES

The European Economic Community, established by the Treaty of Rome, functioned very well, and the cooperation resulted in rapid economic development and technical renewal, a dynamic development that lasted for almost two decades, until the 1973 oil crisis. Following the economic successes, the quest for a higher degree of integration and the creation of a European federal state has begun. Three studies were conducted in the 1970s to examine the economic and social conditions for further integration: the Werner, Marjolin, and MacDougall reports.

What all three reports have in common is that they were based on realistic conditions, ie the actual practice of united states (such as France) or realized federations (such as the United States or the then Federal Republic of Germany) and derived the conditions of a federal economic and monetary union from that.

The first report, chaired by Luxembourg's Prime Minister Pierre Werner,<sup>14</sup> emphasized the importance of ensuring the Union's internal balance: "global economic balance may be jeopardized by structural differences... In an economic and monetary union, structural and regional policies are not just a matter for national budgets", said the report, and considered it necessary to apply significant financial transfers in the same way as in a nation-state in order to redress territorial inequalities. According to the report, "Community action should focus primarily on regional policy and employment policy. Increasing financial intervention at a community level would help to realize them. In addition, strong community policies will be needed in the fields of industry, transport, energy, housing and environmental protection". That is, the Werner Plan took into account the differences between the six countries of the economic community at that time to a large extent, and its main objective was to reduce these differences, which it considered an essential condition for further integration. However, the Werner report was soon off the agenda due to the financial crisis caused by the oil price explosion.

Five years later, French economist Robert Marjolin, one of the drafters of the Treaty of Rome and former Vice-President of the European Commission, was given another mandate to work out the conditions for creating an economic and monetary union. The Marjolin report<sup>15</sup> stands out from the studies because, albeit briefly, it deals with almost every aspect of the implementation of an economic and monetary union. As an introduction, it points out the reasons for the failure so far: "The consequences of the situation were exacerbated by the decision in 1969 to establish the European Monetary Union in the next ten years without any specific idea of what they were undertaking (...) They did not sufficiently grasp the fundamental difference between the customs union of the Treaty of Rome and an economic and monetary union." It then explains that, in contrast to the customs union, where individual governments only give up the right to impose customs duties and quantitative restrictions on their own, in an economic and monetary union, national governments entrust the community with the use of all the economic governance tools they have previously governed with. For this reason, instead of nation-state governments, the community will be tasked with solving problems such as responding to changes of external conditions, balancing the balance of payments, managing unemployment, providing pensions, ensuring minimum wages, and the like. The recurring idea of the report is the need to reduce regional disparities. In this context,

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<sup>14</sup> Report to the Council and the Commission on the realization by stages of economic and monetary union in the Community. Council – Commission of the European Communities. Luxembourg, 8 October 1970.

<sup>15</sup> Report of the Study Group «Economic and Monetary Union 1980» European Communities, Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, Brussels • March 1975

it proposes setting up a common unemployment fund, which would also increase the population's commitment to the EU. According to the report, this commitment is a prerequisite for the creation of the economic and monetary union: "the majority of the population should feel that they belong to the union," they write.

It is also interesting for the current debate that the study finds that reducing income disparities between regions is important because they would lead to strong migration from less developed to more developed regions, which "leads to a less desirable distribution of factors of production and slows down the development of the well-being of the community as a whole".

The budgetary conditions for the economic and monetary union were drawn up by a group led by Scottish economist Donald MacDougall. The report, published in 1977<sup>16</sup>, estimated the size of the central budget required for integration and the level of financial transfers. According to this, in the initial level of integration, 2-2.5% of GDP, in the case of economic and monetary union, 7.5-10%, and in the case of full integration, 20-25% must be centralized for integration to work. At the same time, they also warned that a financial union could not be introduced with the then EU budget of 1% of GDP, because the imbalances created by the single currency would not be compensable.

### **Introduction of the Euro**

However, the economic crisis following the oil price explosion of the 1970s swept these plans away, and the issue of integration was not re-launched until 1989 in the so-called Delors report (Jacques Delors was then President of the European Commission), which proposed the implementation of the single currency in three phases. The first phase liberalises capital movements, the second coordinates the economic policies of the member states, and the third establishes the European Central Bank and the euro itself, first in the form of currency (1999) and then in the form of banknotes and coins (2002). In order to ensure the stability of the single currency, strict conditions were set for the introduction of the euro: these were the Maastricht criteria that are often mentioned today.

When introducing the euro, the leadership of the union neither took any previous studies into account, nor the opinions of contemporary leading economists. They worked exclusively on developing the stability conditions for the single currency, and the European Union deviated from ensuring economic conditions for integration. All this did not escape the attention of the public either. The Maastricht Treaty, for example, was rejected in a referendum in Denmark, but another referendum was held for it, where the treaty has - with great difficulty - won a majority after all. This was repeated several times in the history of the Union, when a new convention was to be approved by the people: the European Constitution was rejected by the French and the Dutch, and the Lisbon Treaty, which was made out of it (and is currently in force), was rejected by the Irish. The leadership of the union turned to the method already proven to be working in Denmark and re-voted the Irish.

The introduction of the euro (due to its economic unfoundedness) has been criticized by a number of economists familiar with international finance at the outset, among whom, in the light of later developments, it may be worth highlighting the opinion of Milton Friedman, who won the Nobel Prize in Economics. In 1997, three years before the introduction of the euro, the well-known economist told the Wall Street Journal the following: "It has long been

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<sup>16</sup> Report of the Study Group on the Role of Public Finance in European Integration. Commission of the European Communities. Volume I General Report, Brussels, April 1977

my view that the disadvantages of the euro outweigh its benefits. Potential members of the euro area do not have sufficiently flexible wages and prices, a sufficiently mobile workforce, or a sufficiently effective financial compensation mechanism that could compensate for the impact of the loss of flexible exchange rates. The likely outcome will be that externalities affecting the countries in different ways in the zone, which could have been easily addressed by changing exchange rates, will turn into divisive political debates and increase political tensions between individual countries. Political unification can create the conditions for financial union, but a monetary union introduced under inappropriate conditions will be an obstacle to the process of political unification.”

This is exactly what happened, as a result of the introduction of the euro and the German mercantile (export-seeking) economic policy, southern European countries became indebted because, without having their own money, they could not defend themselves against the foreign trade deficit by devaluation. The European Union has disintegrated into opposing groups of debtors and creditors. The British exit is also largely the result of the centralization policy that has also led to the introduction of the euro.

## **ERODING THE WELFARE STATE**

Modern welfare states developed through a gradual process beginning in the late 19th century and continuing through the 20th. Among the milestones on the road to the welfare state the following can be mentioned: the development of social insurance in Germany under Bismarck, the unemployment and health care benefit scheme suggested by Lloyd George in 1911, the Swedish pay as you go pension system in 1935, the 'Social Insurance and Allied Services' in England created by Sir William Beveridge, and Ludwig Erhardt's 'social market economy', in which a capitalist free market would be tempered by an active role for the state in providing a market-friendly social welfare system. Secondary and tertiary mass education and comprehensive health care systems for the entire population were set up at about the same time. By the late 1960s and 1970s the "welfare state" or the "European Social Model" (albeit with some differences in the individual countries) was established.

However, after the oil price explosion in the 1970s and the economic turmoil in its wake, neoliberal ideas gained ground. Milton Friedman's famous book "Free to Choose" published in 1980, laid down the ethical bases for the demolition of the welfare state. Inspired by him, thousands of other economists rushed to find arguments proving that the welfare state was unsustainable. It is interesting that the arguments against the welfare state came up in a country (the United States) where the welfare state was the least developed and the redistribution of the income for the poor was the smallest. The idea was largely introduced into Europe by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and from the United Kingdom it spread throughout the EU. Yet, the idea that the welfare state cannot be sustained has more to do with the changing power balance between labour and capital, than with the oil crisis (actually the USA was hardly touched and eventually the prices went down to almost the original level). With technological progress, big companies employing sometimes up to several tens of thousands of employees (especially in heavy industries) disappeared, and with them the organised workers who were able to defend their interests.

The neoliberal ideas were moulded into the European Union framework with the Maastricht Treaty and the Growth and Stability Pact. Many of the trade union organisations that supported the European integration process were aware that the Maastricht criteria and the Growth and Stability Pact would harm the European Social Model, but they were simply not strong enough to prevent these developments.

To legitimise a predominantly neoliberal integration process, European policy makers repeatedly referred to the European Social Model. The draft EU Constitution Union rejected by French and Dutch voters in the spring of 2005 included a paragraph on "social market economy" (I-3.3), while giving monetary restraint and budgetary austerity a constitutional status. The commitment to a socially-just Europe -even if it was hardly more than lip-service- convinced even left-wing representatives in social democratic and green parties to vote for the constitution.

However, the mainstream social democratic parties were unable to persuade their voters of the advantageous character of the EU constitutional treaty and this was the reason that in France both the rightist and the leftist voters were against it.

Those against the welfare state have brought up many arguments, among them that society was ageing and that Europe had to compete with China and India. However, welfare depends only on the GDP/capita and the income distribution. If GDP/capita increases (as is the case in the EU) there is no reason to assume that the system is unsustainable. The question is the

income distribution. As regards competitiveness, the question can be raised why continents should compete with each other, i.e. why entities cannot produce the products they consume and trade for those they cannot produce for natural reasons (e.g. climate, raw material resources), or for technical reasons (e.g. the lack of modern technology). One of the alternatives discussed later builds its proposals on this approach.

Meanwhile, the so called 'free market' is not only distorted through EU regulation, but also by the collusion between 'big government' and transnational corporations, creating supranational monopolies and cartels.

## **FOREIGN, SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OUR VIEW**

The basic principles of the EU's foreign policy are laid down in the Article 2, 21 and 23 of Treaty on European Union (TEU). Article 2 determines the basic value of the Union:

„The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.”

Article 21 and 23 says that the Union's action on international scene shall be guided by principles outlined in Chapter I, which actually means the Art. 2.:

“The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world:

- democracy,
- the rule of law,
- the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and
- respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.”(Art 2.1 TEU)

By these provisions the EU practically authorizes itself to interfere in the inner affairs of any third countries, especially because the concrete content of these principles are elusive and can be applied arbitrary. It is very clear for instance that Islamic countries have their own Sharia laws which are not in line with principles mention above. Does it mean that EU shall not have contact with Islamic countries or we shall continually criticize them for their juridical practice? And also, as Europe or the United States have its specific social development in the course of which the commonly accepted laws and social customs changed, other countries also went their own way. Why do we want make them for us to account with their own social system or laws? It is not else than juristic imperialism which can cause strains even within the EU countries. Instead, if we want to live in a peaceful environment we have to follow the principle of the peaceful co-existence as the Chinese-Indian Agreement of 1954 determined:

1. mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
2. mutual non-aggression,
3. mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs,
4. equality and mutual benefit, and
5. peaceful co-existing.

As regards the involvement in international affairs, for instance as peacekeepers or in any military action it should be in accordance of the United Nation's decisions.

After these general principles for an alternative foreign policy for the EU, we address the policy for different region. Our starting point is the latest EP resolution and we show up our views against the EP standpoints.

### **Challenges and threats according to EP**

The EP resolution outlines the main challenges ahead of the EU as the resurgence of populism and authoritarianism, an increasing reluctance to respect international law, human rights and the rule of law, and attacks against liberal democracy and multilateralism, combined with competition between great powers, which has transformed into rivalries, especially between the US and China.

The EU faces mid- to long-term threats including the security risks posed by authoritarian regimes, nonstate actors, climate change, cyber-threats, CBRN attacks, hybrid threats including the wider use of artificial intelligence, disinformation campaigns, the space race and its militarisation, and emerging technologies, terrorism and uncontrolled migration flows.

The European Parliament expresses concerns at the unprecedented scale of state- and non-state-sponsored disinformation and propaganda campaigns, which have devastating effects on societies, besides, authoritarian third countries directly and indirectly finance and influence Europe's political parties and actors.

### **Foreign policy principles suggested by the EP**

EP insists that the EU's foreign and security policy must be guided by the promotion of the objectives outlined in Article 21 TEU, such as democracy, human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief, the protection of all minorities and of religious communities, including Christians, Jews, Muslims, nonbelievers and others, and the promotion of gender equality;

The EP urges Member States to swiftly implement and apply the new regulation to establish mechanisms for screening foreign investments in critical sectors.

The EP welcomes the adoption of a new EU Global human rights sanctions regime (EU Magnitsky-like Act), which allows the EU to impose targeted sanctions on those responsible for serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide. Also, it recommends that the scope of the sanctions regime be broadened in the future to include acts of corruption.

### **Our alternative views**

Our starting point is that with catching-up of the third world, especially China and India and the strengthening Russia the world develops into a multi polar system the sometimes superiority of the euro-Atlantic world will be diminished and this is a natural phenomenon based on the changing economic power of countries and can't be stopped. The containment policy expressed by some American or European politician and organisation can create only a new cold war but do not alternate the changing economic power structure.

Member states of the European Union have no special geopolitical interest regarding the East Asian and Pacific area, except trade with them on a mutually beneficial basis. So, it is not our interest to contain of China (whatsoever the containment actually means), and we are not interested in supporting any kind of such policy.

As regards Russia the West did not keep what was promised to Gorbachev at the German unification, that is to say that the NATO will not move to East. Today all the sometimes socialist countries are NATO members even, NATO wants to involve the countries around Russia that sometime belonged to the Soviet Union. It is not our interest to further extend

NATO towards Russia, and bear the strains coming from it. Let Russia keep its influence in the countries around it with which it has cultural ties and long common history.

What was said it comes that if the European Union does not want to pursue an aggressive expansionist policy it can easily adopt to the developing multipolar world. It is not our business to fight for keeping up a unipolar world in which we are side characters.

According to EP resolution “the resurgence of populism and authoritarianism, an increasing reluctance to respect international law, human rights and the rule of law, and attacks against liberal democracy and multilateralism represent a threat for the European Union.

We do not share this point of view. We do not need “liberal democracy” where political debates can be resulted only in one “liberal” standpoint when the opinion of the others are condemned as “populist” or something else, like in the communist time in the eastern member states (actually its name in that time was “socialist-democracy”). We need democracy without adjectives, where everybody has a say without being condemned for its opinion.

As regards the human rights and the rule of law in third countries it is their business, we should not to intervene into third countries inner affairs.

The European Parliament expresses concerns at the unprecedented scale of state- and non-state-sponsored disinformation and propaganda campaigns, which have devastating effects on societies. We agree, we should do something against the one-sidedness of the European press and the phenomena described in Udo Ulfkotte book titled Journalist for hire. Also, we are for a European free press where every political movement can express freely its opinion. And also we are against the concentration of the ownership of the European media, especially when the owners are in third countries. As regards third countries media broadcasting in the European Union we are for the free movement of information. We do not need censorship or prohibition on them. The Eastern countries during the communism experienced the one sidedness of the press and to get realistic information they listened to the Free Europe which was restricted (jamming) by state authorities. We do not need to follow the communist experience.

The EP welcomes the adoption of sanctions regime which allows the EU to impose targeted sanctions on those responsible for serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide or for acts of corruption. We reject this sanction regime we are against to interfere into third countries inner affairs.

### **EU policy for some countries or regions**

The EP resolution suggests special policies for different countries and regions as follows:

**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine** (in the framework of the eastern partnership)

EP calls for strengthening economic and connectivity ties, using trade and association agreements, access to the single market and deepened people-to-people contacts, including through visa facilitation and liberalisation when all requirements are fulfilled; emphasises that the above could serve as incentives to foster democratic reforms and the adoption of EU rules and standards.

**Belorus**

EP supports the demands of the Belarusian people for freedom, democracy and dignity, and to hold new, free and fair presidential elections; recognises the important role of the Coordination Council as a representative of the protesting Belarusian people; strongly condemns the violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators and welcomes the adoption of sanctions against the Lukashenka regime

**Russia**

reiterates its condemnation of Russia's aggressive policies vis-à-vis Ukraine, its negative role in several frozen conflicts and its pressure against some of its immediate EU neighbours, in addition to its violations of the rights of the Crimean Tatars, its blockade of the Azov Sea, its continued seizure of Ukraine's gas fields in the Black Sea, and its violation of the territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova; remains fully committed to the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea

**Armenia, Azerbaijan**

Takes good note of the agreement on a complete ceasefire in and around Nagorno- Karabakh signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia on 9 November 2020

**Mediterranean**

EP calls for the EU to strengthen cooperation with regional actors such as the Arab League, the African Union and the Union for the Mediterranean and to actively support intra-regional cooperation among the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, as an indispensable tool for security and sustainable economic development;

**Syria**

EP underlines the need for the EU to pay closer attention to the ongoing conflict in Syria and to work towards bringing to justice the members of the Syrian regime and its allies, particularly from Russia and Iran, who are responsible for numerous war crimes committed since 2011.

**Middle East**

EP takes the view that the EU should continue to play a proactive role regarding the Middle East Peace Process and the conclusion of an agreement, including on final status agreement issues, between the parties, looking, in particular, at the need to preserve the conditions on the ground for a peaceful two-state solution, on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states,

Takes note of the Abraham Accords, which normalised diplomatic relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain; in this regard, commends the role of United States in facilitating the Abraham Accords

**Iran**

EP welcomes the EU's commitment to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and ensure it is fully implemented by all parties.

Calls on the US to refrain from taking unilateral actions, thus contributing to regional and global peace and security, and to a rules-based global order

Rejects the unilateral extraterritorial reimposition of sanctions by the US following its withdrawal from the JCPOA, as it undermines the EU's legitimate economic and foreign policy interests, in particular by hindering humanitarian trade with Iran at the time of COVID-19

### **Yemen**

EP takes the view that the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have committed war crimes, calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure that there is no impunity for the most serious crimes, calls on the EU and its Member States to introduce targeted sanctions against officials in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

### **Turkey**

EP takes the view that the EU needs to urgently define a better geopolitical and overall strategy for its short-, mid- and long-term relations with Turkey, particularly in the light of continued democratic backsliding and the growing assertiveness of Turkey's foreign policy, which is contributing to the escalation of tensions and having a destabilising impact that threatens regional peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean

Reiterates that the accession negotiations with Turkey are formally frozen, in light of human rights situation, democratic back-sliding and challenges to the rule of law inside Turkey;

Strongly condemns the signature of the two Memorandums of Understanding between Turkey and Libya on the delimitation of maritime zones and on comprehensive security and military cooperation,

### **UK**

Underlines that it is essential and in the mutual interest of the EU and the UK, amplified by their common principles and shared values, as well as their geographical proximity and longstanding shared strategic cooperation, to agree on common responses to address foreign, security and defence policy challenges

### **Transatlantic partnership (USA)**

EP insists that the transatlantic partnership should be revitalised, acknowledges the need to find a new basis for EU-US cooperation against nationalistic, authoritarian and hegemonic ambitions. EP is alarmed by the rise of populism and extremism on both sides of the Atlantic and stresses the urgent need to defend democracy, human rights and the rule of law globally;

### **Africa**

Notes the importance of European capacity building and training missions in fostering peace, security and stability in Africa; reiterates the importance of the EU stabilisation missions and operations deployed in Africa, particularly in the sub-Saharan and Sahel regions, and calls on the EEAS and the Council to ensure that the mandate and means of the CSDP missions in Africa are reinforced

### **Latin America**

EP urges the Union to maintain its position as the preferred partner of Latin American countries in view of the prospect that other geopolitical actors occupy increasing space in the region. EP stresses the importance of moving forward with and completing the revision of the global agreements with Chile and Mexico, as well as the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement, and highlights that these are key allies and partners of the EU. EP calls for a

strong joint position to be maintained in relation to the regime in Venezuela, and in relation to human rights violations perpetrated by the regime of President Nicolás Maduro.

### **China**

EP underlines the importance for the EU of pursuing a unified, realistic, effective, firm and more assertive strategy that unites all Member States and shapes relations towards the People's Republic of China (PRC), in the interests of the EU as a whole.

EU should proactively and assertively seek more balanced and reciprocal economic relations, based on European values and interests, with a very strong and special focus on respect for human rights and the freedom of religion or belief; highlights the importance of aiming to reach a common approach with the US and other likeminded partners on China;

EP calls on the Commission, the Council and the VP/HR to continue to communicate to the PRC that the EU will not tolerate its continued human rights violations in Hong Kong, Tibet and Xinjiang

EP calls on the PRC to reach a peaceful resolution of all land and sea border disputes in accordance with international law and to avoid any provocative military moves aimed at the destabilisation of the South Chinese Sea.

### **Taiwan**

EP calls for the EU and its Member States to revisit their engagement policy with Taiwan and to cooperate with international partners in helping sustain democracy in Taiwan free from foreign threats.

### **Arctic, as well as the Indo-Pacific region**

Arctic, as well as the Indo-Pacific region, where China is pursuing a policy of expansion to which the EU must develop a coherent response; points out the need to further expand cooperation with important like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific region, such as Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand; welcomes, in this regard, the efforts towards developing a European Indo-Pacific strategy based on EU principles and values, which may include joint military exercises between Australia and NATO in the Pacific; is of the view that, as part of a coherent China strategy in which the EU and the Member States together push back when necessary

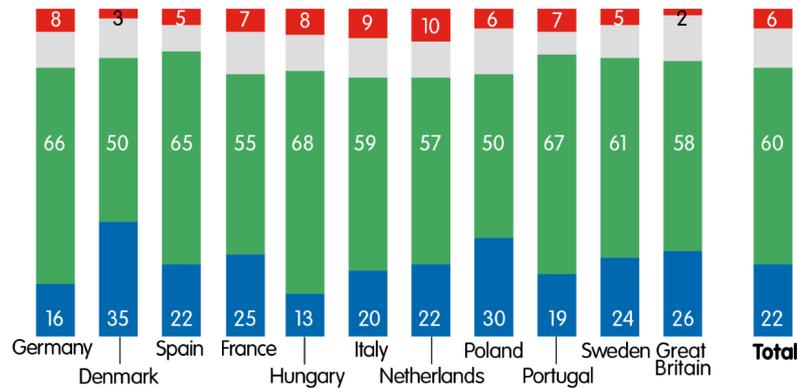
### **Or point of view**

As can be seen from the EP policy listed above, the EP outlines an interventionist policy as if it was a great power using its power to set rules for other countries. It can result in not else than a growing tensions especially with Russia and China. We do not think that it is the interest of the member states of the European Union. And what is more, the problems (i.e. the economic burden) coming from the tensions (for instance from the sanctions) have to bear by the individual states while the politicians of the EP and the Commission do not have to take responsibility for their policies.

A poll commissioned by the European Council on Foreign Relation shows that the public opinion of the European citizens is close to our point of view. According to their poll which

was carried out in ten EU countries and Great Britain<sup>17</sup>, the large majority of respondents in all surveyed countries wanted to remain neutral (rather than align with Washington) in a conflict situation between the US and China or Russia.

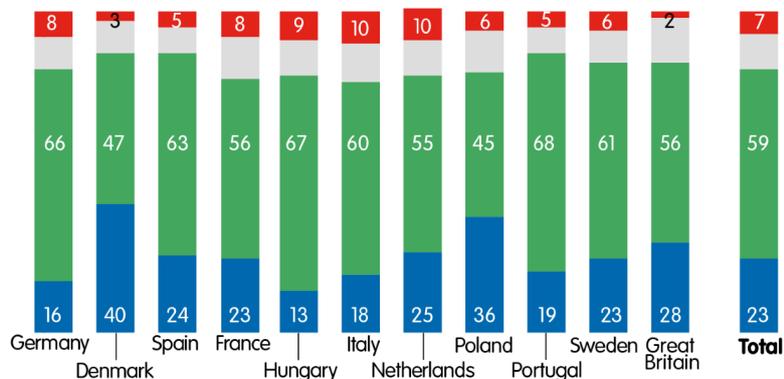
**If there was a disagreement between the US and China, what would you like your country to do?** in per cent



- I would like my country to take China's side
- Don't know
- I would like my country to remain neutral
- I would like my country to take the United States' side

Source: ECFR-commissioned data from Datapraxis and YouGov  
ECFR · ecf.eu

**If there was a disagreement between the US and Russia, what would you like your country to do?** in per cent



- I would like my country to take Russia's side
- Don't know
- I would like my country to remain neutral
- I would like my country to take the United States' side

Source: ECFR-commissioned data from Datapraxis and YouGov  
ECFR · ecf.eu

<sup>17</sup> Ivan Krastev, Mark Leonard: The crisis of American power: how Europeans see Biden's America. European Council on Foreign Relation, January 2021

From the statistics above comes that there is no popular support behind interventionist foreign policy of the EP and the European leadership, as a citation from the above mentioned poll outlines:

„However while European leaders tend to view European sovereignty as reflecting a desire to play a more important role in global politics that is not the case for a large number of European citizens. There is a substantial group for whom ‘European sovereignty’ is code for a drive towards neutrality in the escalating competition between the US and China. For these citizens, European sovereignty is not a grand entry into international politics but an emergency exit from the bipolar world of tomorrow. It is an application for early retirement from great power competition.”

Taking into account also the desire of the European citizens, we have to develop a foreign policy which is not interventionist, which is based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and which serves the economic interest both EU and the third countries.

## **IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY**

### **EU policy of immigration**

According to the EU leadership the EU has a forward-looking and comprehensive European immigration policy, based on solidarity. The EU aims to set up a balanced approach to managing regular immigration and combating irregular immigration. Proper management of migration flows entails ensuring fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States, enhancing measures to combat irregular immigration, including trafficking and smuggling, and promoting closer cooperation with non-member countries in all fields. It is the EU's aim to establish a uniform level of rights and obligations for regular immigrants, comparable to that for EU citizens.

The Lisbon Treaty introduced qualified majority voting on regular immigration and a new legal basis for integration measures, the Court of Justice now has full jurisdiction in the field of immigration and asylum.

The aim of the EU's asylum policy is to offer appropriate status to any third-country national requiring international protection in one of the Member States and ensure compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. To this end, the Union is striving to develop a Common European Asylum System. The Treaty of Amsterdam provided that the Council could adopt its decisions by qualified majority too. Since the Treaty of Lisbon, Article 80 of the TFEU also explicitly provides for the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including any financial burdens, between Member States.

### **History of immigration**

During the 1950s, most West European countries still registered a negative migration balance. West European countries began to "import" guest workers in the early 1960's to fill jobs, which the own nationals would not accept. These guest workers came mainly from the Mediterranean (to France) and from Turkey (to Germany). The present French Muslim communities trace their origins back to a wave of immigration in the twelve years between 1961 and 1973. After France's withdrawal from Algeria more than a million French citizens migrated back to France.

Most European countries closed their doors to labour immigration in the 1970s, following the first Arab oil embargo and the subsequent economic downturn. Yet since then, some 500,000 immigrants - primarily family reunification cases - and 400,000 asylum seekers arrived in West Europe every year, originating mainly from Central and North Africa and the Middle East. Furthermore, the number of yearly immigrants has increased threefold since.

there is a growing concern among the West-European population over the fast-growing Muslim communities. The size of the European Muslim communities has tripled over the last 30 years. This rapid growth is caused both by immigration and the high fertility rate in the traditional Muslim communities. Whereas one-tenth of the French population is now Muslim, it is five percent in Germany and six percent in the Netherlands. While the UK's Muslim population is only 2.5 percent, Muslims have become large minorities in some small British towns.

According to a study published by the PEW Forum on religion and Public Life<sup>6</sup>, many European cities have sizeable Muslim minorities. Currently, they make up at least 25 percent of the inhabitants of Marseille and Rotterdam, 20 percent of Malmo (Sweden), 15 percent of

Brussels and Birmingham, and 10 percent of London, Paris and Copenhagen. The amount of illegal immigrants from Muslim societies is estimated up to half a million per year.<sup>7</sup> In Central and Eastern Europe, Muslim populations remain virtually nonexistent.

Many Europeans have the feeling that the fast-growing Muslim population will cause social conflicts. Muslims rightly demand political recognition, greater entitlements and preservation of their Islamic identity. For many West Europeans immigration is largely thought of in connection with crime, and the idea of multiculturalism is rather difficult to convey. In addition, the view is rather widely spread among West Europeans that Muslim societies are not willing to integrate themselves into Western societies.

In a book to be published in 2020, **Helmut Schmidt**, the Social Democrat chancellor from 1974 to 1982, says: "For idealistic motives, born of the experience of the Third Reich, we have taken in far too many foreigners... We have seven million foreigners today who are not integrated and the minimal number who do want to integrate are not given help to do so... There are two possibilities for a foreigner. Either he is a guest in another country or he wants to immigrate. In the latter instance, he must slowly but surely - and it is a difficult process - identify with his new fatherland and become a citizen. If he is a guest, he has a quite different status. Then he has neither the right to vote nor a claim to sickness benefit, health services and unemployment pay. This distinction has been lost... Now we are stuck with a very heterogeneous, de facto multicultural society and we can't cope with it. We Germans are unable to assimilate all seven million. Nor do Germans want that at all. The Germans... in their hearts are to a great extent xenophobic."

**Angela Merkel**, German chancellor, told a gathering of younger members of her conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party on a meeting in 2010 that at "the beginning of the 60s our country called the foreign workers to come to Germany and now they live in our country... We kidded ourselves a while, we said: 'They won't stay, sometime they will be gone', but this isn't reality."

**Denmark** has struggled for decades with how to integrate non-Western immigrants into its welfare state. Public debate intensified in 2015 with the arrival of large groups of refugees from conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere. The anti-immigrant Danish People's Party became the second-largest party in an election that year and now supports the coalition Government in Parliament. Kenneth Kristensen Berth the European Affairs spokesman for the Danish People's Party stated the aim of making the country "the least attractive in western Europe" for asylum seekers. "We need an Australia solution," "We want to send these people to north-eastern Greenland ... and potentially a country like Tanzania, which Denmark has collaborated with for years." "I think it's the only possible solution. If you don't do anything, then I think the European culture will evaporate in a couple of years. We need to make it clear to these people that they cannot have a permanent life in a European country."

**Nigel Farage and Johannes Blokland in an interview with them in January 2007 said:**

"The erosion of the nationstate's key-power to apply its own immigration-policy is precisely where our problems come from. That power should be restored immediately, and the myth that immigration will solve any "demographic deficit" roundly debunked." (Farage)

"First of all we have the reality of Schengen. This means open borders with free movement of persons. This implies that member states have to work together to fight illegal immigration as immigrants will not be stopped at borders anymore than EU-citizens. It is up to the EU to

coordinate measures and up to the member states to carry out the implementation. The European Union does not have to dictate a common policy for legal immigration. That should be left up to the member states.” (Blokland)

### **Questions:**

**Shall we adopt a policy on immigration and asylum?  
If yes, what shall be its main points?**

### **Sources of information:**

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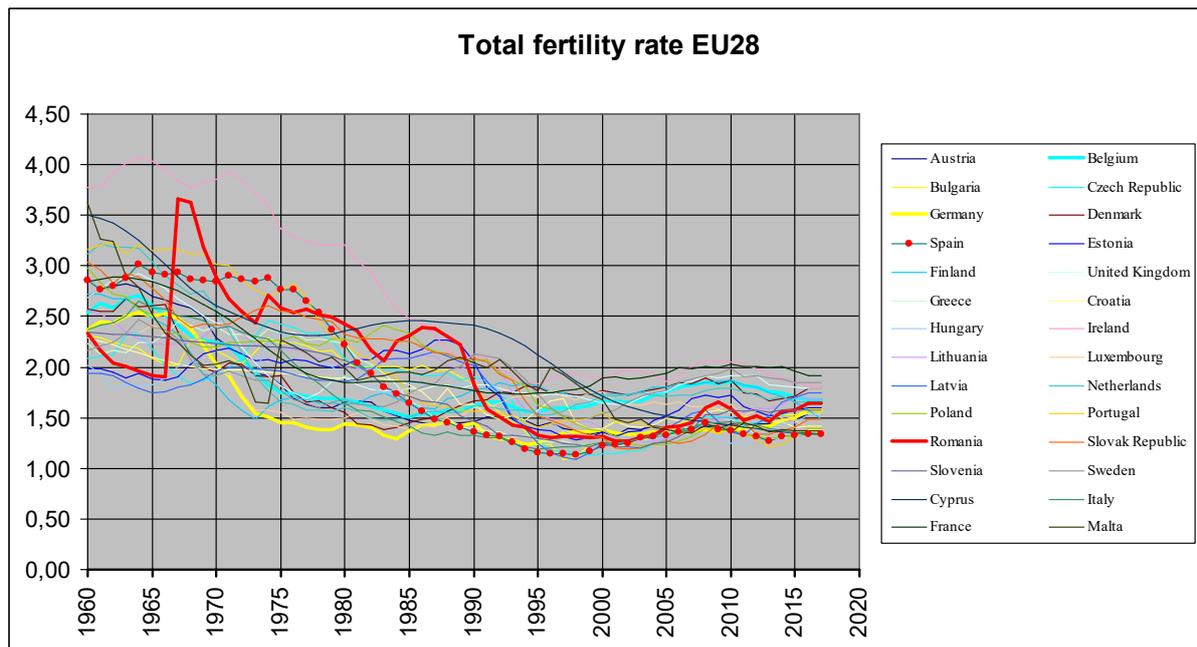
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## THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

The negative demographical tendencies are present in the whole of Europe and their symptoms are rather similar. From the second half of the 19th century, since when the demographic tendencies can be followed from official statistics, the yearly growth rate of population in the present European Union oscillated between 0,5 and 1%. However, this trend changed dramatically in the 1960's and within one generation the growth rate slowed down to zero because of the steadily deteriorating total fertility rate. (Total fertility rate "TFR" is the average number of children that a woman, in all her lifetime, will give birth to.) This ratio was around 2,66 in the beginning of the 1960's and fell back to 1,46 by the end of the 1990's.



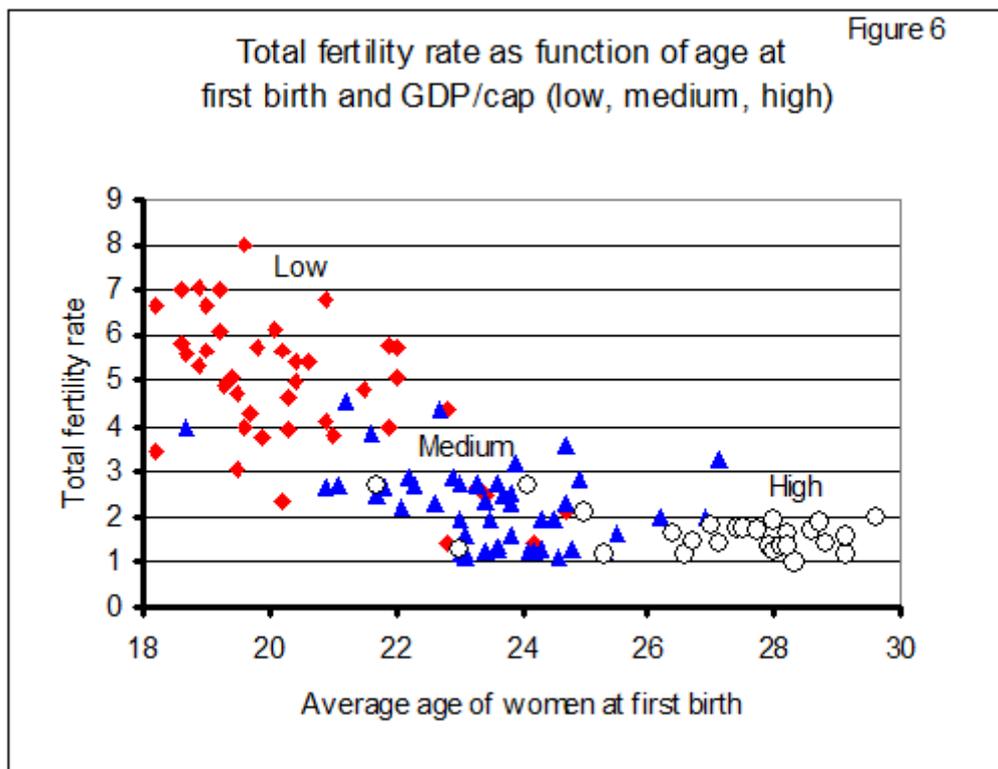
The decrease in total fertility rate is a global phenomenon. However while in the developing countries – against a substantial fall – it remained well above the critical 2,1 level which is required for the simple reproduction of the population; in the developed world, and especially in the EU-25 the rate of 1,46 is not enough to maintain the society.

Wide international comparisons show that there is a close connection between the age of first birth and the total fertility rate (Figure 6.). From a detailed dataset for Norway it can be seen that in a 40 year time frame the total fertility rate decreased in all age groups but the bulk of decrease came from the 20-24 and 25-29 year olds. One of the main reasons behind is the growing level of education. As more and more young men and, especially women acquire higher education the possible date to get married is postponed and with it also the age of first birth. On the other hand, higher youth unemployment rates also contribute to both longer school years and the postponing of marriages and/or first births.

One may think it logical that the birth rate increases in the higher age groups. But as the data for Norway prove, it never happens. The children who were not born when women were in their twenties will never be born.

Europe has been able to uphold the number of its population only by the help of immigration. West-European countries began to "import" guest workers in the early 1960's to fill jobs

Europeans would not consider. These guest workers came mainly from the Mediterranean (to France) and from Turkey (to Germany).



If the decreasing European population will be supplemented by immigrants the population can be kept unchanged, but this solution means that Western Europe has to face up to the prospect of a 70-80m strong Muslim population by the middle of this century. From an economic point of view, the impact mass immigration has on the labour market, can easily be traded off by the increasing participation rate. Model calculations suggest that the economic benefits of an increase of only 7% in the participation rate may be equal to the impact of an immigration rate of 1.3m people yearly

What can be the measures to change the very low total fertility rate and change the demographic tendencies? There is some suggestion:

#### Governments/politicians

- Make of **boosting birth rates** a **top priority** in the public agenda.
- Increase **social awareness** about the demographic / fertility problem.
- Foster **serious research** about causes, effects and solutions.
- Promote **changes in laws and cultural values** that facilitate **higher birth rates** and a recovered prestige to mothers and fathers.
- Handle **immigration in a win-win** way for foreigners and nationals.
- Take steps to **adapt the State and companies** to a very aged society.

#### Civil society

- **Understand the magnitude** of the demographic problem, and help create **public awareness** about it, and to **adopt solutions**.

### **Companies and organizations**

- **Understand the impact** of demographic evolution (recent and projected) in their businesses, with a focus on risks and opportunities, and adapt to changes derived from incoming demography profiles.
- Include in their portfolio of **Corporate Social Responsibility** the contribution to projects to fight demographic decline.

### **Private citizens**

- **Provide support** to those who have or can **have children. Save.**

### **Question:**

**Shall we address the demographic problem?**

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