

EUROMEETINGS

Group of European Pensioners from Savings Banks and Financial Institutions

Nº 22 - October 2017* Editions in german, spanish, french, english, italian and portuguese * Free distribution



EDITORIAL

We are all together!

CURRENT NEWS

Courage and Audacity

Selfishness, solidarity and Lack of solidarity

The Portwine

“Europe divided by a weak memory and an uncertain future — A rich and dramatic history”

Europe and its “populisms”



EUROMEETING 2018 From May, 19th to 26th Seville - SPAIN

OFIR (Porto) — 2017

XXIIIrd Euomeeting at Douro

Conclusions on the subject of the XXIIIrd Euomeeting: “Europe at a crossroads between populism, the answer to migration, disintegration and the future”





Management and Administration address:

Calle Antonio de Cabezón, 29
28034 MADRID (Spain)

HONOUR PRESIDENT

JEAN CLAUDE CHRÉTIEN

MANAGEMENT BOARD

President

CÂNDIDO TRABUCO VINTÉM

Vicepresidents

MICHEL PAGEAULT

FRANCISCO RAMÍREZ MUNUERA
(Treasurer)

Secretary

ANTONIO GONZÁLEZ DÍEZ

Assistant Secretary

JEAN WOJTIUK

Assistant Secretary to Presidency

MARIA CREMILDA CABRITO

EXECUTIVE COMITTEE

(President)

CÂNDIDO TRABUCO VINTÉM

(1º Vice-president)

MICHEL PAGEAULT

(2º Vice-president)

FRANCISCO RAMIREZ MUNUERA

ASSEMBLY DELEGATES

Portugal:

ANTÓNIO MENDES DE ALMEIDA

CARLOS GARRIDO

JOSÉ RIBEIRO GONÇALVES

ORLANDO SANTOS

(to designate)

France:

Caisse d'Épargne

JEAN YVES MARTIN

JACQUES HUBERT

(to designate)

(to designate)

Banques Populaires

BERNARD NICOLAS

Spain:

DOMINGO PEREZ AUYANET

JOSÉ ALMELA ALCÁZAR

JOSÉ MANUEL GARCÍA VILLA

ARTURO PÉREZ VELASCO

Italy:

EGIDIO RAMONDETTI

Elected Member:

CHRISTA SAIA (Germany)

HONOUR MEMBERS

AGRUPACIÓN EUROPEA

DE CAJAS DE AHORROS

CONFEDERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA

DE CAJAS DE AHORROS

CAJA MEDITERRÁNEO

CAJA DE AHORROS DE ZARAGOZA

ARAGÓN Y RIOJA (IBERCAJA)

CAIXA GERAL DE DEPÓSITOS

SUMMARY

⇒	Editorial	3
⇒	Courage and Audacity	4
⇒	Selfishness, solidarity and lack of solidarity	5
⇒	The Portwine	6
⇒	North Portugal's "Costa Verde"	7
⇒	GET's conclusions — Ofir	9-11
⇒	Europe divided by a weak memory and an uncertain future — A rich and dramatic history	12-16
⇒	Europe and its "populisms"	17-18
⇒	Eurometing 2018 - Sevilla	19
⇒	Souvenirs of Ofir	20

For further information about the Group:

President (Portugal): ctvintem@netcabo.pt

1º Vicepresidente (France): michel.pageault@orange.fr

2º Vicepresidente (Spain): framirezmunuera@gmail.com

Secretariat



info@euroencuentros.org

www.euroencuentros.org

DIRECTORS

Cândido Trabuco Vintém

Alicia González Amorós

DESIGN AND LAY-OUT

Cândido Trabuco Vintém

Alicia González Amorós

EDITORS

Cândido Trabuco Vintém

Jean Claude Chrétien

Domingo Pérez Auyanet

José María Tortosa (Prof)

Franco Chittolina (Prof)

Egidio Ramondetti

Christa Saia

PRINTING

TRACER-CAD (Impresión Digital)

C/Médico Manero Mollá 13 Bajo

03001 Alicante

(España)

Tel: +34 965216360





EDITORIAL **WE ARE ALL TOGETHER!**

The European Group is a common space for reflection and coexistence where every single opinion of each one of our members is taken into consideration.

In order to strengthen the structure of our Group we need the active presence of all the Associations from all the countries. Only so we will be able to achieve our goal, which has been for years the defense of the less young citizens who worked to build a solid financial system and to turn it into an engine for the development of our Europe.

For some years now there has been evidence of the need for the Spanish Federation to go back to work on the Euromeeting and to our every-day life.

While we were working on the development of this newsletter and on the preparation of the next Euromeeting in Seville, we continued being in touch with the new direction of the Federation. Thanks to the open spirit of cooperation of its direction we can announce to you with great pleasure that, in an extraordinary meeting of the Spanish Federation held in the symbolic city of Toledo, it was decided that this Federation will return to the European Group. This decision will substantially contribute to the strengthening of the European Group regarding the AGE Platform.

From here we want to greet the management of all the Associations that make up the Federation and welcome them to a place that was always theirs.

This newsletter “Euromeeting” contains exceptionally twenty pages, due to the fact that we have included the full publication of the writings of two speakers who were invited in the last Euromeetings.

The texts complement each other and offer as a whole a historic vision and perspective concerning topics which make our world and unsafe place, especially for future generations.

The populism and radical nationalism question remains a current topic. The results of recent elections in several countries point out that “populism” is losing momentum. However, we cannot forget that in some of those countries the positions and the representation of those defending it were reinforced.

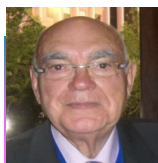
Our generation waves the flag of values such as equality, fraternity and solidarity and has the moral duty of passing it on the next generations and this is what we are trying to do from our European Group.

The direction will do everything necessary to make 2018 a very important year for everybody, keeping up our efforts to reach new countries.

We continue working now with the added joy that comes from the return of our colleagues.

Cândido Vintém (Portugal)

President of the Group



COURAGE AND AUDACITY

Courage should not be confused with **audacity**. Although audacity is trendy, both courage and courtesy and loyalty are forgotten words, since courage represents humility and discretion.

Audacity is nowadays present everywhere: business life, political life and even in some social and cultural fields. Audacity means frequently taking risks, sometimes it is about inventiveness and, very often, it means going against the grain. But as Confucius affirmed, "he who once shows courage is not always courageous".

Courage is less spectacular, since it often stems from a permanent will of facing adversity. In times when heroes stand out, courage is often imperceptible, since it hides a way of reacting to events and facing them, which is not valued in a reasonable manner.

Audacity often occurs at a given moment throughout our life, even when individuals, business leaders or some other high-profile leaders which pride themselves on the fact that they use this value in all of their actions, do not necessarily seek recognition and honor. For them, audacity represents very often an isolation

solution which hides the lack of courage to confront a given situation. Audacity is a challenge whose reliability often diminishes over time. Bravery or courage (which etymologically stems from "coeur"- "heart" in French) is often used as a synonym of humility. For the most part, those who represent it do not claim it, but, fortunately, live it.

Audacity is trendy; it is often considered a movement of courage which knows no obstacle or limit. It is sometimes pejoratively described as a synonym of insolence and impertinence at the expense of its benefits.

Even though courage has been forgotten, it still remains a source of future. Nowadays we are faced with a question: is the man who every day evolves in an uncertain and constantly changing world courageous enough to face terrorism, unemployment, abuse, the conflicts which cast a shadow over our world, the suffering of the oppressed peoples and all the existing scourges nowadays? The answer is yes.

While every day today puts much more scandals ahead of good deeds, we must represent, each at our own level, the expression of this discreet courage which of-

ten unites dignity and humility. Two other forgotten words!

Courage is a force which means respecting values with dignity, committing oneself to humility, taking responsibility, listening and understanding our fellow human beings. As Winston Churchill stated, a brave man if ever there was one: **"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen"**.

Courage is ageless. Each individual in its company, its association, its neighborhood, its cultural environment can show courage. It is the meaning that we give to our participation in the tasks carried out by our Group and the Platform AGE in Brussels, when we take measures for the welfare of the elderly and we carry out influential operations with MEPs to end certain discriminations and put solution on the table for the problems of pensioners and retirees.

Jean Claude Chrétien
(France)
Honour President



SELFISHNESS, SOLIDARITY AND LACK OF SOLIDARITY

The term selfishness refers to the excessive and immoderate love that someone feels about himself and which makes him take disproportional care of his own interest. Therefore, someone who is selfish does not take any interest in his neighbor's needs and governs his acts in accordance with his absolute convenience.

We people do not behave usually generously nor selfishly all the time, we rather find ourselves in an intermediate point in which we act depending upon several factors, including our vital moment.

A great many times we ask ourselves the following question: Am I being selfish if I do or do not do this? This issue arises when someone makes a reasonable request and we need to assess whether we agree or not, when saying yes means a cost or when we think of ways to help which may or may not be excessive for the responsibility we have. We surely have gone through moments in which we have asked ourselves that question, and the answer to that question is very often not easy.

A common and selfish reason for not helping is the fear of showing weakness, of trying and exposing ourselves by feeling that our action is not very helpful. People that behave selfishly believe that their environment tries to belittle their work and potential. These are typically not tenacious people when pursuing their goals, who might even think that success will always be on their side, without caring about who they might have to get rid of on their way to achieving it.

These kinds of individuals prefer easy criticism and stabbing someone in the back. Deep down they fear being wrong and they do it from the distance so that reality cannot spoil their idea of how they have shaped the world in their heads. One of the most important and evident defects of somebody

who is selfish has to do with the lack of humility. Humility is a precious and human virtue, it is also necessary to grow as human beings and sociable individuals with our environment. Egocentric people will only abandon this potential and try to highlight and enhance their achievements instead.

They are afraid to take risks; they do not consider failure because they never get exposed to it. Of course, they do not hesitate to criticize in a hard or stern way, when others do not achieve their goals. They are the first ones that will tell you: "I already saw that coming..."

The lack of solidarity is the attitude of social indifference of that person who lets himself or herself be carried by individualism and looks elsewhere, avoiding by doing so getting involved in social issues in which he or she could do his or her bit for the construction of the common good. It shows the emotional distance of the one living imprisoned in his or her own comfort bubble to live worried about his or her own ego.

It can not only be shown from a physical point of view but also through the emotional attitude. For instance, someone may not show his or her collaboration towards a friend who is going through a tough personal moment whereas solidarity enhances mutual collaboration and reciprocal support for the well-being of the community. On the contrary, the lack of solidarity shows the attitude of that one who evades his ethical responsibility as a person. This might be a one-time attitude or go on in time. However, it has negative consequences on a personal level; one of the most remarkable ones might be loneliness.

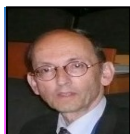
The indifference of people before the needs or calamities that one person or a community in general might be experiencing. In the face of these things one must not only feel moved and bad for the unfortu-

nate people, but do something about it. Concerning major catastrophes population in general usually responds positively, as do Governments. Poverty is one of the greatest enemies of disasters because victims are ultimately those who are left in sheer helplessness and lack the contacts and strategies they need to face what they lost. On the other hand, before the possibility of disaster risk, Governments should implement action protocols, since those establish the way of proceeding before each action: what type of assistance is needed at a given moment: it is not the same in an earthquake, in a forest fire or in a flood.

In times of crisis an organizer is always required. Someone who defines and communicate what the needs are. The problem arises when Governments improvise and society finds itself at a crossroads of not knowing what to do.

For all of these reasons we live in a world where solidarity is very rare, but it is known worldwide that people go out to help on a massive scale when a major catastrophe occurs; it is an expression of solidarity. That one who was not injured feels obliged to collaborate that one that was injured. Political issues should always be put away from disasters, which means; discussing whether aid should or should not arrive due to any given reasons. Broadly speaking, Civilian protection, the Fire Brigade, the Military Emergencies Unit, the State Security Forces and Corps, etc. are ready to face such events, they have been proving it with efficiency all along.

Domingo Pérez Auyanet (Spain)
President of the Association
of Retired Workers of Caja Insular
Savings Bank of the Canary Islands



THE PORTO WINE

During the wars with France (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), Great Britain boycotted French wine and decided to purchase Portuguese wine, which unfortunately could not stand the long journey by sea.

The production process of *Porto* wine was accidentally invented by two brothers who strengthened the wine by adding grape distillate, around 3% at that time, to maintain the quality during the trip to England.

In 1756 in Portugal, the Marquis of Pombal delimited the production of *Porto* wine in the Douro region, Europe's first appellation of origin with a regulated production, as is the case of *Champagne* produced in this specific region of France. From that point on, true *Porto* only comes from that region. Farmers and landowners were traditionally Portuguese and sold to the English their wine, which had been aged in Porto. But at the end of the nineteenth century the scenario changed, when the plague of an insect of American origin called phylloxera reached Europe and spread rapidly throughout all the vineyards, ruining irreparably the production of wine.

The fields were treated with chemical substances which polluted the land, turning it not suitable for the cultivation of wine grapes. As the wine production stopped for more than a decade, the Portuguese ceded their lands to English societies which awaited the so-

lution to the plague of phylloxera: the grafting of European vineyards in the stem of the American vine that provided the whole plant with an intrinsic tolerance to phylloxera.

The *Porto* production improved, but it did it in British lands.

At the beginning of 1700 the grapes harvested were sweeter



than normal and the wine of that vintage was very successful in Great Britain. After this, Douro winemakers produced sweeter wines and added a greater amount of distillate: those wines were the forerunners of today's *Porto*.

Porto wine is a blending of grapes coming from different vineyards, using different winemaking techniques and different vintages: a wine which is not produced like most of the wines whose grape-juice is allowed to ferment. *Porto* wine is a very sweet grape-juice to which the wine expert adds the distillate to stop the fermentation and obtain a wine with high alcohol content (17-21% by volume) and a marked residual sugar level (around 7%) because the yeasts could not completely transform it into al-

cohol, since they were inhibited from the high concentration of ethanol. The result is a wine with body, succulent and sweet.

There are two different types of *Porto* wine: the one aged in wood and the one aged in glass. The **Vintage** is the only *Porto* wine aged exclusively in glass bottles and it is named

vintage because it has only been kept in the bottle for one year; it is the most prestigious *Porto*, produced with grapes from a single vintage, aged in barrels initially for about two years and then put in bottles for a second aging process which can last much longer (up to 40-50 years, and in the best vintages even more than a century).

The **Ruby** ages in big barrels only for a period of two or three years, then it is moved to small barrels of about 550 liters where contact area with wood and the air (in this last case through the wood) is bigger.

It is a very fruity wine, with an intense ruby color and flavored with berries and plum.

The **Tawny** ages for much longer in wooden barrels, sometimes up to 40 years and as it rusts away it ages faster than *Ruby*.

*Egidio Ramondetti (Italy)
Delegate of the Assembly*



NORTH PORTUGAL'S "COSTA VERDE"

The Group of European Pensioners from Savings Banks and Financial Institutions invited us to Portugal for the third time. After visiting the Algarve and Lisbon, this time we went to the northern part of the country, Esposende, on the Green Coast. 200 participants from Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Great Britain and Germany spent a wonderful week in the Axis Ofir Beach Resort, on the wild and fine sand coast of the Atlantic; and during the excursions into the country we were delighted by the forests, groves and uncountable vineyards in the Douro Valley. During the several reunions important issues were discussed and the decisions made were unveiled. Some Spanish associations decided to be once again part of the Group.

The main topic of this edition was: "Europe at a crossroads between populism, the answer to migrations, disintegration and the future."

The participants from the different countries made their contributions on the subject in the plenary assembly. The working groups drew conclusions from all the speeches in interesting rounds of discussion. These conclusions will be sent to AGE, which is the European platform of pensioners based in Brussels.

126 associations and organizations of pensioners are part of it with 140 million members.

Our main goal should be supporting Europe, letting citizens take part in open and transparent debates and not falling into isolation and protectionism. This applies to foreign and economic policy, which must act with responsibility concerning the refugees issue as well as the fight against economic and social inequality among European citizens.

Europe will continue being a constant project and the current crisis will not end unless we carry out structural reforms. All of us can contribute to this, because Europe can only continue existing if there is tolerance and collaboration.

The board of directors and Viajes Transvia know how to surprise us each time with a comprehensive program, apart from the debates and the meetings.

Our first excursion took us to the church of the pilgrims Bom Jesus do Monte. At the top of the city of Braga, there is a staircase with 600 steps, interrupted by small terraces and decorated with statues, which leads to the noble Baroque church. We avoided climbing so many steps and we used the world's oldest water ballast functional train (it was built in 1882). After enjoying a breathtaking view of the city and its surrounding forests we

headed to Braga to visit one of the oldest churches in Portugal, the so called Se (cathedral), inside which are the tombs of many historical personalities of the country.

The following day we set off with the first light of dawn. We were going to take a one-hour-long boat trip along the Douro River on a *rabelo*, a typical ship which was formerly used to transport merchandise, mostly port wine barrels; we sailed under the six bridges of Porto and enjoyed the view on both sides of the riverbank. Later we were shown the winery "Ferreira" in Vila Nova de Gaia through a guided-tour, where we were able to taste different Porto wines. We finished the evening with a live singing and dance show in the restaurant Herança Magna, in which we also enjoyed a wonderful meal. At the mouth of the river Lima, between the sea and the mountains, is Viana do Castelo. This city was a very significant starting point during the time of the voyages of the discoverers towards the "unknown land". We visited the Santa Luzia church, which has five domes from the 18th century, arches of Romanesque inspiration and Renaissance balconies.

Guimarães is a beautiful and historic city and is considered to be the founding place of Portugal, since Portugal's first King, Alfonso Enrique was born here in 1110. On the sacred top, above the city, is the crenellated castle, with its 27-meter high tower. The castle is considered one of the best preserved Roman castles in Portugal. A bit further down is the Ducal Palace. In the great chambers there were impressive pieces of furniture, Flemish tapestry and collections of weapons. UNESCO declared the old town of Guimarães a world heritage site.

On Thursday we went to Barcelos and visited the biggest weekly flea market in Portugal, located in Campo da Republica. The symbol of Barcelos is the *Galo*, (rooster), and is offered as a souvenir in various forms.

The legend tells of a farmer who had been condemned to death, despite being innocent. Before his execution, he demanded to speak with the judge one last time. This was eating a roast chicken, when the condemned told him that the rooster was going to jump off the plate and was going to sing very loud at the time of his execution, as a sign of his innocence. So it was. Following this, they pardoned him and, subsequently, the farmer made an offering to the church: a clay rooster.

We went through one of the most beautiful landscapes of Portugal when we went

to the Douro Valley.

The grapes of the famous first class Port wine grow on the slopes of the River Douro, a river known as the "father of wine".

The natural climate of this region has a positive effect on the vines.

We could see this in the traditional luxury and family vineyard of Quinta de Pacheca. We participated in a guided tour and enjoyed the regional products of gourmet cuisine and of course the excellent wine, which we were able to buy there directly. The bottle has already arrived in Germany and, in fact, part of it has already been consumed. All the more reason to come back soon!

When we continued the trip, we discovered another large farm, surrounded by a beautiful garden; the baroque palace Casa de Mateus. The interior decoration of the house, which nowadays is a museum, has beautifully elaborated wooden ceilings, as well as paintings, silver and ceramics from different periods.

Located on the top of a hill of the beautiful and well-kept city of Lamego is the sanctuary of the Senhora dos Remedios, on which a rococo chapel was built in 1761. A double staircase of 613 steps, with a total of 18 statues, leads to the church, which is a pilgrimage destination.

Our last excursion took us to Porto, the second largest city in Portugal. In the old town, which is a world heritage site, we visited the Se do Porto cathedral. It combines Gothic and Romanesque elements. We admired the cloister with very nice painted tiles, the organ and the golden image of the shiny altar. From the Serra do Pilar monastery we enjoyed an incomparable view of this historic and diverse city, and of the Douro River itself. A magnificent two-story bridge, the Ponte Dom Luis, with a layout for cars and a level for pedestrians and the metro crosses the river from one bank to the other. The bridge connects Vila Nova de Gaia, on the south bank, with the Ribeira district, Porto's old town. We took a last walk through the paved and narrow streets where you can find numerous restaurants, cafes and bars.

As usual, this wonderful week ended too fast. The German group thanks Cândido and Santiago and all the organizers and assistants of the event and hopes to see them again next year in Seville.

Christa Saia (Germany)
Delegate of the Assembly



Viajes **Transvia**

Viajes en Grupo

Nuestra gran experiencia en el sector turístico, nos permite organizar, desde cualquier punto de España, una amplia programación de viajes con itinerarios de gran interés, acompañados por uno de nuestros guías. Seleccionamos cuidadosamente los hoteles y servicios para que ustedes disfruten de un viaje cómodo y feliz.

Disponemos de una flota de autocares dotada del máximo confort y seguridad. Sus últimos avances en tecnología hará que su viaje sea cómodo, agradable y seguro.



INFORMACION Y RESERVAS

VIAJES TRANSVIA C/ San Fernando, 5 03001 Alicante · Telf. 96 514 39 50 · euroencuentro@viajestransvia.com

CONCLUSIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE XXIIIrd EUROMEETING OFIR — 2017

“EUROPE AT A CROSSROADS BETWEEN POPULISM, THE ANSWER TO MIGRATION, DISINTEGRATION AND THE FUTURE”

They say Europe is at a crossroads. What does this mean? For all of us this is about choosing between emerging triumphantly from the crisis or taking the path that will eventually lead us to a dead end.

What is the reason why Europe, sixty years after the Treaty of Rome, appears today as a discredited institution, questioned and often falsely accused of all evils? We should better ask ourselves this question: what are the reasons? since they are plentiful.

There is no doubt that that the first one is the economic crisis which not only

previously mentioned sense of fear and isolations. Mediterranean countries such as Greece or Italy are at the very forefront and they must manage the massive influx of immigrants.

The measures envisaged include, among others, the will to reduce the number of crossings and consequently to save lives. This fact means intensifying the fight against smugglers and people traffickers under the program “sea horse”, which consists in the placement of coastguards on both sides of the Mediterranean and above all in Libya; the most common departure point.

Great Britain’s decision to leave the EU (this country had an important attraction to migrants before Brexit) has made it even harder for France, with the migrants trapped in Calais in miserable conditions.

The third reason for the lack of interest of States towards the European institutions could be named “technocracy”. It is repeatedly blamed for its nature of governance: the lack of transparency, the absence of communication, the complexity of the structures and the decision being made destabilize even our most educated citizens. The unanimity rule, which undermines any progress, the obstacle to any kind of evolution, the already mentioned economic scenario of the last years and the distortions of competition related to the absence of tax harmonization contribute to this lack of interest, even to rejection.

The crisis of unemployment and the fear of immigration and, above all, of terrorism interact with each other: the crisis not only promotes electoral consensus with respect to populist forces, but also broadens the effects of fear. Fear reinforces populist impulses and at the same time, widens the effects of the crisis. The crisis of unemployment and the fear of the unknown are the elements that in recent year have made the populist movement as-

pend and also that many times we consider someone terrorist without even considering him an immigrant.

Populism means sympathy for the people (people + ism), the form of “governing” where resources are used to obtain popular support, where personal propaganda is overly used and abused, where sympathy towards the lower social classes is appealed, without economic or political privileges to attain power. Usually, populist leaders present themselves as humble and redeemers, but it is not surprising that they become arrogant and hypocritical.

In our view, Europe is a victim of populism that affects a growing number of European Union States whose nationalist, even xenophobic frivolities are becoming increasingly open in countries that are very different from one another. Today, in the countries of the European Union, the populist or eurosceptic parties are about a hundred, present in 24 countries out of the total 28. Populism found its place in the emergency created by the three joint crises: the economic disaster and unemployment, migration and jihadist terrorism.

The Finance Corporation Fitch has already figured out the numbers that a hypothetical victory of the populist and eurosceptic parties in the many upcoming elections to take place across Europe this year would mean: more than 100.000 millions.

Indeed, the increasing political risk may have an important impact on economics and finance. In the worst case scenario, the Eurozone growth may be reduced by one percentage point. According to the



GET—Spanish delegation

European economies are facing at different levels, but also the Western economies.

The effects of this financial crisis occurred in 2008 are today still evident ten years later and they are characterized by a growing indebtedness of the States, a disturbing increase of the unemployment rates, an extremely urgent work insecurity and an impoverishment of the middle class.

This crisis and its impact on the different Member States economies keep on reminding us of the Wall Street Crash of 1929. This memory, however, still makes us shiver when we think of the fatal consequences of this crisis back then. The second important reason that explains this anti-European phenomenon lies in the geopolitical situation in the Middle East.

The fall of the Libyan regime, the revolution in Egypt and later in Tunisia and the war in Syria have pushed thousands of men, women and children into leaving their home countries. This permanent migration flow strengthens in some the



GET—French Delegation



CONCLUSIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE XXIIIrd EUROMEETING OFIR — 2017

“EUROPE AT A CROSSROADS BETWEEN POPULISM, THE ANSWER TO MIGRATION, DISINTEGRATION AND THE FUTURE” - Continuity



GET—German Delegation

Reducing the inequality rates among European citizens The EU has to do something

because the populist movement we are currently seeing in France, the Netherlands and Germany is mainly fuelled by the people's sense of insecurity and frustration;

The external borders of the EU must be secured,

because only a more legal and controlled immigration will stop the rising of organized crime and traffickers and help ensure safe entry routes and permit the management, registration and integration of refugees;

The current context is full of insecurities.

Not only are we far from overcoming the effects of the economic, financial and social crisis, but to this is added the political and leadership crisis that may threaten the future of the European project. The "Brexit", the management of refugees and the adjustments of the countries of southern Europe are on the European agenda. After two days of meetings in China, the 20 major economies of the world highlighted in the final declaration UK's withdrawal from the EU as a factor of greater global instability;

anted peace and that has made possible a good standard of living in its member States;

We still have urgent objectives to tackle

such as economic and foreign policy coordination, banking union, the fight against corruption, fraud and tax evasion and, in the medium term, the budgetary union to achieve greater growth, better wealth distribution as well as the reduction of unemployment and always keeping decent wages;

The return to national-socialism claimed by the Front National and AFD would have fatal consequences for Europe:

Less work, less freedom of internal market, less training opportunities for young people ... Europe should not be divided. It needs more cohesion and less hatred and violence;

There is a feeling of rather pronounced isolation,

depending on the countries, and political movements or new parties have been born, taking advantage of the fear and the concern of their citizens. This isolation, this sometimes xenophobic nationalist rhetoric, and the idea of rebuilding internal borders, are feelings incompatible with the European principle of free movement of people and goods that their founders wanted;

The European Parliament should have the capacity to legislate immediately. The ratification that allows each state to enforce the laws, after approval by each Parliament, must be stopped, as this approval can take years.

The core idea of the EU was solidarity between States,

but the influx of refugees poses an even greater challenge for Europe than the previous economic and monetary crisis. The existing disagreement between the member States does not benefit anyone because what is urgently needed is a joint European solution;

There is certainly still room for improvement in Europe, but in my view, it would be a tremendous mistake if we overlooked it.

The source of populism is the austerity policies that European leaders have dictated to their peoples.

We need to define the concept of a responsible policy towards refugees.

For example, we need to combat the causes of evasion and to stop providing weapons to the affected regions immediately, because war and civil war, State violence and terrorists in the countries of origin are key factors in the flight. In addition, we must invest in emerging countries and their development to significantly improve the living conditions of people;

Now it is time for those who elect their governments, the voters, to choose wisely. From that choice may depend the salvation of Europe.

However, for others the element that has favoured the rise of populist movements is the unorganized and illegal entry of immigrants into Europe as a result of the crises that have arisen in Africa and the Middle East. In the social sphere, the reality of immigration seems to have increased the sympathy for the populist movement;



CONCLUSIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE XXIIIrd EUROMEETING OFIR — 2017

“EUROPE AT A CROSSROADS BETWEEN POPULISM, THE ANSWER TO MIGRATION, DISINTEGRATION AND THE FUTURE” - Continuity

GET—Portuguese Delegation



populist and xenophobic was elected president. For thousands of years, men with similar characteristics have felt the need to organize in groups, to leave their place of birth and to spread throughout the world. The movement of migration is, after all, as old as humanity.

Today migrations result mainly from the lack of hope for a better future and the business model of

framework of the Erasmus + program. So many advantages that seem obvious nowadays and which anyone would ever dare to question, unless to assess its consequences;

We must make clear to the newest generations,

since many are not conscious of this, everything Europe has meant in terms of agricultural, industrial and infrastructural development in each country that has joined this community of interests and ideas;

The crisis will not end without structural reforms;

We must think about Europe,

humanize it, bring it closer to the citizens and listen to them more often. Care should be taken not to fall into isolation and dogmatic protectionism;

latest data, 41% of the European economy (in other words, Germany's, France's and the Netherlands's GDP) would be threatened by Populism and Eurosceptics.

To these insecurities we should add the recent announcement made by the four biggest partners (Spain, France, Germany and Italy) during the mini-summit held in Versailles in early March this year aiming to promote different rhythms so that the mainstay of the EU can move beyond this impasse and drag along the most reluctant, specially the East European countries. That is to say: A two or more speed Europe.

Besides, now a large part of the German population believes that they would be better off without the euro and, in other countries; a similar trend is also seen.

Northern European countries fear that the millions of Euros already paid out to bail out structurally weak countries may never come back to them and citizens of countries in crisis consider the reform and rehabilitation requirements monitored by the EU too harsh.

A few months ago, UK citizens preferred Farage, populist leader of the Independence Party and a supporter of Brexit, rather than traditional party leaders, conservative Cameron and Labour Corbyn. Undoubtedly, the "Brexit" has meant a before and after in the history of the EU. According to a research conducted by the London School of Economics the cost for the UK resulting from its withdrawal will affect its GDP between 6,5% and 9,5%, a figure similar to the financial crisis from the years 2008 to 2010. In the United States of America, Republican candidate Donald Trump, also

human traffickers is once again booming. This was also the result of the so-called illegal immigration and the process of reinforcing borders to prevent the mass arrival of unwanted human beings.

To reflect on these issues and on the future consequences on our "home", about 200 pensioners from the banks of seven European countries (represented by the Group of European Pensioners from Saving Banks and Financial Institutions) meet in Ofir (Oporto, Portugal) between May 28th and June 4th, 2017,. From this joint reflection we draw the following conclusions:

There are many positive aspects in the construction of Europe.

We cannot and must not give up this dream. In the last 60 years there have been significant results. For example, a lasting peace that has settled in Europe after two world conflicts that devastated Europe and the world between 1914 and 1945, a true economic integration and useful in some sectors (especially in the high-tech manufacturing industry), and a feeling of belonging to Europe, which is widespread among the students who have benefited from the Erasmus program in many European cities;

The free movement of people and goods,

a single currency, the exchanges between young people in the

Europe will remain an unfinished project.

What we need is an open and transparent debate about the Europe in which we want to live. In this way we can achieve a renewal of the EU: a society that is tolerant and open to the world, a Europe of its citizens, because the EU can only continue to exist if we work together. We must admit the existence of great problems and insecurities, but the construction of Europe is a process that has guar-

GET—Italian Delegation





“EUROPE DIVIDED BY A WEAK MEMORY AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. A RICH AND DRAMATIC HISTORY”

Europe has existed during many centuries and will hopefully be around for many more.

It emerged in the West's history as an extension of Asia and has been, after centuries of cultural, economic and political expansion, at the centre of the world for a long time. Today it has become the small extension of Asia again, because of the continents' tumultuous development and as a victim of itself and the suicide act that was the First World War, 100 years ago.

After centuries of “civil” wars, between



countries which were more in conflict united, Europe seems to have repented after the two tragic world conflicts, which left dozens dead on their lands. Halfway through the last century marked a censoring in this endless violent history, provoked by different economic interests and political rivalries, sometimes accompanied by religious conflicts.

On the 9th of May 1950, after only five years since the end of World War Two, the memory of the endless European conflicts and the knowledge of the perceptive politicians was made into a “Declaration” by the foreign minister, Robert Schuman who appealed to the countries at war (starting with France and Germany) to cooperate policies to rebuild Europe and bring peace.

A bid which until now they have been able to achieve a large section of, at least in the countries that have joined to the community integration one by one, but without forgetting the conflicts which erupted on Europe's borders, such as ex-Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 90s, on a smaller scale

in southern Caucasus and most recently and seriously in Ukraine.

Today, 100 years since the “useless blood-bath” of the Great War, not as a coincidence also referred to as “the European War” and after more than 60 years since Schuman's “declaration”, Europe finds itself in the midst of worrying turbulences and has started feeling like they should give up on the common foundation, built with great patience, which grew over time from the first six founder countries up to the twenty-eight members today.

Nineteen of these have gone a step further and adopted the single currency, the Euro, which on one hand has established a strong political union but on the other has been accused of having paid out too much to weaker members which the Central Bank was trying to help during their last interventions during the financial crisis.

It's been a history full of valuable experiences, lots of which are positive but others negative also. Making a new start for the adventure of the European constitution, by evaluating their strengths and weaknesses still today and asking themselves about future possible developments.

Without once again going over Europe's rich history, but also not forgetting its cultural origins that have seen it grow into the great Eurasian continent, we need to let go of the difficulties of the last century so that they become tragic memories and so that there is a rebirth for this broken up region of the world and a hunt for the new cohesion.

Europe, a result of many strict cultures and identities, entered the 20th century with an economic boost from the industrialisation of the prior century and with a strong development of businesses and financial services: It is little wonder that they talk about this time as the “first globalisation”.

National states lived together with political tensions, fed by the colonization pushes after the distribution of the world according to the Berlin conference in 1884. This is why they became allies and were exposed to the outbursts of possible conflicts. It was years before the Belle Epoque Europe seemed to live in a time of harmony, which was quickly torn by a pistol shot in Sarajevo on the 8th of June 1914. The detonator for the First World War must have been

“Blitzkrieg” (lightening war) but it went on for four years. It ended with 10 million dead, a changed course of world politics and a European suicide.

In the small European continent, a relatively limited territory, they fought until the four empires were dissolved. The treaty of Versailles, signed in Paris in 1919, wasn't enough to repair the continent. The mending of Europe was based on ethnicity, the change of the borders, and above all the harsh punishment imposed on Germany along with the emerging nationalisms who were the beginning of the disconcerting politics, especially from the totalitarian regimes in Germany, Italy and Russia, which contributed to the trigger to the Second World War, barely 20 years later.

The war theatre had extended from the West to the East, with 60 million dead on the battlefields, in the concentration camps and the demolished cities, from London until Dresden passing by Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A new peace treaty was then signed again in Paris in 1947 by, on one side, the potential winners, such as France, the UK, the USA and the Soviet Union, and on the other side, the defeated, Italy was amongst those. Germany did not have to sign anything, they were practically expelled as a sovereign State and international representative, and there wasn't even approval from the American Administration, who had chosen an isolationist policy.

A new round of international relations opened in Yalta. The great three: USA, UK and Soviet Union (France was not invited) divided up the influential areas in Europe and started up the United Nations on the 24th of October 1945 with the Treaty of San Francisco. It was created to replace the “ghost” of the League of Nations, created from the treaty of Paris in 1919 and became extinct without great remorse in 1946.

New indicatives and international unions rose in this climate. One of the main ones being, the adoption in 1948 of the Charter of Universal Rights and the creation of the European Council in 1949, based in Strasbourg, now composed of 47 countries, all of the EU, Turkey and Russia.

In April 1951 the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was created within the Treaty of Paris. It was inaugurated by great



“EUROPE DIVIDED BY A WEAK MEMORY AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. A RICH AND DRAMATIC HISTORY” - continuity

statesmen at the time: Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet in France, Konrad Adenauer in Germany, Alcide De Gasperi in Italy and Paul-Henri Spaak in Belgium. A big adventure began, a unique project in the world to create a “democracy between nations, after the negative results of the political regimes based on an unexpected idea of “nation” and led to the tragedy of the two World Wars that had destroyed Europe and troubled the world”.

A complex history then started in Europe, with moments of crisis followed by revivals, yet without a significant progress towards that political union desired by its founding fathers. A dream that became more difficult with its 28 member countries and a widespread climate of mistrust or a declared hostility against present institutions of the EU.

A DIFFICULT PRESENT

In recent years a string of difficult events occurred in Europe, marked by an incomparable financial and economic crisis, with massive migratory flows and with armed conflicts in their boundaries that had a big social and political impact on the EU.

The impact of the financial and economic crisis

The financial crisis had come about above all through an imbalance of public accounts in many of the European states: some found themselves out of the threshold permitted by the deficit, such as Ireland, the UK and Spain, but also France and Italy had a relatively contained imbalance. More alarming is the public debt situation, in particular in Belgium, Ireland and Portugal, but above all in Italy and Greece. Imbalances have made worrying risks of bankruptcy and have kept the EU and its single currency on alert. The consequences of the financial crisis in the real economy have been disastrous. Within the Euro zone only Germany has achieved significant growth while all the other countries have recorded substantial immobility, in some cases followed by times of recession and recently by weak signs of improvement.

The impact of the crisis has especially affected the social sector. Unemployment has increased, exceeding the threshold of 10%

in the Euro zone, and with high and troubling levels for youth employment. In Spain, one young person out of two does not have a job, and in Italy, one out of three.

In Europe, the number of people living in poor conditions has exceeded the threshold of 60 million. According to Eurostat, one person out of four finds themselves at risk of poverty in Europe.

It was clear that so many crises would lead to political crises, not only in some countries of the Euro zone, but also in the summits of the European Union.

In recent years, the governments of Ireland, Portugal, Greece and Italy have collapsed with the crisis, (twice in Italy). In Greece and Italy, the “technicians” need to replace politics that take the risk of trying new forms of delegation which create perplexities based on the health of our democracy and in the political ability to assume its responsibilities.

The financial and economic crisis of Greece was very serious. They needed to redo elections and create severe austerity policies which brought the country to its knees, which, in the summer 2015, could breathe because of an agreement with the EU and the International Monetary Fund, whose application is still fragile.

The fragility of European Institutions

What is also interesting – and under worrying aspects – is what happened to the European institutions and their surroundings. The daily work of the European Commission has continued without finding, until recently, this initiative ability given by the Treaties to make the European integration progress. It always ends up in a conflict because of different interests, taking place in the European Council and insufficiently fed by the good intentions of the European Parliament.

In this institutional emptiness – hardly moderate by the activism of the European Central Bank – two governments (France and Germany) have been left out. They have decided to “use the crisis” to take the command of an uncertain and divided Union. The one who would have compared this “duo” with the legendary “French-German” axis there used to be, would have been in the wrong historic period. After German Unification in 1990 the new leaders that

ruled Germany and France, the impacts caused by the financial crisis, the political and economic landscape from the one side and the other of the Rhine have deeply changed.

Germany has become the most important country of the EU. It is different from the other countries regarding not only its demographic size, but also its economic power and its inclusion in the European and global market. It has clearly become the new political ambition for the EU and it also has expanded itself to the Eastern boundaries of Germany which still politely refuses to show the example for the EU.

It was different for France, a country who has more difficulties at national and international level. Its role is now less important. However, they still maintain some positions they gained in the War, like their position in the Security Council of the United Nations and in the International Monetary Fund, after the sad events for the French pride worsened by their approach to direct the European Central Bank, in which Mario Draghi replaced the French Jean-Claude Trichet.

In this context, we have to interpret differently the image we have of the French-German “duo” for what it really is: pedalling between both of them and with a different determination, but with only one in command, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. She is being more and more criticised not only by the EU, but also, and quite recently, by her own country, because of the position she took regarding the welcoming of the Syrian refugees.

The European elections of June 2014 confirmed the problems that the EU is facing, giving great consensus to the Eurosceptic political parties with a populist domination, but without negatively penalising the two major European parties: the European People’s Party and the European Socialist Party, directed respectively by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the current President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz.

An ambitious European Union

Europe’s structure has been deeply changed by the progressive expansion of the EU territory, from the six founding countries to



“EUROPE DIVIDED BY A WEAK MEMORY AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

A RICH AND DRAMATIC HISTORY” - continuity

the 28 present ones with the last arrival, Croatia. Europe has also been affected by a financial and economic crisis unequalled in history and has been shaken by nationalist and populist movements. The continent has to face a lot of obstacles to reach political integration, which is now developing faster. There are countries that have adopted the single currency, others that want to adopt it, those that are taking the risk to get rid of the single currency, and those that seem not to want it at all. There are also those that have signed the Schengen Agreement, those that have not adopted it and those that have unilaterally suspended its application during the past months.

The structure of the EU has also changed the economic and political influence of the countries of the EU. Some “smaller” countries like Greece, Ireland and Portugal have reached their limit. The Benelux countries do not launch any more initiatives, Spain finds itself in a difficult situation, Poland puts forward some ambitions, Italy tries to, once again, launch initiatives; and we have already talked about France and Germany. We still need to understand the model chosen by the United Kingdom by its current young Prime Minister, David Cameron, who promoted the reckless referendum that will take place in June to see whether the UK should remain within the EU.

The European Project in the new international context

The European Union should reconsider its future project in the international context, without hoping to be in the centre of the world like it was in the past, but without refusing new relations with their traditional allies and with the new emerging powers, especially with the East.

In its closest boundaries, the European Union should apply the European reunification model that started with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 that has led ten EU countries out of the Soviet sphere. The European Union is still following the same path: Croatia has recently joined the EU, and negotiations are taking place with Macedonia and Montenegro. Other countries are waiting to be part of the EU: Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo. The expansion up to Iceland has been suspended.

However, the situation is more complicated

for the EU in its eastern and southern boundaries.

In the East it is difficult for the EU to negotiate with Turkey, and in the North with the countries of the Southern Caucasus, connected with the EU in the political framework of proximity. The joining negotiations with Turkey have come to a halt because of economic, cultural and political reasons and worsened by the recent policy of the “sultan” Erdogan wanting to go back to the times of the Ottoman Empire and responsible for serious offences of fundamental rights, like the freedom of the press. But Turkey still has a political and military role in an area of great instability like in the Middle East, where Europe has difficulties managing massive migration flows. This is what is happening with the Syrian conflict that has resulted in hundreds of millions of victims and more than ten million refugees. The fragile truce which is currently in process is still far from consolidating peace where there are conflicts of interest between Iran and Saudi Arabia, where it is impossible to find a solution in the never-ending conflict between Israel and Palestine, and where there is still no transition to a democracy in the southern Mediterranean countries, especially in Libya, where we can notice the unclear interests of powers that are more interested by the Mediterranean, and sometimes in what the European Union can demonstrate.

A FUTURE TO RECONSTRUCT

In the last years, it was difficult for the European Union to manage the crisis it was going through and to maintain the economic and political union within the EU, but also to play its significant role in the world. If the EU continued this way, there would not be a lot to bid for its future, regarding the Euro and, maybe, for its pacifying search of a political union for a historically divided continent and constantly in - sometimes armed - conflicts within the EU.

The current agreements based on the “ordinary maintenance” will not be able to save the EU from the political and economic decline for much longer.

Europe faces the dilemma of creating a new valuable project or disappearing in the conflicts of its neighbouring countries, generally led by blind leaders without ambitions or

too reluctant to take important initiatives. In the EU, there needs to be an “extraordinary maintenance” inspired by a new political project supported by deeply reformed Institutions and above all, in the hands of active citizens who have finally decided to build “their” Union, a Union that does not undervalue the union of the States, but represents it a lot better, even if it is a Union which is more difficult to create.

It is only under these conditions that peace will represent for the new Europe not only an objective, like it is today, but also a value to follow “without ifs or buts”. Europe will be united with the different European countries. It will be founded by justice before legality so that an inclusive society can be formed in which all cultures, inspired by tolerance and democracy will be able to communicate.

It is not as if we are trying to fix an old car because it has probably provided a lot of service, but because it cannot cope with the new challenges of the global world anymore. There needs to be new European citizens, a new Treaty, new Institutions, new policies, new leaders and new global horizons to be able to progress today.

New European citizens

The European Union was created 70 years ago by the visionary and courageous founding Fathers who knew that they had to save and consolidate a conquered peace after the tragic years of the Second World War and after centuries of conflict in all of the continent. The first project of European community was to connect economic and commercial interests with the neighbouring countries using complex rules to create a progressive path towards political integration.

To create this model they called upon an organised and effective technocracy that made the Institutions move forward thus reaching their goals, even sometimes before the deadline, like in the customs Union created in 1968. The protagonists of the first integration chapter were “visionary” politicians of the institutional technocracy period. They were avant-garde and “elites” inspired by a political vision and by new economic and commercial interests that could derive from this model.



“EUROPE DIVIDED BY A WEAK MEMORY AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. A RICH AND DRAMATIC HISTORY” - continuity

During the first years of the post-war period, the active participation of the citizens was more restrained because, according to them, the necessities of everyday life prevailed and its social organisation led to disputes to reconquer the rights denied for a long time. In Italy, for example, the first trade union opposed itself during many years to the community project in which the capital interests were more important than those of the workers. And this is how, in opposing, different and unenthusiastic popular unions, that the fulfilment of the community project progressed without having great popular participation. The situation did not improve until 1979 when the European citizens voted to elect, for the first time by direct universal suffrage, the European Parliament. Moreover, with passing years and the new expansions, electoral participation was reduced until it reached, a bit less than 40 years later, peaks of abstentionism of around 50%.

With the conditions changing today and with a Union we need to rebuild after the numerous crises it was a victim of but also responsible for, everyone knows that it will be an illusion to reopen the European integration project without connecting it directly with the citizens. First concerning the elaboration of the new EU project and then in its daily management. It is a difficult but necessary great deed that needs to become a patient pedagogy to explain the complexity of the European adventure and to mobilise the citizens to support a project in which they recognise themselves.

Jean Monnet, the father and architect of the first European communities, would have declared in the last moments of his life that if “he had to start again, he would begin with the culture”. Maybe, in the European Union of today, he would say that it is necessary to “start with the cultures”, the culture of many European and non-European people, that live and still arrive in Europe and that need a new multicultural Europe.

A new Community Treaty

The Community Treaties have deeply left their mark on European integration history: from the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, to the current Treaty of Lisbon that came into force at the end of 2009. All of the Treaties have made the European

model progress. It is the case for the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 up to the present Treaty. However, the promises have not all been kept because some State members did not agree or because they were blocked by the economic and political situation that has made the neighbouring countries more independent, putting their interests before the ones of the Union.

A significant radical political change could have occurred with the Treaty regarding a European Community of defence that was not ratified by France in 1954, nor was the “European Constitution project” later that turned out to be a failure by France and then Holland in 2005. In the last example, not everything was lost because some important elements were taken from this project to the Treaty of Lisbon signed in 2007 and that came into force two years later, after many unwelcomed events.

Today, barely two years after it entered into force, a lot of competent voices like Chancellor Angela Merkel's demanded a new Treaty. She imposed in 2012, an Intergovernmental Agreement (called the “Fiscal Pact” or “Union of balance”) that should have been able to work on a provisional basis in a European Union where there is a single currency, but not in a European Union that does not have a common government for the economy and even less for the tax policy, or at least coordinated between the member States.

If this Agreement succeeded, there would need to be a lot of legal actions to introduce it in the current Treaty and offer it operational support from the EU Institutions.

Another temporary expedient reminds us of the memorable speech of Altiero Spinelli in the European Parliament to convince the Union to radically change its Treaties. At that moment, Spinelli (whom a lot of people quote), talked about the book of Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*. It tells us the adventure of an old fisherman who sails out into the open sea in a small boat whose “sail was patched with flour sacks and, furled: It looked like the “flag of permanent defeat”. According to Spinelli, this was the image he had of Europe at that time and, unfortunately, it also is the one we have today.

New European Institutions

From the beginning of the European Communities to the current European Union, the European Treaties have been created based on the institutional model whose originality and complexity are valuable to reach the European integration, but are inadequate to be carried out. The first attempt consisted of looking for a balance between the Institutions which mainly had a sovereign vocation, and those protected from legitimate national interests. This system should have progressively reached an innovative and unprecedented “democracy between nations”, with different aspects of the already experimented “democracy in the nations”, belonging to each of the member States individually”.

The model worked better when the European Union was composed only of a small number of countries that were more united. All changed with the increasing number of member states, that all had different integration projects and were jealous of the sovereignty. For example France, Great Britain and other countries of Central-Eastern Europe, whose sovereignty was conquered not long ago, which is why they are jealous.

Today, we need to find a more advanced balance that reinforces the sovereignty vocation of Europe's institutional order:

- a European Commission, having the power to take initiatives being the future executive power of the EU. It needs to be a real government whose President would benefit from a strong popular legitimacy because of their direct election, as a result of the positive experiment done at the last European elections

- a European Parliament whose powers would be reinforced and a “House of Peoples” in communication with the European Council “Federal Court”, representing the Union territories

- a Court of Justice with a confirmed jurisdictional power, progressively playing the role of the European Constitutional Court.

A lot of time is needed to realize all of these reforms, but it is also urgent that we carry them out because history will not wait for the tortoise-Europe of the past.



“EUROPE DIVIDED BY A WEAK MEMORY AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. A RICH AND DRAMATIC HISTORY” - continuity

New European policies

A new Treaty and new European institutions would not have been of any use if there were not any new EU policies to reform the ones that exist and face the new challenges Europe will have.

There is a lot to change in the current policies of the EU and the current crisis has demonstrated it by emphasizing the misfortunes of an unstable monetary and economic Union because of its money and obsessive austerity policies and because it does not have a European Economic Government. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi called it a “limp” that the EU is paying a lot for and which needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

To face the problem at the root, if Europe is to become important again in the world, there will need to be a revision of the EU's responsibilities concerning taxes and more generally, the balance policies that cannot only be part of the “national sovereignties”. Moreover, more powers will have to be given to the EU concerning the foreign and security policy.

There will need to be more determination in the social policy aspect, including a progressive convergence of the welfare systems, to protect the rights and fight against exclusion.

In 1951, the common policy in the carbon and metal sector was a valuable choice. Today, it would be right to choose a common policy of research and energy: not only to increase the competitive adventure of the EU in the international markets, but also to foster a common environment policy to save the planet. In 2015, new steps were taken in that direction and it is fair to hope for new progress in the environment policy after the positive conclusions of the COP21 in Paris last December.

New European leaders

Treaties, institutions and new policies will not go very far if they are not carried out by determined men and women able to assume the responsibility to reach the common good, using their competences and their constant relations with the citizens and not only its electorate or those having the same nationality, but all citizens, being Europeans or not, that live in the Union

territory.

The new leading class Europe needs, does not have to respect the original standards, so that it does not lose the valuable resources of those who, with the years, have contributed to the memory and experience of the common adventure and so that it trains teams that get the best they can so that they can pass it on to the next generations. What we really need are humble leaders who can listen, who are prepared to face problems, who are democratic to find solutions together and that can work in a team so that there isn't just “one person commanding”. They also need to be ready to hear the voices of the “intermediate bodies” in which Montesquieu put his trust in to consolidate the democracy of the three independent powers.

We do not need to invent everything, but there is a lot to do with the political work of all of the citizens and not only the “elites”, because it is the only way that we will be able to create a “Union of people” and not just a Union of States, which was useful before but inadequate today.

New European horizons

When we look at the world map Europe is a small peninsula and it made Paul Valéry ask the next question: “Will Europe become what it really is, that is to say a small promontory of the Asian continent?”. If the geography was all that counted the answer to this question would have been clear, but because we also have to take into account history and what man has created, everything becomes a lot more complicated and different answers are therefore accepted to this question.

In its history Europe has been present in a lot of different regions of the world during centuries starting in the age of discoveries, after which the colonisation period started. This now belongs to the past of Europe and we hope that no one will ever have to feel nostalgic about it.

Today, the presence of Europe in the world is different: cultural deception, business and financial exchange, information networks, political and military capacity to control territories and direct the policies of the “supposedly sovereign” States.

Today, Europe is able to use the first influ-

ences on the world, without giving up this policy, without hoping to activate the military policy for which Europe is in reality less equipped, but it should probably reinforce the connections with its allies.

The new European horizons begin with its neighbouring countries that hope to enter the European Union or associate themselves. The answer is found in the expansion strategy that should follow the agreed conditions and in the proximity policy, especially in the Mediterranean, for those who today, do not reply to the expected conditions of expansion.

But Europe should consider larger horizons: in the North, it should find new opportunities to improve its relations with Russia and in the South, the obligation, even if it also is an interest, to be in charge of the development of Africa, its “bordering continent”. In the East, after the Atlantic, the political changes taking place in South America, in the former European colonies, concerning the European democracy “laboratory”, which they still have a lot to teach. Clarifications are also needed with the US, not only about the military alliances, but also about the agreement between two different societies that can represent an opportunity for them to learn from each other. The current negotiation taking place between the EU and the US about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), would be the right time for indispensable explanations.

And finally, Asia, the next future of the world in which two great economic, trading and political powers emerge: China and India, two very different countries and playing an important part in the changes taking place in the world. They are not protected from any bad surprises relating to political or even military results, like we can see in China.

New world horizons are waiting for Europe: and it would be unacceptable for Europe to be late to meet them, as has happened often in recent times.

We, as citizens, need to take part of the great world match taking place so that we not end up being the spectators.

Franco Chittolina

Guest speaker at CHIACIANO TERME



EUROPE AND ITS “POPULISMS”

A ghost is haunting Europe: a ghost named populism. It poses dangers, it calls for analysis, it requires understanding and it demands collective and individual reactions.

1—It is an important phenomenon

What a brisk tour through opinions from the most diverse geographical and ideological origin on the importance of “modern” populism.

In the first place, those who, due to populism, fear an **imminent collapse of the liberal system** initiated in the post-war period. Without going so far, the approaches being branded as populist affect and shall affect the European Union. In fact, the perspectives expressed by Jean-Claud Juncker, head of the European executive, are not precisely favourable. The fact is that **these populisms put at stake the existence of the European Union**. In much more concrete terms we find those who, due to this risk, fear that **the Eurozone growth could be reduced** by one percentage point. Something like 104.500 million euros. All within the context of the **securitarian drift** occurred in the 14 European countries analysed by Amnesty International. It is not about finally affirming, like Richard Falk does, that there are necessarily **pre-fascist elements**. However this should not be either denied a priori.

2—Who are they

Let’s take a look at the **list** provided by the Spanish newspaper ABC at the beginning of 2016 including the names of **some populist politicians**: Bernie Sanders, Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Pablo Iglesias, Alexis Tsipras, Yanis Varoufakis and Beppe Grillo. This list, as you may probably have already noticed is not complete, but it already allows some tentative points to be made. Firstly, the list contains indeed leaders from the so-called “right wing” and the so-called “left wing”, and secondly, only in the USA we find the leftiest democrat (pre-candidate against Hillary Clinton) to the extent that he has continuously used the term “socialism” and the current president, hardly suspicious of leftism. There are right-wing politicians in the government

such as Trump and Kaczynski or Tsipras on the left spectrum as well as people who have very little chances of accessing the governmental arena, such as Varoufakis. That the list is incomplete is shown by a table published by *The Economist* (data from 2015) which also allows once again confirming that “populist” is an adjective applicable to both right and left-wing.

One will also observe that, similar to the cases offered by Sanders and Trump, both populists but with different political views –“left-wing” and “right-wing” respectively– Greece provides a political party labeled as both populist and “left-wing” (Syriza) and another on the “right-wing” spectrum (Golden Dawn). The Italian political arena only provides two, the *Lega Nord* and *Forza Italia* (Berlusconi’s party), however the *5 Star (Cinque Stelle)* movement is not included, which some classify as populist according to its empirical background, although perhaps not to the same extent as the *Lega Nord*.

Donald Trump’s counterpoint is necessary since **we do not seem to be confronted with independent phenomena**. Let’s take as an example the following statement: “I, for one, am not interested in defending a system that for decades has served the interest of political parties at the expense of the people. Member of the club—the consultants, the pollsters, the politicians, the pundits and the special interests—grow rich and powerful while the American people grow poorer and more isolated. This statement may well have been made by Pablo Iglesias or Donald Trump (it was actually the last who made it). The fact is that they are progressively building a new category at international level.

Their trend to manipulation leads them to **break their electoral promises once they have reached power**, which can be seen both in the cases of USA’s and Greece’s leaders, Trump and Tsipras respectively.

A warning is necessary: **the presence of parties or political behaviours labelled as “populist” differs significantly from country to country**. Historical and geographical factors, as well as differences in the local political and economical conditions (as we will see later) are involved. However, for the time being, it is sufficient to underline what they may well be, from a quantita-

tive point of view, the two ends of “populism” in Europe. On the one hand, Portugal, where according to António Guterres, “populism does not receive the voter’s support”, on the other hand, Italy, where one can almost affirm that all the parties, to a greater or lesser degree, are populist.

3—How they define them

There has not been an agreement yet on the definitions to be used. Let’s take a look at the following examples:

The first one comes from a list Gino Germani made from *La razón populista (On populist reason)*, a book by the Argentinian Ernesto Laclau, **one of the instigators of the Spanish party Podemos**. “Populism”, reads the quote, “generally includes opposite components, such as being the standard-bearer of equal political rights and the universal participation of the common people, but linked to a certain form of authoritarianism often under a charismatic leadership. It also includes socialist demands (or at least the demand for social justice), a vigorous defense of the small property, strong nationalistic features and the denial of the importance of social classes. This is accompanied by the statement according to which the common people’s rights are confronted with privileged interest groups, generally considered as anti-popular and against the nation”. Note the likeness this last point shows with Donald Trump’s already quoted statement.

The second one comes from **Moisés Naím**, of Venezuelan origin, in the current orbit of the Spanish newspaper *El País*. It reads: “Us against them: the people against the elites; Catastrophism: the past is terrible; They are the enemy, both internal and external, who must be criminalized; Militarism against diplomacy; Undermine the experts for being part of the elites, Undermine the press; weaken the *checks and balances*; Messianic approach: I am the solution”.

The *Global Trends*, published in 2017 by the National Intelligence Council comes in third place. Its characterization of populism, one of the trends which, according to this report, could alter the world, is the following: “Populists, both on the right-



EUROPE AND ITS “POPULISMS” - Continuity

wing and on the left-wing of the political spectrum, have been growing bigger and more present across Europe. They are characterized by their suspicion and hostility towards the elites, the conventional politics and the established institutions. They reflect the rejection of the economic effects of globalization and the frustration caused by the political and economical elites' reactions to people's concerns. Anti-immigration and xenophobic feelings within the central democracies of the Western Alliance can weaken some of the essential pillars which uphold the West strength to promote diverse societies and stimulate global talent. Populist movements and its leaders, both from the right-wing and left-wing spectrum, can make the most of the democratic system to encourage, on the one hand a popular support which strengthens their power through a strong executive and on the other hand, the slow but steady erosion of the civil society, the rule of law and the standards of acceptability”.

There is one last characterization of the **economic populism** from the work laid by Sebastian Edwards and Duriger Dornbusch. According to them, this would be the economic approach which: “underlines growth and income redistribution while it reduces the emphasis on the inflation risks and financial deficit, the external constraints, the reaction of economic agents before aggressive anti-market policies”. Populist approaches, they say, “in short, fail”, not because conservative economy is better, but as a “result of unsustainable policies”.

At this point, it is obviously clear that it is not possible to provide a final definition. It seems sufficient to settle for these characterizations of a phenomenon that, as can be seen, cannot be easily defined, given its **blurred boundaries** to other political proposals which influence the drafting of a populist proposal at the same time this influences those of the conventional parties.

However, it does seem to make sense to ask oneself what it is which is causing this tide, which, as we have seen, does not affect all considered countries in the same way, but which does finally affect.

4. What feeds them

As we seem to find ourselves before a phenomenon which despite its blurred boundaries affects all European political parties to a greater or lesser extent, it is then worthwhile to ask ourselves about the factors that may have led to such situation.

There are, firstly, political factors and the first one of all is the **crisis of the traditional parties** (in particular, the Democratic Party of the USA and the Social Democratic parties in Europe). Nonetheless the problem is deeper and it is linked to the **feeling of unease in Europe regarding the functioning of democracy itself**. There seems to be a wide variety of reasons including the **perception of corruption, the increasing inequality and the perception of public institutions as something upon which citizens can no longer rely**.

Secondly, we find the cultural domain, the mentalities and what we can call the **“tweet culture”**. It is about the role that new information technologies have played, which while indeed do provide a better access to news and information, they also appear to be at risk of producing those “ideological bubbles” much bigger than the ones produced by the traditional media when we read the newspapers and we listen to radio and TV programs that match our own prejudices, **which feed rather into feelings than into facts**.

From an economic point of view, **the crisis that broke out in 2008** has made the disposable income as well as the wealth of many families plummet and has struck the young particularly hard. As we know, frustration triggers aggressiveness and this searches for an object against which it can unleash its self-destructive power (increase of the number of people suffering depression and eventually suicide), street violence and search of objects (wether real or fictitious) to blame on for oneself's situation.

We can equally generalise the **problematic situation of the middle classes**, who fear slipping into poverty, insecure about their future as unemployed or as pensioner. Insecurity is a situation that demands means of security, preferably easy ones.

The economic crisis has had a significant effect on almost every society, that is, that “the powerful have become even more powerful and the vulnerable more vulner-

able” as a general trend. In this way, **social inequality** has grown bigger within the different countries and particularly inside the European Union, where on top of this (being this particularly relevant) the situation of the social justice or the perception of this one has worsened.

But the problem is that of the **polarization**, that is to say, situations in which the ends of such scale, before the decrease of the intermediate elements (the middle classes), create forms of confrontation in which violence is not excluded, in the most extreme cases through revolution or military or police repression. It is clear that these dichotomous options can reinforce trends towards polarization, but it is not about its causes, which in classical terms (Karl Marx) as well as in more contemporary ones (Warren Buffet) can be called **“class struggle”**.

5. What to do

We can make a list with the possible solutions both in personal and in collective terms in various fields: from family to the participation in educational and media programmes. Here is an extract of this hypothetical list (the full list is available in the complete text):

1. Counterweight (not denial) to the “tweet” culture: **educate in the media**.
2. Counterweight to the “adamist” culture: **the past exists** (hence intergenerations).
3. **Emotion, but rationality** when necessary.
4. **Images, but ideas**.
5. **Group, but individual**.
6. **Darwin, but Kropotkin: competitiveness, but mutual help**.

The omens that can be gleaned from this text can be softened by what has been said in this synopsis: Trends in keeping with the above mentioned points are also perceptible in the European Union. The immediate future will depend on the strongest of the two tackled trends (both of them will always exist), but as it happens with Tao, it cannot be ruled out that one keeps taking the place of the other and vice versa, as it has been the case so far, at least in this Europe to which the European Union belongs. *Chi vivrè, devrà*.

José María Tortosa

Guest speaker at Ofir
mundomundialtortosa.blogspot.com



EUROMEETING 2018 - MAY, 19th to 26th

SEVILLE—SPAIN

The autonomous community of Andalusia extends along the coastal zone of southern Spain, from Portugal (Alentejo/Algarve) until the Region of Murcia. Its capital is Seville.

Throughout history, peoples and cultures left their mark in this region and contributed decisively by doing so to the formation of the Iberian Character. This characteristics spread throughout the whole world through its closest areas to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

There is no doubt that Seville is one of the most important cities of the age of discoveries, and afterwards, of the Spanish expansion and maritime trade. Seville became the central trading point of the sixteenth century due to its privileged location in the interior on the banks of the River Guadalquivir (which enabled a quick access to the Atlantic).

Founded in the thirteenth century B.C. by the Turdetani with the name of "*Hispal*", this city with more than 3.300 years of history encloses in itself and in its region real treasures. It is also the heart of flamenco, the horse, the bull and Sherry, as well as being known for the strong religious conviction of its people.

This is the region that we will discover from 19th to 26th May 2018 in our 24 th Euromeeeting.

We have prepared several half-day excursions where we will know the city, its cathedral and the Alcázar, Europe's oldest inhabited palace. Besides we will have enough time to enjoy the city as we like and have a drink in one of the many courtyards of Seville

The Guadalquivir River will open its doors for us to discover Seville from a cruise on its waters. Flamenco will also be waiting for us, of course, in a very special "tablaó".

We will experience the Roman culture in Carmona, where the Via Augusta passes and in Italica, where the Roman emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born.

The beauty of the horse together with the flamenco music and the Sevillian dance will be awaiting us in Jerez de la Frontera, where we will visit the Bodegas Don Pepe (Spain's largest winery) to know and taste the famous Sherry and eat there in a full-day tour.

With this previous information we only want you to keep in mind the specified dates so that you can participate in this 24th Euromeeeting, where you will be able to meet old and new friends from different countries who will come to enjoy and debate ideas in a marvelous atmosphere.

We will be waiting for you in SEVILLE.



► For further information, please contact :

VIAJES TRANSVIA: Tel: +34 96 514 39 50 - E.mail: euroencuentro@viajestransvia.com

Just missing your registration...

Cândido Trabuco Vintém (President), **Michel Pageault** and **Francisco Ramírez Munuera** (Vicepresidents)

MOMENTS TO REMEMBER



We look forward to seeing you in SEVILLE!