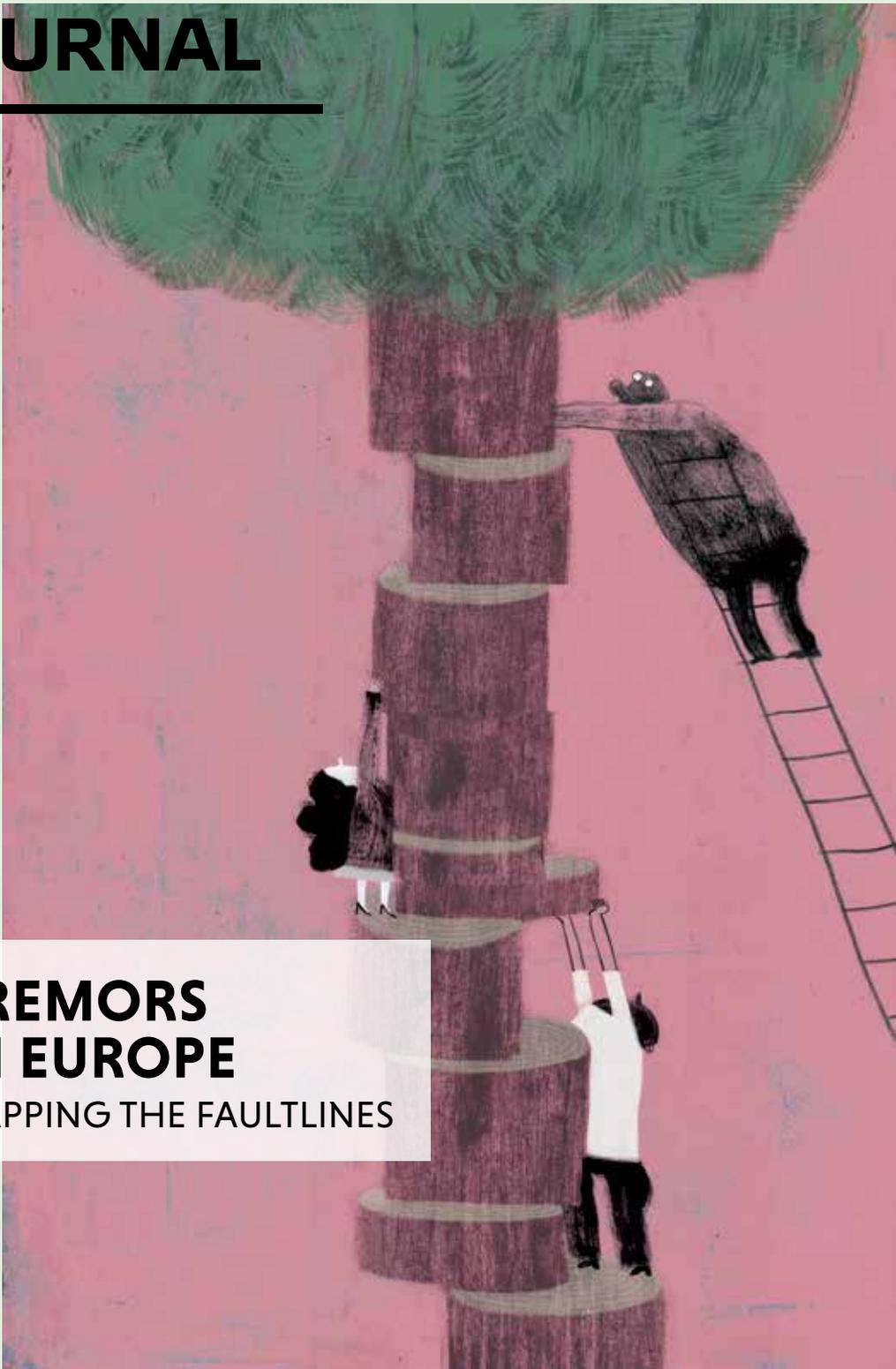


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An illustration of a tree with a trunk made of stacked wooden logs. The canopy is a dense, textured green. Three figures are climbing the trunk: a large tortoise on a ladder on the right, a small figure on a branch on the left, and a person at the bottom pulling up another person. The background is a solid pinkish-red color.

TREMORS IN EUROPE

MAPPING THE FAULTLINES



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EDITO

BOATS AGAINST THE CURRENT

EUROPE IN UNCHARTED WATERS

LAURENT STANDAERT FOR THE EDITORIAL BOARD

While putting the finishing touches to this edition of the Green European Journal, news reaches us that a majority of voters in the UK have opted for their country to leave the European Union. If there was already a sense that the European project is in danger of stalling or even unravelling, this latest development only compounds those fears. We certainly need a profound reflection on this seismic outcome. But what underlies the apparent malaise the EU is experiencing? Behind the sensational headlines and the obfuscating rhetoric, how can we explain the stark polarisation that seems to be taking hold, across Europe, between those who defend the idea of Europe and its institutions, and those who feel these do not enhance but rather hinder and threaten their aspirations?

This edition of the Green European Journal sets out to identify and apprehend some of the forces of integration and disintegration at work in Europe today. It rises from the need – above and beyond immediate political priorities and imperatives – for the Greens to urgently analyse Europe as it exists, real Europe. In a bid to avoid the trap of merely putting forth a vapid pro-European rallying call, the Journal offers analyses, opinion pieces and interviews to shed light on the tectonic shifts that give rise to the tangible transformations taking place in European societies. Far from an essay on the European institutions and treaties, this edition

EDITO

is essentially an attempt to explore what lies beneath the surface of daily politics, and the attitudes of citizens towards the EU. If, as Bernanos said, the highest form of hope is to overcome despair, the contemporary historical watershed compels us to embark “in search of the lost Europe” and envisage its future.

From the analyses of Reinhard Bütikofer and Yanis Varoufakis on the state of the Union to the contemplation of the division between centre and periphery; from the abandonment of European youth to the ambiguous struggle against TTIP; from the information war between Russia and the EU to the question of sovereignty; from European security to the Eurozone; from the significance of religion to the rise of regionalism and independence movements; from the democracy conundrum to the rise of populism; and through prejudice and the fraught marriage of France and Germany, the Journal’s contributions bring to the fore a dialectic and its confusing and often seemingly contradictory forces which could potentially be fatal to the European project. The European idea has been racked by endogenous and exogenous challenges and finds itself in a maelstrom between currents that would beat it back into a retreat, and those that spur it on to pursue its course of integration. The Brexit referendum and its expected consequences are a textbook case in this regard.

Analysis of the dynamics of integration and disintegration clearly highlights the emergence of a new political landscape. The traditional left-right division retains a certain heuristic importance, of course. And yes, a Europe of elites completely out of sync with the interdependent nature of our economies and our ecosystems locked into the trappings of the nation state, a Europe of democratic and institutional practices that date from another time, far removed from citizens. But, in the early phase of the 21st century, it appears that Europe is more crucially divided between retreat and openness. Retreating back to the confines of a nation, a generation, a culture, an institution, security, underscores the fear of a threatening environment, the current paralysis, and a general loss of bearings.

ORIAL

The exposed disappointment with the neo-liberal compromise leads to a rise in populism, authoritarianism, and political forces that offer no vision beyond reviving time-worn nationalist tropes. To put it simply, the Greens have chosen openness. Nonetheless, in order to prevail in the battle for Europe, they must analyse the compulsion to retreat, and understand the fear and psychosocial insecurity, while defending their choice. The time has come for the Greens to stand up for their discourse of openness and hope, and to bear the standard of the European dream confidently. Failing to do so will mean failing to reclaim their political ideals of freedom, democracy and an alternative model from the grips of populists and the extreme-right. The idea of Europe must be overhauled if it is to survive.

Today, Europe is barren and has been stripped of what little emotional content was left by the unrelenting defenders of a mythical past of nations and their fictional soul. The Greens must also tap into those emotions while promoting pluralism and tolerance. The European Greens have everything it takes to face the challenges of the 21st century, yet, they find themselves at a historical juncture and all too frequently associated with mainstream and centrist parties whose political base seems increasingly challenged.

Before building the policies and beating the drum on the political campaign trail, and because the very idea of Europe is under attack from all sides, the Greens must set out visions, narratives and strategies – political and meta-political – on the purpose and course of European integration. Failing to do so would be tantamount to missing their political destiny.

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www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu

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WE OWE THE EUROPEAN DREAM TO CITIZENS

AN INTERVIEW WITH
REINHARD BÜTIKOFER

The European Union is far from perfect, from a Green perspective, yet at times when it is threatened, we must rally to its defence as an idea and as a project. This is because it offers the most promising path to making fundamental Green values – sustainability, solidarity, solidity – a reality for European citizens.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: Today we see Europe and the EU being attacked, mistrusted, and loaded with negative emotional charges. Why?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: There is a growing anti-European, nationalist, right-wing populist camp that makes fighting European integration one of the core elements of their ideology. Secondly, we have the camp that wants to defend the European dream and build on the advances that the European integration project has made over the last 70 years. I am in this camp, not because I disregard the failures and mistakes that we have to own up to, but because we can only make the EU better if we don't let it break apart. Then, there is a third camp that says: yes, we're for Europe, but the EU is all rotten, one-hundred percent wrong, everything is going in the wrong direction, and we can't have that. This third camp is the least credible.

If you are a devoted nationalist, I will fight you. If you are a pro-European, I will try to convince you that it is because we love the European project that we have to transform it and change it. But to tear down what we have today in order to build a more brilliant Europe – that's not going to happen. If we tore down the EU, if we said we have to start all over, but with completely new principles, that would just be preparing the victory of the nationalistic reactionary forces. We

can only build our real dreams through transforming and reforming and, in some dimensions, also deeply changing what we have in front of us. Sitting on the fence is more than a political crime, it's a mistake.

So what are the forces of disintegration at work today?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: There's not just a single root cause. What we experience right now is the effect of multiple overlapping developments. For a long time, the idea of uniting Europe was a guiding star that was always looked to in times of difficulty. This guiding star is not directing European developments anymore because European unity was achieved, basically, in 2004 with ten countries coming into the EU and overcoming the Yalta division. I strongly believe that it was a strategic mistake of the pro-European forces not to start, at that moment, the discussion about where we go from here. We didn't see the need to define a new vision that could take us forward.

This new vision is all the more important because, under our feet, two important developments are happening as we look on. One is internal. The cohesion of our societies is being undermined. Everybody sees it. The vast discrepancies between the very poor and the very rich have grown over time. Disintegration is also visible in the lack of opportunities for

the adults of tomorrow. Parents cannot offer their kids the same kind of perspective that they had. Disintegration created weaker cohesion, and between the different countries that resulted in a lesser capacity for compromise.

The second development concerns the greatly changed international environment. Obviously, the power relations and the economic relations on the global stage are changing fundamentally. We have a continental drift. And Europe is not at all in as powerful and as central a position as it was 30 years ago. This results in new challenges to the EU.

By the change around us and within our communities, the ability to continue building the European project was impacted. Less ability to cope with the outside, less ability to cope with the challenges inside. We don't see clearly now that the world doesn't stand still around us. And we have not realised well enough or early enough how much the internal disintegration in our societies will translate to the European level if we don't stop it.

And what about some of the basic building blocks of the EU, such as the Single Market and the Monetary Union?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: Obviously the internal market and the Monetary Union were not ideal constructions. From today's angle you can say they were fair-weather constructions.

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Helmut Kohl did say, for instance, that the Monetary Union should go along with a political union. It was assumed at the time that this might be strengthening Germany too much. But now we're suffering from the fact that we don't have this political union to the level needed.

Arguably, the Eurozone suffers from three different weaknesses. The first concerns weakness in the solidity of common economic governance. The second regards the weakness of explicit European solidarity. Of course we have "solidarity" organised through the European Central Bank (ECB), but we don't have a common understanding that solidarity has to be a basic element. The third element is that we are pursuing old growth policies when we should be building a transformation union towards a sustainable economic development. Solidity, solidarity and sustainability must go together. Economic resilience can only be achieved through a Green new deal. We need a new approach towards the future of our economies by integrating economic progress on the basis of greening and social inclusiveness.

Can the Green New Deal be a force for integration?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: Absolutely. Because it addresses some of the core deficiencies of our economic system. When people start battling over European economic governance and what it should look like, they often ignore that the basic challenge of constructing a transformation union. Some say we need a transfer union, others say we need a stability union. But the transformation union that we need is not at the core of the debate. This is where we as Greens must continue battling.

The European Union has to be guided by the ambition to create a new way forward, not just for us, but for the global community, in defining how economic progress and sustainability within the limits of the planetary boundaries can be reconciled. And Europe has all that it takes to be a prime player in that regard.

But is it possible in today's European Union with its political landscape to have that very transformation? Are there not forces that prevent it?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: Historical shortcuts don't happen very often, and I am afraid we're not granted an exception here. So you have to build the forces of transformation, you cannot just imagine them. You have to nurture them and bring them together, and that's what we do as Greens. We combine those movements wherever they play on local, regional, national, or European levels.

On the other hand, it is not fair to depict the EU as an institution that has utterly failed. Yes, we are falling short of what we would need for transformation. I agree with that. But there's no standstill. If, in 2010, the Union hadn't managed to overcome and leave aside the orthodoxy of the 'no bailout' clause, the EU would have broken apart years ago. Old orthodoxies were overcome with insufficient pragmatic, makeshift and on-the-go solutions. There are, after all, no textbook solutions for the greatest democratic experiment in world history of creating a transnational alliance of sovereign countries to solve their very deep problems together peacefully.

Let's compare our present economic crisis to the one in the 1930s. There is a great historical difference. In that time, the economic con-

traditions boiled down to and boiled over into nationalistic and chauvinistic mobilisations against each other, and ultimately, into war. Today, we manage to keep the contradictions at a manageable level. I'm not saying that the EU is always good at finding the right solutions in a timely manner, but we're not standing still.

But still, in light of the rise of populism and the far-right in many European countries, it is clear that the threat of nationalism and inward-looking regression remains.

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: The nationalistic and populist temptations will not go away for some time to come. Regarding the economic necessities Greens are well equipped. The direction is defined by the three "S": solidarity, sustainability, solidity. It wasn't wrong to demand reform in the crisis. It was wrong to shape the policies under the paradigm of austerity.

What other factors of disintegration can you identify?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: Let me highlight a possible factor of integration. In surveys from Eurostat, citizens of the EU expect the Union to improve security – domestic and foreign. It's obvious from the terrorist attacks in recent years that without stronger coordination and cooperation, it will be very hard to

increase the level of security. We will continue fighting against unjustified demands like passenger name record. But that doesn't relieve us all of the challenge of pushing for police cooperation across Europe.

The same applies to external security, and there is a link between external and internal security. The Europeanisation of domestic and foreign security issues will be one of the main challenges in

the time ahead. I'm not talking about a European army. I oppose that. I'm talking about practical cooperation.

There are diverse initiatives in Europe that put democracy at the centre of their project. Democracy has always been an essential dimension of Green thinking. Can democracy be the core of a political project for Europe?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: From a Green perspective, the two core motivational forces of our movement – the two souls – are fighting for the common good, in particular as defined from an environmental perspective and defending the individual's right to self-determination, dignity and to a valid role as a societal actor. So it's a certain tradition of liberalism and individualism and a certain socialist and conservative tradition of the fight for a common good

that together form the Green core identity. This cannot be achieved without democracy. Democracy is the time and space, so to speak, in which we try to achieve those ambitions.

Presently, the EU urgently needs re-legitimation through more democracy. There are three major issues that we have with European democracy at this moment. The first is that of lobbyists: the pervasive recognition that

there is not equal access to the decision-making process, and that big corporations are more 'equal' than others. Secondly, in the nation state, European policies are often not sufficiently controlled or overseen by domestic parliaments and by the public. There are many states where the national government goes to the Council of the EU without engaging with their parliament beforehand or afterwards. Thirdly: the need for more democratic oversight over the EU's economic governance, in particular within the Eurozone. Those are the three major fronts on which we have to fight for European democracy.

What about alliances and cooperation for democracy and beyond?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: Greens have always been open to and will continue to be open

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to collaboration, to alliances with whoever would be willing to join forces. But on the basis of Green values, alliances must be principled. The Greens don't want to be exclusive owners of progressive ideas – we want to share them as widely as possible, also learning from others, because we want to make them into a reality.

It is also important to look for movements in many corners of society. There are movements within the economic sector, where small and medium-sized enterprises are opening up to a green transformation of the economy. Look at Alexander Van der Bellen of Austria – the New President of Austria – and his openness to all sectors including the private sector and entrepreneurs; it is of high relevance for all of Europe that this person was able to become the focus of a very broad alliance against the populists. Look also at Baden-Württemberg where Winfried Kretschmann managed to pursue, successfully, and with increasing electoral support, a policy of economic and social transformation that gives great motivation to people far beyond that area.

Why should we make the case for Europe?

REINHARD BÜTIKOFER: I'm not just making a case for some abstract "Europe", I'm making a case for the EU. What some of the most energetic critics of the EU hate most about it is not its failures, but its resilience. The energy

that is making this resilience possible is the energy of our European citizens. European citizens are not giving up, at all. Nor should we. Giving up on the EU would imply killing, for the next two generations, the hope of implementing the European dream. So this hope of European citizens makes it imperative for us to continue working. The European dream is more inclusive than the American dream. It is one that is built on the basis of respect for diversity. It's more a dream of freedom than the new Chinese dream. It's built also on the respect between nations, small and large. This European dream, and the fact that our citizens expect us to deliver on that - that is the basic reason we can't give up. It is an obligation!



REINHARD BÜTIKOFER

is a German Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the European Green Party. He was the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen party leader, together with Claudia Roth between 2002 and 2008.





EU ECONOMICS MEETS DEMOCRACY

AN INTERVIEW WITH
YANIS VAROUFAKIS

The architecture of the European Union institutions is flawed. Its leaders seem to deny the ineffectiveness of the response given to the financial and economic crisis as we see inequality and extremism on the rise. The European Union will be unprepared for the next crisis unless it profoundly reforms its governance and enhances democracy.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: Today in Europe we see it being bashed, mistrusted, and loaded with negative emotional charges. Why? What do you think are the big disintegration forces at play today in Europe?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: The European Union is a construct which was simply not fit for purpose. The design – from an economic perspective – of the single market, and especially the common currency that was grafted upon it, is such that it was always going to be incapable of responding to a global financial crisis like that of 2008. And in exactly the same way as the Gold Standard in the 1920s, it created macroeconomic and financial imbalances which then burst under the pressure of the Wall Street collapse in 1929, and the established order of Europe. This is precisely what we are facing again. The response of the EU today to the inevitable crisis is one of permanent denial. To put it in slightly more general terms, when a crisis happens in the US, as acute as in 2008, the powers that be – bankers, the Federal Reserve, people from the treasury, corporations – they ask themselves a basic question: how can we stop this crisis from consuming us?

In Europe, after October 2008, the question asked was: how can we continue to pretend that the rules of the Eurozone can be respected? The answer to this question is not going to help overcome the crisis, it deepens it. It's like giving cortisone to a cancer patient. The denial of

the problem means that you perpetuate failed policies which create bad economic outcomes. At the same time, the political capital that has been expended on those policies means that there is an inertia and a need for the institutions to carry on with these policies. But the only way to carry on with these policies that are failing is to increase authoritarianism, so you have this negative feedback effect of mutual reinforcement. Is it any wonder that, as these processes are unfolding, the peoples of Europe are turning against the EU?

Of course, Europe is, and always was, a lot more than an economic project, but it began as an economic community, on top of which Europeans grafted their dreams of unity and shared prosperity of a political union: an end to war, peace, and common objectives.

After 2010 with the Euro crisis, Europe evolved, Merkel moved away from the no-bailout mentality and we have been having an institutional revolution. This is true, in a sense: the European Central Bank (ECB) has been doing a lot of things it was not doing before. We created the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF); we created something called the banking union, and yet, in this institutional revolution every move has been in precisely the wrong direction. It is completely true that there have been many institutional developments in Europe, and indeed, if there weren't, then the euro would have collapsed.

Let's take the EFSF and the bonds it issued to finance the bailouts as an example. Recall the collateralised debt obligations (CDO) that led to the collapse of Lehman's and of the financial sector. The CDOs were pieces of debt containing lots of sub-debts each with different default probabilities and interest rates. But these probabilities and rates were correlated. This correlation caused the domino effect. And this is exactly how the EFSF bonds and bailouts were constructed in the Eurozone. We created a new toxic institution! Implicitly, intrinsically, and embedded within the EFSF was a domino effect; the process of disintegration. Similarly with the Banking Dis-Union that we called a Banking Union. We have a saying in Greece: to baptise meat as fish in order to eat it during Lent.

Why is it such an ill designed system?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: There is an architecture in Europe, and the powers that be can't accept that that architecture is not fit for purpose, and they want to preserve it in spite of this. But they even disagree among themselves. The reason the Franco-German axis is falling apart is because we have an economic structure which has imploded. The key to answering your question is this: German and French Ministers of Finance, Mr Schäuble and Mr Macron, for instance, fundamentally disagree on what design is needed to replace the current model. And while the two elephants in the room are clashing, the mice suffer and,

instead of fixing the architecture, they buy time putting plaster on the cracks. It is a political failure. And this is where we, progressives from Europe and Europeanists, must come in, because these two will never get it together.

Starting from scratch?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: No, we should never start from scratch. There has to be a radical confrontation with the powers that be. There are a lot of things that we should preserve, but we should move away, both from the French, Italian and Spanish elites' posturing, and also from German ordoliberalism.

So disintegration for you is endogenous. We put layers of plaster on the cracks.

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: Yes. We need to step back, to have a holistic approach. This is what we have not done in Europe. And we can do that.

And why do anything at all? Why not stop it here and go back to national borders?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: In Indiana Jones, when he rushes into a temple, the path behind him on which he has been running begins crumbling, and that path doesn't exist anymore. You cannot backtrack or reverse. In exactly the same way, if Greece had not joined the EU or not joined the Eurozone in particular, we would not have had the good growth of the 1995 to

2008 period which gave rise to the economic crash. There would have been around 1% steady growth year-by-year throughout that period, like Bulgaria, and in 2008 there would have been a small recession. Within eight to ten months we would have recovered and continued slowly and steadily growing in spite of all of our corruption and faults. Greece would not have been in the news and would not be in the great depression that it is in now. But, given the choices that we made and the position we find ourselves in now, if we go out of the EU, we would have a major catastrophe.

Let's suppose we go back to nation states and we have free trade and a new forms of cooperation. If we disintegrate and go back to this, there's going to be a huge fault-line running across the Alps and up the Rhine. Germany is going to create a currency, but because it is so integrated with the Netherlands, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, they will share the same currency. This will create a space around Germany that will stretch to the Baltics and the edge of Ukraine. That currency will go through the roof immediately because there will be a capital flight into the currency area. You will immediately have 10 million unemployed people in that area. People who are now in precarious employment, but employed nevertheless, in these surplus countries, will be very soon unemployed, and that is a toxic development. The only beneficiaries that come out of that will be the political monsters.

THE RESPONSE
OF THE EU
TODAY TO THE
INEVITABLE
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So the next step for you would be to have a common banking system?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: If you want to change the treaties in order to stabilise Europe: forget it. Before that, we need to stabilise the current situation: imagine, tomorrow, in Brussels, a press conference held with the presidents of the European Council, the ECB, the EIB (European Investment Bank) and the ESM (European Stability Mechanism). They announce a new policy including four components: investments in green energy and sustainable technology to the tune of 6% of euro GDP every year; secondly, a policy for public debt; thirdly, a policy for banks; and fourthly, a policy for alleviating the poverty crisis. All together this would form a sort of New Deal. Everything I propose, that would come out of this hypothetical press conference, is already written in the existing treaties.

The first announcement would be that the Council agrees for the EIB to manage this expenditure of 6% on green energy and sustainable technology. How would it be funded? By the EIB issuing bonds on its own – no co-financing by Member States; they're bankrupt or fiscally stressed. Let's say they issue all these bonds, but remember next to the president of the EIB is that of the ECB standing by the secondary markets, waiting to purchase any bonds if the yields start going up. The ECB has 80 billion to do it. But EIB bonds are not government bonds, they're owned by everyone in Europe – effectively, it's the only euro-bond we have and it is completely within the charter of the ECB. So that's how we deal with investment. And I can assure you, these bonds will sell like hot cakes.

On debt, the announcement by the presidents of the ECB and the European Council would be that the debt of Member States are to be rolled into two parts. The master compliant part, the 60% of GDP allowed and the rest. The master compliant part will be from now on serviced by the ECB, not by printing but by issuing ECB bonds on behalf of the Member State. So effectively the ECB acts as a go-be-

tween for the money market and the Member State. So we use the ECB as a midway for the part of the debt that we are allowed to have, so we are strengthening Maastricht. It's like telling Member States that they will be penalised for every euro of debt they have over that limit, so we strengthen the rules, we do not do away with it. That way, 35% of the present value of Eurozone Member State GDP goes away and if you go away with 35% of the debt value, then the debt crisis goes away.

Third, the presidents of the ECB and ESM are sitting next to each other. When a bank is drenched, and needs to be recapitalised, the national government has the right to say that it will not touch the bank. Immediately, the following process would start: the ECB fires the board of directors and appoints a new one, without any member coming from that country, to break the cosy relationship with politicians. The ESM, under new management, and under Single Supervisory Mechanism and the ECB, recapitalises the bank and in return gets its shares. So the European taxpayer puts money in the bank under new management that the ECB decides and in return gets the shares. Within two years the taxpayer must get its money back. This way, you would have a new Eurozone jurisdiction for banks that opt out of the Member State banking system. This is a step-by-step banking union.

The last announcement concerns the creation of something that we borrow from the New Deal in the US and the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson, which is the food stamp system. In the US, poverty exists, as we speak, at 15%. It is clear that without them poverty would be 25% or more. So food stamps alleviate poverty by 10%. We need something similar, but the question is how you finance it. In the US they have the treasury. In the EU we have the European system of central banks. Every year, a lot of money accumulates in this system.

You have talked about disintegration while putting proposals forward. But what about democracy in all this? Can democracy be the core of a political project?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: Yes, and I would go further. It is the only chance of putting the brakes on the disintegration of the EU and rise of the far-right. Think about it: democracy is not just a process or a mechanism. It's the idea that those who are in command are the demos, the people, the majority who happen to be the disenfranchised, the least powerful. Democracy is of course more than majoritarianism. It is also about rule of law, separation of powers and safeguarding minority rights, and all those things that are today in Europe being thrown out of the window.

What kind of democracy are we talking about?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: Democracy is a combination of majoritarianism and rule of law and respect for individual rights. You cannot pick and choose. It's all or nothing. If you have a group of misanthropists, there is no system of government that can produce results. There is no doubt about it. The only reason that ultra-nationalism is raising its ugly head is because Europe is failing and because it has annulled European democracy in the centres of power. And whenever you do that, and you combine negative interest rates and inflation in some parts of the Union, then, just like in the 1930s, the scapegoating phenomenon will emerge. People will need to point fingers at somebody tangible next to them – they cannot understand an abstract concept like inflation or the capitalist crisis – so it's the Jew, the Greek, the German, the Syrian, the Other, that gets scapegoated.

One of the things you offer as a solution, and you talk at length about it, is transparency. We have talked about a democratic deficit since the first European Parliament in 1979. How do we solve that, concretely?

YANIS VAROUFAKIS: What is possible is systems of transparency. To connect cameras inside the Council of the EU with the internet and smart phones, so you know what is being said. This is the first step we need to take in

order to reenergise dialogue and debate in Europe. We need some checks and balances on our representatives within the existing framework. This can happen as of tomorrow. The next step is to stabilise. Afterwards you can have a press conference and it would inject a huge level of optimism, and suddenly the European agenda would be back, and the dream of shared prosperity would reappear. Negative expectations can cause an immediate relapse, but positive expectations can cause an immediate recovery. And after a year, we can start discussing how to institute a constitutional assembly, to come up with an EU constitution that replaces the treaties and creates a proper federation.



YANIS VAROUFAKIS

is a Greek economist and was Member of the Parliament of Greece between January and September 2015. In 2015 he was Minister of Finance and voted against the terms of the third bailout package for Greece and resigned in July 2015. In February 2016, Varoufakis launched the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 – DiEM25. His most recent book is entitled *And the Weak Suffer What They Must? Europe's crisis, America's economic future.*

UNITED IN FEAR

ARTICLE BY

MARYIA
SADOUSKAYA-
KOMLACH

Both pro-Kremlin and independent media in Russia tend to oversimplify and ‘tabloidise’ news about the European Union, painting it as weak, excessively tolerant and eager to forsake Christian values. Politicians and media outlets inside the European Union help spread fabricated stories among their constituencies. This circulation of misinformation can have far-reaching implications, and can influence not only the European Union’s relations with Russia and its neighbours, but also its own internal process of integration.

Since the beginning of the military operation in the East of Ukraine in 2014, the West has paid increasing attention to the way the pro-governmental, Moscow-based media portray the European Union, NATO and their members.

The EU-run East StratCom – a Brussels-based team of information specialists seconded from the Member States – collects examples of the Kremlin’s ‘disinformation’ through its network of several hundred contributors from inside the EU and beyond its borders. Examples from May 2016 include the alleged ‘politicisation’ by Europe of the *Eurovision* song contest spread by the Russian TASS national news agency and exaggerating French euroscepticism in a story that misquoted most of the speakers, aired on the main information TV channel *Rossiya 1*.

Pro-Kremlin media indeed regularly portray processes in Europe in a false light and publish stories that are easy to discredit. However, there are certain topics that go beyond disinformation and require deeper analysis. A major theme that runs through the publications and

broadcasts about the European Union and its members is the question of Europe's national and cultural diversity. This diversity is being tested due to the recent migrant crisis, with politicians in several EU Member States using refugees' influx as an argument against the further integration within the EU and against the model of liberal democracy as such. If left unnoticed and not tackled, the hostile attitude to other cultures can become a disruptive influence for European integration, fuelled both endogenously and exogenously.

MULTICULTURALISM AND MIGRANTS: EUROPE'S 'DISEASES'

One of the selling points of European integration is the peaceful co-existence of diverse societies reflected in the Union's motto, "United in diversity". Yet, in Russia this diversity is perceived by many in only a single dimension: 'multiculturalism'.

A 2015 survey¹ by the National Centre for Research on Europe for the European Commission shows that among the EU's ten strategic partners, Russia has the least share of those who have a 'very positive' or 'somewhat positive' view of the European Union at less than 25%. When asked to describe the European Union in one word, Russian respondents' top-three

choices was 'multicultural'. If, in other polled countries, 'multicultural' was understood both in a positive and a negative way, in Russia it was perceived as a negative trait, alongside the 'hypocrisy' and 'arrogance' of the Union.

One cannot say that this comes from a lack of news about the EU: nearly two-thirds of Russians (64%) hear about the EU every day, while for more than 75% of the respondents, this information comes from media. The threat of 'multiculturalism' comes not from being uninformed but rather from being informed in a biased way.

Multiculturalism is not an official policy of the European Union. The effectiveness of a 'multi-culti' approach has been long questioned by the politicians of EU Member States: in October 2010, Angela Merkel admitted that this policy had "utterly failed" in Germany, while in February 2011 David Cameron spoke highly critically of this concept at a Munich security conference. Moreover, there is no agreement between scholars and analysts on what exactly 'multiculturalism' means. But for the pro-Kremlin Russian media, that does not matter as long as this term can be used to demonstrate the dangers of European integration.

"Austria is divided into two parts: one part supports multiculturalism, migrants and

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/documents/showcases/eu_perceptions_study_executive_summary.pdf

the European integration and another part is against it”, a popular online newspaper *Vzgliad.ru* wrote on 25th May 2016, commenting on the results of Austrian elections where a far-right presidential candidate was narrowly defeated by the former Green party leader Alexander van der Bellen.

A wave of articles presenting Europe as too weak to survive the invasion of alien cultures began in January 2016, after Cologne’s New Year’s Eve attacks, when a group of men harassed female participants of street celebrations. While later reports proved that the majority of suspects were not refugees but representatives of North African communities², this event gave rise to a whole series of pro-Kremlin media reports about the intensification of “rape” committed by newly arrived refugees – or migrants in general – in Europe.

The story that got the most attention in the Western media was the February 2016 case of a 13-year-old German teenager,

Lisa F., of Russian origin, who was allegedly “raped for a whole day and night” by a group of migrants while the German police chose to ‘hide’ that fact (the story was later denounced by the German side). The statements about the girl were made not only in Russia’s national media but also by politicians and diplomats, including Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov.

WHILE THE RUSSIAN
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OF EUROPEAN
“MULTICULTURALISM”,
THE EU-BASED MEDIA
CATCH THE BAIT

Refugees are blamed for other crimes as well. A repeated accusation after the Brussels March 22nd bombings was that it was German chancellor Angela Merkel’s fault: either because she invited refugees to Europe, and even posed with one of them who “looks like one of the bombers”³,

or because “even after the bombings she continues to defend refugees”⁴. Refugees are portrayed as cynical owners of ‘new iPhones’ who are coming to Europe for economic reasons, but who also apparently hate Europe because of its involvement in NATO operations and therefore will not take long to retaliate against it⁵.

² <https://decorrespondent.nl/4403/News-after-the-fact-Reporting-on-New-Years-Eve-in-Cologne-with-hindsight/740954526851-d527a047>

³ <http://ren.tv/novosti/2016-03-26/foto-merkel-so-smertnikom-iz-bryusselya-shokirovalo-polzovateley-seti>

⁴ <http://news-front.info/2016/03/23/merkel-voshla-v-obraz-i-dazhe-posle-teraktov-prodolzhaet-zashishhat-bezhencev-nataliya-yankova-germaniya/>

⁵ http://best.kp.ru/msk/europe_migrants/

Not only pro-Kremlin media disseminate the image of the European Union that is too ‘weak’ in its treatment of refugees, and more broadly, representatives of other cultures. “*Migrants already demand that Christians forsake their values: stop celebrating Christmas; stop selling alcohol and pork; stop wearing swimsuits on beaches or sun-tanning in parks – and they demand it aggressively*”, claims the writer Mikhail Veller in his blog⁶ on the website of *Ekho Moskvy*, a radio station that is still regarded by some as one of the last platforms for independent voices in Russia.

THE LANGUAGE OF FEAR KNOWS NO BORDERS

Pro-Kremlin media arbitrarily use publications from the EU media to support their narratives. For that, they use quotes from opinion pieces, presenting them as editorial positions. For example, in the aftermath of the Brussels bombings in March 2016, *Sputnik* website quoted the Italian newspaper’s *Il Giornale* column about the “suicide of Europe”, presenting it as an editorial position of the outlet.⁷ Another common approach is an exaggeration of the scale of the event. “Turkey sends only non-educated migrants to the European Union”, the First TV Channel, *Izvestia* newspaper and TASS news

agencies claimed⁸ in May 2016, quoting *Der Spiegel*’s article⁹. While the article has analysed only several cases of denials of exit permits to highly-skilled and trained Syrian refugees, the Russian leading TV channel presents this as a main trend noticed by “European media”.

The penetration of discourses is mutual: while the Russian media select the most grotesque examples of the downsides of European “multiculturalism”, the EU-based media catch the bait and repeat their claims. The story of a ‘raped by refugees’ girl continuously appeared on Polish, Czech or Hungarian websites already after it was discredited by German media.

It would be unfair to blame the EU media for becoming the source of inspiration for the pro-Kremlin media’s gloomy portrayal of Europe, aimed at Russians and at the broader circle of Russian-speakers, consumers of the Russian media. Even the most respected of media’s stories can be misquoted, distorted or put into a totally new context. In the era of the struggle for clicks, it is also understandable that some online media in the EU extensively use unverified information to attract readership.

However, it would be also unfair not to notice that the amount of ‘anti-EU’ rhetoric on the

6 http://echo.msk.ru/blog/weller_michael/1619776-echo/

7 <http://sputniknews.com/europe/20160327/1037045769/brussels-attack-west-policies-suicide-europe.html>

8 <http://izvestia.ru/news/614772>

9 <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/fluechtlinge-tuerkei-laesst-hochqualifizierte-syrer-nicht-in-eu-ausreisen-a-1093332.html>

THE NETWORK
OF WEBSITES
SUPPORTING
THE MOSCOW
NARRATIVE
ABOUT
EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES
IS GROWING

political scene of European countries has grown, and the refugee crisis is one of the main pretexts politicians use to promote a more xenophobic model of European democracy and European values.

During the parliamentary campaign 2015, the president of Poland's now ruling Law and Justice Party, Jarosław Kaczyński, warned Poles that migrants and refugees carry “parasites and protozoa” that do not harm them but would harm Europeans. During TV debates in September 2015, Kaczynski stated that some regions in Sweden were “governed by Sharia law” prompting the Swedish embassy to deny the claim.¹⁰ In October, his party won a majority in parliament, and while the anti-migrant rhetoric may not be the only reason behind that, one should not disregard it.

Czech President Milos Zeman described the refugee crisis as an “organised invasion” of Europe and threatened his population with migrants installing ‘Sharia laws’ on the EU territory: “*We’ll be deprived of women’s beauty, because they’ll be covered from head to toe... unfaithful women will be stoned and thieves will have their hands cut off.*”¹¹

These statements are in line with the language of fear and xenophobia used by the pro-Kremlin media when referring to migrants and refugees in particular. Some of these statements come from political parties and movements that have been financially supported by the Russian government, such as the French Front National¹², but ironically many come from those who oppose Russia’s non-democratic rule, such as the Law and Justice Party in Poland. As a result, a growing number of EU citizens learn that Europe is under the threat of alien invasion and we have to protect our borders, history, culture or religion better to defend ourselves against ‘multiculturalism’.

10 <http://natemat.pl/154915,ambasada-szwecji-szybko-odpowiada-na-szariat-kaczynskiego-w-szwecji-mamy-szwedzkie-prawo>

11 http://zpravy.idnes.cz/islamsti-uprchlici-zeman-pravo-saria-dw1-/domaci.aspx?c=A151016_154427_domaci_hro

12 <http://www.politico.eu/article/le-pen-russia-crimea-putin-money-bank-national-front-seeks-russian-cash-for-election-fight/>

IS A WAR OF WORDS A SOLUTION?

The disinformation and distortion campaigns, some claim, are led not only by pro-Kremlin media but by the whole state machinery and popular figures loyal to it, such as pop-singers, sportspeople and writers. The network of websites supporting the Moscow narrative about European countries is growing, repeating and exaggerating both Russia-produced myths and the most controversial and xenophobic statements of the European politicians.

The political response from Europe, and the West more broadly, so far has been mostly limited to setting up several communications agencies tasked with denouncing myths and bringing truth about the EU or about ‘transatlantic values’. However, it would be too tempting to decide that such bodies as Riga-based NATO’s Center for Excellence in Strategic Communication or Brussels-based EU East StratCom are enough to fill the gap in quality information about the real situation in the EU.

Governments and international institutions are not always the best friends of investigative reporting, revealing their wrongdoings, lack of action or in some cases corruption, and are naturally prone to exaggerate their successes and ignore mistakes. Giving them a leading role in ‘fixing’ the situation

could lead to a war of narratives where the non-democratic side would always win, just because it has more experience, resources, determination and less control from the side of its own society in spreading propaganda and in other words, has less barriers to aggressively leading such a war. One also should not be caught by the information war language because even the well-intended West’s attempts to counter propaganda will often be treated as a “propaganda of another kind”, just as the US government’s call to support investigative journalism in the Baltics “to combat Russian propaganda” was interpreted in 2015¹³.

There are two important steps that have to be made by the EU as an institution and its Member States if they want to help citizens both in their countries and outside the Union understand the processes in the EU better. Both require long-term commitments and are not extremely popular among politicians.

The first step is investing in independent media in the Russian language in the Russian-speaking regions; this will enable it to present a deeper and more varied picture of the European Union without ignoring its problems and challenges. The more diverse voices there are, the less black-and-white a

13 <http://gijn.org/2015/08/19/journalism-or-propaganda-lets-help-russian-media-the-right-way/>

picture Russian-speakers will get. While the EU-based media, even being hit by the world industry crisis, are able to survive on the mixture of advertising, subscriptions and new revenue streams, the ones that are based in less democratic and less prosperous countries are in need of funding that would support independent journalism with no political agenda attached. The ‘counter-propaganda’ money is not something that will help the situation, but systematic support of high-quality journalism will.

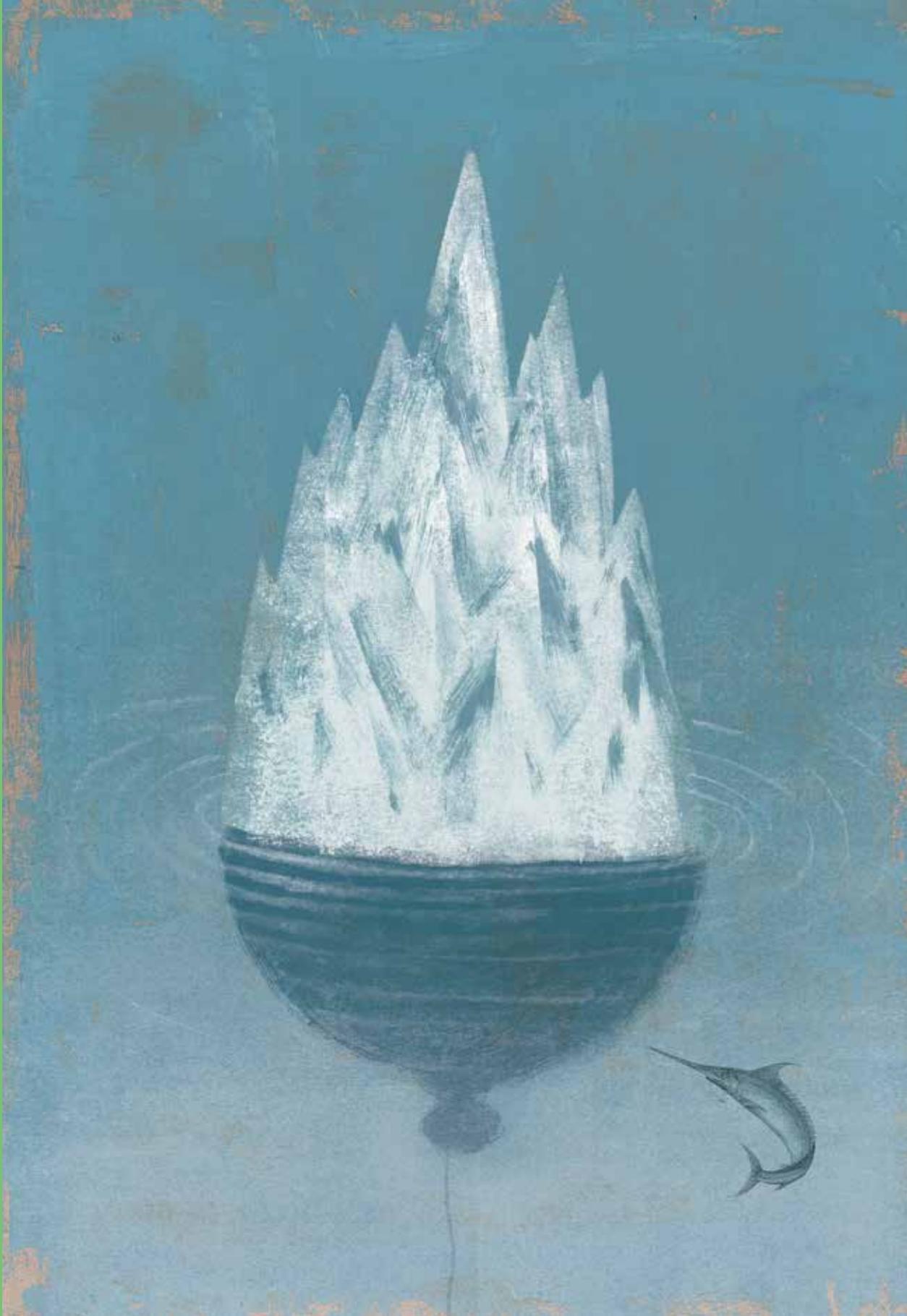
The second step would be reassessing the way the European Union and its problems are described inside the EU. Is there a way to check whether the sensationalism that drives media and politicians to the extremes is balanced with fact-based reporting on the EU-relevant problems? And, more importantly, are we perhaps too busy fighting the outside ‘enemy’ to notice that its values are increasingly shared by local elites throughout old and new EU Member States? Are we, as the EU, even able to explain to our own citizens that refugees, migrants and European integration are not necessarily an ‘evil’ or a ‘good’ combination and needs to be tackled in a more nuanced way? Journalistic and citizen initiatives that contribute to this process inside the European Union should be promoted and highlighted, and the issue should be raised in a more systematic way on the highest political level.

Both steps are crucial if the European Union, struggling with its own identity crisis and ‘two-speed’ approach, is to ever succeed in presenting itself to its neighbours as a peaceful alternative that unites its citizens in all their diversity.



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EUROPEANISATION FROM BELOW

DEMOCRACY AS A DRIVER OF INTEGRATION

ARTICLE BY
**DONATELLA
 DELLA PORTA**

Can democracy be the project that leads to further European integration? Social scientist Donatella Della Porta provides a diagnosis of the current state of European democracy, and tells us whether today's pro-democracy movements have the potential to become the driving forces of a more united Europe.

European democracy – together with European integration – is in a deep legitimacy crisis, as austerity policies and other developments have put extreme pressures on it. Decisions at the EU level have moved towards the least transparent institutions, such as the European Central Bank (ECB), and the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN). Among the citizens of Europe there is resentment about the fact that in Europe today the emphasis is on regulatory ideas instead of democratic ideas, and the main goal of the EU seems to be the expansion of the freedoms of the market, rather than the improvement of the social wellbeing of its people. Looking at the EU's own statistics, such as the Eurobarometer, one could have seen the obvious warning signs well in advance, but the EU institutions have simply overlooked them.

A decade ago, two-thirds of European citizens said they trusted Europe. Now about two-thirds say they mistrust it. More and more people associate Europe with negative sentiments, and the mistrust for EU institutions has increased to the extreme in the European peripheries, especially in Southern Europe. The percentage of citizens in the southern Member States who have positive feelings about the EU is below ten percent today.

This text is an edited compilation of Professor Donatella Della Porta's answers to questions by the Green European Journal.

And the Left cannot simply dismiss this as a sign of populist right-wing refusal of Europe. Many of those who (even some years ago) were struggling for another Europe are now dissatisfied with what

the European Union has become. So today, people are more and more sceptical about the potential for democratic institutions to be built at the European level.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS HAVE NEVER BEEN PERFECT

Democracy at the EU level has always been problematic. Even political scientists who are sympathetic to the EU and its processes have always said that there are challenges, which are difficult to address through the development of electorally accountable institutions. There have been some major deficits in the construction of the institutions of democracy, especially political parties and political elections.

For a long time, European elections tended to be second-order elections: people had little interest in European politics and tended to vote on national issues. And often national priorities were the ones that decided issues in the institutions themselves – even Members of the European Parliament tended to vote based on national loyalties rather than their affiliation to a party family. Moreover, the democratic dialectic between different positions has never really been developed in the European Parliament, as the dynamic was based on broad coalitions. Thus, there has been little capacity to create deliberative arenas. This is something that has frustrated a lot of

citizens, who have perceived their capacity to be heard at the EU level as extremely limited. In countries like Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, there has been increasing resentment as the EU institutions have shown no signs of solidarity with those more in need – not even the Social Democrats.

But what people have resented the most since the start of the economic crisis is probably the fact that the EU (in particular, through the Troika institutions) has produced lots of dictates to Member States, not supported by the people, and not supported by national parliaments themselves. In addition, the European Parliament, an institution that was supposed to acquire more power with the process of European integration, has, in reality, been deprived of its decision-making power. As main decisions have shifted towards the least visible and least accountable institutions and various new regulations created – which impose very specific policies of cuts in public services, privatisation and liberalisation – many citizens perceive this as meeting the interest of the few, and increasing the suffering of the many. Take, for example, the issue of Greece and the potential default, when decisions were made by the financial ministers of “Eurolandia,” following the (apparently unsuccessful) idea that the main and only aim has to be the defence of the free market at the expense of social protection. This is a very empty and unpopular form of politics.

BEHIND THE CURTAINS

This brings us to the paradox of the EU. While the European Parliament is not doing enough, there is also the impression that more and more decisions are made at the EU level, but that these decisions are made behind closed doors. What really counts is the economic interest of the stronger Member States, while any idea of building solidarity is lost in the European debate.

While formally there is more power for the elected organs, in reality, the Fiscal Compact¹ and similar agreements developed during the financial crisis impose the dismantling of the very model of a social Europe that had served to legitimate European integration. Decisions are then taken away from elected bodies and displaced into the executive, into the markets, and into the least visible international organisations, like the ECB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They have played a huge role in making people think that there is no electoral relevance whatsoever, because, contrary to what the voters wanted, the Troika started to dictate how much national governments can spend on social protection at home.

The proponents of illiberal democracy – Viktor Orbán, Jarosław Kaczyński, or Marine Le Pen (who is not yet in government,

but might soon be) – are all profiting from this visible decline of institutions of electoral accountability. Essentially, their open attack on democracy is a response to a previous attack on European democracy; an attack that was carried out by the European institutions themselves.

SOCIAL RIGHTS LEGITIMISE DEMOCRACY

Democracy has, in the past, been made up of many different institutions: for example, the institutions of electoral accountability, but also the institutions of participation, such as political parties or trade unions. And these institutions were complemented by the so-called public sphere (as theorised by the philosopher Jürgen Habermas), which made it possible to discuss political issues not just inside the above mentioned institutions, but also among the people, as well as social movements in different size and form. Given the steady decline of traditional parties and trade unions, the civil society organisations active in the public sphere have become very relevant institutions of democracy in our times.

Through the public spheres, citizens have participated by controlling those in power, and social movements have been very relevant in developing new concepts of democracy. They

¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/european-council/pdf/Treaty-on-Stability-Coordination-and-Governance-TSCG/>

were, for instance, the ones to introduce the idea of social rights, such as the right to welfare (in order to complement individual rights like property, or political rights, such as the right to vote). Social rights have legitimised democracy among the people, as they have managed to provide citizens with protection.

And movements have also introduced arenas of additional democratic life. The labour movements have, for instance, often put pressure on governments, not only for democracy in the parliaments, but also for democracy in the workers' councils. The same has been done by student movements to improve participation in universities, whilst users of public services have been demanding more participation in decision-making.

BEING PART OF POLITICS

In terms of participation, many social movements have indeed been successful in empowering people by giving them a feeling of being part of politics. Moreover, they have developed the idea that it is not only a matter of including many people in participatory mechanisms, but it is also important to create spaces in which the so-called deliberative dimensions of democracy can take place. This

means spaces, free of power relations, where high quality communication produces new collective identities and solidarities.

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This development of alternative conceptions of democracy goes against the over-simplification of the conception of democracy at the institutional level, where democracy was all about delegation and majoritarian decision-making. These move-

ments gave instead importance to a democratic way of producing ideas and not just decisions. This passed through the introduction of consensual decision-making: the idea that you can make spaces for normal, non-politicised people to participate in politics. This is fundamentally different from the elitist and minimalistic visions of democracy that are also visible in today's representative institutions.

The elites say, 'we need experts, we need professionals' – while the movements say, 'we need the citizens, because they are also experts and they can contribute their own knowledge to single out problems and solutions'.

The empowerment of people has been the greatest effect of social movements, such as the global justice movement or the anti-austerity protests, in Europe and beyond. And this

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is a feature that movements can still provide in Europe. In Spain and Greece, you can see that people started to trust politics again. They now see it as something that belongs to them, and through which they have the right to participate in the decisions that have an effect on their lives.

CREATING BROADER SOLIDARITIES

Spain's Indignados and other movements have managed to produce lots of new alternative institutions, such as citizens' assemblies, self-managed cooperatives, and other types of solidarity initiatives. These organisations and movements are aiming at building new forms of societies, associations, social movements, alternative unions, etc. Through their work it became obvious that if we want democracy to be an inclusive integrating force it should not only be about delegation, but also about participation. Moreover, it should not just be about majority voting but also about the creation of spaces through which ordinary citizens can participate in politics. Because these are the kinds of experiences that can have an empowering effect, and can bring people closer together.

This was very visible with the example of movements against austerity all over Europe, where citizens from different social groups, generations, gender and religions participated. This kind of democratic process brings some hope for Europe.

This follows up, to a certain extent, on the idea of a European democracy built from below that had developed within the so-called European Social Forums (ESF) in the early 2000s, which brought together social movements, unions, NGOs and other interested parties. They have developed very sophisticated ideas about possible democratic alternatives at the European level, and through this, Europe was legitimated as the right level to address these issues. The proposals for "another Europe", a democratic Europe of solidarity, implied the creation of spaces of encounters among citizens to elaborate ideas about social and environmental policies, but also foreign policy for a Europe of peace.

Democracy at the European level can indeed develop only if citizenship rights, such as civic, political and social rights, are recognised rather than considered as subordinated to a so-called logic of the market. It requires that the political character of decisions at EU level is not hidden behind an obsolete image of a “benevolent” Europe; this character should rather be explicitly acknowledged, and the possibility for citizens to participate in the decision making at EU level increased.

At the moment, however, developments in the EU have disappointed those who hoped for a democratisation process. The anti-austerity movements that have developed in many countries against austerity policies, steered by EU institutions, still have difficulties in coordinating and creating broader solidarities at the EU level. Some attempts in this direction, such as the European Days of Struggle, or the Blockupy campaign – which targeted the ECB – still remained much narrower in scope and reach than the European Social Forums (ESF). The very idea that Europe is the right level at which to build solidarity is challenged, especially among the new generation, who tend to find the idea of Europe as overlapping with the EU far too narrow.

This does not mean that there aren't any issues that could restart a process of Europeanisation from below. Nowadays I see, in fact, some possibilities for such a process to

redevelop. One possibility is related to the movements that show solidarity in relation to the refugee crisis, which is very clearly seen as a European problem, where it is very clear that solidarity cannot be expressed only at the national level, and a solution has to come through an EU level democratic process. And there is also the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), against which the opposition is very strong all over Europe, with a large majority of citizens criticising it for its potential effects on social and environmental rights, and the very protection of the people over the market. The question is only if the younger generations can be convinced that the idea of Europe can also be an inclusive conception, not just the exclusive one that it is perceived as being right now.



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THE ANXIETIES THAT (DIS)UNITE TERRORISM AND THE FORCES OF INTEGRATION

AN INTERVIEW WITH
**JUDITH SARGENTINI &
MICHAL BERG**

In a rational world, security threats might boost European integration, given their cross-border nature. Today's Europe, however, is different. In a pattern mirroring the economic crisis, instead of supporting a collaborative European solution, many of the Member States' governments opt for more expensive, complicated and nationalist responses to the threats they face. A discussion with Dutch MEP Judith Sargentini, and Michal Berg, Deputy Chairman of the Czech Green Party.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: Can we turn Europe's common fear of terrorism into a force that brings about further integration? Can "no more fear" have the same effect as the promise of "no more war" did after World War II – when Europe's nations transformed their deep mistrust of one another into a project of integration?

JUDITH SARGENTINI: Rationally, the current security threats should lead to more integration, not less. Many of the "home-grown" fighters who committed terrorist attacks in Europe were known to the security agencies. The person who carried out the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels in 2014 used to fight in Syria. The French security agencies knew that and the Germans did too. But nobody told the Belgians. The men behind the bombings in London were known to the authorities; the murderer of the filmmaker Theo van Gogh was tapped by the national security agency in the Netherlands, and still he was able to commit his crime. So from a rational point of view I would say that national security is a concept that should be changed to European security, because as long as you call it national security, and as long as you keep all your rights and duties at the national level, you will not be able to organise inter-European cooperation.

The situation is very similar to the economic crisis, which was also supposed to lead to more Europe, and should have led us to the understanding that governance is not about state sovereignty anymore, but about the sovereignty of banks – as they are the ones in power today. But emotionally we see a completely different understanding of the issue: instead of trying to find a common European solution, we are mixing up terrorism with the refugee issue, and everyone is focused only on protecting their own country and their own borders from the perceived threat from outside, as well as from other Member States. And the real question is how to overcome that emotion and bring our politicians back to a rational view of dealing with the real threats.

MICHAL BERG: From a Central European perspective it is slightly different. We have been really lucky so far that we haven't had a terrorist attack on the scale of those in Brussels or Paris. So the mental connection between terrorism and European integration is not so strong in Central Europe. People don't perceive it as a real threat. But still they have this feeling that in the Schengen area terrorists can easily move to the Eastern Member States if they want to. So they associate Western Europe with the threat, and that makes them hostile towards the EU, even though there is no rational basis to that: why would terrorists

want to move to the Eastern Member States and attack Europe from there? They already know that in the East the support for the European project is waning, and there is no need to attack Eastern Europe, because Eastern Europeans are quite capable of weakening their connection to Europe themselves, even without the external influence of terrorists.

Michal says that Central Europe is not under threat, because terrorists see that those countries are already hostile towards Europe. Do you think it is a goal of terrorists to stop European integration?

JUDITH SARGENTINI: No, but every time we overreact to a terrorist attack, or every time we make a connection between Muslim refugees and terrorists, we are helping Daesh¹ in their fight against the openness of Western societies. We are putting restrictions on our liberal democratic states, and with that we are making people's lives, especially European Muslims', more difficult. It must be a joy for those behind the terrorist attacks to see these populist debates going on in Europe. In the Netherlands, the Parliament recently debated a ban on Salafist organisations, because terrorists are often Salafist-influenced. But that's a flawed way of thinking: just because many terrorists took their inspiration from the Salafist tradition doesn't mean that Salafism

¹ Daesh is the Arabic language acronym for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

per se is violent. So if we are debating whether Salafism should be forbidden, we are also pushing away those Salafists who just have a very orthodox religion, but are not involved in criminal acts. Of course, I am not appreciative of Salafism: I don't think it emancipates women, it doesn't give people fair chances in life, and it doesn't fit into the kind of inclusive society we want to share with each other, but they are not dangerous. But when we marginalise them we play into the hands of Daesh.

MICHAL BERG: And not only Daesh. If we restrict freedoms we will in a sense become indirect allies of Putin and his regime who see liberties as a threat to their survival. They believe that politically it is problematic to let people freely do, think and say what they want to. There is a rising support for Putinist parties in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia; many Central European governments look at Russia as an inspiration in their policies, and cooperate with a regime that is trying to undermine the democratic, national security, military and economic endeavours of Europe. We have already witnessed some Czech generals and other high-ranking officials getting involved with Russian intelligence services, which is really worrying. And I think intelligence service cooperation could be really helpful against both the Russian and the Islamist threats in Europe. This is way

more effective than spending money on the demonstration of power, and on sending the military onto the streets, which makes some people feel less secure rather than reassuring them that the governments of Europe have the situation under control.

Many Europeans (especially in the Eastern Member States) are afraid of the unknown – such as newcomers to our societies – and this plays into the hands of populists like Orbán, who claim to provide answers to their misgivings. How can we win support from them for integration?

JUDITH SARGENTINI: If you look at terrorism over the decades, we see a lot of home-grown terrorism, where not even the parents or grandparents of the terrorists were immigrants: terrorist groups like the IRA, RAF, ETA², and so on. We had a lot of terrorism motivated by right-wing or left-wing politics. Now it is religiously motivated; but here again we need to be aware that the young men from Molenbeek, in Brussels, who did the last attacks were still drinking, smoking, doing drugs a few weeks before and they religiously radicalised overnight. They are the kind of people who buy “Islam for Dummies” on Amazon. So I don't think their radicalisation has to be explained by pointing to cultural or religious reasons alone.

2 Irish Republican Army, Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction or Baader-Meinhof Group), and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Country and Freedom)

I know this won't make the problem easier to understand for someone living in a small village in Eastern Europe, but we need to be aware that this issue is rather complicated. You have to explain it to people by looking, among others, at class issues, the discrimination of people, their chances in life, and so on. I don't want to leave Islam out of the debate, but it is just not the sole issue. Secondly, refugees are forced to come to Europe via irregular routes, because there is no other way for them to flee those unbearable conditions back home or in the refugee camps, and if there are irregular routes it becomes inevitable that jihadists and criminals can use them as well. But this wouldn't be the case if we had a way to allow people in need to enter Europe in an organised way, in which we could have conducted security checks, and so on.

The former President of Germany, Christian Wolf, famously said that Islam was part of Germany. And the same way we can argue, that it is part of Europe as well. But if it is part of Europe, can't it be criticised and scrutinised the same way as Christianity?

JUDITH SARGENTINI: In my country we are much more critical of Islam than of Christianity. In the Netherlands we have a "Bible belt" where in certain villages you can't withdraw money from a cash machine on Sundays, where families still have nine to ten children, where women and girls are not allowed to wear pants, and the orthodox Christian party does not allow women on their party lists – and that is unjustly seen as folklore. But Islam is judged more harshly.

MICHAL BERG: On the example of the Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic we can see that integration per se can work even in Central Europe: Vietnamese people run successful businesses, their children go to universities, and they live side-by-side with the Czechs without a problem. Therefore, even in the case of Islam, religion and cultural values are only secondary questions. The major question is where the money comes from, whether these societies will have to pay

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for integration themselves, and how it is going to affect their welfare systems. Some, especially older people and people from the countryside in Central and Eastern European countries, already feel like losers of the transition processes of the 90s, and they are afraid that the newcomers will take away from them the rest of what they possess. To some extent it is similar to the issue of Central Europe's Roma populations, where the local politicians always complain that they don't have enough money to integrate the Roma, or to build decent houses for them. And they see the refugees as an additional burden that adds to this situation.

JUDITH SARGENTINI: But even in the case of populist politicians like Hungary's Viktor Orbán, the issue of anti-refugee propaganda is not about whether or not the refugees can be integrated or whether they are perceived as a threat by the government, but about the fact that the country cannot deliver on its promises for economic growth, so Orbán just wants to distract the attention of the voters. And the same stands for Marine Le Pen in France or Geert Wilders in the Netherlands.

How did we get to this situation in which national interests and the short-term populist goals of some Member States seem to trump the interests of the EU?

JUDITH SARGENTINI: I think it was always so, to some extent. A good example is the fact that we introduced the Euro, but did not integrate into a political union. We did start to integrate on environmental laws, and partly on labour laws, but not on foreign policy. We also did not want banks to be controlled at the European level. I think the Central European Member States have the feeling that they just got back their independence in the 90s, and now they are reluctant to sacrifice part of it again to a supranational entity. With the last economic crisis it became even worse, with major job losses and current efforts from governments to cut their social spending as a reaction to economic hardships.

MICHAL BERG: Slovakia and the Czech Republic have not been influenced by the crisis, so economically we have no reason to complain about the European Union. I think here the main driver was our former president, Vaclav Klaus, who was both anti-European and anti-environment. His opinions had a great influence on the Czech public opinion: today we are the EU country with the greatest percentage of people denying climate change for example. And now with the refugee crisis many political parties and politicians saw, based on Klaus' popular anti-Europeanism, an opportunity to make some political gains based on the refugee issue.

Judith said at the beginning that in many cases there is a quite obvious rational choice for many of our problems, nevertheless the leaders of our countries go with an emotional and rather irrational choice. Why? Where do these feelings come from?

MICHAL BERG: I think lots of people just feel that the world is changing too fast, and they don't really understand what is going on, and what is influencing their lives. So they

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are constantly looking for new, convincing explanations: sometimes it's the economy, sometimes the EU, and sometimes the refugees. In the West people are afraid that this way of living might not last forever, while in the East they think that they will never be able to reach this standard of living. And we just need to look at the disenfranchised youth of Spain or other Southern Member States: they are already in this situation.

JUDITH SARGENTINI: That's true: in Spain and Greece the youth unemployment is huge, but the response to the problem did not lead to increased populism, instead they brought to life Syriza and Podemos. I think in most of Europe we are trying to cover up our economic issues with this irrationalism, and I partly blame politicians for this. We are not looking for the right solution even if that fits our political goal. For example in this case, the Dutch government is not supporting a European solution – fair share – on the refugee issue, even though it knows that that would mean less refugees for the Netherlands. If the Europeans shared the burden, it would be much easier and cheaper to deal with this issue. But we are not willing to.

This seems to imply that Europeans don't trust each other.

JUDITH SARGENTINI: If that's the answer then the EU is doomed. And with that issue of mistrust we are back where we were with the first question: I'd say having a different approach on the issue of security could help us with European integration, but for that we need a different definition of security. There is no such thing as national security anymore, or at least there shouldn't be. Whether you close your borders or not, criminals and terrorists will move over borders. You need to act together, you need a European answer to fight them.



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is a Member of the European Parliament since 2009 where she is a coordinator for the Greens/EFA in the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs committee. Judith is also member of the Development Committee and the Human Rights committee.

She stands for a Europe where people care for one another regardless of whether the other person is an EU citizen or a refugee looking for safety. Europe should be a home, not a fortress.



MICHAL BERG

has been an entrepreneur in IT for 15 years. During 2015 he sold all his assets and later became a vice-chairman of Czech greens.

He is also active in voluntary refugee help as a board member of civic organisation PLNU.cz. Since 2014 he serves as a local councilor in Vsetin, town in mountainous region of eastern Czech republic. His political topics are human rights, migration, open government and privacy issues.



A LETTER TO THOSE WHO MUST SOON GIVE WAY TO THE NEXT GENERATION

ARTICLE BY
**GUILLERMO
 RODRÍGUEZ ROBLES**

The serious challenges confronting the European Union have placed the future course of its integration in doubt. Against this backdrop, young people have a central role to play. This is not only because they are largely bearing the brunt of the crises, but also because they are deeply involved in processes that, in different places, and to the surprise of those directing the European project, are defining our society. This role will only become more defining in the future, which ought to make European leaders consider the fate of young people much more carefully.

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**CARTA A LA
 GENERACIÓN
 QUE NO ESTARÁ
 AQUÍ DENTRO
 DE 20 AÑOS**

La gente joven está jugando un papel fundamental en dibujar el horizonte de la Unión Europea. Es el momento de que quienes están a cargo del proyecto europeo lo tengan en cuenta.

The historical contempt shown to youths at election time has resulted in a disproportionate distribution of the costs of the crisis, whereby young people have been pushed to the fringes of society. That scorn has led to indignation and that indignation to being part of the immense transformational processes in the European Union. The young have become key drivers of change in both the rejuvenation and democratic reversal within politics, all without society being aware, or so it seems, of this situation. We cannot see what is on the horizon for the European Union; it could be progress and unity, or disintegration. Whichever it is, the need to include young people in the decisions taken at this critical point where we find ourselves is irrefutable because they already define the EU's horizon, and because they will be the ones who continue defining it.

A GENERATION ON THE EDGE

The words 'unemployment' and 'youth' have in recent times constantly gone hand in hand. And 'words' is surely the best way to summarise

the political response given to this problem in the last few years: words and little else. A complete lack of action and social policies, together with some completely inadequate funding¹ have allowed youth unemployment to rise to 45.3% in Spain and 48.9% in Greece², while its level in the EU remains at 19.4%. Basically, in both countries, for every two people under 25 years of age actively seeking a job, only one of them is able to find work. In relation to total unemployment, the trend has practically not changed over the last 20 years: youth unemployment and total unemployment have remained relatively parallel, the former being double the rate of the latter, both in Spain and in the EU.

To better understand the gravity of the situation that young people have faced in recent years, several details are needed to complete the picture. At the job level, the rate of long-term youth unemployment is a good example: in Spain the rate is 39.2%, in Greece and Italy it exceeds 50%, while it is at 33.6% in the European Union³. In other words, more than one-third of those under 25 who are looking for work have spent more than 12 months in that quest.

Another important figure is the percentage of young part-time workers (71.3% in Spain,

43.6% in the EU⁴), which portrays the nature and quality of work that the young people who do manage to find jobs end up in. The actual percentage of self-employed young people in the European Union is also significant: only 4% of the 19.4 million youths are in employment⁵. This proportion, which has remained constant throughout the crisis, conveys the actual opportunities in contrast with the suggestion that has been oft-times repeated like a mantra (start a business, they say, as if courage were the problem) and which places the burden of the problem on the individual rather than the institutions that should shoulder the responsibility.

Unemployment is the most visible area, but there are others. The risk of poverty and social exclusion also greatly exceeds the rate in other age groups. In Spain, 38.6% of young people between 18 and 24 years of age are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (31.9% in the EU), while the total rate is 29.2% (24.4% in the EU)⁶. Furthermore, the changes in these levels over the last decade have been disproportionately negative for the young. In 2005, the risk of poverty and social exclusion level among young people in Spain was even lower than the total rate (21.7% for the 18-24 age group in compar

1 <http://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/opinion/youth-employment-together-we-can-make-a-change/>

2 Eurostat, data from 02/2016: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7225076/3-04042016-BP-EN.pdf/e04dadf1-8c8b-4d9b-af51-bfc2d5ab8c4a>

3 Eurostat, data from third quarter 2015: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/gdp-and-beyond/quality-of-life/long-term-unemployment-rate>

4 Eurostat, Young people between 15 and 24 years old, data from 2015: <http://goo.gl/vmgCvb>

5 Eurofound 2012: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/labour-market-social-policies/needs-young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-characteristics-costs-and-policy>

6 Eurostat, data from 2014: <http://goo.gl/jHY1KQ>

ison with 24.3% for all age groups). In the EU, while the total rate has decreased since 2005 (25.8% in that year), it has increased for young people.

In Europe, especially in the south, a significant proportion of society has been pushed into an unprecedented situation of social upheaval. Hundreds of thousands of young people have been forced to leave Spain since 2011⁷; the future cost of this loss of talent, motivation and contribution to the welfare state can easily be imagined. A large proportion of a generation, categorised as lost and for whom the end of the crisis is already too late, have seen their future prospects snatched away. Their right to live an independent life and make their own decisions have been lost and they are obliged to accept any job, work at any wage, study what the labour market demands and return to live with their parents⁸. It is clear that the results of all this will be long-lasting and affect their personal and professional development.

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WHITE MEN OVER 50 IN SUITS

Why young people? The words that best explain how we ended up here are participation and democracy.

From the point of view of the political elite, the issue is clear. Under 18-year-olds cannot vote and young people over that age are generally not interested in politics.

Throughout recent history, they have been an electorally discouraged segment to which politicians do not pay attention, while consideration is generously given to those over 60. Young people have not been a cohesive group of voters who would have only lobbied for their specific interests – despite

under-30s counting for 65 million voters in the European Union – and to whom political parties can appeal through specific policies. They are a textbook case in political economy.

In this way, parliaments continue to be, overall, the playground of over-50, white

7 http://www.lasexta.com/noticias/sociedad/ine-cifra-medio-millon-numero-jovenes-que-han-emigrado-tesis-marea-granate-multiplica-cinco_20160103572407eb4beb28d446005f23.html

8 The average age of emancipation of the youth in Spain is of 29.1 years (26.2 in the EU) and increases constantly. Eurostat, data from 2014: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=yth_demo_030&lang=en

males in suits. Indeed, the average age in the European Parliament is 53⁹. For Spain's 11th legislature, the average age of its lower house dropped to 47¹⁰, closer to the national average age of 43, thanks to the entry of new political parties. But the political class has not stopped ageing¹¹. Parliaments still do not reflect the diversity of the society that they represent, whether in terms of gender, age, ethnicity or other, and this lack of voice and representation results in young people having to bear a larger proportion of the costs entailed by the crisis, in all its aspects. In essence, parliaments are not representing young people, nor are they seeking to do so.

THE TREMORS BEFORE THE ERUPTION

Yet, the outrage of the youth has unexpectedly boiled over. In different ways, in different places and with different goals, young people are reacting. They are, across the length and breadth of the European Union, playing a decisive role in the processes that are defining the path of the European project, albeit in very disparate directions. Ignoring this has been an error of great proportions, which is still impacting today.

One of these processes was unleashed in the months of May and June 2011 across various Spanish cities. The Indignados were not just a movement of youths but a diverse group made up of people of all ages. One of their distinguishing characteristics was, in fact, that social and generational or ideological cross-section. But the central role played by youths in the forming and organising of the 15M movement was of huge importance, thereby allowing its ideas to be more extensively shared.

The impact of this movement is of a scale that we have not yet wholly ascertained. The empowerment of so many citizens and the discovery of unconventional participation methods have resulted in a complete change in the political map of the country that could not have been imagined in 2011. A change in the discourse that challenged the 'TINA – There Is No Alternative' narrative and replaced it with another, where words like transparency, regeneration, participation, common good or primaries (which did not exist in the political vocabulary except for small parties like EQUO) have become essential. A complete change in the political agenda, which began to prioritise the rejection of corruption, evictions and austerity, it created political and journalistic platforms

⁹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-Briefing-542150-European-Parliament-Facts-and-Figures-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰ http://www.elespanol.com/espana/20160118/95490513_0.html

¹¹ The data shows that the average age of members in the Congress of Deputies was of 42 years old in 1979 and of 49 years old in 2008: <http://politikon.es/2013/07/08/cuando-la-politica-se-hizo-vieja/>

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and projects, new trends in architecture and transformations in our models of consumption and communication. The 15M movement indeed caused a profound change in the political reality; its impact crossed oceans and still reverberates five years later. In the squares of Paris, as I write these lines, the activists of the Nuit Debout protests stand against a political class that fears them, aware of what similar citizen protests created in Spain and Italy not long ago. They fear them and they are right to fear them.

The consequences of thousands of young people plunging into a wave of mobilisation and participation transcend elections. In Spain and elsewhere, the political involvement of young people is leading to some extraordinary results.

In Spain, the parties that know how to mobilise their young voters obtained some results that were unthinkable only a few years ago. The Valencian coalition, *Compromís*, was one of the first to do it. It managed to increase its 4.8% of the vote in the 2011 general elections to 25.09% in the 2015 elections and did this by becoming the most voted party among voters under 34 years of age¹². Since 2015, it has also governed the Region of Valencia with the Socialist Party.

Another example is *Podemos*. This party, with undeniable ties to the *Indignados* movement of 2011, was created in the months leading up to the 2014 European elections. It has managed to transform itself into a real option for the government of Spain, much to the chagrin of the two parties that have shared power since the end of the Franco dictatorship. The Spanish Centre for Sociology Research estimates that 35% of under 35-year-olds voted for *Podemos* in the 2015 general elections¹³, while the other three main political parties each garnered only 15% of the votes from this age group. The generation gap and its impact in changing the country's political

12 El Mundo, 25/10/2015: <http://www.elmundo.es/comunidad-valenciana/2015/10/25/562bc3f7e2704ee15a8b463d.html>

13 El Español, 07/05/2016: http://www.elespanol.com/espana/20160507/122987812_0.html

scene is even witnessed in another party, Ciudadanos, the second preference for those under 35, though with little clout among the over 54-year-olds.

Young people have the ability to create true shifts in the political map of our countries if they mobilise to vote. It is happening in Spain, but also in many other countries, in very different directions.

In the Greek elections of June 2012, Syriza (a then newly formed party) and Golden Dawn (a neo-Nazi party) obtained 26.9% and 6.9% of the votes respectively by becoming the favoured choices of those under 35. Syriza garnered 37% of the votes among the under-25s, while Golden Dawn, which gained entry into the parliament for the first time, gained 13% of the votes from this age group and 16% from the 25-34 age range¹⁴. The Green Party of England and Wales, which has experienced an extraordinary gain in vote percentages and influence, has done so by increasing the number of its young members from 1,300 in 2013 to 14,000 in 2015¹⁵. In Austria, the only EU country that gives the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds at the national level and where the rise of the xenophobic FPÖ and

the Green Party have witnessed an electoral tsunami, 51% of under-29 males voted for the FPÖ in the first round of the presidential elections, according to surveys¹⁶. In France, the National Front of Marine Le Pen secured 35% of votes among voters between 18 and 35. And the list goes on: Netherlands, Denmark, Poland... countries all with similar realities¹⁷. While I write this, the rising importance of youths in the weeks prior to the UK referendum on EU membership may be decisive in that result¹⁸.

The influence of young people in the major challenges confronting the European Union goes beyond even politics and elections. The radicalisation of European youths recruited in the outskirts of cities like Brussels or Paris, and their participation in terrorist acts, must be understood as the responsibility not of Islam but of the public policies in relation to youth and integration, as recently pointed out by The New York Times¹⁹. It must be understood from a much broader perspective, one that reflects on the decades-long expansion of youth exclusion in terms of society, employment and education and that considers the capacity of marginalisation to create fertile ground for radicalisation.

14 Golden Dawn and its Appeal to Greek Youth, Alexandros Sakellariou, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/athen/11501.pdf>

15 Huffington Post, 14/01/2015: http://www.huffingpost.co.uk/2015/01/14/why-is-the-green-party-successful-british-youths_n_6470326.html

16 Zeit, 25/04/2016: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2016-04/oesterreich-wahl-norbert-hofer-wachler>

17 Deutsche Welle, 14/12/2015: <http://www.dw.com/en/young-people-vote-far-right-in-europe/a-18917193>

18 El País, 28/05/2016: http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/05/28/actualidad/1464449020_948036.html

19 The New York Times, 08/04/2016: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/08/world/europe/belgium-brussels-islam-radicalization.html?_r=0

AN AMBIVALENT FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

The historic abandonment of the young population for electoral reasons has had disproportionate repercussions over the last decade. The economic crisis, the neoliberal and austerity policies to counter it, the lack of integration and the scarcity of solidarity in the European Union have pushed young people to the margins of society in terms of work, economics and community. However, the youth of many European Union countries, in turn, are reacting, in a concerted effort or otherwise, and are evolving into a force of great influence for both the integration and dissolution of the EU.

Young people are not a homogeneous force. The problems of German youth are not the same as those from southern Europe, and it is therefore not logical to assume a collective outlook. What is important is to understand that young people are a catalyst capable of creating changes throughout the political spectrum: both towards progressive rejuvenation based on human rights and democratic wholesomeness, and towards extremist, xenophobic or nationalist routes. This deserves everyone's attention. Young people are now playing a fundamental role in sketching out the European Union's horizon. Now is the time for those in charge of the European project take them into account. The future of the European Union depends on it.



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THE FIGHT AGAINST TTIP

A GREEN PYRRHIC VICTORY?

ARTICLE BY

GEORG MAIßER

Victory seems to be in sight for the movement against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). It appears to be a fairy-tale ending: a pan-European mobilisation succeeding in overcoming yet another attack by the neoliberal establishment, in the interest of the European, and indeed also the American, working people. But there is also another version of this story being told, which can't be ignored, claiming a victory for nation states against Europe, and thus giving further momentum to the already thriving nationalist tide on the continent.

The feeling of victory comes after a long and intense battle, which started in 2013, when TTIP was unveiled as the resurrection of the unsuccessful Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) of the 1990s. As soon as the first details about the secret negotiations were unveiled, it became obvious that this was not about the reduction of tariffs. This was a blunt move by big industry to outmanoeuvre consumer interests, worker protection, unions, and social legislation.

It was a well-oiled machinery that sprang to life. Existing networks, from the fight against a globalisation in the sole interest of the shareholder – to the disadvantage of the working people and consumers – were completed by new transnational alliances.

Sometimes, sheer numbers hide the real amplitude and the extraordinary role of individuals in a story. But occasionally, it takes the numbers to understand the whole picture. More than 500 organisations, from small, local agricultural associations, to feminist movements, to ATTAC,

THE ANTI-TTIP
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Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth; from literally every single nation in the European Union, 3.5 million signatures, widespread coverage in all the major newspapers and TV stations: it is impossible not to wonder if Jürgen Habermas's dream of a common European public sphere has not already come true, or is at least reflected in this resistance movement.¹

The remarkable thing about this continent-wide mobilisation seems to be how well it works; how normal it became to reach out for partners across national state borders. Today's activists grew up without knowing national limitations in political mobilisation.

From the start, the Greens were part of this broad, pan-European alliance, and in many countries, they were the first political party to take up the topic and to discuss it in their respective parliaments.

A NEW "ESPRIT DE RÉSISTANCE EUROPÉENNE"?

The existence of rather strong Green parties in German-speaking countries might have contributed to a 53% majority of the Austrian population who were against TTIP in autumn 2014, while 58% of the general European population, who were still positive towards the so-called trade agreement, averaged at 58%.² Since then, a common mobilisation gathered momentum and we now have a European majority against TTIP, with Austria still leading the anti-TTIP movement – around 70% of its population is opposed.³

All in all, there seem to be many reasons to be hopeful. The anti-TTIP movement has a lot of potential to be a powerful integrative force for the European Union: first, from the Trans-European nature of the resistance itself, where activists from different countries work together in the

1 <https://stop-ttip.org/de/unterstuetzerorganisationen/>

2 <http://kurier.at/politik/ausland/eurobarometer-oesterreicher-sprechen-sich-gegen-ttip-aus/115.504.979,>
bzw. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/europaeische-union/eu-umfrage-deutsche-lehnen-mehrheitlich-ttip-ab-13399065/infografik-die-eu-buerger-und-13399197.html>

3 <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/71004>

interest of a common cause. In addition, many people have become interested in numerous European issues, such as European consumer protection, animal welfare, the democratic mechanisms of the EU, the European justice system, European patents, food quality and social standards. In all these areas, the need for a common European policy seems clear.

While appreciating the immense positive work of the NGOs and the Green movement as a whole, it is hard to ignore a bitter aftertaste and not to see the danger of a Pyrrhic victory. The problem became obvious in the electoral campaign for the Austrian presidency: the far-right candidate Norbert Hofer not only made TTIP one of his most prominent campaign topics, he repeatedly attacked the incumbent president Alexander Van der Bellen on this topic. Van der Bellen, a former university professor, initially made his resistance against TTIP contingent on a few concrete factors. A political mistake, this permitted Hofer to declare him a turncoat and put forward his own outright, unconditional opposition to TTIP and his refusal to sign it without a popular vote on it.

For a long time, the Greens led the political opposition against TTIP and it was the Green interpretation that was prominent in the media. The Green narrative ran along the lines that TTIP was big business against the people

on both sides of the Atlantic; that it was about defending the precautionary principle against the industries' interest to undermine it; that free trade should be fair trade and include social and environmental guarantees.

THE NEW USEFUL IDIOTS?

We have to concede that there is a nationalist narrative overlapping our own stories, and this nationalist narrative has a lot of momentum, not only in Austria, but in Europe as a whole. The British UKIP expresses a nationalist, anti-European perspective, also shared by parties like the Front National in France or, to a certain extent, the Alternative for Germany party (AfD) in Germany: "*Fears of what TTIP might contain precisely illustrate why UKIP believes we should leave the EU and negotiate our own free trade agreements again. We find it astonishing that other political parties, while launching high-profile campaigns against TTIP, nevertheless remain committed to our EU membership. Their hypocrisy is shameless.*"⁴

Proof of the popularity of the nationalist story about TTIP can be found in every social media discussion on the topic, where approval of the efforts of the Greens is often mixed with nationalistic and even fascist rhetoric and symbolism.⁵ This in itself should not

⁴ <http://www.waronwant.org/media/ttip-and-2015-election-where-do-parties-stand>

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jn2ndKuf7w>

be a reason for too much pessimism. A huge project like the resistance against TTIP, where we need not just a majority, but an overwhelming majority to mount enough pressure to overcome the power of pro-business networks in the political system and in the mainstream media, has to unite all the different factions within a society. We should not look too closely at individual motivations, also, regardless of whether they are Euro-patriotic, religious, left- or right-wing, ecological or anything else.

But the nationalistic narrative has become different in the last few years. Scepticism about the benefits of free trade are only one piece of a larger puzzle. It is safe to say that in the aftermath of the economic crises of recent

years, the whole neoliberal project has lost its appeal, not only in specific countries, but worldwide.⁶ The weakness of the centre, of the hegemonic power of an essentially neoliberal discourse, gives rise to the alternatives we are perceiving everywhere. On the left, we see a revival of a socialist narrative, not by chance incorporated by older men like Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn. They both derive their credibility from the fact that they, unlike their parties, never bought into neoliberalism. But the real momentum

is unfortunately on the right, where we see political figures and organisations such as Donald Trump, UKIP, AfD, Front National, Sverigedemokraterna, Partij voor de Vrijheid and FPÖ etc. on the rise, many of them already leading in national polls and with a real chance of winning outright in their next respective national elections.

For every Green, left and social view on a specific policy issue, there is a nationalist counterpart. To use the example of Austria once more, Norbert Hofer not only attacked his Green adversary on TTIP, but also on his possible weakness towards the prohibition of genetically-modified food. This seems ridiculous in light of the Green historical position on this

topic, but it shows that the far right is prepared to attack the Greens on their own turf. In most European countries, the ecologist movement could free itself from a right-wing, authoritarian and nationalist ideology, which contested the left-wing interpretation of the Green parties on the continent. But in every major campaign, from animal rights to nuclear power or even regional and ecological agriculture, there are right-wing populist interpretations; in Austria, often forcefully supported by the influential tabloid “Kronenzeitung”.

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It is easy to see the possibility of nationalistic interpretation regarding the anti-TTIP movement. In an article in *Der Spiegel*⁷, Alexander Neubacher argues that the whole resistance against TTIP is a plot of the far-right, supported by naïve ecologists who fight the war of the nationalists. While it may have been the intention of the author to use the nationalists to discourage left-leaning ecologists from supporting the anti-TTIP movement, the result is to convey the nationalist interpretation of the TTIP resistance: it's their fight, so it will be their victory.

It's difficult to direct reproaches at the Green politicians and left-leaning NGOs, who led their fight in good faith. There were countless statements to distinguish between legitimate resistance and pure anti-American propaganda. The Greens honestly tried to complement their fight against TTIP with a more positive vision of not only “free” but “fair” trade and the necessity of common ecological and social standards, not only within the EU, but beyond. But unfortunately, this is hardly the message that rests in the minds of a broader public. The Greens and the Left could describe the anti-TTIP movement as just another defensive battle against the forces of globalisation, with no lasting peace in sight. The nationalists, on the contrary, managed to evoke the idea of a “positive” utopia, a return to the control and order of the nation state.

⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/31/witnessing-death-neoliberalism-imf-economists>

⁷ <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/ttip-bei-der-demo-marschieren-rechte-mit-kommetar-a-1057131.html>

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The perspective of successful resistance can be a very powerful force to mobilise people and to even create euphoria. But there has to be the promise of peace, stability and the spoils of victory. This is exactly the reason why the neoliberal narrative has lost its appeal. People no longer believe that at the end of all the sacrifices constantly asked of them, there will come a time to rest and a better life. They have understood that there will always be another good reason to squeeze them even more, that the profits always go to the same few.

The Green resistance concentrated considerably on the obvious false promises of the mainstream neoliberal promotion of TTIP. Yet, it's unlikely that many people on the street would be capable of naming a few basic characteristics of a Green alternative to neoliberal free trade. The same is not true for the nationalistic alternative project: everybody easily understands that there is the promise of the "good old times" of ethnic homogeneity; of economic and political autarchy. No matter how many obstacles lie in the way, no matter how implausible this nationalistic promise is, as a powerful utopia, it is at least a key to understanding policy decisions and making them worth the fight.

THE NEED FOR A GREEN NARRATIVE

Historically, the Green movement was most successful when it simply offered a slightly 'Greener' version of mainstream policies. The archetypal embodiment of this approach is Winfried Kretschmann in Baden-Württemberg. This strategy is perfectly reasonable and honoured by electoral victories as long as "the centre holds" and the mainstream, hegemonic approach is strong enough to keep the longing for real alternatives at bay. And in Germany, the centre still holds, at least economically. But we have to understand that this "pragmatic" approach bears considerable risk. Greens in Austria have previously been accused of being solely the stooge of neoliberal globalisation, because the neoliberals were "as

8 <http://haraldwalsler.at/die-fpoe-und-ihr-partner-die-identitaeren/>

no-border” in their mentalities as the Greens.⁸ If nothing else, this shows the potential of the nationalist narrative to plausibly link the Greens to the mainstream economic order, even though most of the Greens would identify exactly this order as their main enemy.

To understand the full extent of the looming danger for Europe, it is important to understand the nature of the deepening knowledge crisis as a consequence of the multiple crises we witnessed in the wake of 2008. The rise of right-wing populist parties in recent years could be attributed to the need for political change and discontent with policy issues. Every success story was rooted in respective national situations and people wanted right-wing parties as a strong opposition, not as governing parties.

Today, the situation has changed dramatically. The problem is not the rise of nationalist parties in different European countries, but the rise of nationalism as a disintegrative force in Europe. While a large majority “knew” for a long time that the key for economic growth lay in European integration, trade and “less state”, disillusioned people all over Europe are now starting to think that the way to a better life for themselves lies in national seclusion, less Europe and a stronger nation state. A crisis of knowledge means that people lose faith in old certainties and start looking for new ones in order to understand society, its mechanisms and their individual role in the world. If we

are indeed not just witnessing a passing period of weakness of neoliberalism, but rather a real disillusionment, people will be in dire need of a new, convincing story about the state of the world and its future. Nationalism is such a story and it has proven again and again its persuasive as well as its destructive powers.

The European resistance against TTIP has to be understood as a struggle of ideologies, where integrative and disintegrative forces for Europe joined for a common fight against the old but failing hegemonic order. On the eve of victory, it is crucial not to be blinded by joy, but to be ready to put forward a European interpretation of the fight against the stories of only national victories.

At the same time, we have to make sure that we have an alternative Green utopia in place to offer a new, attractive project to the public. It cannot be limited to a critique of neoliberalism, but it has to be a narrative of its own, able to confront nationalism with the prospect of a pro-European, social and Green-liberal future.



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FIGHTING THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE

HOW RELIGION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO INTEGRATION

AN INTERVIEW WITH
**YOLANDE JANSEN &
 TOMASZ KITLINSKI**

To what extent are the values we ascribe to Europe today rooted in religion? To refer to such roots bears the risk of alienating certain groups and minorities, but also of turning a blind eye to the multitude of different religious influences that have shaped these values over time. Yet at the same time, discourses of secularism have increasingly hardened and come to bear an exclusionary and colonial connotation in the minds of many Europeans. In light of this, a more inclusive vision needs to be put forward, one that enhances understanding by challenging the prevailing monolithic visions of religious communities to reflect their internal diversity.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: More and more politicians refer to Europe's so-called Judeo-Christian values as our shared heritage that needs to be protected from inside and outside enemies. But what exactly are these values?

TOMASZ KITLINSKI: I personally have a very clear understanding of the values that need to be protected in Europe, as I am dreaming of a balance between religion and secularism in Europe but I don't know how to reach it. In recent decades we have forgotten about religion too much, and it is good to recall religious values in our societies, but those values cannot be reduced to simply Judeo-Christian values – they should be Jewish-Christian-Buddhist-Muslim-Secular-etc. values. These values would, for example, include values like hospitality to the 'Other' that has roots in the Torah, in the Quran, in the major Sanskrit Mahabharata epic, but also in the European Enlightenment. To determine what exactly these values can be, we need to have a debate about Judeo-Christian values, and through that we can enrich the very term.

YOLANDE JANSEN: In the European context it is relevant to recall the concept's roots in 19th century theology, when the notion that there was such a thing as 'Judeo-Christianity' formed part of a so-called supersessionist¹ discourse which held that (Protestant) Christianity was the heir but also the moral superior of Judaism (and of Catholicism), a thought which had already found its way in the historical Enlightenment. The concept, therefore, has to be viewed as a reminder of how Europe itself should be seen as a problem, a reminder of the precarious position of minorities in Europe, instead of as the self-felicitous term that it has become today. The need for this becomes all the more obvious once we realise that the term today is mainly used by populists, with the aim of excluding Muslims. Therefore, I would call this an identitarian concept that has little to do with a positive set of values that brings Europeans together today. We can try to turn the concept into an inclusive one, as Tomasz says, but I also fear this might be a risky strategy today, and we'd better let the concept do some self-critical memory work first.

TOMASZ KITLINSKI: We also shouldn't forget that if we are talking about 'European values', there are secular values that are also religious values. In order to overcome our deficiencies, for example, we need to remind ourselves that, in religion, we can find the seeds of democracy. After all, the Pope is also elected in a democratic process. Unfortunately, present day Catholicism in Poland, for example, is not only undemocratic but also anti-democratic.

YOLANDE JANSEN: It's important when talking about 'European values' not to claim certain values specifically for Europe, as public discourses today tend to do with regard to both freedom and democracy, as well as secularism. These discourses then present migrants of non-European backgrounds as backward or not yet secularised.

It would be much better to accept, as a starting point, that many traditions have their own ways of organising freedom and equality, and Europe has no monopoly on those terms. With the dismissal of the discourse on multiculturalism, we have, in Europe, revived an old attitude inherited from colonial modernity, which is to think that 'we' have the Enlightened values and 'they' have to intergrate or adapt to them. This is plain wrong as a starting point for living together.

¹ Supersession is a Christian theological term which refers to the belief that Christianity is the fulfillment of Biblical Judaism. This term replaces God's covenant with Israel by a new covenant with the Church.

How would you define Christianity in the European context, if we need to find a definition for a term that can cover so many practices and attitudes?

YOLANDE JANSEN: There are and have been many different ways to be a Christian, intermingled with secular traditions, dissident traditions, heretic traditions, as well as Judaic and Islamic traditions, nationalism, patriarchy, emancipatory movements, and so on. So it would be better to think in terms of a patchwork of all those traditions when defining who we are, instead of saying that there is the ‘one Christianity’ and the ‘one Islam’ and the two have to cope with each other somehow. The latter is the model that dominates the public debate today, but this implies we take an essentialist conception of religious traditions as a starting point, and I think we need to start from a more dynamic, historically dense and multicultural point. Here, I am definitely with Moses Mendelssohn in his early discussion with Kant about the Enlightenment, and a proponent of pluralising our understanding of religious and secular traditions. So, for example, I am not happy when, in debates about the headscarves, it is suggested that European secular or Protestant traditions are concentrated on thought and belief, while other religious

traditions (Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, African) are said to be directed towards religious practice and lived religion. Of course there are different emphases in different traditions, but there are no either/ors in complex traditions: all of them know about practices, and all have their ways to talk about meaning and theology.

TOMASZ KITLINSKI: Today there is LGBTIQ Christianity, feminist Christianity, as well as atheist Christianity, and I am very happy about that. But what worries me is the ultranationalist Christianity that develops today in Russia, Hungary, Poland and the rest of Central and Eastern

Europe. This trend is very dangerous, and has nothing to do with the initial open form of Christianity. I think the Polish Church is a mafia of ultranationalists and xenophobes, and its message has nothing to do with Pope Francis’ mes-

sage about ecology and hospitality. The images of the Pope in Lampedusa and Lesbos and his messages about the acceptance of refugees were extraordinary. For the Polish audiences he is the only respected voice that is supportive towards refugees and sexual minorities. Therefore, his words are often mistranslated in order to reflect more the majoritarian discourse – the ultranationalists are so afraid of his opinion having an effect on public opinion.

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Of course this is not a new phenomenon. The nationalism of the Catholic Church in Poland can be explained historically: in the 19th century, Poland didn't exist as a state, and the Church was the only institution to promote 'Polishness' among the people, so there was this equation of Polish-Catholic, and this has terrible consequences now when politicians use the Church to legitimise their goals, and vice-versa. This leads to an unholy alliance. But I am sure, if we manage to build a coalition of inclusive movements, among other LGBTIQ and feminist movements, we can make Poland a hospitable place.

Do you consider *laïcité* and secularism integrating or disintegrating forces in Europe?

YOLANDE JANSEN: It depends very much on context; they are not at all the same all over Europe. In general, religion only became an important issue in the 1980s, after decades of being only of secondary importance. In the decades before, it was more important whether someone defined him/herself as capitalist, communist, colonialist, imperialist or nationalist.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall a political paradigm re-emerged, according to which, religion and secularism are important components of our political identification, just like it was the case in the early 20th century in some European countries, such as France.

It is also important that secularism, like every concept, has more than one meaning, and the public meanings attached to concepts do not have to be realistic. In France, for example, contrary to many interpretations, there has never been a full separation of Church and State: there has always been a relation between state and religions, which included a strong tradition of support and control of religions. Moreover, secularism has been defined in an identitarian manner, mostly in relation to Muslims in recent decades. Secularism in that sense hides many of the effects and emotions that need to be discussed publicly, and that have their roots in the colonial past and colonial mentalities, in racialisation and hierarchies related to class and citizenship. Remaining within the framework of secularism is misleading, because there is much more than religion as a system of beliefs and practices that has to be problematised. This is also why the increasing focus on a secular-religious framework in the European context is problematic, and we need to take more vectors into account to fully understand the power relations at work; all this needs to be determined contextually.

Another problem with secularism is that it is connected too much to one particular and politicised interpretation of religion, and that it serves the self-complacent idea that secular and European values are those that all Europe's 'Others' should just assimilate to or integrate into.

At the same time, I would say today that we cannot throw away secularism as a concept. There are too many people with progressive ideas who identify with secularism, and it does serve a function in specific contexts where conservative, nationalist and patriarchal interpretations of religion prevail. So, despite what I said in the above, you can't just say that it is a disintegrating concept. We have to realise though, that for many European citizens with their backgrounds in the Global South, and for many in the Muslim world, discourses of secularism have this exclusionary, and colonial, connotation. At the university where I teach many Muslim students, I always note how for almost all of them, 'secularism' serves as a concept that concentrates much of what they find problematic of living in Europe and it is deeply connected to their experiences of being discriminated against. They experience it as a concept through which things that are important in their lives are rejected. And we can't just dismiss that.

TOMASZ KITLINSKI: In Poland, I don't think we can talk about the impact of secularism. Instead, I think we need more secularism, in the sense of separation between the Church and State, because we have never had secularism here.

Instead, almost every child receives some kind of religious education – not at school, of course, but at home, in churches and in synagogues. In the past, there was a compromise between the

Church and the communists at the time, because both of them were nationalists, so they got along well. But there were no critical discussions about religion and the Church. And I think for Poland it would be much easier to integrate into Europe if it wasn't so madly Catholic. Moreover, we need to have a separation of the

State and the Church, because the Church has always impacted the policies of the government in Poland – even under leftist governments. So we need to introduce secularism in Poland, and then we need to emphasise that freedom and equality are both secular and religious values.

Tomasz said we should include a number of religious, as well as secular, values in our definition of European values. But how can we do that if we can't even acknowledge the Islamic and Arabic influences in Europe (including medicine, physics and mathematics)?

YOLANDE JANSEN: I think first we need to acknowledge that, although the current, non-inclusive definition of Judeo-Christian

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and European values is strongly present in the public political discourse, in tandem with a fear of losing out on Europe's privileged position in the world, there is also a lot of resistance against it, both in academia and in public culture. Students at universities are very interested in Islamic and Arabic works. In my faculty we have put the work of the Muslim philosopher, Al-Farabi on the mandatory classics list and the students like it; in popular culture there is a lot of artistic work by people with backgrounds in the Global South who know how to combine being attractive to large parts of the majority populations with being critical or nicely ironic about the new European fear cum self-complacency. But it's true that as long as the non-inclusive view can be near hegemonic in the public political discourses, Europe will remain deficient in reflecting on its own postcolonial and racial histories.

TOMASZ KITLINSKI: The same is visible in Poland, where minorities such as the Muslim Tatar community feel excluded. Tatars have lived in Poland for many centuries; they served in the Polish army, and also became parts of the Polish nobility. They are an integral part of Polish history, and a very culturally-active Islamic community in the country. But now they feel threatened because the public discourse is suddenly demonising their religion. Memory work needs to be done – and not just simple nostalgia, but a critical analysis of our past and present. I don't think that we need to see 16th century Poland as a paradise – because clearly it wasn't – but we need to acknowledge that Poland has in the past centuries often been a place where religions were able to live together peacefully. In contrast to today, Old Poland was an intercultural organism with a lot of discrimination and violence against the Other, primarily its

Jewish population. But the Jewish communities developed an amazing form of internal democracy, as the political scientist Shlomo Avineri has demonstrated. The community elected its own rabbi, its council, etc. This and anti-war, anti-feudal Socinians (exiled from Poland because of the country's rising intolerance in the 17th century) could serve as a starting point for European integration: strong grassroots self-government and transnational tendencies.

How can Greens include the issue of religion in their message?

YOLANDE JANSEN: Greens need to know that there are lots of ecological resources in all religions, and it would be important to use and reinvent those resources; Erica Meijers and Nuala Ahern have explored those possibilities together with Green politicians in their recent book *Green Values, Religion and Secularism*². Also, when we look at the question of whether religion can be an integrating force, we need to keep in mind that peace is a major value in all religions, and the message of peace could also bring people together.

However, I am not sure that integration in itself should be such an unquestioned value. I would say that aiming for peace, cooperation and conviviality would be more important than integration. Many discourses in terms of 'inte-

gration' today are in tension with basic and legitimate – even lively and desirable – forms of plurality and cooperation on a voluntary basis. And here, I mean both European integration, as well as integration of migrants and 'Others' into European societies.

TOMASZ KITLINSKI: In Central Europe, we had a different experience. I think the whole of Central Europe is in need of integration. All that we achieved here in Poland is thanks to the European Union. The first words about non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation were introduced into the labour code solely because of the EU. I know that integration can invoke exclusion, but for Poland, Hungary, or in the future, for Turkey, this is the only opportunity to leave behind our own fascism and ultra-nationalism.

YOLANDE JANSEN: What Tomasz says is really important. However, I would add that European integration has become way too neoliberal. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in the early 1990s, there used to be funds for small cultural projects with an active societal dimension, while now all that money goes to the big players and their large projects. And neoliberal integration itself plays a role in the emergence of populism and nationalism in all European countries and perhaps especially in Eastern Europe, so it is not a question of either integra-

² The book is edited by Erica Meijers (De Helling) and Nuala Ahern (Green Foundation Ireland). It features conversations with politicians and activists from France, Turkey, Poland, Ireland, Greece, Belgium, and the Netherlands. It can be downloaded at http://gef.eu/uploads/media/Green_values_and_religionDEEpdf

tion or nationalism. So here, as well, a critique is in place: integration itself is not the goal. Justice, freedom, equality and a relatively good life for all of us are the goals, and processes of integration (or however you choose to call them) should be evaluated for how well they advance these goals, and in those evaluations, we should be including the dynamics between neoliberalism and the new nationalisms.

TOMASZ KITLINSKI: And this is exactly where the role of the Greens comes in, all over Europe, to promote progressive solutions, and progressive values as part of the process of integration. Just one example: the huge transnational network of the Greens is very important for us here in Central Europe, because there is not enough money there to organise cultural initiatives for LGBTIQ and feminist cultural projects. I've had some experiences with situations in which none of the traditional corporate and public donors were willing to promote exhibitions and other cultural projects, and the only moral and financial support came from the Green parties and their organisations. In fact, my dream is a transnational federation of the Green; a Green International that would function as the voice of the excluded, of the Other, of the enemies of the far-right. The aim of us Greens should be then not only European integration, but also a world integration – world religions in their dynamic forms could be models here as they unite people and protest injustices. ■



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COSMOPOLITAN PERIPHERIES

ARTICLE BY

MARTA LOJA NEVES

Fifteen years ago, almost every European citizen would talk positively about the European project, seen as the sum of three promises: shared prosperity, fundamental rights and sustainable democracies. But we knew that if one unravels, the others would follow: after the Eurozone crisis, a social crisis and a fundamental rights crisis are forming. The imbalance and lack of solidarity between Member States is such that the project is running out of political energy, bringing adverse consequences for us all.

Is Finland a peripheral country of the European Union? Yes. Have you ever heard about Finland being a peripheral country of the European Union? Probably not.

The periphery is at least as much a cultural and political artefact as it is a geographical matter. Being in the periphery isn't necessarily about a location at the tip of some mass of land; it is rather about not having the power to call oneself 'at the centre'. In many ways, the centre and the periphery are defined not only by their definitions, but by the 'definers' themselves. In the United States, it is the geographical extremes of the continental landmass – the West Coast and the East Coast – who get to call to whatever is between them 'fly-over country', as if this inhabited portion of the nation was so devoid of cultural power or importance that it shouldn't be worth mentioning it by another name, or any name at all. In the European Union, the issue of centre and periphery seems only simple at first sight, as the 'centre' is really somehow located in the centre of the continent and the peripheries at the EU's extremes. Or is it?

As the example of Finland shows, the use of ‘periphery’ in EU-parlance, and particularly in relation to the Eurozone, is mainly a function of economic power that then gets translated into political and media agenda-setting capabilities. ‘Periphery’ has been the term of reference for the economies of the Eurozone that have lagged behind the economic powerhouses of ‘central’ Europe, namely Germany, both in terms of output and of convergence to the Economic and Monetary Union targets. The use of this term, seemingly innocuous and technically correct, carries with it implications of hierarchy, unpreparedness and even submission. Thus, once redefined without us even noticing it, periphery starts acquiring different usages and meanings. There are political as well as economic peripheries. Politically, the peripheries are more to the East as the economic peripheries were to the South. Sometimes, the two get conflated every time that a recession happens or an election brings results that were not in the plans devised by the ‘centre’. In the background, one can almost hear the irritation with which the terms are used: a periphery is whatever is creating problems for the centre. But where did these troubles come from and is European disintegration their inevitable consequence?

In recent years, we have been witnessing a clear drift in European vocabulary: from

pejorative terms referring to some countries – the PIIGS¹ or the ‘problem children’ of Europe – to the suggestion of splitting the Eurozone into two separate currencies – one for the weaker and the other for the stronger Member States. It is no wonder that even the most Euro-enthusiastic temperaments are anxious about the future of the Union.

The 1990s were optimistic years, with all the talk of the end of history and the supremacy of free-market democracies. Behind us were the days of a continent split into ‘blocks’; even more forgotten was the pre-WWI coinage of a medical term to refer to the problematic countries of the continent, which were always referred as the ‘sick men’ of Europe. Turkey was once the ‘sick man’ of Europe, but so were Germany and France.

The periphery seems a rather mild use of terminology when compared with some of the alternatives. When the Eurozone crisis erupted in the beginning of 2010, the acronym-du-jour was PIIGS; simply an acronym, reordered to give them a meaning, but a very dehumanising one at that. Paul Krugman, the Nobel-prize winning economist, did not fail to see the unintended (hopefully, just unintended) consequences of this usage and tried to rearrange it, going for “the GIPSIs”, which – for the already over-suspicious ear –

1 Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain

replaced the dehumanising implications with memories of persecuted ethnic minorities and outcast communities. We find another supposedly well-meaning but paternalistic expression in the usage of ‘problem child’ or ‘problem children’ to refer to peripheral countries. Nowadays, as an economic journalist has written, *“indebted Portugal is still the problem child of the Eurozone (...) asphyxiating debt levels, falling job creation and bad loans still plague the economy, a year after it exited its bail out programme, warns the IMF²”*. The same terminology was used for Spain and Italy. And if the common citizen won’t read IMF reports, official press releases or op-eds by the European elite, the media will always highlight those terms, which have a serious impact on public opinion. However, in this last case, the derogatory term can be somewhat illuminating: we tend to forget that problem children do not arise out of nowhere, and that they are often the result of problematic parenting by the adults. If we would be willing to see the EU as a particularly chaotic case of a dysfunctional family maybe we would at least have a metaphor that would allow us to not ‘treat’ one or two members of the family by their exclusion from all the others.

In short, the notion of periphery in the current European debate is much more about politics and economy than a simple geographic con-

cept. It brings an idea of hierarchy between countries, of good versus bad pupils (another common metaphor): a persistent infantilisation rhetoric is used, stressing tensions which may end up being forces of disintegration of the European project, supposedly based upon the principles of solidarity, equality and cohesion between its Member States. Indeed, how can we build a European project when some Member States are seen as lazy, objects of scorn, and others as arrogant, domineering and authoritarian?

Thus, nationalist discourses are arising on both sides at the expense of a project that was inspired, above all, by the desire to overwhelm national interest. And these nationalist feelings occur not only among European politicians or citizens against other Member States, but also from them all towards the European project and the “evil Brussels” that represses national sovereignties.

National governments have, in general, mastered the art of blame-deflecting and responsibility-shifting between one another, and European institutions, and instead onto the European project itself. Partially, this is a quite effective response to the exclusionary principle that works behind the usage of the centre-and-periphery divide. If this spatial metaphor reinforces the sense of dis-

² Mehreen Kahn, “Indebted Portugal is still the problem child of the eurozone”, Daily Telegraph, August 6 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/11786694/Indebted-Portugal-is-still-the-problem-child-of-the-eurozone.html>.

tance between core-countries and the other, more expendable Member States, it cannot fail to reinforce as well the conclusion that many European citizens have arrived at: the EU is unfair, useless and an elitist project. While the elitist specificity was already a concern during the good times, there was at least a justification that the end result of the inherent *avant-gardiste* nature of the European life was a better one for all concerned:

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CAPABILITIES

more cohesion; more economic and social convergence; better standards of living across the EU. The project might not be built on a bottom-up approach, but it had what some economists call 'output legitimacy'.

The problem is that lack of democratic legitimacy is even less sustainable and tolerated when 'output legitimacy' is no longer being returned; undoubtedly, decisions are being taken without us, and it suffices for a chief-of-state or government to use that aggravation card any time that he or she may find his or her government in a bind, in order to extricate him or herself from a complicated domestic political situation, therefore feeding nationalism and Euroscepticism. As this happens so often, cumulatively the citizenry of the Union becomes absolutely convinced

that not only is the European project an idea driven by elitist thinking, but worse than that: the EU is a project of the elites, by the elites and for the elites. In short, there is a belief that there is nothing in it for the common man. And this is why nationalists and Eurosceptics discourses are gaining ground all over the Union, even among the most progressive citizens, opinion makers and politicians: they foster the feelings of exclusion or differentiation,

building a wall between 'others' and 'us', and deepen the existing gaps between the economic and policy 'centre' and everything else. European disintegration materialises not only in the peripheral countries against an authoritarian, unfair and contemptuous 'centre', but it is expressed in the 'centre' countries via a strong reaction against the transnational and cosmopolitan option.

The ongoing economic depression has exposed the political, institutional and regulatory weaknesses of the European Union and it has threatened to jeopardise the entire European integration process. In order to build in Europe – and in the world a sustainable environment for democracy, human rights and shared prosperity – we need the equivalent of an ideological reformation

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that will reframe the economy, globalisation and transnational politics. We need positive arguments – instead of just counter-arguments; we need to build a common heritage instead of just having EU funds allocated as lump sums or blank cheques to the national authorities; we should look at what is successful and make it bigger. Instead of just the Erasmus programme, the EU should build Federal universities and locate them in the crisis countries, giving them a chance not just to fight their “brain drain” but to become the Silicon Valleys of Europe. In short, we must creatively take profit of these differences in order to best overcome our divides: unite for better action instead of divide and rule. Ultimately, this is what European integration should be about.

There is much at stake in the European discussion about the centre and the periphery, and much more at stake than even Europe itself. On its face, this is a question of whether the largest and boldest international integration project in the history of mankind will survive. Europe has a bad record when it comes to its past disintegration experiences. The first era of globalisation ended with WWI. The first international experience, the League of Nations, ended with WWII, followed later by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia ended in bloodshed and ethnic cleansing. Even if we do not go that far this time, the acrimonious breakup of the European project would constitute a sad warning for any international integration project in the world.

In that sense, the destiny of the European project already bears deep significance to the wider world. But there is also a huge blind spot behind the current European debate: it is as if, in the Freudian sense, the core countries of Europe were ‘projecting’ themselves in the characterisation of their European partners as peripheries, while being afraid of becoming peripheral themselves. For what is Europe if not an appendix of the big Euro-Asian super-continent? Or, looking southwards rather than eastwards, what is Europe if not some kind of circumflex accent on top of the much bigger African Continent, which has already dou-

bled Europe's size in population and may still, in this century, be from six to ten times more? After centuries of dominating the trade networks of the world and colonising entire continents, the quarrel between Europe's centre and peripheries betrays a deep anxiety about becoming irrelevant and inconsequential in tomorrow's world.

And that's where – to end on an optimistic note – Europe as a whole can learn a lot from so-called peripheries: rather than accepting a subaltern role, peripheries have often found a much greater room to manoeuvre than is usually imagined. Taking advantage of their geographical position, their diasporas and the collective imagination of their people as seduced by the abundance of possibilities in the wider world, peripheries have launched bridges across oceans and made melting pots out of harbour towns across the world. Although the term is used much more regarding big metropolises, one could even argue that peripheries are the original creators of cosmopolitanism. This sense of belonging to a global citizenship is something that the whole of the EU must cherish in order to survive its challenges now and in the near future.

It would help if the EU would, at least now and then, let itself also be defined by its peripheries. Starting with the term periphery itself. For in its original ancient Greek meaning (shall we let the Greeks have the

last word on this one at least?), periphery means the circumference of a circle or the surface of a sphere – as the Earth itself, of which the periphery is just the layer below the atmosphere. Indeed, the planet has no corners, appendices or any other kind of tip: no periphery except the uninterrupted surface of the planet. In order to face its many challenges, from climate change, to the plight of refugees, to the asymmetries of globalisation, let us all learn to be peripheral – by which is meant: citizens of the world living on the surface of the planet.



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BUILDING EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY

A CONDITION FOR EFFECTIVE POLITICAL AGENCY

ARTICLE BY
SOPHIE HEINE

The project of developing a more integrated European Union faces an important obstacle in the form of the ‘mainstreaming’ of populist Euroscepticism. This can be seen in the rise of anti-system and populist parties, but also in the increase in anti-EU discourses among the centre-left and centre-right. In order to regain momentum, a vision of European integration infused with bold notions of European sovereignty should be put forward.

The EU faces many threats to its integrity, as shown by the rise of anti-European movements in numerous countries and the recent referendum on UK membership. Euroscepticism has ceased to be marginal and instead become an entrenched reality¹. An accurate analysis of these trends is indispensable to counter them and renew European integration.

Apart from strategic and tactical factors, ideological elements have to be taken into account in order to explain this phenomenon. Taking ideas seriously is also useful to highlight the differences between left-wing and right-wing forms of Euroscepticism. However, if there are obviously differences between various branches of Eurosceptics, some points of convergence also exist that can only be explained by long-term, structural evolutions. Most Eurosceptic movements tend to adopt a populist discourse which is precisely the result of this broader context².

1 N. Brack and N. Startin, ‘Introduction: Euroscepticism, from the margins to the mainstream’. *International Political Science Review*, June 2015.

2 For a definition of that term, see: M. Canovan, ‘Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy’. *Political Studies*, Volume 47, Issue 1, March 1999, 2-16.

This populism can be briefly defined by the following factors: granting a superior value to a people perceived as virtuous and embodied by a charismatic leader set against a minority of corrupted elites; seeing this charismatic leader as the embodiment of this pure people; giving priority to identity over interests and defending democracy above (and even sometimes against) individual rights, minority rights and the rule of law. In other words, despite their important differences, all populist Eurosceptics share the same demand to rehabilitate sovereignty in order to save democracy and political agency. And this can only be explained by very structural developments.

THE DEMISE OF SOVEREIGNTY

If the merely symbolic aspect of classic state sovereignty – national identity – seems more prosperous than ever, the capacity of nation states to adequately exercise their sovereign powers has been seriously undermined by supranational evolutions in general, and by European integration in particular. This is due to the fact that only partial rather than fully-fledged Europeanisation has taken place in a number of fields³. This evolution has substantially diminished the capacity of political actors to present clear and convincing projects.

In the socioeconomic field, for example, the creation of a common currency and financial institution was not accompanied by a proper budget able to offset the enormous internal economic divergences or fund demand-friendly investments. By the same token, the liberalisation of goods, services, capital and labour has not gone hand in hand with a fully-fledged social, fiscal and environmental harmonisation that would prevent the ‘race to the bottom’ in terms of standards. Partial Europeanisation also concerns immigration, asylum and border policies. Schengen was not completed by the creation of a common border management or by a common asylum and migration policy. In the current state of affairs, the external borders policy still very much requires the coordination of Member States and lacks adequate resources. This situation also limits the capacity of political institutions to guarantee security, since this requires control of exits and entries. This partial Europeanisation undermining national sovereignty without creating a genuine European sovereignty also concerns the strictly coercive dimension of sovereign powers⁴.

This partial Europeanisation not only applies to policies but also decision-making processes. The EU is currently only partly

3 S. Heine, ‘A federalist rescue of sovereignty as a response to populism and Euroscepticism’ in S. Heine (Ed.) *Various Shades of Federalism: Which Responses to the Rise of Populism and Euroscepticism?*, *Studia Diplomatica* 2014/4.

4 S. Heine, ‘For a Progressive and European Response to Security Challenges’, *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, April 2016.

democratic and does not respect some of the basic criteria of representative democracy. The European Parliament is not entitled to propose new legislation, nor is the Commission fully accountable to it. The argument that national governments, which are involved in all the decisions taken at the EU level, have a clear democratic legitimacy is not sufficient to counteract this lacuna. Indeed, in the ordinary decision-making procedure, the Council of Ministers does not decide alone but in conjunction with the Commission and the Parliament. Moreover, the voting rules within the Council make it possible for governments to have some decisions imposed on them against their will when majority rule prevails. And even when decisions are taken unanimously within the Council of the EU and European Council, the ultimate power held by a state that disagrees with the rest of the Member States is only to block decisions.

And yet, the resolution of the multiple crises currently facing European societies requires not *less* but *more* sovereignty. This reconstruction of sovereignty needs to be carried out at the European level because of the already substantial integration of European societies, economies and territories.

THE RESOLUTION OF THE
 MULTIPLE CRISES CURRENTLY
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At the political level, therefore, the best answer to populists would be to build a convincing project including the implementation of a genuine European sovereignty. And, for that purpose, the tradition of European federalism should be drastically overhauled.

AWAY FROM CONVENTIONAL FEDERALISM

An overwhelming majority of pro-European analysts, lobbyists or policy-makers have supported a biased interpretation of European federalism almost since the birth of the European communities. Many of the first thinkers who contributed to the intellectual justification of European integration were strongly opposed to the creation of a supra-national state that would make last-resort deci-

sions. They promoted instead a more hybrid conception of European institutions. And many contemporary Europeanists still defend the EU's 'sui generis' character: its hybrid dimension, lying somewhere between a supra-national entity and an inter-governmental organisation. This set of institutions, working along the lines of 'multi-level governance', is also supposed to represent a new form of democracy, a horizontal and post-modern rather than modern and vertical one.

A majority of Europeanists thus welcome the absence of hierarchical authority and pyramidal norms in the EU and the prevalence of more ‘relational’ processes of interaction. From this perspective, division of sovereignty is not perceived as a contradiction to the essence of political power.

When adapting federalism to fit the European reality, Europeanists have therefore transformed its meaning: it has become a sort of justification of the status quo rather than a way of critically assessing the latter and of making new and bold propositions to reform it. In this movement, because of a very entrenched scepticism towards state power – and its potential totalitarian or nationalistic trends – many Europeanists have, more or less consciously, pushed the notion of sovereignty aside. This sort of vision leads to a justification of the attempt to share or divide sovereignty created by European integration. In this perspective, sharing sovereignty becomes progress, since it is supposed to lead to a new form of political organisation that tames the dangers inherent in state power⁵.

In practice, these visions have constituted a legitimisation of the slow undermining of sovereignty generated by the partial Europeanisation of an increasing number of fields.

FOR A GENUINE EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY

Contrary to what is still the prevalent drift of Europeanist mainstream thinking, a credible response to the weakening of effective political agency would be to propose a clear rehabilitation of sovereignty at the European level. Indeed, what decades of partial Europeanisation in an increasing number of fields has shown us is that sovereignty cannot be shared or divided without losing its essence and becoming ineffective. Thus, European federalism should not be about dividing sovereign powers but merely sharing competences. In functional federal states, the central government is the only sovereign ruler, while federated entities exert particular competences without possessing sovereign powers as such.

It might be useful here to remember some of the warnings expressed by Jean Bodin, one of the first authors to clarify this concept. Bodin argued that sovereignty is intrinsically indivisible: when it is divided it ceases to exist and tends to engender reactions, sometimes violent ones, aiming to restore the unity of sovereignty at another level. This is exactly what has been happening with the upsurge of regionalist and nationalist movements within the EU. At a different level, this should also be the objective of a renewed form of federalism built around the idea of European sovereignty.

⁵ This line of arguments takes various shapes. See, for instance, Kalypso Nicoláidis, Olivier Béaud, ou encore Koen Lenaerts.



In order to become sovereign, the EU should exit its hybrid constitution and get rid of its intergovernmental features. A refurbished federalist project should thus propose the creation of sovereignty at the EU level with a mere division of competences between the European central level of government and national levels. What would be the concrete consequences of such a proposition? First of all, if Europe is to become sovereign, it must be provided with a monopoly of the use of force. The fragments of internal and external security policies that already exist at the EU level need to be more integrated, led by a central authority and to receive adequate funding. This means that the EU needs a common police force, army and

intelligence service. Secondly, a sovereign EU needs to be given some genuine macroeconomic tools. As already mentioned, the partial harmonisation of macroeconomic policies leads to a lack of efficiency. The Eurozone should be provided with a proper budget (at least 15% of the Eurozone GDP) able to offset the huge economic divergences that still exist within it.

This being said, any European sovereignty should depart from the pre-existing oligarchic tendencies characterising European integration. Since the deepening of European integration is already happening in many fields and the creation of genuine sovereign powers at this level is likely, the issue of democratisation



is a fundamental one. A European democracy could be built in various ways, the most realistic one probably being the transposition of the principles of representative democracy to the European level. This is absolutely essential since sovereignty, in its most basic sense, has little to do with democracy. In this perspective, the European Parliament should become the only institution to hold a right of legislative initiative as well as politically control the executive power. As for the Commission, it would have to derive completely from a political majority resulting from European elections. In that respect, the ‘Spitzenkandidat’ process is a step in the right direction. On the other hand, the inter-governmental features still characterising the European decision-making process should subside. In the long run, the Council of the EU and the European Council should be replaced by a

second chamber composed of elected representatives of the Member States. Another interesting option would be to have a president of the European executive elected by all European citizens. Such reforms would put an end to the current discrepancy between ‘politics’ – which are still deployed mainly at the national level – and ‘policies’ – which are, for the most part, the direct or indirect consequences of European laws.

Finally, besides the oligarchic risk, there is another danger that could result from the creation of a sovereign EU: namely, the totalitarian trends that can appear when political powers are reinforced. Historically, a way to curtail such a risk was to implement the principles of the rule of law. In that respect, the EU itself – and not only its Member States – should be

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clearly submitted to the rule of law. To that end, an independent judicial authority – which could be the European Court of Justice – should be entitled to ensure that the EU respects these principles. But ideally the content of the basic rights that the EU should implement and respect as well as its institutional architecture should be the result of a democratic deliberation and vote leading to a shared constitution.

LEGITIMACY BASED ON INTEREST

Far removed from the communitarian postulates shared by most populist Eurosceptics, the federalism I appeal to is not an identity- or value-based one, but an instrumental or functional one. A deeper European integration could indeed be legitimised more efficiently with the fulfilment of interests than with a common identity or set of particular values. Because what triggers political involvement in the broad sense is the belief that it corresponds to our individual and collective interests⁶, much more so than the support of particular values or a specific identity. This conception relies on a nuanced and differentiated approach to sovereignty and, in the end, to liberalism. It rests on the postulate that it is both possible and indispensable to advocate the re-establishment of some dimensions of sovereignty – the political, coercive and economic ones – while getting rid of its symbolic dimension and guaranteeing that it serves the citizens' interests. This means that a strong political and philosophical liberalism has to be combined with an interventionist assertiveness on the economic front.

This politically and philosophically liberal approach to politics derives from a deeper realistic anthropological stance: individuals do not generally follow values or identities when they act at a macro-level, they follow their interests – or, since this is always a subjective construction, what they perceive to be so. This approach

6 S. Heine, *Pour un individualisme de gauche*, Lattès, Paris, 2013.

does not exclude an appeal to emotions: following your interest means following your selfish instincts as much as your cold and rational reason. Not only can political legitimacy do without cultural or axiological references, but such references are also potentially harmful. All forms of communitarianism – postulating that political legitimacy should be grounded in identity, and idealism – seeing reality as the results of ideas, whether those are values or principles – indeed entail numerous dangers for individual freedoms.⁷

It would be at the same time more desirable and more efficient to provide a renewed and reinforced EU with an instrumental form of legitimacy. An alternative European project can only be legitimate and counter populist arguments if it is convincing in its promise to serve the individual interests of a majority of citizens. This could be done by linking this European project to a broader realistic utopia. Here, the failure of political parties is unfortunately blatant. The key question that progressive political actors need to answer is the following: what is the long-term alternative society for which they are willing to fight? On which principles should it be based? And how can an effective sovereignty best serve this project?

A federalist defence of sovereignty – rather than an end in itself – should only be the means to the establishment of genuine freedom for all individuals, which, of course, presupposes the fulfilment of civilian, social, political and cultural rights. Other answers could be given to these urgent questions. Yet it is only by answering them in an appealing, simple and convincing way that progressives will be able to mobilise a significant part of the population. A reformed EU should, in that respect, only be one of the means to a longer-term alternative project of society. The Greens undoubtedly have the human and intellectual resources to contribute to this strategic and ideological enterprise.



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⁷ Idem; see also: S. Heine, 'The Dangers and Inanity of (euro-)Nationalism: From Communitarianism to Cosmopolitanism', *Egmont Paper*, April 2015.

SAVING THE EUROZONE

IS THERE A GREEN WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS?

ARTICLE BY

FRANCISCO
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Today, the debate surrounding the Eurozone focuses essentially on two questions: whether it would be preferable or even unavoidable to break up the euro area, at least in its current form, and whether it would be possible to fulfil the necessary political and economic conditions for a more resilient, prosperous and integrated EMU. But where do the Greens stand on this issue, and does political ecology have the ‘narrative capacity’ to deliver an empowering vision of the EU’s economic future?

The global financial crisis and its subsequent development into what has been known since 2010 as ‘the Eurozone crisis’ has triggered a welcome although long-overdue debate on the merits, limits and challenges lying ahead for the single currency project and more broadly for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) as a whole. The period of financially-fuelled stability, which characterised the so-called ‘Great Moderation’ (1981-2008), contributed to a sense of complacency and obscured concerns that many had about the way the single currency project was devised and implemented. The crisis has reignited these concerns.

This article aims first to briefly describe the specificity of the ‘Green perspective’ when it comes to providing answers to the two questions referred to above. Against this backdrop, it will then briefly outline two additional key, yet unanswered questions addressed to the Green political family which might play an important role as regards the ‘narrative capacity’ of political ecology to deliver an empowering vision of the EU future to its constituencies and avoid irrelevance.

WHAT MAKES THE EUROPEAN GREENS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE SINGLE CURRENCY AND ITS FUTURE DISTINCTIVE?

On the basis of existing documents, such as various resolutions adopted almost unanimously by the European Green Party in recent years, as well as position papers endorsed by the Greens in the European Parliament¹, it can be said that the European Green political family shares a largely 'integrationist'² view on the future of the EMU. By 'integrationism' we mean here a conception which provides a resolute 'no' answer to the first question raised at the beginning of this article, and a straightforward 'yes' to the second. More fundamentally, the integrationist view claims that the way forward in tackling the Eurozone crisis involves much deeper political and economic integration. And that such a further integration is both *desirable* and *necessary* to ensure the viability of EMU itself. Consequently, the *status quo ante* and the current level of 'post-crisis' integration, as well as a hypothetical 'return' to the nation state, are therefore seen as recipes for democratic, social and economic regression.

In a nutshell, the Greens' overall assessment of the state of play of the euro – taken from a recent position paper adopted by the

Greens in the European Parliament – identifies three main socio-economic shortcomings and a fundamental democratic deficit in the current EMU construct. First, there is a lack of proper private and public mutualisation mechanisms for addressing economic shocks; secondly, there is a severe (public and private) debt overhang as well as unsustainable internal and external macroeconomic imbalances; and finally, in its current form, the EMU goes hand in hand with a non-resilient and non-diversified productivism model.

CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATIONS

According to the overall assessment contained in the position paper referred to above, currently, the EMU has significant potential for disintegration as the common currency has exacerbated the disparities across Europe and divided the continent. But it is not only a potential vector of disintegration. The current common currency model also plays a part in the 'negative integration', or more precisely, 'governance by exception' which is undermining overall democratic legitimacy and European citizens' trust in common supranational institutions.

Indeed, as illustrated dramatically by the never-ending Greek tragedy, the previously unimaginable policy measures adopted in the EMU since

1 www.europeangreens.eu and www.greens-efa.eu

2 Most national Green parties share such views, with the exception of the Swedish and to some extent British Greens who, in many respects, remain close to a more Eurosceptic view.

2008 under the aegis of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Eurogroup have created a major democratic deficit whereby European citizens are haunted by the spectre of being subjected to an intrusive takeover of national economic policy “*by a hardly identified and hardly accountable process*”³. In addition to the prolonged austerity and social degradation experienced by the Greeks, the ‘Third Assistance Programme’ agreed with EU partners and the IMF also represents a democratic disaster as the Greek government will have to consult with and obtain the formal agreement of the Troika (European Commission, ECB and IMF) on any relevant draft legislation before submitting it to its own parliament and citizens.

To paraphrase Jürgen Habermas⁴, the ever-present latent threat of functional and technocratic integration without civic integration, and the development of a common European public sphere has been significantly exacerbated since the beginning of the financial crisis.

The Greens’ response to these socio-economic and democratic shortcomings goes along with an ambitious roadmap encompassing measures to be implemented in the short, medium and long term. Such a roadmap comprises three main pillars: first, the aim is to make the EMU more crisis-resilient by establishing a fiscal union, including a genuine common tax policy and budgetary capacity, a deeper banking union

and genuinely counter-cyclical and future-oriented investment policies. Under the second pillar, the EMU institutions must be deeply democratised to enhance their legitimacy; and thirdly, the roadmap involve the ecologic transformation of the EU economy together with a revived and strengthened European social model.

Ultimately, such measures require the further transfer of sovereignty from EU Member States to the EU supranational level as well as a ‘constitutive’ convention for a federalistic revision of the current treaties. Most European Greens see this as a necessary condition for ensuring that further integration is underpinned by a commensurate level of democratic legitimacy, and consequently to avoid drifting towards disintegration or a technocratic form of ‘integration by exception’ by the elites, for the elites.

The Greens share many elements of this ‘integrationist’ assessment with intellectuals and politicians from other institutionalised and well-known European political families. Yet what sets the Greens apart from other EU political families is their ‘integrationist’ view (going hand in hand with their commitment to subsidiarity in decision-making and implementation) is the fact that such view is largely and, explicitly shared within the Green family. And that it has reached an important level of internal consensus and consistency.

3 <http://bruegel.org/2014/06/from-mutual-insurance-to-fiscal-federalism/>

4 Jürgen Habermas, *The Crisis of the European Union: A Response*, Polity Press 2013

FROM INTEGRATIONISM TO POST-INTEGRATIONISM

This integrationist view aligns with a rejection of both right-wing and left-wing ‘post-integrationist’ variants according to which the partial or total disintegration of the euro area would enhance democratic legitimacy and foster social and economic prosperity (or at least to some extent protect their constituencies from globalisation). The prospect of ‘positive disintegration’ is from a green perspective illusory since ultimately fragmentation would not only destroy any potential for positive aggregation but would also carry high political and economic costs that can only undermine the democratic capacity of European constituencies to shape their shared future in a globalised world. This is particularly true for their capacity to face common borderless challenges such as climate change or migration.

Post-integrationism is not only more general and encompassing concept than euroscepticism but has actually become in fact a solid ‘political majority’ in Europe and is shaping its present and future political regime. Indeed, beyond the rising numbers of traditional and new right-wing Eurosceptics across Europe, mainstream centre-left or centre-right political parties are gradually embracing a post-in-

tegrationist conception whereby the time for deeper political and economic integration is considered to be over, at least for the time being⁵. A remarkable example of this trend is the speech given by Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, at the June 2016 European People’s Party summit in Luxembourg⁶.

Therefore the Greens’ integrationist view not only rejects conventional post-integrationist Euroscepticism, but also differs from the mainstream and more and more post-integrationist conservative, liberal and social-democrat narratives regarding the way forward for the EMU. Indeed, although a non-negligible part⁷ of these three political families still considers additional reforms for further integrating the EMU as *desirable*, the sense of urgency and necessity which persisted in the contribution of the four presidents (European Council, Parliament, Commission and ECB) to the European summit in December 2011 – in the middle of the turmoil – receded remarkably as soon as the worst of the crisis was declared over. Furthermore, the probability of a far-reaching reform of the EU legal framework (besides a ‘post-integrationist’ Brexit scenario!) is edging towards zero, given the rising level of mistrust and rejection currently being generated by the EU project. In this context, the debate on

5 Such a trend is illustrated by the post-integrationism move within several parties, including the Dutch, Slovak, Finnish and German Social Democrats, as well as French, German, Austrian, Dutch and Finnish Conservatives and several ‘EPP-aligned’ Eastern European parties, the most extreme being Fidesz in Hungary.

6 Tusk’s speech is available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/05/30-pec-speech-epp/>

future EMU reforms would appear increasingly confined to an academic sphere. Thus, the euro area's three main EU political families acknowledge that, in the reforms enacted so far, the response to the crisis as a '*second best*' realistic compromise framework has at least stabilised the EMU and avoided implosion. In that perspective, the mainstream domain of the 'politically feasible' both frames and is framed by the constructive ambiguity embedded in the phrase 'a smart implementation of the rules and mechanisms established so far'.

As a matter of political realism, this mainstream vision is becoming increasingly aligned with a post-integrationist agenda. However, in the end, the explicit leitmotiv according to which 'further integration is over for the time being' goes hand in hand with an implicit agenda of post-democratic integration by exception as in the end the different crisis management mechanism established recently and in particular the Troika setting have represented a substantial transfer of sovereignty to the supranational level without commensurate democratic legitimacy.

To conclude, it is important to underline that the gap between the *desirability* of further reforms and their *political feasibility* is not only conflating the mainstream political parties into a post-integrationist approach, but also represents a clear *threat* of irrelevance for the actual perspective of the Greens.

GREENS MUST FIND ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION: "WHAT IF?"

The deeper political and economic integration required to ensure the sustainability of the single currency represents a very demanding and ambitious 'threshold'. In addition to the obstacles created by a broad set of required legislative reforms which, to a large extent, are currently lacking a political majority, the Greens' reform agenda requires a far-reaching revision of the Treaty within the next five years. The scope for such a revision – in a context in which post-integrationist forces represent a solid majority in the EU's political landscape – seems practically non-existent.

The logical implication of this perspective is that unless the unlikely scenario materialises whereby the Greens, together with other 'integrationist' allies, manage to overcome a consolidated political majority in most Member States before the next European elections, the viable conditions identified by the Greens to sustain the euro area will not be met. Although such reasoning cannot predict how and when the single currency might unravel, the assumption is that in the absence of the far-reaching reforms referred to, the euro area will be left in a very fragile state and prone to any shock able to trigger its downfall. Such a diagnosis raises two interlinked questions which the Greens need to answer at the risk of simply becoming irrelevant.

First, beyond the ‘Pascalian wager’, which represents the perspective of the potential fulfilment of the above-mentioned conditions, the Greens need to deliver a narrative on what could and should be achieved in the absence of an unlikely fundamental shift in public opinion across Europe. In other words, since the political majority required to implement the Greens’ integrationist agenda is, and will remain, out of reach in the foreseeable future, the green political family must develop a convincing narrative of what political initiatives can be put in motion and achieved through membership of a sizable political minority in the EU. A small, but institutionalised European political force such as the Greens and their allies could deliver an empowering message to the European polities by playing an active role in promoting or facilitating transnational democratically innovative pilot projects of general economic interest, if up to 10% of European citizens are actively involved in their implementation⁸.

Secondly, as mentioned above, the gap between desirability and feasibility seems likely to cause the disruptive wreckage of the single currency project as we know it. So, as a matter of intellectual consistency, the Greens need a forward-looking response to the question ‘what if?’ In particular, such a narrative needs to address the question of how post-na-

tional solidarity would be created and preserved in case of the partial or total disintegration of the single currency.

Addressing these two interlinked questions does not provide a comprehensive response to the overwhelming dangers lying ahead. More modestly, it might be necessary to translate a specific Green narrative on the way forward for Europe into a narrative conveying the message that change and hope do not require a numeric political majority to bring them about. Thus, by so doing, becoming trapped in mainstream tropism, whereby the alternative to disintegration becomes de facto a post-democratic form of integration by exception, can be avoided.



FRANCISCO PADILLA OLIVARES

is currently working as advisor on economic and monetary affairs for the Greens in the European Parliament after having worked as a researcher and policy officer in different organisations. He studied philosophy and economics.

⁸ For instance, if 10% of the EU population agrees to put EUR 100 each year (in other words, a substantial sum of EUR 5 billion annually) into a solidarity fund to provide support for those most affected by the crisis in Europe or, for example, to address energy poverty in the EU. The fund would be managed in a horizontal and innovative way by its contributors.

PERFECT COMPLEMENTS

IS REGIONALISM THE WAY FORWARD FOR EUROPE?

AN INTERVIEW WITH
**NICOLA MCEWEN &
 ROCCU GAROBY**

There is a kind of nationalism in Europe that is not only progressive, but has the potential to reinforce European integration. The so-called sub-state nationalists are not building on a vision of nation statehood, but on direct representation in the European Union, focusing on the decision-making at the lowest level and protection of the territory. These democratic and environmental concerns mean that there is much potential for political convergence between regionalists and Greens in terms of the solutions they advocate.

GREEN EUROPEAN JOURNAL: More and more regions in Europe demand independence, greater autonomy and sovereignty. Do you think there is increased momentum for regionalism today?

NICOLA MCEWEN: We need to distinguish between the different forms of regionalism. First, there is the regionalism of territories that seek more autonomy within a Member State. Here, it is hard to identify a pattern that is different from what we have seen in previous decades. I think there is a general sense of dissatisfaction, that the dream of European regionalism is gone. We don't have that idea anymore, that regions could be the dominant actors in the EU framework. And the disappearance of this idea has generated a sense of frustration.

Secondly, there's the case of territories, such as Catalonia or Scotland, which see themselves as nations, and are seeking to become Member States of the EU. There, what is new is the definition of what they want to achieve as a Member State: it is not a classic 20th century sovereign statehood in the traditional sense, but something more nuanced and more integrated into transnational networks.

ROCCU GAROBY: The term regionalism is too narrow. In the European Free Alliance¹ (EFA) we have three main groupings: the minorities, such as the Hungarian speakers in Transylvania; the autonomists, of which some call themselves regionalists, but not all; and the ‘independentists’, who call themselves nationalists, because they fight for the right of self-government and self-determination. But even they are different from state nationalists who are looking back to the past to some lost hegemony – such as the Front National in France or the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in Austria.

Stateless nationalists are, most of the time, progressives. Just look at Catalonia, Scotland or the Basque Country. And they have a momentum – a rise of self-determination movements for different reasons. The Europe of regions we tried to create at the beginning of the 90s has never been created, the Europe of states has failed in certain fields, especially when it came to tackling the crisis, and these regions believed that, as a small state, they could recover or do a better job than the big states at tackling certain challenges, particularly in social and economic terms.

And if you look at the developments of the last few decades you can see that having new states is normal. After 1945, we had only around 50 states in the world, and now we

have 193 in the United Nations. Look at Kosovo, which became independent just a few years ago; or Slovakia, which became a state about 20 years ago. This is a trend because the UN Charter’s principle on self-determination allows this to happen, and because the current structure of states does not work.

Does that mean that nation states are less relevant or less salient in the global order, as most of the challenges we face aren’t confined within borders?

NICOLA MCEWEN: This form of nationalism is not building on a vision of nation statehood, but on direct representation in the European Union. The independence being sought would be accompanied by a whole range of shared institutional and economic arrangements with the state they are ostensibly seeking to secede from. This form of embedded independence is a new phenomenon. Sub-state entities have new demands which will undoubtedly be influenced by changes in the global environment. In some ways, nation states may be becoming less crucial in the global arena due to the role the EU plays on behalf of its Member States and the rise of other players.

But, on the other hand, we can see that European integration has also given greater authority to the nation state, because the gov-

¹ The European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in the European Parliament and currently includes representatives from Scotland, Catalonia, Wales, Valencia and Latvia. EFA MEPs advance the cause of Europe’s stateless nations, regions and disadvantaged minorities.

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ernments of the nation states are the ones sitting at the table and participating in decision making – even where it may be the regions that may have competence in a number of areas. By this, I mean areas like the environment, agriculture, fisheries, and others where the EU has an expanded reach.

Could accepting this reality and strengthening regional competences be a way of consolidating and advancing the European project?

ROCCU GAROBY: Yes, and that's exactly why we need to distinguish between state nationalism and sub-state nationalism. State nationalism is far-right, and wants to give competences back to the Member State, while the sub-state nationalists are pro-European. They want to have a different Europe, a Europe of the people. They want to make it right for the people of Europe, because Austria has more power to define European fisheries policy than Corsica or Galicia and this is not acceptable. So, once you give them the right to be part of the decision-making in Brussels, you don't need to give them a fully independent status anymore. This is one key element if we want to reshape Europe. That would create the example of the first-triple layer federalism (Region/ Nation – State – Europe). Because at the moment federalism is based on two levels: the federal state and the states – as in the US.

Two centuries ago when the modern French state was built, it was built around three layers: the commune, the department and the state. This structure and size were ideal for controlling and governing the territory, and meeting the needs of the people at that time. Since then, however, the world has changed drastically. The exchange of goods, services and capital has become much faster; people can travel all over the world. So, the state doesn't seem to suffice, and for many issues, the European Union is the right level to address problems – that's a reason to demand more integration. Equally, the regions are the right level to address local issues – so the regions and the EU perfectly complement each other.

NICOLA MCEWEN: But here, I would add that the problem with designing a constitutional framework with three layers, from the top down, is that you don't have parity across Member States, in terms of political structures. So it is not so obvious where that third layer would be. Sometimes you have to create it. The other challenge is the growing significance of cities and municipalities, some of which are more populous than existing Member States or autonomous regions. So the patterns are very complex, which makes designing a European structure to accommodate those relations very, very complicated.

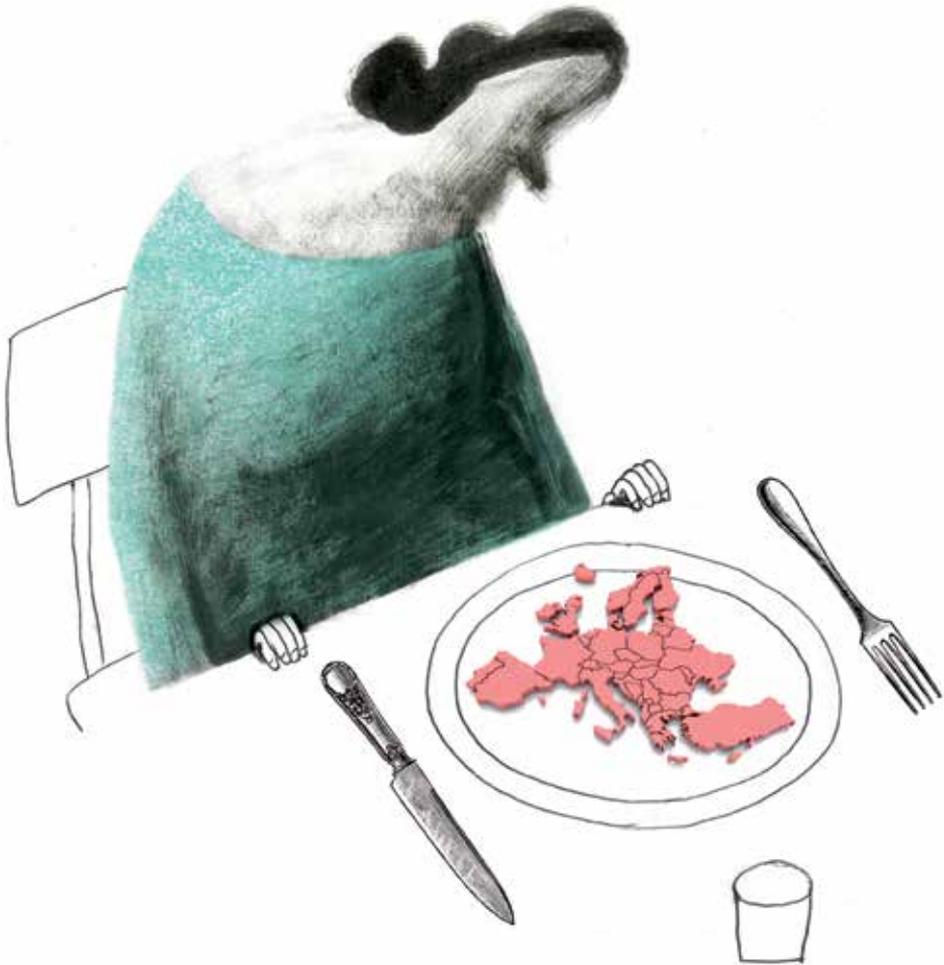
How can you create an identity once you have a triple-layer structure? Are there three identities or only one? And how do they co-exist?

ROCCU GAROBY: You can't create identities, but they can evolve with time. For example, the modern French state was built after the French revolution, but the shared feeling of being French only arose after the first World War, when the Basque, the Corsican, and other minorities, as well as the people of the colonies, risked their lives together for their homeland. And today, if you look at the current generations in Europe, you can see that they are more European than the previous ones. This is in part because of the exchange programmes, such as Erasmus, that gave them shared European experiences.

NICOLA MCEWEN: We spoke about nationalism as an issue of self-determination. I think the second dimension of nationalism is about the politics of nation building: we can use institutions, symbols, cultural norms and discourses to reinforce a sense of national identity; a national distinctiveness. The nationalism scholar Michael Billig talked about the so-called "banal nationalism". This refers to everyday symbols and rituals that we all share and that we all take part in to define what we share as a community. We can see attempts to do that in the EU. In this context, currency can be seen as a shared symbol that is recognised by many. In Jacques Delors' vision, a social Europe involved nurturing a feeling of solidarity to strengthen the feeling of community identity. Unfortunately, some of that has gone now in the EU with imbalances between countries, the prevalence of concerns with the internal market, and competition and trade.

Can the EU be a channel to allow regionalist sentiments to express themselves by bypassing the national level?

ROCCU GAROBY: Stateless nations and minorities are very often pro-European. For them, the EU is seen as a tool to protect themselves. But the European Commission needs to be a partner in that; it cannot stand behind the European Council, saying that the issue of independence or autonomy is an internal matter of the Member States – it isn't.



NICOLA MCEWEN: The European Commission acted as a partial player in the Scottish independence referendum, when Commission president José Manuel Barroso said it would be extremely difficult for an independent Scotland – or Catalonia – to join the EU, which is not even true, because there is nothing in the treaties about this, and there is no precedent. I think when we will be confronted with a nation within a Member State seeking its sovereign status in the context of the EU, treaties will need to have a provision for internal enlargement in order to clarify the process.

I think the EU can be, and often is, a force for recognising minority rights, or citizen rights, and even social rights. What the EU cannot do at the moment is provide recognition for territorial rights, as there is no mechanism for doing so other than the Committee of the Regions, which is ineffectual, in that sense. So the representation of regions is mainly about raising the profile of a region among the policy-making community. The real impact of regions is internal: inside the Member State, therefore, they are mainly trying to shape the Member State's policy in the EU.

Although regionalism, and especially sub-state nationalism, might seem like a process of disintegration, it can just as easily be a force for integration. From the point of view of those sub-state nations, stateless nations, or at least from the nationalists within them, the forces of regionalism and nationalism are there to help them engage in the integration process as individual players, rather than indirectly through Member States. But as long as we continue seeing this as an internal matter for Member States, we are privileging them to the detriment of the regions as well as Europe as a whole. If the European project is about nurturing a sense of commonality or citizenship at the EU level, it should see sub-state nations as allies.

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Have Greens managed to successfully build alliances with sub-state nationalist groups? How can they represent their interests?

ROCCU GAROBY: The EFA and the Greens have sat together in the parliament since 1999. This might sound like a paradox, but both party families agree on the same issues, but for different reasons. The Greens will say that global warming is a great threat and we need to tackle it globally, while regionalists focus on protecting their territory from massive tourism and damaging industries. So both the local and the global point of view will result in the same political solutions. Another example is nuclear energy, which is often used by very centralised and powerful states, like France, that impose their will on territories that would not want to use this kind of energy. Often, both regionalists and Greens are against nuclear energy, either because it is dangerous, or because it is imposed by a centralised state, or both.

Also, the Greens are one of the few left-wing parties that are not that centralised, but mix individual and collective rights, and believe in a state that shares the wealth amongst the people, simply as a tool, and not as the goal in itself (which would often lead to the acceptance of a centralised state). This is why Greens are among the federalist forces in Europe. They are also the new progressive force, because by now all Social Dem-

ocrats have, to some extent, accepted neoliberalism. Even though most of the so-called moderate left-wing parties want to achieve some social rights, LGBTIQ rights, and so on, they still remain in the realm of the liberal market economy. Here, the Greens, together with the sub-state nationalists, represent an alternative.

NICOLA MCEWEN: A very good example is the cooperation between the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Scottish Green Party. The latter is a wholly autonomous party, which has an alliance with the Green Party of England and Wales. It has undergone a very significant transition in the last few years; it used to be quite ambivalent on the issue of independence and the issue of European Integration. This has now truly changed, and today their message is following: there is no real independence without a real EU. This party was partnering with SNP when they were campaigning for Scottish independence, and in the context of the movement, that helped the SNP make it visible that the “yes” for independence is broader than just one political party. In the 18 months since then, it has also helped the Greens, as they have managed to triple their membership and overtake the Liberal Party in the latest election.

THE GREENS AND EFA
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Do you consider the issue of regionalism to be a specific trend and force to be reckoned with in the near future of European politics? Is it a defining feature of what Greens should promote for a further progressive and democratic integration of Europe?

NICOLA MCEWEN: Regionalism and nationalism will remain important within those strong identity regions across Europe, and it is a dominant feature of politics which all parties have to engage with. Most Green parties in these territories already engage with issues of identity and self-government. Whether regionalism will be a dominant issue in the years ahead is difficult to predict from this vantage point. What is clear is that other dominant issues – whether it is the economy, trade, climate change, the refugee crisis, or the like – have a regional dimension. Any EU or national policies seeking to address these issues will need to harness the resources and political will of regional or sub-state governments if they are to be effectively implemented. This may be easier to achieve if these governments are involved in the policy-making process, too.

ROCCU GAROBY: I would say the question of self-determination has become more and more important within the EU. Five years ago, nobody talked about it and now everybody, at least in the EU institutions, is thinking about how to ensure that democracy prevails in Scotland, in Catalonia, and so on. And unless the EU Member States agree to reshuffle the EU in a more open and democratic manner within the next months – and I don't think it is going to happen – this question will be even more important in 2019 election. It will even be part of the European campaign, especially if, as I would like to see, EFA presents its own Spitzenkandidat ('leading candidate').

However, the Greens should think about strengthening their political alliance with the nationalists and regionalists at both local and European levels. Despite some differences, the Greens and EFA parties are the complementary driving forces of a renewed progressive platform within the European Union. One way to strengthen their alliance would be to see the Greens supporting democratic movements from Scotland to Transylvania, from Basque Country to Silesia, from Corsica to Friesland. The Greens should stand up for democracy and stand by democratic movements.



NICOLA MCEWEN

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ROCCU GAROBY

has been a policy advisor working on budgetary affairs for the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament since 2011. Politically engaged in the Partitu di a Nazione Corsa (PNC) since 2010, he was the President of the European Free Alliance Youth between 2011 and 2016. He also publishes weekly articles on European affairs in the Corsican weekly newspaper *ARRITTI*.

TEARING EUROPE APART

TEXT & ILLUSTRATIONS BY
YANKO TSVETKOV

Evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar, who specialises in studying primate brains, once determined that the amount of human individuals in a functional social group cannot exceed 150. This limit, he argued, is a direct function of relative neocortex size. In other words, we don't have the physical capacity to maintain a meaningful connection with a larger number of people because there is a shortage of drawers in our brain, where we can store all the necessary gossip. I wonder if this rule applies to political alliances. Is there an optimal amount of countries, after which an organisation becomes dysfunctional?

It's a tempting question, especially during an economic crisis that has sharpened all kinds of divisions across the European continent. Contemporary politicians speak about enlargement fatigues, ideological rifts, and the failure of multiculturalism. The older electorate in Europe keeps warm memories of the time when the union was simply a community of a few prosperous countries coexisting in peace, harmony, and perpetual economic bliss.

The text and the cartographics are an excerpt from the chapter "Endless Europe" in the book *Atlas of Prejudice* by Yanko Tsvetkov.

See also

www.atlasofprejudice.com

The decision making in Brussels was light as a breeze, Angela Merkel was still busy sorting out posters for the Free German Youth, David Cameron smoked pot at Eton, and last but not least, the participants in Eurovision were obliged to sing in their native languages. There was a common enemy behind the Iron Curtain, and the threat it constantly emanated made a lot of people, who wouldn't otherwise be natural allies, unite under a common goal.

RAPPHICS

And here's a really naughty question: Would there be a European Union if the Soviet one didn't devour the countries of Eastern Europe one by one? It took just several years after the end of the Second World War to turn the world completely on its head. There were a lot of reinventions of old political ideas, freshly adapted to a bipolar, crudely divided continent.

Stalin, who during the war mastered Realpolitik better than Bismarck, stole the anti-Soviet idea of Georges Clemenceau and hastily started building his own *Cordon Sanitaire* of small buffer countries that were supposed to protect him from the influence of the pluralist West. He even introduced algebra to politics, trying to persuade his capitalist ally Winston Churchill that foreign political influence in a single country can be divided in percentages among the Great Powers. According to his plan, the United Kingdom was supposed to receive a 90% influence in Greece, 25% in Bulgaria, 10% in Romania, and 50% in Yugoslavia and Hungary. The Soviet Union was supposed to cash in the rest, as if those countries were ingredients in a cooking recipe.

These ridiculous calculations were just a trick to buy more time until the (not so) secret communist agents in the Soviet-occupied territories consolidated their power. Echoing the historic Defenestration of Prague in 1618, which precipitated the Thirty Year's War, the Czechoslovak foreign minister Jan Masaryk

was found dead right below the bathroom window of his office. Stalin had a sense of humor darker than a black hole.

Soon every country where the Soviet percentage was equal to or above 50% suddenly got a 100% communist government, which – to nobody's surprise – didn't feel comfortable sharing power with anyone else, rendering all algebraic assurances presented to Churchill meaningless. As a result, Europe received one of its deepest political scars, parts of which were even visible from space at the height of the Cold War.

Lush forest started popping out in the border areas between the enemy states, shaping what is now called the *European Green Belt*. Many animals, some of which belonging to endangered species, found refuge in those oases. Had the Cold War continued indefinitely, Europe would have gained back its once legendary wild forests, at least in the heavily guarded buffer zones between the two opposing camps.

There was a time when the continent was practically impossible to traverse, and such buffer zones covered vast expanses of land called *marches*. Geography, nature, and human politics flirted with each other, claiming land back and forth every time two neighboring states started generations-long quarrels. Among the notable examples was the

CARTOOG

Spanish March, which separated the Franks from the Moors in Iberia. Another one was the territory of modern Denmark, which even kept its original name, meaning *March of the Danes*.

While a squirrel probably had no problems traveling from Spain to Greece just jumping from branch to branch, for humans moving on dry land was much more challenging. This is why most ancient civilizations in Europe spread along the shores of rivers and seas.

The Ancient Romans were the first ones who started building permanent roads in order to keep their provinces connected. Some of those roads remain to this day. The first real cross-continental division of Europe started with the ascent of the Roman Empire. The Romans actually managed to break Europe twice. It began with the divide between the North and the South, or as the Romans understood it, between the wild barbarians and their own superior civilization. The stark cultural disparities between those two worlds started a chain of problems for future European politicians. One of the most notable was between Hitler and his superstitious servant, Himmler, who was busy digging out prehistoric Germanic villages:

“Why do we call the whole world’s attention to the fact that we have no past? It isn’t enough that the Romans were erecting great

buildings when our forefathers were still living in mud huts; now Himmler is starting to dig up these villages of mud huts and enthusing over every potsherd and stone axe he finds. All we prove by that is that we were still throwing stone hatchets and crouching around open fires when Greece and Rome had already reached the highest stage of culture.”

The second time the Romans broke Europe was when they divided their own empire in a Western and an Eastern part. What was a purely bureaucratic decision soon spilled over into a cultural and religious rivalry that would continue even to this day in various forms, some of which costing the lives of far too many people...



YANKO TSVETKOV

would best describe himself as an explorer.

He insists curiosity is his best asset and pursuing it his real profession.

A Bulgarian, born in the Black Sea port of Varna in 1976, he has traveled several continents, passed through thick jungles, walked through scorching deserts and booked a lot of taxis in busy metropolises.

RAPPHICS

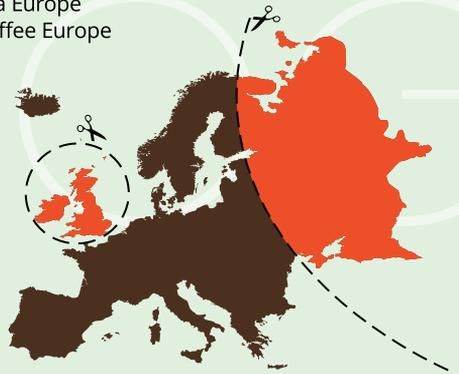
20 WAYS TO BREAK EUROPE



- Tomato Europe
- Potato Europe



- Tea Europe
- Coffee Europe



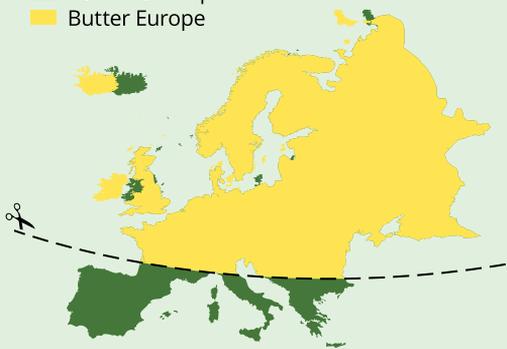
- Wine Europe
- Beer Europe
- Vodka Europe



- Sexually Repressed
- Emotionally Repressed

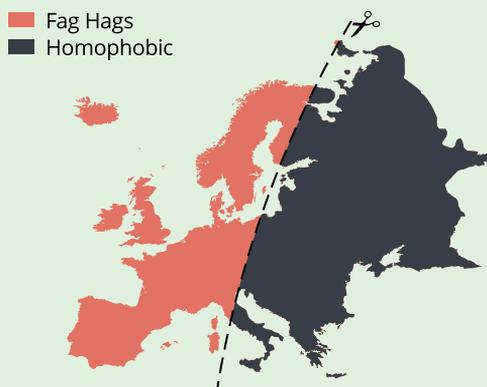


- Olive Oil Europe
- Butter Europe



- Catholic
- Protestant
- Orthodox



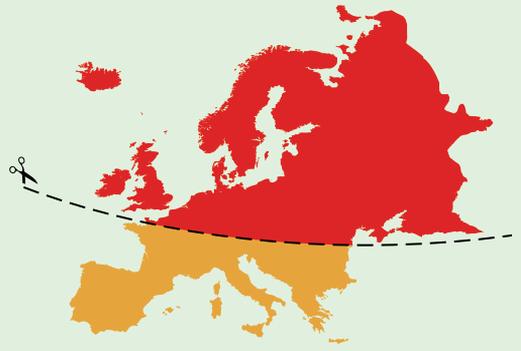


CARTO

- People who work 21 days per year
- People who live 21 days per year



- People who eat walking
- People who eat sitting



- People who need a plumber
- People who can fix their own sink



- Religious Europe
- Atheist Europe



THE UNHAPPY MARRIAGE OF CAPITALISM AND DEMOCRACY

AT THE ROOT OF EUROPE'S CRISIS

ARTICLE BY

DANIJELA DOLENEC &
MISLAV ŽITKO

In order for the Left to re-articulate growing anti-establishment sentiment in Europe towards emancipatory politics, it must put the future of capitalism squarely on the table and explicitly address the contradiction between further economic integration and the future of democracy in Europe. A first step to achieving this involves reframing the terms of our analysis so that we can fully grasp the scope of the expressions of discontent that we are witnessing.

According to most analyses, Europe is swinging to the right. In a recent standoff, which took place in Austria for the country's presidential election, the Green candidate, Van der Bellen, beat the Freedom Party's Hofer by just 31,000 votes among the 4.64 million cast. In a number of Western European countries, far-right parties have surpassed 10% electoral support, while the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in Austria is at 35%, the Swiss People's Party at 29%, and far-right parties in Denmark and Hungary both stand at 21%. If we add the current Polish and Croatian governments to the mix, with their blend of social conservatism and nationalism, one is indeed inclined to pronounce the rise of illiberal politics in Europe. On top of the already well-documented trend of falling electoral turnout and volatility, dwindling party loyalty and declining trust in political institutions¹, we are observing growing segments of citizens turn to nationalist, xenophobic and authoritarian parties for solutions.

In contrast to mainstream accounts of this trend, which refer to the rise in Islamophobia, growing Euroscepticism or some such statements

¹ Mair, Peter, 2014, *Ruling the Void*, London: Verso.

founded on opinion surveys, we propose a political economic analysis, *old style*, which collapses the artificial distinction between the economic and political domains in order to make sense of what is happening in Europe today. Doing this requires abandoning the term illiberal democracy, which we understand as a conceptual obstacle to progressive politics. By labelling the current crisis as the rise of illiberal democracy, we are blindfolding ourselves in the search both for explanations and solutions.

The first problem with the concept of illiberal democracy is that it ostensibly refers only to the political domain: democracy as a political regime characterised by free and fair elections, and illiberalism as the catchphrase for the rise of authoritarian, xenophobic and nationalist political platforms. However, even a cursory probe into the concept of liberal democracy (as used, for instance, by the often-quoted Fareed Zakaria²) immediately reveals that the liberal component refers to the rule of law, as it pertains not only to the protection of civil liberties, but to property rights and the underlying class politics that this entails. From the onset of liberalism, capitalism and democracy have been posed as contradictory forces, embodied in the fear that when the masses come to rule, this will spell the end of capitalism³. The concept of illiberal democracy plays into this age-old liberal fear.

AUTHORITARIAN CAPITALISM

The second problem with this concept is that it precludes progressive alternatives to the status quo. While stuck in this liberal-illiberal dichotomy, we are forced to choose between the status quo on the one hand, and worse outcomes on the other. The hegemonic status of economic liberalism is left off the table. A way of grasping this problem is by re-visiting Dani Rodrik's trilemma, which stipulates that global capitalism, nation-states and democracy are mutually incompatible. The second half of the 20th century witnessed how democracies used national governance frameworks to rein in capitalism. Since then, in a story today everyone knows by heart, global economic integration has become the driving force of social change. If we agree with Rodrik, that means either nation-states or democracy have to give way. Why? Mitigating social and environmental consequences of global capitalism democratically (that is, in the interest of the majority of the world population), requires a global governance system which remains a utopia. We are hence left with the other pair, where global economic integration is implemented through nation-states in an increasingly authoritarian manner. Over time, national governments face narrowing policy scope in taxation, spending, and regulation – eroding their democratic legitimacy and foundations. Isn't it more accurate then to label the current trend in Europe as the rise of authoritarian capitalism, rather than illiberal democracy?

2 Zakaria, Fareed, 1997, 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy', *Foreign Affairs* (Nov./Dec.).

3 Streeck, Wolfgang, 2011, 'The Crisis of Democratic Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 71 (Sept/Oct)

Most importantly, illiberal democracy is a residual term which bundles together two phenomena that are not inherently related: a rejection of neoliberalism and the rise of right-wing extremism. The reason why these two phenomena are linked today is due to the dramatic failure of the Left to articulate the interests of numerous social groups and individuals who are currently badly losing out. To return to the election in Austria: the outcome reflects a widening class divide, where middle-class, urban elites voted for Van der Bellen, while low-earning rural and working class Austrians backed Hofer. In other words, ever since the 1990s, when it uncritically embraced economic liberalism, the Left ceased to represent the very social groups that it owes its existence to.

The Swiss political scientist Hanspeter Kriesi⁴ argues that political realignments in Europe should be attributed to the process of globalisation. Global economic integration, undertaken to facilitate free movement of capital, goods, services and people, brings increased economic competition for jobs and personal opportuni-

ties, as well as increased cultural diversification due to immigration. In other words, it creates new articulations of interests and alignments, of proponents and opponents to economic liberalisation. The particular morphology of opponents will vary across national contexts, but generally speaking, individuals and groups who find it harder to adapt to social change because of lack of education, skills or other impediments to mobility will oppose further economic liberalisation.

THE BOTTOM LINE
CONNECTING RIGHT-
WING RESURGENCE
ACROSS EUROPE IS THE
POLITICAL ARTICULATION
OF SOCIAL DEMANDS FOR
PROTECTION, A LONGING
FOR SECURITY AND
BELONGING

As Bauman⁵ famously argued, today's liquid world is inhabited by tourists and vagabonds. The first group is moving through the world, while for the other, much larger group, the world is moving by. Vagabonds are on the move because they have been pushed from behind, uprooted from places that hold no promise, while the tourists stay or move at their hearts' desire. The group with the right resources – information, networks, knowledge, money – has the whole world at hand, while the group without these resources is switched on and off according to its momentary relevance to global networks of capital and markets.

4 Kriesi, Hanspeter, et al, 2006, 'Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared', *European Journal of Political Research* 45: 921–956.

5 Bauman, Zygmunt 1998, *Globalisation. The Human Consequences*, Polity Press: Cambridge

The crucial problem we are facing today is that this resentment is being articulated by the Right, on various platforms that aim to demarcate communities and provide a sense of security by vilifying the Other – on anti-immigration and Islamophobic programmes in Western Europe; on Eurosceptic, anti-LGBT, socially conservative programmes in Eastern Europe. The bottom line connecting right-wing resurgence across Europe is the political articulation of social demands for protection, a longing for security and belonging. In other words, the abundance of social anger and frustration caused by capitalism, coupled with estranged Left parties that have for decades been articulating elitist platforms designed for tourists rather than vagabonds, help explain the metamorphosis of working class identities into nationalist and xenophobic ones.

THE PROJECT FOR THE EUROPEAN LEFT

Once we reframe the problem in terms of resistance to further commodification, rather than resorting to culturalist explanations, it becomes possible to reinterpret the current political conjuncture not as right-wing ascendance, but as a Europe-wide, unequivocal rejection of establishment politics. A 2013 study of global protest concluded that

the fundamental grievance expressed today is over the lack of “real democracy”⁶. While we understandably worry about the rise of nationalism and xenophobia, we should focus on the fact that the phenomenon before our eyes is wide-scale popular rejection of the political establishment. This is evident in the resurgence of popular protest, the growth of new social movements, and a re-articulation of Left politics – as is particularly evident in Greece, Spain and Portugal. It is also evident on the European level in initiatives such as DiEM25, which advocate urgent re-democratisation of the European Union and the taking back of power currently held by the Troika.

However, this anti-establishment sentiment is currently more effectively channelled through right-wing extremism and countering this trend represents the most urgent task for progressive politics in Europe. In order for the Left to re-articulate this energy towards emancipatory politics, it must put the future of capitalism squarely on the table and start explicitly addressing the contradiction between further economic integration and the future of democracy in Europe. In order to do so, it may help to remember that today's democracies, which we are all devoted to preserving, were the outcome of struggles by workers' movements and socialist parties for universal suffrage, political, social and economic rights.

⁶ Ortiz et al., 2013, 'World Protests 2006-2013'. Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University, New York and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung New York Office.

Though standard textbooks mark the inclusion of socialist parties in government as the fundamental moment in which democracy took its contemporary form, in the early 21st century we have forgotten this.

Instead of observing how popular anger is articulated into nationalist platforms, the Left must boldly reclaim egalitarian principles. One of the side-effects of the hegemony that liberal democracy holds over our imaginations is a reduction of the concept of egalitarianism to meagre compensatory mechanisms. In stark contrast to that, egalitarianism is an ambitious political project of building communities in which people stand in relations of equality to each other⁷, and that project demands simultaneous struggle against class and status injustices⁸. Claims for recognition based on the status of the citizen versus the immigrant form a pressing demand for justice, but Leftist appeals to solidarity fall flat if they fail to address the class divide. Only by addressing the personal opportunities of the vagabonds can we hope to divert the current trend away from authoritarian capitalism and in the direction of a renewal of democracy.



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⁷ Anderson, Elisabeth, 1999, 'What is the Point of Equality?', *Ethics*, 102, 2.

⁸ Fraser, Nancy, 2003, 'Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition and Participation'. In: N. Fraser, A. Honneth (eds.), *Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. London: Verso.

ENGINE BREAKDOWN OR POWER SHORTAGE?

HOW THE FRANCO-GERMAN ENGINE IS NO LONGER DRIVING EUROPE

ARTICLE BY

**JENS ALTHOFF &
EDOUARD GAUDOT**

Since the outset, the ‘Franco-German engine’ has been the driving force in the European construction process. In times of upheaval, Franco-German political cohesion and solidarity has guided the process of forging a common European spirit. When the French-German duo struggles, so too does the entire European family. But what was once an asset has become a liability. Solidarity between Paris and Berlin is absent, undermining the European Union’s ability to face its accumulating crises. Imbalances in the Eurozone, threats to democracy, handling the influx of refugees – the future of Europe hinges in part on re-establishing veritable French-German solidarity.

FR

This article is available in its original language (French) on the Green European Journal website.

**MARIANNE ET
MICHEL SE FONT
LA TÊTE**

Depuis les origines, le « moteur franco-allemand » a une place particulière dans la construction européenne. Mais quand le couple va mal, c’est toute la famille européenne qui trinque.

The Franco-German couple figures prominently in all European political declarations on both sides of the Rhine, and has for a long time been a fundamental and necessary part of European construction. The choice of word ‘couple’ indicates the intrinsically human and lasting nature of the relationship, much like in the case of any bilateral diplomatic relation. At times, small glitches in understanding go unnoticed. At other times, the tensions are visible. However, the marital tension becomes palpable when a French Prime Minister – steeped in French domestic certainties – visits Munich in 2016, only to lecture the German Chancellor on refugees rather than offering support; or when German politicians and the press openly lambast the French for their social and economic rigidity rather than attempting to assist in the remedy. And it’s the whole European family that suffers.

The Franco-German engine is a special force in the European construction process. The symbolic figures of France’s Marianne and Ger-

many's Michel grew progressively close during the early days. They courted each other, building the common European house.

Perhaps it was calculated, but no matter, when François Mitterrand took Chancellor Kohl's hand during their September 22nd 1984 visit to the Douaumont ossuary in Verdun, the political emotion conjured by the image was a testament to just how much road had been travelled since the end of the war. They had moved beyond the past: the moral shock of the "Strange Defeat" of 1940; the shameful collaboration; the bitterness of being vanquished and having a master and occupier who had erstwhile been occupied. The failure in 1954 of the European Defence Community for fear of German rearmament was erased nine years later on January 22nd 1963 when de Gaulle and Adenauer signed the Elysée Treaty. Since then, French Presidents and German Chancellors have carried on the tradition of showing Europe and the world that it is possible to fight three wars in the span of a lifetime (1870-1940) – including two which caused destruction on a global scale – only to become the closest of partners.

Yet, reconciliation and cooperation are not founded solely on brotherly voluntarism: there is also the disequilibrium of the two former powers. The voluntary and imposed atrophy of German political power stood in stark contrast to the French Gaullist political grandeur. One struck the modest stance of a small country without any international ambition and without any outlook beyond its economic "miracle". Meanwhile, the other played up its position as a Great Nation with a future as glorious as its past, never mind the realities of decolonisation and the clear limits to its economic model.

This disequilibrium played out in a relatively small European Community: first, six countries, and then twelve, all of which were either smaller than Germany and France or in less of a position to make a play for leadership. Therefore, it was a natural progression for a

Franco-German ‘engine’ to be built. France, defending without hesitation its own interests, and speaking for itself or Germany – carefully avoiding doing just that for historically evident reasons – made it preferable to speak on behalf of the European Economic Community (EEC); every agreement was tinged with general European interest. Through ups and downs, in a Europe learning to mature from its crises, the Franco-German couple’s strength and political solidarity became one of the most important and reliable forces in the construction of a united Europe.

MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE AND LOVERS’ QUARRELS

Marianne and Michel’s is perhaps a marriage of convenience, yet it is a solid union, and the road travelled is a testament to that. The ties that bind on a daily basis are strong and even when the relationship is being tested the most, as presently, daily business runs smoothly between Paris, Berlin and Brussels, leading one to believe that all is well. The administrations know each other, work together, share mutual understanding and respect. Yet, despite these political appearances, the ever-present cooperation, the requests of one side or the other, the Franco-German couple is no longer a driving force of the Union. The relationship has become a bit stale and technocratic, it is ham-

strung by rituals and stripped of its political content. It is running out of the steam and the passion needed to rise to the major challenges that threaten the very existence of the European Union: Brexit, the pressure of the influx of refugees, imbalances in the Eurozone and the increase in so-called ‘illiberal democracies’ within Europe. All of this is compounded by the broken down ‘engine’ of Europe.

Perhaps a bit of historical perspective is needed to fully comprehend the worrisome weakening of this relationship. The last big test of solidarity that the couple faced was in 1989-92. With the fall of the iron curtain in 1989 and German reunification on October 3rd 1990, the European Community’s balance was thrown off. Europeans were surprised by events and had not fully contemplated the extent to which an end to the Cold War would mean a coming to terms with a history that is disquieting to the neighbours.¹

Indeed, it was the strength of the Franco-German couple that meant that 1990’s Europe could find its way in the face of a newly re-united Germany. Germany made a huge sacrifice in giving up its currency. Emblematic icon of the re-established power and symbol of the soft domination of Europe, the Deutsche Mark was pivotal in reunification, more so even than the Grundgesetz and the rule of law.

¹ Samy Cohen (Ed.) *Mitterrand et la sortie de la guerre froide*, PUF, 1998. In France debates on the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht did not actually focus on Europe but on Germany. Either surround Germany with a tight solidarity net (vote ‘yes’) or fear Germany would dominate the new European structure (vote ‘no’).

Chancellor Kohl imposed the new currency on a reluctant German people, concerned about the economic divergences with the countries of what was coming to be known as ‘Club Med’.

The scorn shown at that time foreshadowed the worst moments in the current debate. Giving up the Deutsche Mark was a magnanimous European act and the historic mark of the joint Franco-German leadership.

The irony of history would have it that the single currency did not put an end to the Deutsche Mark’s dominance or German-dominated monetary policy. On the contrary, the Euro further boosted the economic success of Germany and further exacerbated the struggles of the rest of the Eurozone and the European Union, as described by Ulrich Beck in his book *German Europe*.²

The couple’s decisive moment of weakening was precisely in its response to the 2008 financial crisis – and subsequent social and political crises – spurred by the collapse of the US banking system. Acting alone and without respect for her partners, specifically Nicolas Sarkozy’s France, who never

grasped nor accepted the importance of the couple³, Angela Merkel’s Germany abused its dominant position to impose on the EU a twofold catastrophic edict. First, that solu-

tions to the debt crisis were to be national; and second, that said decisions be in strict compliance with the common rules set at the time of the establishment of the European Economic and Monetary Union. In other words: climb the tree of your choice to escape the flames, but

too bad if you lack the agility of a monkey or the wings of a bird.

GERMAN PRIDE AND FRENCH PREJUDICE

Rejecting a European solution (e.g. eurobonds to pool debt risk) to the problem, when the very nature of a European single currency transforms each national problem into a European one, violates the very spirit of the European community, as it casts doubt on whether all the Member States are indeed equal. The technocratic and dehumanised handling of the Greek facet of the crisis was further evidence of this diminished European spirit.

THE FRANCO-GERMAN
COUPLE'S STRENGTH AND
POLITICAL SOLIDARITY
BECAME ONE OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT AND RELIABLE
FORCES IN THE
CONSTRUCTION OF A
UNITED EUROPE

2 Ulrich Beck, *Das deutsche Europa. Neue Machtlandschaften im Zeichen der Krise*, (Suhrkamp, 2012)

3 Sylvie Goulard, *Le Coq et la perle, 50 ans d'Europe* (Le Seuil, 2007)

HOW COULD
A FRENCH
PRESIDENT
– THE
REPUBLICAN
MONARCH,
DIRECTLY
ELECTED BY
THE PEOPLE –
POSSIBLY GO
BEGGING FOR
SOLIDARITY
FROM BERLIN?



The fallout of this tragic decision can be seen around Europe, above and beyond the devastating breakup of the Franco-German relationship; one that feeds mutual incomprehension. In Germany, Merkel and Schäuble refuse to account for the rigidities of the French political model. How could a French president – the Republican monarch, directly elected by the people – possibly go begging for solidarity from Berlin? Especially when that solidarity no longer comes naturally. Nothing wrong with helping Paris save face.

In France, pressure from the extreme-right is mounting. The consequences of this disagreement are pervasively felt. A new version of a “Germany will pay” rhetoric is blowing a 1930’s wind onto public opinion, not accustomed to self-criticism. Worse still, cultural and political defiance seems to be increasingly relevant. Left to its own devices, lost without any historical bearings, broken by economic competition which favours Germany, floundering in an EU which has expanded too much for its taste and which has made Berlin and Frankfurt the new epicentres, the French political class no longer understands the Franco-German couple. Just like it no longer understands Europe.

4 Wolfgang Streeck, *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism* (Verso Books, 2014)

5 Guillaume Duval, *Made in Germany : Le modèle allemand au-delà des mythes* (Le Seuil, 2013)

6 Jean-Luc Mélenchon, *Le Hareng de Bismarck (Le poison allemand)*, (Plon, 2015)



This historical defiance is quite well illustrated by Jean-Luc Mélenchon's rants against Germany. Instead of the poised analytical tone of his excellent readings on Merkel's harmful policies (Ulrich Beck, Wolfgang Streeck⁴ and Guillaume Duval⁵), the French leftist-sovereignist Bonaparte-wannabe has no qualms about turning to the most basic nationalist tendencies, using all of the most German-phobic culturalist clichés while celebrating the genius of the Grande Nation.⁶

From Marine Le Pen to Frauke Petry, on both sides of the Rhine, nationalist, extreme-right, anti-European movements are impeding the ability of governments to drop this pretence and to recognise that European solidarity is struggling – and also, more specifically, that Franco-German solidarity is struggling – and to find the answers needed.

The partners could have rallied to a common cause or challenge to European polit-

ical integration, one that is not domestic and that they could share. Yet, even the threat of a Brexit did not seem to focus the minds of the Franco-German couple to move them out of their state of passive spectatorship, overcome by resigned stupor. Why is there no appeal, on behalf of the 27 Member States, to the British to stay in the EU and continue to contribute towards political union? Why are there no initiatives being taken to ensure that if the dis-United Kingdom leaves the EU, it does so alone? Why are there no new Lamers-Schäuble initiatives?⁷

EUROPEAN SENSE AND FRANCO-GERMAN SENSIBILITY

Whether we like it or not, the United Kingdom is an essential building block of the European edifice. A departure would strengthen nationalist extreme-right movements making pleas for an end to the European Union. Marine le Pen, Viktor Orbán, Jarosław Kaczyński and the recent showing of the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in Austria are examples of this increasing demand for 'illiberal democracy' movements and regimes abound. This is a serious subject and an existential threat to the European Union. Meanwhile, the Franco-German couple looks on awkwardly and essentially

⁷ The Lamers-Schäuble Report from 1994 proposed to the French a vision of Europe integrated around the French-German couple which was very consistent with the « engine » idea. It met the silence of the Balladu Government, the total inaction of François Mitterrand and the scepticism of the then Secretary General of the President, Hubert Védrine.

THE SPARK
OF POLITICAL
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IN AN OLD
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WORN DOWN
BY THE DAILY
HUMDRUM
OF ADMINI-
STRATIVE AND
TECHNOCRATIC
MANAGEMENT

passively. Rather than taking the pulse of the real European threat; rather than responding firmly; rather than a riposte to the increasing influence of Moscow; France and Germany prefer to maintain a domestic approach to the problem – as with the issue of debt, everyone has their own neo-fascist domestic approach.

The tragic absurdity of this passivity is that it results in the crises reinforcing each other. All of the crises are aggravated by the locking up of the Franco-German engine: refugees; the rise in populism; Brexit; the Euro. Disunited, Paris and Berlin are struggling to formulate a common security and foreign policy. Worse still, the couple's weakness on the inside is the European Union's weakness on the outside. Before it became a sordid game of haggling between a beleaguered EU and President Erdogan's authoritarian Turkey, the refugee deal was a cynical agreement hatched by the Franco-German couple. In exchange for its complete lack of solidarity with Germany on the refugee issue, Paris left Berlin to outsource the dirty work to Ankara. France – the so-called home of human rights – has obstinately failed to do its part in handling the burden of the refugee and migrant tragedy. It mirrors perfectly German deafness to the pleas for solidarity during the early phases of the Euro crisis.

Yet, when they want to, they know precisely how to rally the full clout of the European Union to weigh in on all of the partners who respond to a raw power struggle: from Riyadh to Moscow and Tehran to Ankara. The handling of the crisis in Ukraine and the Normandy format⁸ are an illustration that it can be done; it really can. The conflict in East Ukraine was hurtling towards a civil war with a whole other source of refugees coming to Europe and all of the disastrous effects of the full destabilisation of a country bordering the European Union, and Merkel and Hollande were able to contain the crisis, bringing all of Europe together to impose sanctions on Putin's Russia.

⁸ Normandy format is a diplomatic group of senior representatives of four countries (Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France) to resolve the situation in the East of Ukraine.

The conflict is still far from over of course. Nonetheless, this is an excellent example of what the EU can do in the face of a crisis if the Franco-German couple puts the engine in the driving role and not the brake slowing things down. To make this possible, the spark of political passion must be lit again in an old couple that is worn down by the daily humdrum of administrative and technocratic management. It comes down to a question of the quality of the political staff, but also of their embodiment (that old idea of a Franco-German minister who would be a part of the governments of both countries), and most importantly, an invested civil society. Franco-German cooperation in the 1950s and 1960s was nourished by twinned towns, language courses, exchanges and a will to transcend the cultural and political borders. Today, more and more, the French and Germans tend not to speak to each other in their respective languages. They increasingly communicate in English.

Free movement of peoples and open borders are threatened and the historic couple exudes lethargy, misunderstanding, and irritation.

When the Franco-German couple is strong and shows solidarity, it has proven to carry Europe very far on the path to political integration. But today, it has become a deadweight for Europe. It will have to rekindle the faith and commitment it had in the early days – and strive to save Europe from the threat of disintegration. ■



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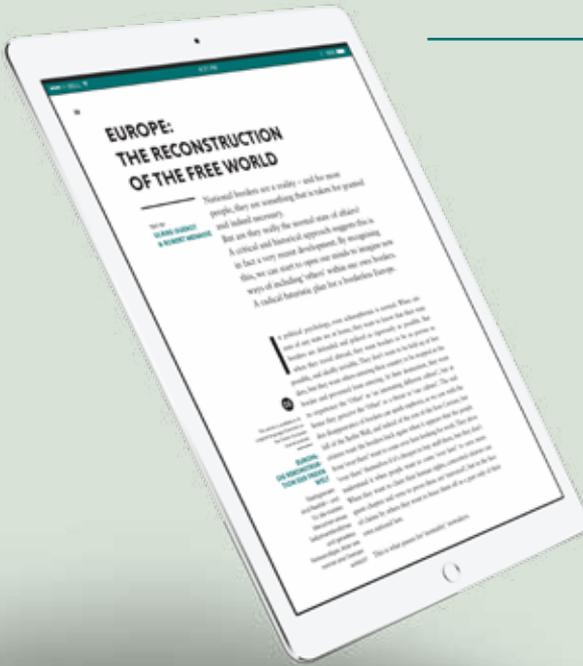
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TREMORS IN EUROPE

MAPPING THE FAULTLINES

At a time when the European Union faces numerous obstacles, this 13th edition of the Green European Journal explores the forces of integration and disintegration at play today in Europe. An exploration, in sum, of the tectonic shifts occurring beneath the surface. This edition of the Journal opens with two state-of-the-union interviews and offers analyses, opinions and illustrations on topics such as the anti-TTIP struggle, youth in Europe, the information war with Russia, the case for European security, challenges of the Eurozone, the role of religion, developments in regionalist and independence movements, the force of prejudice, the evolution of the Franco-German axis, the power of division narratives and the importance of democracy, equality and sovereignty. As a new political landscape emerges and as tensions between retreating and openness in Europe appear, the question is: “what is the purpose of European integration and where is it leading?” Today more than ever, Greens cannot ignore this question and must provide answers.

