

EPFMA BULLETIN



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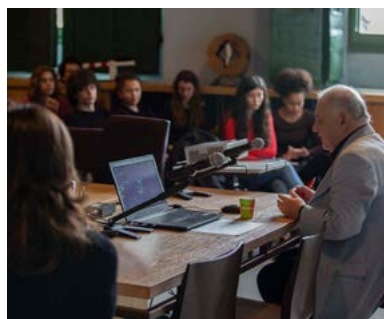
Competitive Social Market Economy



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70 years of the Schuman Declaration, 70 years of European solidarity.

Cover: ©iStock

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

The Editorial Board would like to thank all those members who took the time to contribute to this issue of the FMA Bulletin. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision to include an article lies with the FMA Editorial Board and, in principle, contributions from members who are not up-to-date with the payment of the membership fee will not be included. Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.

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Message from the PRESIDENT

Dear Member,

The first half of 2020 was dominated by the brutal reality of the COVID 19 pandemic wreaking havoc across Europe and claiming the lives of tens of thousands of Europeans. The rapid spread of the disease caught governments by surprise and resulted in drastic sanitary measures being taken to flatten the curve of new infections in most countries, with differing reaction times at government level. The crisis revealed gaps and failings in national health infrastructures, EU health policy coordination and supply chain management in critical sectors. One of the worst economic crises since the Great Depression in the 1930s is looming over Europe. The International Labour Organization foresaw that due to the labour market impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly half of global workforce is at risk of losing livelihoods with a devastating effect on workers in the informal economy and on hundreds of millions of enterprises worldwide. Similarly, the future of European agriculture and food reserves is a growing concern. Neither have yet felt the full negative effects of the pandemic. The European Union has been granted an unprecedented opportunity to assert its leadership amid the COVID 19 crisis. By showing political consistency both during and in the aftermath of the socio economic crisis we are facing, the EU will solidify the foundations of the European project by putting solidarity and coordination strategies at the heart of its policies. With the dark shadow of an economic

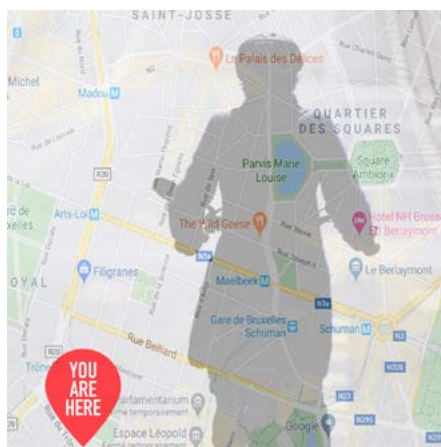
slowdown falling over Europe, it is the duty of the European Union to step up and take the lead in coordinating swift economic relief measures before recession irreversibly erodes its political legitimacy. This is exactly what will happen if the EU refrains from taking bold action when it is needed most.

In the context of the pandemic, this edition of the Bulletin will provide insights into the competitive social market economy, reflecting on the importance of this concept when applied to today's economic slowdown. This topic has a unique resonance in the current exceptional circumstances. In his article published in this edition, Professor Troitiño, who currently holds the Jean Monet Chair at the Tallinn University of Technology, shares his perspectives on the use of distance learning during the coronavirus outbreak. He emphasises the digital fracture lines separating certain countries

which are less able to provide such opportunities from their more fortunate counterparts, calling for an equal European academic digital space for all universities. He also underlines the importance of leveraging digitalisation for educational purposes and of producing high-quality material in this format. Professor Barrueco, who currently holds the Jean Monet Chair at the University of Deusto in Spain, also provides us with important views on the practicalities of online education and the necessity for teachers to adjust to the new situation. In the same vein, he argues that the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need for students to fully embrace digital skills and become the workforce of tomorrow. As Members are already aware, the Annual General Assembly has been postponed to 10 September 2020 for reasons of force majeure. We hope that by then the situation throughout the EU will have evolved positively and returned to normal so that our colleagues can travel to Brussels without risking their health.

With my best wishes and regards,

Hans-Gert PÖTTERING
FMA President



Contact tracing and warning app used to warn users if they have been in proximity for a certain duration to a person who reported to have been tested positive of COVID-19 ©European Parliament

EP AT WORK

Due to the current situation with the outbreak of COVID19, the European Parliament has to find new ways of working and adopted urgent proposals in plenary.

The main decisions adopted in the plenary sessions were:

- **The Corona Response Investment Initiative.** These measures are meant to channel €37 billion from available EU funds as soon as possible to citizens, regions and countries hit the hardest by the Coronavirus pandemic. The funds will be directed towards healthcare systems, SMEs, labour markets and other vulnerable parts of EU member states' economies.
- **The extension of the EU Solidarity Fund** to cover public health emergencies. The measures will make up to €800 million available for European countries in 2020. Operations eligible under the Fund will be extended to include support in a major public health emergency, including medical assistance, as well as measures to prevent, monitor or control the spread of diseases.
- **Temporarily suspending EU rules on airport slots.** This will stop air carriers from operating empty flights during the pandemic. The temporary suspension means that airlines are not obliged to use their planned take-off and landing slots to keep them in the next corresponding season. The 'use it or lose it' rule will be waived for the whole summer season, from 29 March until 24 October 2020.
- **The postponement of new requirements for medical devices.** To prevent shortages or delays in getting key medical devices on the market, Parliament decided to



EP Plenary session - EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences - MEP Voting remotely ©European Parliament

postpone the application of the Medical Devices Regulation.

- **Specific measures so that EU funds can be used flexibly.** The adopted measures will allow member states to transfer resources between the three main cohesion funds (the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund), between the different categories of regions and between the funds' specific priority areas.
- **Specific measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in the fishery and aquaculture sector.** Measures include supporting fishers that have to temporarily stop operating, financial aid for aquaculture producers when production is suspended or reduced, support to producer organisations for temporary storage, as well as a more flexible reallocation of national operational funds.
- **Specific measures to guarantee the continued functioning of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).** Measures include the possibility to finance the provision of protective equipment for workers and volunteers, the temporary 100% co-financing from the EU budget and lighter reporting

and audit measures during the COVID-19-crisis.

- **MEPs free up over €3 billion to support EU healthcare sector.** The initiative allow the EU to buy urgent medical supplies, such as masks and respiratory equipment, transport medical equipment and patients in cross-border regions, finance the recruitment of additional healthcare professionals to be deployed to hotspots across the European Union.
- **MEPs called for massive recovery package and Coronavirus Solidarity Fund.** The MEPs said that Europe needs a massive recovery and reconstruction package to be financed by an increased long-term budget (MFF), existing EU funds and financial instruments, as well as "recovery bonds" guaranteed by the EU budget. It should not, however, involve the mutualisation of existing debt, but focus on future investment. The European Green Deal and the digital transformation should be at its core in order to kick-start the economy.

For more information, please visit : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/plenary>

CURRENT AFFAIRS

BREXIT FROM AN IRISH PERSPECTIVE

On 31st January, the UK left the EU - over three and a half years after the UK referendum. In that time, Brexit dominated political and media attention, particularly in Ireland, the country most affected by the UK's decision to leave.

In the months since, we have barely had a chance to think about Brexit. The COVID-19 pandemic has, rightly, become the focus, challenging politicians to protect the lives and health of the people we represent, alongside managing serious economic consequences.

But the challenge of negotiating a new partnership between the EU and the UK remains.

Even before the disease took hold, there were only 11 months to negotiate a complex and unprecedented agreement, to provide for partners to diverge rather than to converge.

Negotiations have been directly affected. The chief negotiators on both sides, Michel Barnier for the EU and David Frost for the UK, had COVID-19 but have thankfully now recovered.

In-person negotiations are, for the

foreseeable future, off the agenda. Negotiations by video-conference are now the norm.

As it stands, the UK Government continues to maintain it will not ask to extend the transition period. The deadline for such a request is the end of June.

The EU and the UK remain far apart on a number of issues.

In the political declaration, the EU and the UK agreed their future economic partnership would be wide and ambitious, with no quantitative restrictions on trade: zero tariffs and zero quotas. In recognition of this ambition and the economic interconnectedness of the partners, this would be underpinned by zero dumping: the level playing field, ensuring fair competition between the EU and the UK.

But now the UK no longer sees the need for this level playing field, instead declaring its sovereignty and freedom to decide its own rules and regulations.

Fish is another sticking point: so far the UK has not been engaging with the EU on this issue, hindering overall progress.

Another fundamental difference is the structure and governance of the future partnership. The EU, based on the political declaration, wants a comprehensive agreement covering not only an economic relationship but also areas including security and fishing. The UK instead is proposing a free trade agreement, alongside separate sectoral agreements.

In June, the negotiators will hold a high-level conference to reflect on progress.

This conference will not just be about the future partnership but also the implementation of the

Withdrawal Agreement.

The Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland was an important achievement to maintain the open border on the island of Ireland and safeguard the peace process, at the same time as securing the integrity of the single market and customs union.

We need to see progress on the implementation of the complex and important provisions in the Protocol, including on customs and animal health checks on goods coming into Northern Ireland. Trust between the two partners will be greatly helped by the UK showing it is committed to implementing its obligations in an international agreement, the Withdrawal Agreement.

In June the European Parliament will pass a resolution to give its view on negotiations. Implementation is a key concern, not only the Protocol but also on protecting citizens' rights.

June, with the high-level conference and the deadline for a request to extend the transition period, will be another compelling time as the Brexit process continues. It is too early to speculate if this conference will be conducted by videoconference or in person. Either way the time between now and June is very short. But with little progress reported from the most recent negotiating round, the waiting may be long.



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SO IT'S HAPPENED...



EP Plenary session - Withdrawal Agreement of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community ©European Parliament

For the first time in its history, the EU has lost a Member State.

“The final days and the vote on the Withdrawal Agreement in the European Parliament were highly emotional. The prevailing mood was one of immense sadness. It was not just British MEPs who were in tears.”

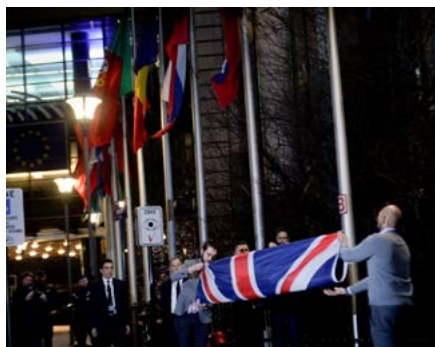
Brexit has happened. Despite several delays. Despite the December election in the UK seeing 53% of voters supporting parties demanding a new referendum (the UK election system is not proportional). Despite almost every opinion poll showing that a majority would have voted to remain in the EU if there had been another referendum. Despite some of the largest demonstrations ever seen on British streets. Despite Brexit turning out to be completely

different from what Boris Johnson and the Leave campaign promised 4 years ago when they said it would be easy, save lots of money and help the UK economy.

The final days and the vote on the Withdrawal Agreement in the European Parliament were highly emotional. The prevailing mood was one of immense sadness. It was not just British MEPs who were in tears. Apart from the minority of Brexit-supporting MEPs, the British contingent in the European Parliament had been active, constructive and influential. Deep friendships had grown.

Appropriately, MEPs linked arms after the vote to sing the traditional farewell song Auld Lang Syne (in French ce n'est qu'un qu revoir), a moving moment, transmitted by the media across Europe.

Many British MEPs wore a scarf produced by Labour MEP Rory Palmer, emblazoned on one side with the words “United in diversity, 1973-2020” and on the other with “Always together”, and with the UK and EU flags at either end. One British MEP, Seb Dance, said the British were merely going on sabbatical and would return one day. Many fervently hope that this will be true.



Union Jack lowering in Brussels - Brexit 31st January 2020 - UK leaves the EU ©European Parliament

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FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2021-2027

A matter of life or death for the European Union.

The European Union is above all a single market, and its budget keeps that market functioning properly. It would be wrong to mistake the EU budget for that of a global power, however. The most obvious difference is that, in a departure from normal parliamentary practice, MEPs do not have the final say on how the budget is funded: most of the money is provided by the Member States. In order to curb any spendthrift tendencies, the total amount available is set in stone every seven years in the form of a Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The start of each seven-year period covered by this framework, which does not coincide with the European Parliament's term of office, is the political deadline which stands above all others and the focus of all ambitions to transform the EU. The opportunity to shape the MFF is the moment of truth.

During my five years as chair of the Committee on Budgets (BUDG)

(2014-2019), we spent many long hours thinking about how we could shape the MFF for 2021-2027. Keen to eschew fatalism, but forewarned by the disappointments suffered by our predecessors, from the moment our committee was constituted, in July 2014, we adopted an aggressive strategy with the aim of influencing the volume and substance of the next MFF. By means of a white paper and a reflection paper, supported by scenarios, the most ambitious of which raised the bar to 1.2% of EU GDP, Commission President Juncker and Budget Commissioner Oettinger set a challenging and bold course. The first stirrings of a future global power? Parliament and the Commission jockeyed for position while the Council remained stubbornly silent.

Discouraged by the glaring lack of response from the Member State governments, the Commission quickly forgot its daring ideas and accepted the grim reality of the 'Brexit gap': the loss of some EUR 10 billion a year on the revenue side prompted the Commission to postpone its proposal to the spring of 2018. Oettinger worked tirelessly, in the hope that agreement on the MFF could be reached before the May 2019 elections. Urgency was suddenly the order of the day. As Parliament's approval was needed, we set out our terms in a resolution adopted on 10 October, which was intended to put pressure on the Commission in its forthcoming arbitration. On the basis of a budget equivalent to 1.3% of EU GDP, we proposed maintaining the allocations for cohesion policy and the CAP and increasing the appropriations

for research, solidarity, the climate and the environment. Funding for Erasmus+ could be tripled. The loss of the UK contribution would mean the abolition of the rebates that had been paid to certain countries (Germany, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands). On 2 May 2018, the Commission's draft was finally published. For Parliament, it was a sobering moment. The overall volume was brought up to 1.11% of EU GDP only by means of a cosmetic trick, the inclusion of the European Development Fund (+ 0.03%). As the Commission wanted to launch new projects, it had had to reduce the appropriations allocated to the CAP and cohesion policy. Disappointed, in November Parliament went back on to the attack by adopting a report which set out detailed figures for each programme.

“When the coronavirus pandemic, of which Europe has become the epicentre, is over, the mismatch between political rhetoric and a travesty of a budget will become intolerable.”

Hopes of swift approval were dashed in December: the Council ruled out any possibility of agreement before the autumn of 2019. MEPs were not so easily discouraged. While the Heads of State or Government played a waiting game, their envoys prepared the ground, negotiating behind the scenes. BUDG's chair, rapporteurs and coordinators formed a task force to break open the



Jean Arthuis, Chair of the Committee on Budgets from 2014 to 2019 ©European Parliament 2019



Presentation of the Commission's Draft Budget 2020 by Gunther Oettinger, Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, and reaction by EP rapporteur and Chair of BUDG, Jean Arthuis on June 2019 ©European Parliament 2019

'negotiating boxes' and remind the Council of MEPs' red lines. During those five years we worked hard, although perhaps too often we were preoccupied with procedures and legal bases, to the exclusion of the political dimension. There was no innovative vision, no order of priorities, perhaps also a lack of conviction. Our position could be summed up as 'more money', but more money for what kind of Europe? The Finnish Presidency now upped the ante. In autumn 2019, it roused the Council from its slumbers by putting forward a proposal which, by wielding the axe across the board, reduced the ceiling to 1.07% of the GDP of the EU27. Only the CAP and cohesion policy escaped, but they had already been severely pruned. The net contributors were still not satisfied and demanded a ceiling of 1%, while the supporters of cohesion policy regarded 1.07% as insufficient. In Parliament, in December, the Conference of Presidents of the political groups decided to 'suspend the negotiations on the sectoral programmes'. The shock was all the more severe because the new heads of the Council and the Commission had

raised great hopes: the Green Deal, the digital economy and a geopolitical Europe. To the stupefaction of Members, the Commission took the Council's side and Charles Michel put forward proposals very similar to those that had been made by the Finnish Presidency. The end of the procedure was in sight. Could Parliament accept an MFF which had been gutted to this extent? Even if it had wanted to reject the proposal, it would have struggled to explain its position to the people of Europe. It had not been given the time it needed to set priorities and resolve the issue of what kind of budget should be adopted for what kind of Europe.

It could therefore legitimately have invoked the provisions of the Treaty and asked for more time. That is the weapon Parliament can use to secure respect for its positions and drive Europe forward. It should be clear from the above that this procedure offers an illusion of democracy and produces a budget which offers an illusion of power. When the coronavirus pandemic, of which Europe has become the epicentre, is over, the mismatch between political rhetoric and a travesty of a budget will become intolerable. The short-termism and willingness to surrender strategic autonomy shame the Union. From now on, the prerogatives of national sovereignty require that funds used ineffectively at national level must be transferred to the EU budget. This MFF must mark the end of an infantilising procedure which generates pointless parliamentary battles. A matter of life or death for the Union.

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COVID19 : THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA?

Since first appearing in China last December, the new coronavirus, COVID-19, has been advancing inexorably around the world and consequently wreaking havoc among Member States.

“The need to build a Europe of health is now becoming clearer than ever. In its efforts to safeguard health, Europe must be less dependent on third countries: 80% of our medicines, antibiotics and vaccines are produced in China. This in an unacceptable state of affairs which, once the pandemic has been resolved, merits concrete analysis and decisions.”

It is worth recalling that Europe's history is replete with pandemics, and at times when communications were much less easy. The Black Death in the 14th century killed 25 million people! And the older generation still remembers the terrible consequences

of the Spanish flu outbreak in the last century.

In early March, however, the Commission President, Ursula Von der Leyen, set up a response team of several Commissioners, responsible for taking the necessary measures and assessing needs, together with the ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control). In addition to the grave health emergency, in recent weeks there has been an economic shock amplified by the lockdown measures imposed on society. For the first time, researchers the world over are working around the clock to develop new medicines and vaccines. The health response has never been so rapid: a coordinated effort between scientists, researchers to win the battle against the virus. A true race against the clock.

And, perhaps surprisingly, China has sent essential medical equipment to Italy, Spain, and now France. We should therefore keep in mind the fact that at the height of the crisis in China, these countries and Europe sent several tonnes of equipment and masks to the Chinese.

The need to build a Europe of health is now becoming clearer than ever. In its efforts to safeguard health, Europe must be less dependent on third countries: 80% of our medicines, antibiotics and vaccines are produced in China. This in an unacceptable state of affairs which, once the pandemic has been resolved, merits concrete analysis and decisions. To that end, health must become a European policy area and not, as it is today, a variable for adjusting social policy.

Ensuring the EU's strategic autonomy requires a common defence and

security policy that is inseparable from its independence in terms of health, food, digital and energy policy.

“The coronavirus constitutes a collective challenge. No one country can tackle it alone.”

Globalisation, with the liberalisation of the markets, is certainly contributing to the spread of disease, but is also compelling economic decision-makers to agree on the best responses. This will require a spirit of solidarity and a willingness to put in place a European industrial policy that is less vulnerable and, above all, more autonomous.

The crisis on the stock markets, the shuttering of our companies and the closure of our borders are undermining our internal market, the Schengen area and our economic policy. The coronavirus constitutes a collective challenge. No one country can tackle it alone.

It sheds light on what an age of 'post-globalisation', in the words of Commissioner Thierry Breton, could look like in the future.

Faced with this health, economic and societal crisis, Europe has no other choice than to profoundly reform itself, set its priorities, including health, and above all overcome national self-interest. It is at this price that it will show its true added value.

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©European Union 2020 - Source : EP

CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

In adopting its resolution of 15 January 2020, the European Parliament officially launched the process which will culminate in the announcement of the conclusions reached by the Conference on the Future of Europe.

In these tense and troubled times, the finishing line in 2022 seems a very long way off. Parliament, though, has sensibly undertaken to follow up the Conference 'without delay' (paragraph 31) to ensure it leads to firm commitments. The 'high-level patronage' of the three Presidents – of Parliament, the European Council and the Commission – will lend momentum to the entire process (paragraph 20). Evident throughout the resolution is the laudable intent to encourage European citizens to play an active role in both the preparations for and the work of the Conference. An interinstitutional memorandum of understanding (paragraph 28) is expected to shed light on the Conference's precise format and timeline, and on how the many civic 'agora' fit into the equation. In short, that document will set out the procedures required for direct coordination under the stewardship

of the European Parliament and the other European institutions, shielded from populist interference and insidious anti-parliamentary sentiment.

"In view of the sheer scale of the challenges facing us, we need to come up with not only new laws, but also new procedures and new institutional arrangements."

Thanks to the Lisbon Treaty (Article 12 TEU), we can of course count the national parliaments among the institutions which 'contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union'. The 'strict parity' clause governing their equal representation with the European Parliament will safeguard this network of elected assemblies which, 20 years ago, played such a decisive role in the Nice Convention on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Indeed, it would be a serious constitutional error to break up this cohesive unit and simply lump the individual parliaments together with their respective national governments, which have their own representative body, the Council. Moreover, the work set in train by the resolution of 15 January will no doubt provide yet further confirmation of the golden European rule that conferences and treaties are only ever the product of continuous efforts to forge an 'ever-closer Union', come what may. The Conference has, then, already

begun. Its format and conclusions will clearly be shaped to a large extent by the precise measures that the EU is forced to take in the next two years.

The health emergency, economic stagnation, the migration crisis and the fallout from Brexit are four extraordinary challenges which call for an extraordinary response. There is neither time nor room for ordinary administrative procedures – and certainly not for the renationalisation of policies. Any European citizen can see that these four challenges transcend borders and the capabilities of any one Member State.

This is why the 'future of Europe' will begin when we recognise that, in view of the sheer scale of the challenges facing us, we need to come up with not only new laws, but also new procedures and new institutional arrangements.

The major questions hanging in the air (such as proposals for a euro area budget, banking security, the joint supervision of common borders or national benefits for those left unemployed by new working arrangements) must be answered using methods that allow no scope for delaying tactics or obstructionism.

Europe's fate will, once again, be determined by its ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable difficulties. This Conference will reveal whether we are up to the challenge.

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Statements on the Future of Europe by David Sassoli, Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen. ©European Parliament

THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

I was born in Belgium, am interested in science and politics, and am a passionate and positive person – that is how I would describe myself. In addition, I am a woman, a mother, a pharmacist, a politician and a cancer survivor.

I should like to say a few words about the last of these aspects. Everyone is familiar with cancer, either from personal experience or through family and friends. Cancer can change a life, completely take it over and also bring it to an end. It makes such a deep impression, can be so destructive: in a word, I cannot think of any period of my life that had such an influence on me.

“Every cancer patient in Europe has the right to the best prevention, treatment and care. That can only be arranged by means of cooperation between universities, industry and Member States.”

Of course, there are very important and memorable times in life, which we never forget and which are highlights of our experience, but they have all been beautiful times for me. Receiving my pharmacist's diploma, my election as Chair of the Public Centre for Social Welfare in my local area for 12 years, followed by my election to the Federal Parliament and later becoming a Member of the European Parliament. But even more important times were those when my three children were born and I enjoyed the privilege

of becoming a mother ... and yet, even so, cancer had an even greater impact on me.

In May 2016, Philippe De Backer, then an MEP, was appointed as a State Secretary in Belgium and had to leave the European Parliament. I was his replacement, so I entered the EP. I took over his committees (ECON and ITRE), which meant that I had the opportunity to do the most interesting work in my whole career. In addition, I sought to do something on behalf of cancer patients. Having once been one myself, having worked in the care sector for 30 years as a pharmacist and now being someone who helped to decide policy: I saw these experiences as being something I ought to combine for the benefit of cancer patients. The previous parliamentary term laid the foundations for the present one. The parliamentary work of a number of MEPs emphasised the need to adopt an effective European approach to a cancer plan. Every cancer patient in Europe has the right to the best prevention, treatment and care. That can only be arranged by means of cooperation between universities, industry and Member States. We should not be constantly reinventing the wheel. Sharing best practices, making one another smarter, ensuring that all residents receive the same high-quality care, that has to be the aim. If we want a strong Europe, we must ensure that all our residents are strong and that they receive the best treatment at difficult times. First and foremost, prevention needs to be further developed and applied in all Member States. Motivating residents to take preventive action is a task for the authorities. Prevention is always



Pink illumination on the EP building in Brussels in connection with the Breast Cancer Awareness day ©European Parliament

better than cure!

Another point is that the best care can only be provided by the best centres, where the best specialists are. Concentrating specialised care results in better outcomes and therefore saves lives. Adequate prevention enables cancers to be detected at an earlier stage. Treating cancer at an early stage costs less than treating advanced cancers. At the same time, the treatment is less of a burden for the patient, both physically and mentally. They can naturally go back to work much sooner, and the financial impact, both on the patient and on society, is far less serious. A good European Cancer Plan and effective cooperation between Member States, with the focus always on the patient, should result in better prevention, treatment and care for everybody in Europe. A strong European Cancer Plan will enable the population of Europe to feel safe in the EU, and that is what really matters, in my view.

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GENDER EQUALITY

On 8 March, people celebrated International Women's Day, going through the customary rituals, with formal expressions of excitement and with an equally excessive self-regard, affording gratification only to people who are superficial and immature. Murderers (tarred with the ugly name of 'femicides' to underline the gender aspect), exploitation, marginalisation, including in fields and sectors that are neutral in terms of gender and have no specific gender connotations, differences in political, economic, social and civil representativeness that are to the detriment of women are not only symptoms but effects of cultures that prevaricate over gender issues: a type of culture that is slow to die even though it has long since been shown, not only socially but scientifically, that being a woman is not actually a handicap and in many respects, indeed, is an advantage, improving the general condition of society in psychological and sociological terms. While in general the differences that exist between any human beings have been the driving force behind progress, thanks to the influence of contrasts and emulation, prompting a search for the 'best' way of living, which has resulted in the quality

of life we enjoy today, one that would have been unimaginable in any previous era and generation, there is all the stronger reason to acknowledge how much of this has been achieved by women, since the creation of the world, as women have committed themselves in an exclusive manner to certain areas of life, forging social relations and defining a structure of society in which the positive ethical and aesthetic elements have provided a symbolic frame of reference to inspire people to improve their own condition. Religion and philosophy have always pointed to women as an expression of family and social synthesis and to men as an individualistic expression of dominion and power; and religion and philosophy have inspired social thought until the present day, but have not yet succeeded in ousting the concept of the supremacy of power over thought, which is the true engine of social development.. It is necessary to think about the effectiveness of the norms that have been constructed in order to attain 'true equality' between the sexes; if many phenomena of marginalisation, undervaluation and inadequate representation still persist, clearly the road to

be travelled is still very long and treacherous.

It might be desirable to take electoral systems as a starting point and to establish not 'pink quotas' but lists differentiated between men and women in proportion to the number of people in the population of each gender, at all institutional levels, from local government to Parliament. Each political party should present lists of female and male candidates, and the numbers of candidates of each gender elected would be proportional to the votes received by the individual gender-based lists. In this way the principle of equal dignity would be protected directly at the source, in the candidacies and in the electorate, rather than downstream in the institutions. Until such time as strict rules are adopted, it will not be possible to have genuine gender equality; to achieve that, it would be desirable to start from the institutions, as they are the ideal mirror of a society, as the origin and embodiment of a revolutionary idea which will ensure the supremacy of the intellect over that of power without such an affirmation being seen as an endorsement of the 'principle of the elite' or a consequence thereof, so that it is seen rather as a decision to opt for comparison, dialogue and synthesis as a basis for civil coexistence between people who are always accorded equal dignity.



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KNOWING THE TRUTH IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Enforced disappearances – an issue for the EU?

Today, when people hear the term 'enforced disappearance' they still think first of past crimes in military dictatorships in Latin America. However, this serious human rights violation is still an everyday occurrence in many parts of the world. It can take months or years for people to find out what has happened to their missing relatives, whether they are even still alive and who is responsible for the crime perpetrated against them. The financial impact on families is often severe, and surviving relatives frequently come under pressure and find themselves facing threats or worse. It is usually women who lead the search for missing family members and the fight to secure the truth and compensation.

“It can take months or years for people to find out what has happened to their missing relatives, whether they are even still alive and who is responsible for the crime perpetrated against them.”

In July 2019, after 10 years in office, I swapped my work as a Member of the European Parliament for a seat on the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED). There are some similarities between the two roles. I was elected to both - the first time by voters in Germany, this time by the States which are parties to the International Convention for

the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, ICPPED. In both roles, protecting human rights was and is a priority: as chair and vice-chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), I investigated many human rights violations around the world and used all the possibilities offered by the EP to improve the human rights situation. As a member of the CED, I am still dealing with specific complaints and prevention, focusing on a particularly brutal type of human rights violation, enforced disappearance. And looking at the EU from both vantage points, I cannot help but feel that it should be doing more to combat serious breaches of human rights. But there are many differences as well: 751 MEPs here, 10 committee members there. I was paid for my work in the European Parliament. My work on the CED, meanwhile, is voluntary, and the UN's human rights budget is so shamefully small that, to give just one example, the committee can hold only four of its five scheduled meeting weeks per year. The European Parliament is known throughout the world. Mention the Committee against Enforced Disappearances, even in the EU, and the response is most likely to be a puzzled look. Why does this body exist, and what exactly does it do? The CED is one of the 10 so-called treaty committees that monitor compliance with key UN human rights treaties. We independent experts keep an eye on the application of the ICPPED, which has so far been ratified by 62 countries, discuss country reports, examine and decide on individual complaints and make recommendations on how to look

for disappeared persons. In addition, relatives can apply for 'rapid actions' to help them find such a person. The committee calls on the State Party concerned to provide information or take concrete steps to establish the whereabouts of the person in question. Thus far the committee has dealt with almost 900 applications for rapid actions; most of the recent ones have come from Iraq and Mexico. Even if only very few disappeared persons are found either dead or alive, our work sends the States concerned and the family members who submit applications the important message that human rights cannot be breached with impunity.

The EU can and must take determined action to ensure that cases of enforced disappearance are resolved, that those responsible are punished, the relatives are compensated and that human rights activists are supported in their fight against enforced disappearances. In December 2020, the ICPPED will be 10 years old, a good reason to lobby for more support. Thus far, however, only 12 EU Member States have ratified the convention, although 13 more have at least signed it. If EU human rights policy is to be credible and convincing, more Member States need to ratify the convention as a matter of urgency.

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MY CAMINO

When more than three years ago, as a Croatian Member of the European Parliament and the member of the working group for the Ways of St. James, at the conference in Santiago de Compostela I presented the St. James' Cathedral in Šibenik, and the St. James' parish of Međugorje, I knew that one day I would come back to the Camino. With my continuous journeys and obligations which I had as a Member of EU Parliament working up to 14 hours a day, I did not manage to find a spare month to keep it apart for that journey, nor I had time to prepare myself physically.

“People decide to walk the Camino for various reasons. I was walking the Camino to get to know God’s will for my life and for that reason I was ready to go to the end of the world if necessary.”

But little by little I was coming to the understanding that my soul was ready for the Camino and that it is time to set off. I needed to get the equipment, and it certainly included good climbing shoes, airy clothes which dry up quickly and a backpack of course, which must hold everything you need on the way, and its weight should not exceed 10 % of your body weight.

I set off for a 900 kms long journey with three friends and we agreed that we would walk our Camino in silence, deciding to take the Northern Route along the Atlantic ocean, full of demanding route portions where you continually have to climb up and down.

People decide to walk the Camino for various reasons. I was walking the Camino to get to know God's will for my life and for that reason I was ready to go to the end of the world if necessary. And then, walking in the beautiful nature which enraptured me every day anew, feeling on my skin the touch of sunshine, wind and rain, which were interchanging one after the

other with such dynamic to remind me again of that perfect simplicity and wisdom of the nature, I became aware of God's proximity and of the fact that He is always here, by my side, present in this moment, and I need not look after Him outside of this moment.

Apart from the blessings which I received every day on the Camino, such a journey is demanding and problems come up, like walking over 30 kms, and no shop around, I found myself left with no water, and it was very hot, I got blisters because I was walking in the rain for hours... But you forget all of this somehow, and the next day you start again, of course until you come across a new obstacle with which you struggle and try to overcome it, since what moves you is the strength of the Spirit, and if you want to continue, your will must really be strong. After 29 days and 900 kilometers passed, and 1.3 million steps made, I arrived to Santiago de Compostela, to the tomb of St. James, the Pilgrim and the Martyr, where I felt the holy peace. Although a bit melancholic because the journey came to its end, I became aware that when one Camino ends, the other one begins – the Camino of the life – in which we must find time to admire God's creativity and express gratitude to God for his walking along our way with us, and for carrying us even when we are not aware of it.



On the way to Santiago de Compostela on the James pilgrimage route ©Shutterstock

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EXPLORE THE 'WHY' BEHIND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Back in 2007, in his inaugural speech as President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering encouraged the initiation of a project now known as the "House of European History". He was concerned that the generation of people who experienced the tragedies of the 20th century and went on to build the European Communities was disappearing. The rights that had been so hard-fought for at a Pan-European level were increasingly being taken for granted. He argued persuasively that it was imperative to present the development of European integration in a comprehensible way, and explain its main historical developments, motivating forces and aims. Future generations had to understand how and why today's Union progressed as it did.

This was a highly ambitious project. It had exceptional support from colleagues such as Vice-President Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez MEP, who recognised the vital need to mobilise citizens and promote effective knowledge of the European process. On many occasions, he



FMA annual events at the House of European History in Brussels. ©European Parliament

helped build consensus among political actors, such as in Bureau meetings. In his own words: "Museums have the power to show what our reality has been and has become in all possible respects: culture, politics, solidarity, social justice." Together they led the Board of Trustees, overcoming the many practical and political challenges present in creating a new, unique museum.

In parallel, a Committee of Experts was set up, consisting of nine historians and museum experts from

across Europe, and chaired by Hans Walter Hütter, President of the Foundation for the House of History of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn. Their task was to ensure objectivity, academic independence and contemporary research were at the core of the museum. Through their guidance, the exhibitions, events and publications of the future House of European History would address all generations of Europeans, deepening knowledge of their own history and showing that a united Europe can coexist peacefully on the basis of shared values.

The task of turning these ideas into reality lay with the Academic Project Team, headed by Taja Vovk van Gaal. From 2011 - 2017 this team of curators, educators and conservators, brought to Brussels from across Europe, delivered the concept for the permanent exhibition on European History, its musealisation and realisation. They sourced the objects, drafted the narratives, and produced all the materials a modern museum required. In short, they gave the House its soul.

In 2017, the House of European



Former EP Presidents, Hans-Gert Pöttering and Antonio Tajani, during the opening of the House of the European History. ©European Parliament

History opened its doors: a unique museum offering the history of a continent in a nutshell. The permanent exhibition sets out the main historical developments of 19th and 20th century Europe, and the history of European integration, in an accessible way. Situated in a beautiful Art Deco building in Parc Léopold, the museum sits conveniently in the heart of the European quarter.

“Museums have the power to show what our reality has been and has become in all possible respects: culture, politics, solidarity, social justice.”

By presenting Europe's painful journey through wars, conflicts and crises, the museum reflects the enormous importance of international dialogue and peaceful cooperation. Visitors can explore

the permanent exhibition in one of 24 languages with a multimedia tablet, or through guided and VIP tours, tailored to the needs of the group. For families there are special trails and discovery spaces, whilst a fascinating events programme opens up the exhibition themes to debate.

What's next?

History does not exist solely in the past. It impacts our lives every day, and the future we are moving towards together. In light of this, I would point to our upcoming temporary exhibition, entitled “Fake for Real: A History of Forgery and Falsifications”. Starting with the ancient practice of removing people from official accounts (“Damnatio memoriae”), to forging science, history and art, reaching fake brands and fake news of the contemporary period, a rich selection of objects from prominent museums across 20 European countries will be presented.

To sum up, the House of European

History provides the context for what the European Parliament does — the ‘why’ behind the EU project. It reflects the cooperation between nations and nationalities, tracing a path towards peaceful unity that the current Parliament strives to achieve for its citizens today. It is an emblem of how European ideas and vision can be put into reality. I warmly invite you to visit the museum and help make it become a milestone in the European cultural landscape. You may also want to bring your visitors to experience one of the guided tours for VIPs or to taste the high quality restaurant.

Constanze Itzel

Head of Unit, House of European History, DG COMM



Aerial view on the House of European History in Brussels. © Architecte Michel Polak 1935 – Atelier d'architecture Chaix et Morel, JSWD architekten GmbH and Co KG - European Union 2019 - Source : EP

FOCUS

Competitive Social Market Economy



FOCUS

ACCELERATE THE FUTURE

We are going through one of the biggest crises of our lifetime. The economic effects will be devastating and we will have to rebuild Europe. That's why we need to learn with the past and act. The financial crisis taught us two things: speed and scale are crucial. So the good news is that it took the EU Institutions 4 years to react with speed and scale during the financial crisis (remember that it was only on the 26th of July 2012 that Mario Draghi said: "whatever it takes"). This time was different, and the EU was able to act much quicker, but we don't know yet the scale of the response. This is a unique opportunity for the Commission to be bold and ambitious as never before. But we have to start thinking about the future beyond the economic shock. I believe this crisis can be an opportunity to accelerate to future. We all know that the EU as always advanced through crises and tensions. The current crisis has brought us three types of tensions that can accelerate for better our common future:

First, the tension between the physical and the digital worlds. We have for last 20 years talked about the digitization of education and health but the resistance from the established players never allowed us to change the paradigm. Now, in a couple of weeks we were able to advance decades with online courses from kindergarten to university. Hospitals were able to start with telemedicine and online consultations that seemed impossible just a couple of months ago. So this is an opportunity for Europe to accelerate the digital transformation. Second, the tension between the member states and the supranational level. This is the typical tension that has been present since the inception of the European project. But this crisis more than any others has shown the limits of the member states as problem solvers. So far health is a prerogative of the member states. But we have to ask ourselves if in the case of a pandemic it makes sense? Shouldn't the coordination be at the level of the Union. I think the answer is clear. If

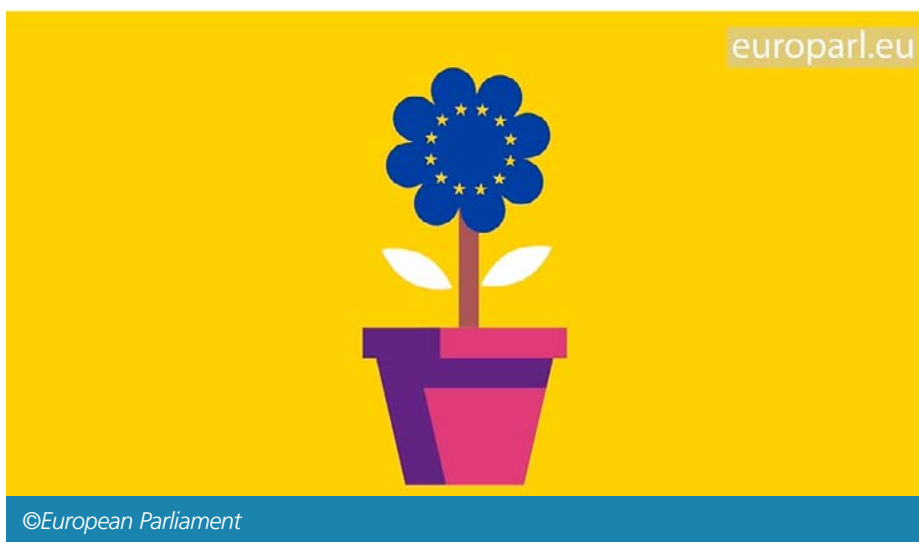
from the beginning the coordination was at the EU level the results would have been better. So we should take this opportunity to rethink how to ensure that even in areas where the EU as no delegation of power EU coordination is essential.

"I believe this crisis can be an opportunity to accelerate to future. We all know that the EU as always advanced through crises and tensions."

Third, we have this tension in between state-control and empowered citizens. This is for me the biggest challenge for our democracies. The state of emergency in every economy is transferring a huge amount of power to the executive branch. So in the future the choice we have is between empowering the state or empowering people. The European Union can be the leader of those that believe and influence the world to choose the latter. Our decisions in the areas of artificial intelligence or data should be the world standard for empowering people. With the right political decisions in these three areas we can accelerate the future that we have been fighting for as pro-Europeans. I believe we can do it.

Carlos Moedas

Former EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation 2014-2019



INEQUALITIES AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The novel coronavirus is a two-faced coin. On one side, it is indiscriminately contagious, having infected everybody from royalty to world leaders. But social distancing is a privileged exercise. Data collected on the COVID-19 spread is revealing a disparity of contagion between low-income workers and individuals on the other end of the income scale.

Whereas the latter find it relatively easier to work from home and isolate themselves, the former are workers who are currently stocking shelves, running public transport, and collecting waste. For them, self-isolating would not only be detrimental to the basic functioning of our cities, but more personally, it would pose a risk to their very livelihoods.

Eliminating social inequality has been a priority for the European Parliament. That it is emerging so starkly now, which is a reminder that even when this crisis blows over, social protection should not be abandoned on the path back to normality.

The pandemic is by definition a

crisis, meaning there cannot be a long-term policy reaction to address problems that emerge uniquely during the crisis. With a gloomy prediction of economic turmoil, the Parliament has a mandate to make sure nobody is left behind during recovery.

The legislation that Europe enacted before the crisis will remain relevant going forward, maintaining the elimination of social protection and reducing inequality as key priorities for a social Europe. Consolidating Europe as a competitive economic player on the global market with a social Europe that concerns itself with the wellbeing and the lifestyles of its citizens should not be seen strictly as a balancing test. A healthy workforce is more productive, not less, and striving to achieve milestones in one of them will necessarily help the other.

Although it was less than a year ago, it now seems like another era when the Work-Life Balance Directive I spearheaded with the invaluable cooperation of Commissioner Marianne Thyssen was signed into law by then President of the

Parliament Tajani. The Directive is emblematic of the effort made by the European institutions to invest in its citizens not as cogs in an economic machine, but as family members and as European members of their community.

By 2022, and as a direct result of this Directive, minimum standards will be in place to facilitate a better balance between work life and private life. This is not just good for families; it is good for businesses. By enabling fathers to be present in the upbringing of their children, women are set to benefit, too.

The pay gap persists as a blemish of social inequality, affecting not just salaries, but the employment opportunities and pension of women across Europe. In countries like Malta, my home country, women tend to be the primary caregivers in their households, despite a university education. Creating better conditions for a work-life balance will integrate capable women into the workplace. Safeguards such as this are a meaningful step in the upcoming battle to bring Europe back on its feet after this pandemic. Down the road, sectors which have seen employees made redundant will hopefully grow once again. To reduce the unemployment that Europe has suffered, social safeguards mustn't be neglected. To do so would be to betray the progress that so many have strived to achieve. The coming months will test what it means to be European.



European Parliament kitchens produce 1000 meals a day for health workers and those in need ©European Parliament

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EMPLOYMENT AND THE MIDDLE CLASS IN EUROPE

Freedom, prosperity, solidarity and social justice are more easily secured in a society with a strong middle class. Recently, the middle class in Europe has increasingly become alarmingly fragile. It is useful to understand some of the reasons for this phenomenon and how it can be reversed.

“Today, labour legislation no longer covers the consequences of the changes that have been taking place, and this has resulted in an increasing level of precarious working conditions, an increased risk of abuse and a potential impediment to enhancing qualifications.”

Let us examine these reasons in greater detail. The dominant characteristic of our time has been the high and, indeed, unparalleled pace of change, which has had a generalised impact on economic life, politics, culture, society and, of course, employment and the way in which companies and workers' lives are organised.

Businesses have gradually ceased to be organised vertically. Temporary work has become more common. Companies have started to hire more self-employed workers and are doing so for shorter periods of time. The skills most in demand in the economy are highly technical,

coordination and non-routine skills. We have witnessed an enormous change in way in which value is created, in market openness, in new forms of trade, in technologies that leverage economic activities, in the outsourcing of productive activities - factors that have had a great impact on labour relations and social structures.

This means that work in future will be less static a concept and encompass roles performed in different ways under different legal systems.

Today, labour legislation no longer covers the consequences of the changes that have been taking place, and this has resulted in an increasing level of precarious working conditions, an increased risk of abuse and a potential impediment to enhancing qualifications.

Formulating common approaches and brokering compromises through traditional structures such as political parties and social partners have also become more complicated, which has meant that collective bargaining, dialogue and conciliation have also

become more difficult.

Developments in European economies and societies have led to a trend towards the increasing polarisation of employment. The percentage of the active population with jobs in the middle salary brackets and with average qualification levels has been decreasing. By contrast, the percentage of workers performing non-routine tasks has increased significantly, which means that employment at both ends of the scale of professional qualifications has increased, while it has decreased at the intermediate level.

This development, which has been accompanied by an increasingly unequal distribution of income, is one of the reasons for the weakening of the middle class. We are facing a situation in which European social policy needs to be more ambitious and go beyond showcase egalitarianism, which leads to an increase in subsidies, but does very little to make inequality disappear.

It is crucial in future that employment policy should focus on the high quality of jobs to be created, since this is the optimal way to combat social inequalities and reinforce the role of the middle class.

My conclusion is this: without a robust middle class, Europe will not be able to combat the proliferation of populism and the soul of the European project will wither.



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WORLD COMPETITION AND THE EU

The 20th century is very interesting, since it consists of a period of marked protectionism bracketed by periods of economic openness; with the latter periods producing clearly more favourable economic outcomes.

The 19th century bequeathed us a generalised practice of economic opening: for example, between 1870 and the beginning of the First World War the world's economy grew by an annual average of 3.40% (3.24% in Western Europe). There followed - between the two world wars - a period of strong nationalism and protectionism, with a markedly poorer economic performance, with average annual world economic growth of 1.85% (1.19% in Western Europe).

The creation of the institutions promoting economic openness at global and European level is therefore easy to understand (also for political reasons, to avoid new conflicts): the results were very positive, with an average annual global economic growth of 4.91% (4.81% in Western Europe, where exports grew by an average of 8.38%).

Then there were slowdowns starting

in 1973, when the oil crisis hit, but economic growth continued generally (with the exception of the crisis that started in 2008).

However, we now live in a world that is very different from that of the second half of the 20th century, marked by the emergence of new powers. After the dominance of three economic 'powers' (a 'triad'), the United States, Europe and Japan, over the past three decades there has been enormous growth in other countries, namely China and India. With competition from these and other countries, increasingly in the same sectors, the fears of countries such as the United States and European countries, with higher wages and a particularly costly social model, are understandable; and protectionism might have been thought to be the answer, as has been practiced by Trump.

However, this has not been the European Union's position, which has continued (with the exception of the protectionism of the CAP, but watered-down today) to espouse economic opening, with an average level of customs tariffs of 3.6%, and 40% of products imported tariff-free. This is a position that

has been highlighted in its strategic documents, for example with the Europe 20-20 Strategy which emphasises that: 'Global growth will open up new opportunities for Europe's exporters and competitive access to vital imports.'

This means that, far from being harmed by higher prices, consumers and entrepreneurs who rely on imported products actually benefit from a strengthening of the conditions of competition, with the euro area offering a major advantage, with 19 countries using the same currency.

This strategy has borne fruit in terms of Europe's competitive capacity, with the euro area posting a surplus of 423.477 million dollars in the balance of payments surplus on current account in 2018, clearly the largest such surplus in the world: since 2013 its figures have far outstripped China's, for example. It is a result that we naturally welcome, but it is desirable in global terms, since it demonstrates that a political and social model like ours does not prevent us from being competitive. And the growth of new powers is desirable not only for the sake of their inhabitants but also for us, as it will prevent the arrival of migrants who in some cases are not easily integrated and create more market opportunities; this is also emphasised in the Europe 20 20 Strategy, which notes that in emerging countries the 'middle classes develop and import goods and services in which the European Union has a comparative advantage'.



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LIMITATIONS OF THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE ECONOMY

Rarely have the limitations and shortcomings of the neoliberal laissez-faire economy been so brutally exposed as they are being by the coronavirus crisis. In Sweden, one of the richest countries in the world and one which, in proportional terms, has many highly productive and stable businesses with worldwide operations, the red-green government is being compelled to splurge money in order to alleviate the impact on wage earners and keep businesses afloat until the crisis - hopefully - recedes. The idea that all these businesses, with their huge profits, might be strong enough to survive a few months of crisis seems to be quite unthinkable for the ideologists of neoliberal venture capitalism. When the Green Minister for Financial Markets, Per Bolund (Environmental Party), writing in the newspaper dedicated to the financial markets, *Dagens Industri* (16 April 2020), called on businesses to put their house in order and create buffers against crises, he was roundly criticised by a chorus of representatives of businesses and industry, as well as conservative politicians, who, among other things, ridiculed him for not having any idea of how businesses work. Perhaps indeed he had failed to appreciate the extent of the short-sighted greed of the prevalent finance capitalism, quite different from the responsible industrial capitalism that transformed Sweden from Europe's poorhouse in the late 1800s into an affluent and envied welfare state a hundred years later. The pressure became so extreme that Bolund was forced to retract what he had said (presumably compelled to do so by a shaken

Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, who unfortunately does not dare to argue with the business world, despite his role as leader of the Social Democrats, a party officially called the 'Workers' Party'). How did it come to this? How was a stable and reliable industrial capitalism able to develop into an extreme form of short-sighted finance capitalism? This was recently explained by Göran Therborn, a Swedish professor of sociology at Cambridge, in the book 'Capital, the rulers and all the rest of us' (2018). In it he shows that Sweden's development changed course dramatically in 1980. After almost two centuries of democratisation, social and economic equalisation and the development of a government-managed welfare state, that was the year in which what Therborn calls a neoliberal counter-reformation began, with deregulation, privatisation, profit interests as a driving force, even in healthcare and schools, as a result of which Sweden is now more unequal than large parts of the EU and is marked by disparities akin to those in the United States. In such a society, it is of course not possible to pursue a green policy either. Therborn stresses that there is no fundamental conflict between the market economy and the welfare state, nor does the market render a green economy impossible. But the market must be hedged around by a framework of laws and regulations that prevent the kind of excesses that now dominate in Sweden (and to varying degrees throughout the EU). In addition, in order for welfare/care for the environment and the market to coexist, managers of

businesses must be guided not solely by profit interests but also by the ideals of equity and quality of life for people at large. That is all it takes! Therefore a green market economy, which will have to come after the coronavirus crisis, is in fact no more than a green variant of the social market economy which, during the 20th century, turned Sweden – and many other EU countries – into social welfare states. In addition to a legislative framework and a certain standard of morality on the part of company managements, what is needed is cooperation between capital and environmental movements, along the lines of the Saltsjöbaden Agreement signed between the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Swedish Employers' Association in 1938, which established a solid partnership between capital and labour and brought Sweden several decades of freedom from conflict on the labour market. If the right conclusions are drawn from the coronavirus crisis, it could pave the way for a 'greening' of market economies throughout the EU. The explosive awareness of the climate crisis, which flourished before the pandemic took off, has not vanished: it has only temporarily been forced into the background because of the acute danger to life presented by the coronavirus. A spotlight is being shone on the extreme dependence of businesses on the state. One of these days it will be payback time!

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EU FUNDS FOR ERASMUS AND JEAN MONNET PROGRAMMES

Jean Monnet Activities offer the opportunity to teach and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide. Depending on the activity, the programme is open to higher education institutions or other organisations, association of professors and researchers specialising in European Union Studies, established in any country of the world.

Over 30 years ago, in 1989, the European Commission launched the Jean Monnet action to support academic research in European integration. The programme originally addressed academics in the Member States, but came to include those in accession countries soon after. This was an important tool and support for countries preparing membership of the EU.

Today, the Jean Monnet Action has a global scope. In many ways a niche operation, the Jean Monnet activities have nevertheless been celebrated as some of the most successful examples of European Union (EU) support.

Since the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020), Jean Monnet activities enhance the participation of young researchers and integrate EU-related subjects throughout curricula.

This responds to a real need for graduates and helps to strengthen active European citizenship. For the first time, the description of the Jean

Monnet activities now makes specific mention of 'fostering dialogue between the academic world and policy-makers, in particular with the aim of enhancing governance of EU policies'. Some of the Jean Monnet projects have made serving their local community a primary goal.

One example is a university where decades of work in EU issues by the academics and researchers has resulted in the university becoming a key source of information in this field and has led to programmes being opened up to the local council, to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and to legal professionals.

Jean Monnet activities also encourage an 'active outreach and educational work that spreads knowledge about the European Union to wider society and brings the EU closer to the public, beyond academia and specialised audiences'.

Some of the Jean Monnet projects reflect a need to bring the knowledge on EU subjects closer to a larger public and to our youngsters in society. In various Jean Monnet projects, professors and colleagues have made teachers and learners of different levels of education, such as primary and secondary schools, the focus of their activities.

One example in this context is a project that produced ready-to-use teaching material for teachers for use in relevant subjects in primary school, such as Environment, History, and Geography. The project addressed current and future primary school teachers but consequently also pupils as beneficiaries of the project's outputs and activities. New and innovative didactic materials increased the dissemination of information.

Jean Monnet Activities in figures¹:

300 000 students per year
9000 university teachers per year
1000 universities supported so far
5000 projects funded so far
Total budget 2019: €48.5 million
Further information on the current Erasmus+ Programme and the Jean Monnet Activities are available [on the website of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/jean-monnet-activities-30-years-excellence-eu-studies_en).

1. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/jean-monnet-activities-30-years-excellence-eu-studies_en

Jean Monnet activities in the next Erasmus+ Programme from 2021 onwards

For the next Erasmus+ Programme from 2021, which includes the Jean Monnet Action, detailed information is not yet available as the Programme is still under preparation and in discussion with the Member States and the European Parliament. However, it is already known that the future Jean Monnet Action will focus on two main strands. One is the continuation of teaching, research and policy-relevant debate in the field of European Union studies worldwide and the other strand will be the focus on outreach towards a larger public, including other levels of education.

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FMA ACTIVITIES



European Parliament Former Members Association
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FMA NETWORK

WORKING WITH EUROPEAN POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS

European political foundations are organisations that do much to help forge a European consciousness. This means they play a very important role in the EU integration process. They contribute to the debate on key aspects of European policy by organising seminars, training activities, conferences and commissioning studies. Their aim is to promote democracy by working closely with other organisations and civil society bodies.

European political foundations received legal recognition for the first time in Regulation (EC) No 1524/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2007. This was a major step forward in the development of transnational federations, which until then had not had a legal frame of reference. The fact that these new players on the European political stage gained recognition was once again thanks to efforts made by an institution that had already done so much to help develop the European party system: the European Parliament.

The relationship between European

political foundations and the European Parliament, however, did not stop once the foundations had been established. Since 2017, before any other procedures can take place, European political foundations must register with the authority established in accordance with the requirements and procedures laid down in Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014. That authority is independent and impartial, and was established specifically for the purpose of registering and controlling European political foundations. It is located in the European Parliament. Furthermore, the list of registered European political foundations is published on the European Parliament's website, and Parliament also provides financial support to the foundations from its budget. It makes a lot of sense, then, that an association like ours – which is made up of former members of the European Parliament, obviously has very close links to Parliament, and whose objectives include helping to promote European unity and

strengthen parliamentary democracy by organising seminars, debates and cultural, scientific and social events – should seek to establish stable cooperation with European political foundations.

We are convinced that this relationship – which is to be set up gradually, starting with the most representative foundations – will be highly beneficial for both parties. As well as forging even closer links between the European political foundations and the European Parliament, we are convinced the efforts made with our association will help raise the profile of the European political foundations' excellent work, not only among the general public, but also among academics and scientists. On the other hand, European political foundations could take better advantage of the extensive experience that members of our association have on European issues. Our members could be more closely involved in the activities that the foundations organise.

To set the ball rolling, we are hoping that representatives of a number of the European political foundations that are currently active will attend and participate in the seminar organised in the run-up to our next annual assembly. The topic for debate will be 'The Future of Europe', so we will be able to learn first-hand about the initiatives that these important stakeholders are pursuing to contribute to the discussions. We are counting on your participation.



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COOPERATION WITH EUI

EUROPEAN LESSONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

It is always encouraging to meet young people who are interested in European affairs. The Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), which is based in Florence, Italy, frequently organises special educational programmes for students from secondary schools (known as a 'gymnasium' in certain countries in Europe), in addition to its scientific and research activities.

Usually there is one student class participating per session, during which the Archives experts run a class and answer questions from students and teachers. Sometimes former MEPs are invited to hold a session, and on 18 and 19 February 2020 I was fortunate enough to take advantage of this opportunity. On the first day, I met two different classes and I met another one on the second day.

After introducing myself, I spoke about my experience working at the European Parliament and the European Commission. I also spoke about the scholarship and job possibilities for young people at the different European institutions – in my experience, this is something that always interests young students. Although, it is always worth

emphasising that, generally speaking, young people have to finish their university studies before applying for jobs or scholarships at the EU. Many questions were raised in every session. Most of the students asked their questions in English, and some of them asked them in Italian. Although, it turns out that those who asked their questions in Italian did in fact understand my answers, which I gave in English. I was informed that some of them were also fluent French speakers.

As I am from Hungary, I was asked some rather pointed questions about Mr Viktor Orbán and his friendship with Mr Matteo Salvini. Neither I nor the students (at least, those who spoke up) shared the views of those politicians. We all agreed that Europe should be more democratic and united. I followed this up by saying that we have to strengthen our common European values, but stressed that we should be proud of our national heritage, our culture and mother tongue. They asked me how many assistants and trainees I had worked with during my years at Parliament and how they were recruited. This is a topic that always comes up whenever I meet students.

I also talked to their teachers and they told me that these educational programmes run by the HAEU are very useful. The beautiful location of the HAEU, the famous Villa Salviati on the Via Bolognese is an impressive place for such programmes. Once my sessions were over, we all had a guided visit of the extensive archive and we attended an additional session led by one of the guides. The HAEU do an excellent job with these informal but also serious and valuable educational programmes. On the second day, I was also asked to visit the nearby European University Institute (EUI) in Fiesole. As part of the Thoughts for Europe debate, I gave a short introduction entitled 'The EU at a critical juncture: a Hungarian perspective'. After my introduction, we had a good debate with experts and researchers from the EUI. Some of them had already studied the situation in Hungary on and the dangers posed by the antidemocratic tendencies of the Orbán Government. I tried to give a balanced picture of the situation and reiterated the responsibility of the European institutions and the European People's Party. For instance, the independent Hungarian media do not get any help from the EU while the Government-controlled media receive a considerable level of support from the state. I left Italy just before the pandemic hit. I would like to express my sympathy and solidarity to everybody I met during my visit to Florence.



Gyula Hegyi during the meeting with the students in Florence ©EUI

Gyula Hegyi

PES, Hungary (2004-2009)

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EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL SHAPE OUR LIVES

Three decades ago, Tallinn, a coastal city, was closed off by a fence that prevented residents from escaping the Soviet regime. Today, there is a lively atmosphere both in the centre and at Tallinn University, with students from many European countries hoping for an opportunity. Estonia has been declared the most digitally developed country in the world and is also home to the inventor of Skype.

I was invited to present artificial intelligence (AI) from the EU's point of view at a conference at the Technology University of Tallinn from 12 to 13 February. I challenged the students with questions on which they shared their own reflections after my presentation. We then shared our findings at a roundtable discussion with their professors. How can AI improve people's lives and what are the fears about it? How many EU regulations on AI are there?

Where can we find practical examples of AI?

AI does not only have an economic impact, but also social, cultural and ethical impacts. Data is quickly becoming the most powerful economic driver. It is the basis for algorithms and AI. Corporations like Google, Amazon, Facebook and Twitter own data and will shape the future.

AI uses machine-learning processes based on algorithms using vast sets of data – web pages we have visited, our genetics, past purchases, our behaviour etc. Algorithms will be used more and more often to inform decision-making related to politics, medicine, banks, traffic... But first of all, we need to build public



awareness and acceptance of this new technology.

We need to reinvent our mindset within the digital reality and discover the positive impact on our daily lives. AI would make life easier, solve health issues like cancer, help medical professionals to plan the treatment of diseases, assist us when we are traveling (Google Maps, Tripadvisor etc.) and power robots helping the elderly.

Negative impacts would be fake news, unemployment, cyberattacks and reduced privacy.

Digital Europe is one of the EU's five priorities for the next five years. Smart policies are needed to regulate intelligent machines. The Commission has prepared white papers on AI, which will be the basis for further regulations. Parliament has adopted many resolutions on the responsible development and use of AI.

The most practical way to use of AI at the present moment is to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. Health monitoring platforms developed by high-tech companies can monitor the spread of coronavirus and report on its consequences. Their sources are

global airline ticket data, medical community websites and social media posts on symptoms such as a fever or breathing problems.

AI is also being used in the US elections with new campaign technology showing how the Republicans are performing against the Democrats. The candidates have spent millions of US dollars on Facebook and Google campaigns. Algorithm and machine learning helps to micro-target voters through social media.

AI will shape political decisions and our lives. But there is no better choice. It's like democracy. It's not good enough, but better than all the other systems such as communism and fascism.

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Thanks to Candriam for supporting our EP to Campus Programme

INCERTA FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN EUROPE

But certainly digital!

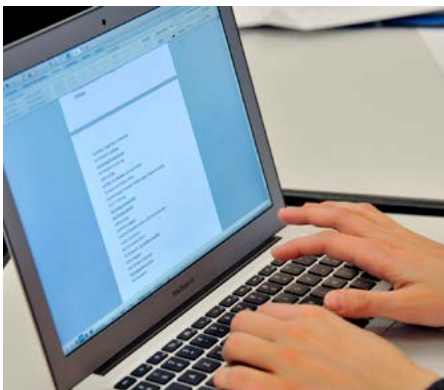
The education systems and universities of Europe were already in a digital transition but the current crisis of COVID-19 has accelerated the process, stressing the current educational structures and forcing a fast functional readaptation of teachers and students. The changes encouraged during this crisis are likely to stay and foster the digitalization once the academic life returns to normality.

COVID-19 broke in suddenly and everyone related to academic world is facing incerta future, unknown and uncertain future in the field of transfer of knowledge. European scholars discuss now, what is the best software to transfer e-lectures for large groups, best grading system or best development of the digital academic life. Nevertheless, the basics of e-learning has been here already long time – digitalization of educational materials, funding of development of e-courses, e-learning environment as an compulsory element of teaching, etc.

The truth is that the e-courses provided across the EU have been qualitatively very different and, therefore, the “new normal” in

our academic life would hit some of the universities and countries more negatively than others. Therefore, the European Union must act accordingly, promoting those successful experiences and supporting those less involved in digital education, creating a common digital academic European space. European integration in terms of education has been a successful story with programs as Erasmus or events like EYE, and should continue to be in the future thanks to common digital development. A crisis is a change, a new open horizon for those evolving according to the circumstances. The current challenge for the society, from an academic perspective, can have just one efficient and lasting answer, distance learning and academic digitalization. The negative side of current massive expansion of distance learning is the low quality derivative from an imposition based on the circumstances involving Covid-19, eliminating transitional stages and gradual understanding of the possibilities. Eventually, educational digitalization must grow in quality in the long term; otherwise, students will not be interested joining a specific university or program. A good e-shape educational institution can reach larger geographical student candidates and has better platform for choosing their students; the instructor purifies e-courses, as they are time framed, of non-relevant information and repetitions; the e-supported modules can reach also other audience, such as experts in the field and those who wish to upgrade their knowledge in some specific field.

We cannot underestimate the impact of the professor personality and social contacts that are part of traditional supervision. However, there are many challenges (as using AI in grading or assessing) and also certain troubles (how can you be sure that your course is not just recorded by some other device and then sold or used infringing copyright rights). Additionally, in Europe, there is a huge gap between notions “e-course” or “course with e-elements”. Universities, with the uploaded texts and communication via skype or e-mail only are far from being innovative. Therefore, high standards for the e-courses need to be set, ensuring the teacher's digital skills and an ideological framework. We recommend the EU rapidly invest to the university administrators and teaching staff to obtain new digital teaching skills and provide free digital learning platforms. Let's use the experiences we have and strengthen the uniform understanding of good quality education!



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PANDEMIC IN EUROPE

An opportunity to innovate and make distance learning available to all.

We could never have imagined or predicted this, and there was no time for a comfortable transition, but the uncontrollable spread in Europe of the virus known as Covid 19 has opened our eyes to the challenges distance learning (I refer here to university education) will face in the 21st century. Challenges which, make no mistake, also apply to education in its wider sense. I would like here to briefly describe the challenges posed concerning innovation, humanisation and inclusion in the learning process. Let me start by expressing my admiration for so many of my colleagues who, from Strathclyde to Padua and from Maastricht to Bilbao, have had to delve overnight into the mysteries of online learning technological tools. The same lecturers who, until so recently, were still using the blackboard and photocopies for their classes, rather than PowerPoint. Lecturers who, from one day to the next, discovered the difficulties involved in establishing contact with students

through a screen, overcoming their natural reticence about showing themselves and their home-offices to students. Lecturers who have rapidly learnt how to organise a class on Zoom or Meet, how to explain fundamental concepts through infographics or a podcast, how to prepare remote exams, knowing full well that students will have their notes in front of them, treatises, and WhatsApp. With classroom learning now impossible, the door has opened to countless webinars and our students can now access from their bedrooms lectures by experts that would not previously have been financially viable.

Moving beyond the tip of the technological iceberg, teaching in a crisis has forced us to identify and underline the essential facts our students must absorb. Skills. Knowledge. The aim: to become the professionals needed in a Europe that will never be the same again. This is the real innovation that the pandemic demands of universities, lecturers and students. This paradigm has turned previously 'desirable' transverse skills, which cannot be learnt in a manual or self-help book, into 'essential'

skills: curiosity for learning, solving everyday problems, adjusting to work in suboptimal conditions, the desire to better oneself, resilience. Making learning available for all. Just as we, the lecturers, have opened our doors to our students, so they have opened theirs to us. In the cloud, we see barriers that the classroom used to conceal. Homes where not everyone has a portable computer. Homes without gigabytes. Homes where uncertainty reigns. Homes that are not at peace. Homes in far-off time zones. The inequalities that the pandemic has brought to the surface are scandalous. Suddenly the moral challenge that universities face in regard to unequal opportunities is not that of being inclusive when students arrive, but when they leave; that of reaching a situation in which the learning process is adjusted to suit each student's circumstances so they can achieve their professional goals when they leave, irrespective of their circumstances when they arrived, or their circumstances in lockdown. An existential challenge.



Prof. María Luisa Sánchez Barrueco

Lecturer in European Union Law and Head of Online Learning at the Law Faculty of the University of Deusto (Spain).

Coordinator of the Jean Monnet SAPIA (Students' Awareness of Public Integrity and Accountability) Module (2017-2020).

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LATEST NEWS

NEW FMA FACEBOOK CLOSED GROUP

Our future and present overnight have become interdependent on digital opportunities, be it the connection of the wider family, the nation, the European Union or the whole world. Wherever we live, we are more than ever dependent and conditioned on one another in responsibility to ourselves and in responsibility for the common good. The COVID19 Coronavirus era set us up for a fact; the personal contacts we were used to are frozen, and life goes on through online channels. Coronavirus is changing the world, changing our habits and our way of socializing. We live in a time when even the European Parliament, as the heart of democracy, had to close its doors to physical entry and at the same time open up the possibility of working remotely, both for debate and for voting. I am convinced that, in addition to our professional work, all of us,

former Members of the European Parliament, have unforgettable memories of our personal conversations, of the good personal relationships that still connect us today. At this time when global health crisis management is in the test, we especially miss our socializing and exchanging views. But digital technologies give us many options that may not completely replace traditional contacts, but are still welcome. Digitization was put at a cradle in contrast to our era of classic phones and television. With over 800 FMA members, we are able to connect through the closed FMA Facebook group, which is only for us. Only we can access it as readers and creators of content. I just want to spell out some ideas; we probably want to share experiences and feelings through quarantine through the pandemic. How to overcome the loneliness

typical of the quarantine period? What will the world be like after the Coronavirus pandemic? What is our cultural heritage, how to preserve it? How can we contribute to a stronger connection between EU countries? What good practices can we spread about democracy? What are some of our personal experiences that we want to share? These are an endless number of areas that we can communicate with through the FMA Facebook Closed Group. We take advantage of this technological opportunity, create pleasant virtual gatherings, and approach the younger generations with a new approach.

Zofija Mazej Kukovič
FMA Board member in charge of communication

NEW MEMBERS



Nora BERRA
(France 2012-2014, EPP)



Seb DANCE
(United Kingdom 2014-2020, S&D)



Theresa GRIFFIN
(United Kingdom 2014-2020, S&D)



Eleni THEOCHAROUS
(Cyprus 2003 / 2009-2019, EPP)

ACTIVITIES



9 September 2020

POLICY ROUNDTABLE

on the Conference about the Future of Europe.
From 15.45 to 17.15 pm
in the Library Reading Room, European Parliament, Brussels.

9 September 2020

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

From 17.45 to 18.15 pm
in the Space Yehudi Menuin, European Parliament, Brussels.

9 September 2020

DINNER DEBATE

From 18.30 to 22.00 pm in the Member's Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels.

10 September 2020

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

From 10.00 am to 13.00 pm
in the European Parliament, Brussels.

10 September 2020

ANNUAL LUNCH

From 13.00 to 14.30 pm
in the Members Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels.

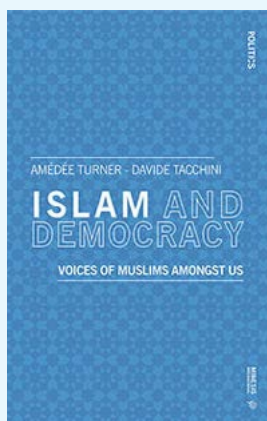
27 Sep -1 Oct 2020

STUDY VISIT TO NORTH MACEDONIA

Members will meet with Parliament, government and civil society's representatives and universities students.

Because of the uncertainty about any arrangements due to the Covid-19 pandemic, you are kindly advised not to buy flight tickets or make any other financial commitments until you receive the confirmation of the Secretariat that the FMA events will go ahead.

NEW PUBLICATIONS



Amédée Turner and Davide Tacchini have recently published the book "Islam and Democracy. Voices of Muslims Amongst Us". During the last six years, a team of scholars, researchers and religious leaders in Europe and the USA worked tirelessly, organising over seventy discussion groups that included members of the local Muslim communities. This volume presents for the first time the result of their work, developed in collaboration with the Anglican Observer to the United Nations. All discussions were designed to explore different views, rather than to reach a common position. The overall aim of the project is to provide a window on the rich and diverse world of "Western Islam", by connecting directly with the everyday life of Muslim citizens in Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, the United States and Canada.

Price: € 20,00

IN MEMORIAM

† 23 March 2020

Carlo CASINI

EPP, Italy (1984-1999 & 2006-2014)

He served as an Italian member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Casini represented the “Unione dei Democratici cristiani e dei Democratici di Centro”.



† 30 March 2020

Emmanouil GLEZOS

GUE/NGL, Greece (1984-1985 & 2014-2015)

He served as a Greek member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Glezos represented the “Coalition of the Radical Left”.



† 24 March 2020

Alfred GOMOLKA

EPP-ED, Germany (1994-2009)

He served as a German member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Gomolka represented the “Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands”.



† 31 March 2020

Szabolcs FAZAKAS

S&D, Hungary (2004-2009)

He served as a Hungarian member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Fazakas represented the “Magyar Szocialista Párt”.



† 3 April 2020
Julio AÑOVEROS TRIAS DE BES
EPP-ED, Spain (1994-1999)

He served as a Spanish member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Añoveros Trias de Bes represented the "Partido Popular".



† 4 April 2020
Pertti PAASIO
PES, Finland (1996-1999)

He served as a Finnish member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Paasio represented the "Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue/Finlands Socialdemokratiska Parti".



† 16 April 2020
Bashir KHANBHAI
EPP-ED, United Kingdom (1999-2004)

He served as a British member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Khanbhai represented the "Conservative and Unionist Party".



† 20 April 2020
Krystyna ŁYBACKA
S&D, Poland(2014-2019)

She served as a Polish member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Ms Łybacka represented the "Sojusz Lewicy Demokratyczne".



† 26 April 2020
Giulietto CHIESA
S&D, Italy (2004-2009)

He served as an Italian member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Chiesa represented the "Italia dei Valori".



† 26 April 2020
Henri WEBER
S&D, France (2009-2014)

He served as a French member of the European Parliament.

At the national level, Mr Weber represented the "Parti socialiste".



European Parliament
**FORMER MEMBERS
 ASSOCIATION**

The FMA sends its condolences
 to those families who have lost
 a loved one during the
 pandemic and thanks
 healthcare workers on the front
 lines of COVID-19 around the
 world.

Together We Can Overcome!
 #EuropeansAgainstCOVID19

