

EPFMA Bulletin



82 · March 2023

European Parliament Former Members Association

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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 Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.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,

We started the year by holding an Extraordinary General Assembly on 2 February for the revision of the FMA Statutes. I want to thank all the Association members who voted in person or by proxy, resulting in the unanimous adoption of the amendments.

The participation of the Association's members in the Extraordinary General Assembly and their numerous contributions to it, made both in person and online, once again demonstrated the great vitality of our Association. We are going through a difficult time, during which the European Parliament must respond to major challenges in order to retain the strong confidence of Europe's citizens.

Many colleagues wrote me to express their anger at the recent revelations. They felt offended and hurt, and expressed sorrow at the insult that some had done to the highest democratic institution of our continent. We all share these feelings and firmly condemn the shameful behaviour that tarnishes the prestige of the European Parliament and wounds the honour of those who have had the privilege of being part of it.

The serious misconduct of one former MEP – a member of our Association and of its Management Committee – must not harm the Association's reputation and cast a shadow over the honour of all those who have served the institution. The Management Committee has therefore decided to apply Article 6 of the Association's Statutes in order to propose the exclusion of the Association member, Pier Antonio Panzeri, who admitted his guilt. The vote on this proposal will take place at the General Assembly on 4 May. I expect all members of the Association to take part in this meeting of great symbolic significance.

Allow me to quote an excerpt from the letter I addressed to the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, on 13 January 2023:

'Our Association stands against all kinds of corruption and illegal conduct and has always supervised the correctness of the behaviour of the former MEPs as reported in its Statutes.

In this disconcerting moment, we express our full support for the actions you promoted against corruption but, if the information is confirmed, would ask you to reconsider the proposal to abolish the permanent access badges for former MEPs replaced by a one-day pass.

The respect of European values and principles are at the core of our activity aimed at enhancing the work of the European Parliament, strengthening parliamentary democracy and serving European unity. Former MEPs are true friends of the European Parliament, having contributed to the choices that led to the construction of the current Union during their parliamentary mandate, and their support and advice is and will remain indispensable in the months and years to come to contribute "rebuilding trust and working together to lead the European Union forward".'

We will continue our work in the Association with passion and determination. As we do so, we will also honour the memory of those who have gone before us.

The first part of the year brought great sadness with the death of José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, a former President of both the European Parliament and our Association. We will remember him as a dear colleague and devoted President and Member, who contributed to the good reputation of the Association and the success of its programmes and activities from its foundation. In this edition, you will find tributes honouring his memory and that of former President of the European Parliament and FMA Honorary President Lord Henry Plumb, who passed away last year.

Our annual memorial service will be held on 3 May. After the ceremony, we will gather for our dinner debate with our guest speaker, Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni.

The memorial service will be preceded by our Librorum event, during which former European Parliament and FMA President Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering will present the biography dedicated to his life and work, 'A European Conscience'.

Last but not least, on 4 May 2023 we will hold our annual General Assembly, which will be followed by a lunch hosted by our Association. A formal notice was sent to all the Association's members by email on 2 March, with the secretariat only sending the notice by post if expressly asked to do so.

From 30 to 31 March, the FMA will visit Stockholm to mark the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU. As delegation leader, I am pleased to see so many of you interested in this visit.

On 16 June, the FMA will co-organise a hybrid high-level event in Florence entitled 'Can the EU learn from experience?' Our partners for this event are the Historical Archives of the European Union and the Commission's Erasmus+ programme. I invite you to save the date in your diary; more information will be sent out by email shortly.

This March edition of the bulletin is dedicated to European resilience. In recent years, Europe has been transformed by climate change, demographic inequalities, migration, the pandemic and, most recently, the war in Ukraine. These events force us to prepare better for future emergencies. Various experts will take an in-depth look at the issue in a number of articles. I would like to thank our former MEPs and all those who contributed to this edition.

I look forward to seeing you at our next General Assembly in Brussels on 4 May.

With my best regards,

Dr. Klaus Hänsch
FMA President

IN MEMORIAM

JOSÉ MARÍA GIL-ROBLES GIL-DELGADO



José María Gil-Robles was my immediate successor as President of the European Parliament, bearing testimony to the substantial political reputation he had acquired while serving as a Spanish Member in the Group of the European People's Party. I remember him as a very sincere man with great respect for law and order in our united Europe and steadfastly faithful to the idea of developing the foundations provided by the treaties for an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe. He played a successful role in strengthening the European Parliament through the Amsterdam Treaty, acting with determination and a firm belief in democracy. As President of our Former Members Association, he continued to spread his unshakeable European convictions.

Klaus Hänsch
FMA President



I am very sorry to hear of the death of José María Gil-Robles, a loved and respected person. Open, intelligent and conciliatory, his commitment and passion for the European construction, accompanied him in his long career as MEP and President of the European Parliament, in his work at the head of the European Movement as President, when he chaired the Jean Monet Foundation and as member and President of our association of Former Members of the European Parliament where I had the honour to meet and work with him. My deepest condolences to his family and friends.

Teresa Riera Madurell
FMA Honorary Secretary



José was an excellent MEP who could bring people together and had an ear for everybody. I supported and elected him as President of European Parliament. On the 12th floor in the Presidential VIP Lounge you can see the tiles from the birth of Europe which remembers of his roots.

Thank you José.

Paul Rübiger
EPP-ED (1999-2019), Austria



Klaus Hänsch meets with newly elected EP President, José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado. © Communautés européennes 1997 – EP



I had the privilege of being a MEP when José María GIL-ROBLES was elected President of the Parliament which he led with determination, competence, kindness and elegance, from 1997 to 1999. Christian Democrat and pro-European, excellent jurist, coherent and enthusiastic supporter of the centrality of Parliament, he helped to strengthen European democracy.

Monica Baldi
FMA Vice-President



Having been elected in the same year, 1989, it was a privilege to have followed the contributions of José María Gil-Robles: in our political group and in responsibilities in the European Parliament, especially as President. With his competence and his commitment, with a strong European conviction, he gave an important contribution for the reinforcement of the role of this institution, in a time in which the European Union was having increasing challenges, in its space and at the world level.

Manuel Porto
ELDR (1989-1996), EPP-ED (1996-1999), Portugal

IN MEMORIAM

JOSÉ MARÍA GIL-ROBLES GIL-DELGADO

SPANISH AND EUROPEAN DEMOCRAT

José María Gil Robles and I shared a long history based on two core ideas: making Spain a democracy and becoming a key member of the European family. More than parallel lives, ours intertwined with a common purpose: overcoming a past marked by war and intolerance.

We were architects and builders – he as a strong Christian democrat, I as a social democrat – even before we met. For both of us, the 1962 Congress of the European Movement was a crucial date – he as the son of exile, I as a young university student. The much-reviled ‘Munich conspiracy’ against the Franco regime was the first meeting of the domestic and exiled oppositions. They updated the programme for democratic transition defended at the 1948 Congress of Europe in The Hague by Indalecio Prieto, Salvador de Madariaga and Dr Trueta, with the support of Landaburu, who had promoted the creation in 1949 of the Spanish Federal Council of the European Movement (CFEME)

at the headquarters of the exiled Basque Government. The CFEME continues to be a prominent civil society platform with a long history. We were both Presidents of the European Movement International (me from 1987 to 1989 and José María from 1999 to 2005) and we succeeded in having its minutes published. A Spanish version is being published, too.

We also took part in all of the platforms and initiatives that were being set up in the later stages of the Franco regime to combat the dictatorship and consolidate democratic values and the rule of law. Together with his brothers Jaime and Alvaro, we met through Cuadernos para el Diálogo, the Bar Association – where he had the heightened risk of being a parliament lawyer – and at many other events. Together we lived through the transition and worked on the drafting of the 1978 Constitution.

After joining the then European Community, I asked to join the European Parliament. Three years later, I was elected President of Parliament (1989-92) and I witnessed first-hand the end of the balance of terror and the Cold War, and the development of the Maastricht Treaty. José María became an MEP that parliamentary term and he, too, was later elected President (1997-99). He strengthened European democracy through the negotiations on the Amsterdam Treaty and managed the Santer Commission crisis with great prudence.

We were followed by our untiring and joyful colleague Josep Borrell, another architect and builder of European integration. He is currently Vice-President of the Commission and has shown great courage in his response to the war in Ukraine.

We did not live the lives of retirees. We continued working as Jean Monnet Chairs, speaking about European integration in universities, forums and meetings. Indeed, we often appeared together because – over and above our values – for many young people we represented the commitment and shared vision of two of the main streams of political action and thought, the so-called European political families, which have been cornerstones of that integration. His achievements and his memory will continue to inspire me.



President Enrique Barón Crespo with President José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado
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Enrique Barón Crespo
Former EP and FMA President
PES, Spain (1986-2009)

Key facts

30th Anniversary of the single market

(January session - P9_TA(2023)0007)

The EU single market is considered one of the biggest European achievements and the “engine of European integration and the backbone of its economy”. MEPs warn, however, that its accomplishments cannot be taken for granted given the serious obstacles faced by the EU today - from the long-term geopolitical conflicts to climate change. Recent shocks to the single market (Brexit, the pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine) had a serious impact on its integrity and resilience and further highlighted the importance of unity and cooperation between member states, MEPs note.

Consumer protection in online video games: a European single market approach

(January session - P9_TA(2023)0008)

The report asks for harmonised rules to give parents a good overview of and control over what games their children play as well as how much time and money they spend playing. MEPs propose setting up an annual European online video game award and ask the Commission to put forward a European Video Game Strategy that would help this creative and cultural sector unlock its full potential.

EU response to the protests and executions in Iran

(January session - P9_TA(2023)0016)

Iranian authorities must end crackdown on their own citizens. All those responsible for human rights violations should face EU sanctions and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps should be on the EU terrorist list, MEPs urge. The MEPs express that those responsible for the killing of protesters have to be brought to justice. The resolution calls for “the expansion of restrictive measures” against Iran as it continues to provide unmanned aerial vehicles and plans to provide surface-to-surface missiles to Russia.

REPowerEU chapters in recovery and resilience plans

(February session - P9_TA(2023)0036)

Plenary confirmed a deal reached with the Council in December 2022. Under the agreement, member states applying to receive additional funds through an amended recovery and resilience plan

will be required to include measures to save energy, produce clean energy and diversify energy supplies, as foreseen in the EU's REPowerEU plan.

Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe: Chips Joint Undertaking

(February session - P9_TA(2023)0044)

Parliament set its negotiating position the “Chips Act”, which aims to bolster technological capacity and innovation in EU Chips. MEPs adopted the Chips Joint Undertaking proposal, implementing the measures foreseen under a “Chips for Europe” initiative. The scheme aims to support large-scale capacity building through investment into EU-wide and openly accessible research, development and innovation infrastructure.

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: EU accession

(February session - P9_TA(2023)0047)

Six years after the EU signed the Convention, it has still not ratified it because of the refusal of a few member states. However, the EU Court of Justice's opinion of 6 October 2021 stated that the European Union can ratify the Istanbul Convention without having the agreement of all member states. The EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention does not exempt member states from ratifying it themselves, say MEPs, who urge the remaining six countries - Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia - to ratify the Convention without delay.

Violence against opposition activists in Equatorial Guinea, notably the case of Julio Obama Mefuman

(February session - P9_TA(2023)0050)

Parliament holds the Equatoguinean dictatorial regime responsible for the death of Julio Obama, a prominent dissident and a Spanish and Equatoguinean citizen. MEPs call for the liberation of three other members of the opposition movement MLGE3R. They urge Equatorial Guinea to fully cooperate with Spanish judicial authorities and strongly condemn the dictatorial regime's systemic political persecution and barbaric repression of political opponents and human rights defenders.

Following up on measures requested by Parliament to strengthen the integrity of European institutions

(February session - P9_TA(2023)0054)

MEPs reiterate that they will show “zero tolerance for corruption in any shape and at any level” and insist that Parliament must show “unequivocal unity and unwavering resolve” in this regard. Parliament notes that NGOs have allegedly been used as vectors of foreign interference, and urges a review of existing regulations to enhance transparency on their governance, budget, foreign influence and persons of significant control.

Establishment of an independent EU Ethics Body

(February session - P9_TA(2023)0055)

Parliament reiterates its call for an independent ethics body for the EU institutions, based on MEPs' proposals of September 2021, to restore citizens' trust. The Commission's proposal should be submitted by March, and negotiations should conclude by the summer break, MEPs say. This body should clearly distinguish between criminal actions, breaches of institutional rules, and unethical behaviour. It would play a key role in protecting whistleblowers within the EU institutions, while working in a complementary manner with other EU bodies.

One year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine

(February session - P9_TA(2023)0056)

In a resolution marking one year of Russia's war against Ukraine, MEPs strongly condemn Moscow's aggression and reiterate their unwavering solidarity with the people and leadership of Ukraine. The resolution calls on EU member states to adopt their tenth sanctions package against Russia and its allies by the end of February and to substantially broaden its scope. Parliament further underlines that the Russian war of aggression has fundamentally changed the geopolitical situation in Europe, “which necessitates bold, brave and comprehensive political, security and financial decisions by the EU”.

Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

17.01.23

MEPs support **explicitly banning shipments of all wastes** destined for disposal within the EU and they also want to **ban the export of plastic waste to non-OECD countries**.

19.01.23

MEPs urge the EU, in close cooperation with Ukraine and the international community, to push for the **creation of a special international tribunal** to prosecute Russia's political and military leadership and its allies.

02.02.23

Plenary backed numerous changes to proposed **political advertising** rules to **make elections and referenda more transparent and resistant to interference**.

It's a matter of restricting **targeting strategies** and a de facto ban on micro-targeting, **tackling interference** from abroad implementing **greater transparency** and **establishing new sanctions** in case of infringement.

14.02.23

A €2.4 billion budget will enable the EU to set up the new Infrastructure for Resilience, **Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite (IRIS²)**; Europe's first multi-orbital satellite constellation.

The scheme will ensure the **EU's strategic autonomy in the field of secure government communications**, in a context where cyber security threats are becoming increasingly important.

14.02.23

Parliament asks for the so-called "**derogation**" provisions, which allow a member state to restrict the electoral rights of nationals of other EU countries when they represent **more than 20% of all EU citizens** residing in its territory, to be scrapped

14.02.23

A new legislation sets the path towards **zero CO2 emissions for new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles in 2035** (an EU fleet-wide target to reduce CO2 emissions produced by new cars and vans by 100% compared to 2021).

15.02.23

Mikheil Saakashvili was arrested by Georgian police when returning to the country in 2021.

MEPs say the way former President Mikheil Saakashvili is being treated is a litmus **test of the Georgian government's commitment to European values**.

16.02.23

MEPs say the **EU must lead in clean energy technologies**, improve its industrial base, and produce high quality jobs and economic growth to reach the Green Deal goals.

MEPs call on the Commission to work on **plans to redeploy, relocate and re-shore** industries in Europe.

16.02.23

Following the invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the **prices of fertilisers and energy increased** sharply, having an impact on the cost of food.

Parliament urges the Commission to **ensure the supply of fertilisers**, take action to bring down prices and increase the

16.02.23

Concerning the **situation in Eswatini**, Parliament strongly condemns the killing of Thulani Maseko.

MEPs call for an **investigation into the harassment, violence and pressure against other pro-democracy and human rights activists**.

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





DEONTOLOGY AT PARLIAMENT

At the final part-session in Strasbourg of last year, Parliament adopted a resolution on suspicions of corruption from Qatar and the need for transparency and accountability in the European institutions, thereby responding to the related accusations with immediate changes, including measures designed to plug any gaps in existing rules. And, on 19 January of this year, a resolution was adopted on the situation in Morocco, calling for the application of the same measures as applied to representatives of Qatar and committing to investigating and addressing cases of corruption involving third countries.

Parliament was a pioneer among the EU institutions in promoting transparency and ethics in lobbying. Back in 1989, then President Enrique Barón Crespo introduced an initial regulation (based on the Metten report) requiring lobbyists to sign up to a public register, wear a visible pass on Parliament premises, abide by a code of conduct pledging to refrain from deceitfully obtaining or exchanging information, and to declare any money paid to Members of the European Parliament or their assistants. Any lobbyists that failed to comply with the rules would be stripped of their pass or publicly censured.

It is well known that the EU institutions have dealings with many groups and organisations that represent specific interests and perform lobbying. This is a legitimate and necessary part of the decision-making process, which ensures that EU policies reflect people's real needs.

Participatory democracy is now part and parcel of the European model of society, in accordance with Articles 10 and 11 of the Lisbon Treaty which enshrine the complementarity between representative and participatory democracy.

Participation is, therefore, a citizen's right and subsidiarity is a cornerstone of participatory democracy. As stated in Article 11: 'The institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action. The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.'

The recent 'Conference on the Future of Europe' provides an excellent example of an innovative participatory process based on an open dialogue between citizens and public institutions. This is why Qatargate is so concerning, as the scandal heavily undermines the credibility of the European Parliament.

We are all fully aware of the importance of coming up with fair responses to this serious incident. The Former Members Association agrees that there is a need for a full internal investigation and to introduce further measures to prevent similar occurrences in future. That said, any proposal that involves stripping former Members of their permanent badges would amount to an indiscriminate punishment and it would constitute a very serious offense to the honour of politicians who have made a vital contribution to Parliament and the EU institutions and who performed their duty scrupulously.

A day pass would relegate former Members to mere visitors and would not, in any case, be a sure-fire deterrent to any dodgy dealings or meetings between corruptors and the corrupted. Among other things, it is easy to carry out a daily check with the still existing telematic accesses.

Personally, as an Italian citizen and the Vice-President of the Former Members Association, I feel offended and frustrated by the proposal; however, it is out of a sense of justice and respect for dignity that I am moved to stand up for the rights and integrity of those who, like us, continue to work meticulously to promote the founding values of Europe.

The Former Members Association was set up in 2001 by Lord Henry Plumb, who became its first president, followed by a series of former presidents of the European Parliament, namely, in order: José María Gil-Robles, Pat Cox, Enrique Barón Crespo, Hans-Gert Pöttering, and the current President Klaus Hänsch.

Today, the Association boasts more than 700 members, who constantly strive to uphold and promote the principles of the European Union by passionately and enthusiastically lending their great personal credibility to the Association's many initiatives. Their participation in educational programmes in schools and universities across the globe (such as 'EP to Campus') and in international conferences and missions is highly valued. Drawing on their integrity and experience, the members also demonstrate the contribution they have made to building Europe by writing books and articles and by promoting activities



EP Plenary Session of 16 February 2023 © European Union 2023 - Source : EP

to champion the work of the European Parliament, strengthen parliamentary democracy and serve European unity.

Since its foundation, our Association has taken a stand against any form of corruption or misconduct and sees to it that the former Members behave appropriately, in accordance with the Association's statutes and rules, which have always formed an ethical safeguard against fraudulent activity.

I believe it is essential that we get behind the work of President Roberta Metsola who has, competently and firmly, taken swift action to protect the reputation and authority of the institution with a series of proposals aimed at bolstering anti-corruption measures to bring about greater transparency and, in particular, prevent third countries from 'meddling' in parliamentary business.

Our Association immediately signalled its readiness to cooperate with the President, mindful of the need to make fair, common choices, as is customary, particularly in relation to the former Members who

are true friends of the European Parliament and able to contribute responsibly to restoring trust between citizens and the media.

"Our Association immediately signalled its readiness to cooperate with the President, mindful of the need to make fair, common choices, as is customary, particularly in relation to the former Members who are true friends of the European Parliament and able to contribute responsibly to restoring trust between citizens and the media."

It would really mean something if we were to work together to enhance and deepen 'deontology' at Parliament, based on the ethical principles of probity, impartiality, honesty and transparency, taking account, of course, of the transparency register used

at Parliament, as well as at the Council and the Commission.

I share the concerns of many of my colleagues to think that someone might undermine the great deal of work that has been done over the years and jeopardise the Association's programmes and projects, as well as the relationship of mutual trust that has been gradually built up in Parliament and that has, at times, led to genuine friendships.

It is my hope that, beyond the emotions and headlines, tools and procedures can be put in place that will bring about a fair and common solution that is in keeping with justice and dignity, to stop Parliament's credibility from being further eroded and that the accusations attributed to some cast mud on those who work hard. And, as President Metsola said, Parliament should be recognized by all as 'a beacon of democracy and the rule of law'.

Monica Baldi
EPP-ED, Italy (1994-1999)
baldi.monica@email.it

HIDDEN FROM HIS STORY

The European Parliament (EP) and its overwhelming majority of hard working and honest MEPs have been ill served by the furore and feeding frenzy in Europe's media over 'Qatargate'. The jury is, of course, still out on details and detainees, yet few would question the fact that Belgium's authorities happened on a smoking gun. The EP is a 'crime scene', with the press and TV carelessly blackening the institution and its MEPs. Yet the instant reaction is to ward them off by waving a bundle of new rules like a cross before a vampire misses the point. The EP has a long and principled record in opening up and making transparent its procedures and workings going back more than a quarter of a century. The result was a set of rules that recognised lobbying was not wrong in itself, but designed to protect public, politicians and the right to plead.

The process started back in the early 1990's with Marc Galle (S&D, Luxembourg) Chair of the Rules of Procedure Committee. When he stood down in 1994, I became the rapporteur for the 'own-initiative' Report on the Control and Registration of Lobbyists. It was quickly clear that we should not be mesmerised by the big picture. The field of battle was where talk was small. It was fought in the verbal jungle where the capture and destruction of decimal points, full stops and Oxford commas in Directives and Regulations were worth millions. After all, everyone knew that the Commission and Council accepted more than two-thirds of EP amendments in whole or part. To catch this required granular detail where the to-ings and fro-ings of lobbyists were tracked via register, and annual pass. An attempt to exempt the 'great and the good'



was brushed aside. No-one whose tastebuds weren't completely shot came into the EP for Belgium coffee at its worst; rather they came to sell an agenda whether they were Greenpeace or the Nuclear Industry.

In January 1996 a first Report was referred back to Committee, but July saw a refined version sail through Plenary with only a single vote against. It was a Framework to be filled, and fill it the Parliament did, adding a code of conduct for lobbyists and Declaration of Members Interests in May 1997. Further work followed on Intergroups, both formal and informal. There was a little 'stay behind' resistance with the Declaration of Members Interests only available for inspection and not copying, but pencil and notebook quickly gave way to photocopier and website. These Rules and ongoing refinements only consolidated the EP's good story. From the beginning the failure was enforcement that allowed a few to blacken the many because of the serial failure of successive Administrations to act and action.

In July last year I wrote in *Riding Two Horses; Labour in Europe* (Spokesman), 'The one area that remains inadequately policed is the role of special interest groups and intergroups. While Rule 35(4) specifies an annual declaration, this is more honoured in the breach than delivery. Here is a scandal waiting to happen'. The EP doesn't need more and new rules, but rather the implementation of the old.

"The EP doesn't need more and new rules, but rather the implementation of the old."

Without enforcement any rules will be more colander than control, littered with loopholes to be exploited. The answer is required transparency, not more redundant regulation.

Glyn Ford
PES, United Kingdom (1984-2009)
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THE SAKHAROV PRIZE ON THE DARKEST DAY

In December 2022, Parliament presented its Sakharov Prize, as it does every year. This time round, the honour was awarded to the Ukrainian people. In other words, to the clearest example in the world of a nation espousing, through its independence, the EU's core values. The prize is the highest European form of recognition for individuals or communities leading struggles to gain political freedoms and fundamental rights. The first recipient of the prize, in 1988, was Nelson Mandela. From then, it has been given to a sequence of names that have been closely associated with human rights events in our time.

It has since become a symbol and, at the same time, a weapon. It is a symbol because it encapsulates, in a single gesture, the sum of the actions taken by Parliament to champion the EU's values, both domestically and internationally. They are the values laid down forever more in Article 2 TEU: 'respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights'.

However, the Sakharov Prize is also a weapon. Because it gives those fighting for rights and freedoms the strength of the support and testament, before the whole world, of the first and only Parliament elected on a continental basis.

Unthinking public opinion often underestimates that. But illiberal governments are afraid of that strength. It is capable of crossing borders and escaping censorship, going so far as to shape public and popular perception.

Thus it constantly threatens to undermine the margin of consensus that even the most oppressive regime needs if it is to stay in power.

This explains why those governments seek, by any means possible, to influence the European Parliament's opinion. Avoiding criticism of their regime becomes a goal to be achieved at any cost, including by resorting to corruption. It is a curious type of corruption because it is not geared, primarily, towards obtaining any form of favourable legislative decision or

economic advantage. It stems from fear of the moral strength of a Parliament that – any electoral deficits and weaknesses of individual components aside – is the leading voice of European democratic culture.

It was truly a terrible – but educational – coincidence that disturbing events (pending criminal trial) were reported over the days in which the 2022 Sakharov Prize was being presented. The celebration was disrupted, the day turned dark. But at the moment of the deepest crisis – as always for the EU institutions – the problem also came to light of who should be accountable for the ethical security of a parliament that wants to remain the platform for European concerns about freedoms and problems in that regard.

In this task of moral representation, Parliament is actually alone. In the sense that, before it gives its judgement, there is no contradiction with the other institutions, as is normal in its decision-making processes. Parliament alone assesses the facts. Its solitary position ensures independence, but it also makes it vulnerable. Parliament will therefore have to come up on its own with rules to counter the risk of betrayal by its individual members.

Striving resolutely and rapidly to introduce preventive rules will also serve to keep up the 'pressure' for freedoms and rights. The Sakharov Prize is the highest symbol of that pressure.

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A NEW START FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS?



© Cultural Relations Platform

The Russian war against Ukraine has provided „collateral benefits“ to the Western Balkans. The war itself and the promise of future EU membership for Ukraine, Moldova, and – more indefinitely – Georgia have resulted in new initiatives for the EU accession process of the Western Balkans. The Berlin Process Summit in November, the European Parliament’s adoption of the Picula proposal on EU enlargement on November 23rd, and the EU Western Balkan Summit on December 6th in Tirana – the first in a Western Balkan country – have sent strong signals to the region. Concrete steps added more substance to the general declarations. These included the agreement to enhance free movement between the countries of the region declared at the Berlin Process Summit as well as the energy support package and willingness to finally give Kosovo the promised visa liberalization announced in Tirana.

Nineteen years after the Thessaloniki Summit gave the countries of the Western Balkans the perspective of joining the EU, there has been little concrete progress made.

Now, after years of failing to deal seriously with the accession of the countries between Croatia and Greece, the EU is helping give rise to new hopes. This change stems in part from current hardships in the region, especially due to the ongoing war and its economic and social consequences. As an analysis by the Vienna Institute for Economic Studies shows, inflation following the rising prices for energy and food have a particularly strong effect on the poorer regions of the Western Balkans. This trend will only enhance emigration from the region. Thus, the EU’s energy support package is an urgent social and economic measure to help alleviate poverty and reduce emigration from the region. However, it must also be noted – as shown by another study by the Vienna Institute – that the EU’s financial support to the Western Balkans still lags far behind the support it provided to other Eastern European countries during their time as candidates.

The Tirana declaration after the EU Western Balkan Summit as well as the vote on the Picula proposal in particular underline

the necessity of overcoming obstacles towards reconciliation and regional cooperation. Too many forces in the region still cling to nationalist attitudes and prejudices, and too little attention is given to this behavior by the European Commission. The European Parliament is correct in asking for more engagement by the countries themselves in promoting the region’s “democratic and economic transformation.” But it also asks the European Council and European Commission to upgrade their enlargement strategy. In particular, the European Parliament proposed a phasing-in process in connection with more incentives to fulfill the different conditions on the way towards full EU membership.

Such a phasing-in accession – or staged accession, as it is called by a research project developed jointly by institutes in Brussels and Belgrade – would overcome the stalemate in the enlargement process. Such a process could be helpful for the eventual accession of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia too. It would also give the EU time to prepare itself for this enlargement. With full respect to the EU’s achievements in view of the COVID crisis and the war in Ukraine, both candidate countries and the EU itself must step up the necessary reforms to prepare for the upcoming enlargement. Moreover, the decisions and declarations of the European Council and the European Parliament make it clear that the newly-established European Conference is no substitute for a carefully enlarged EU.

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DOCTOR AND GENOESE AMBASSADOR TO THE WORLD

The Mayor of Genoa, Marco Bucci, has appointed me Genoese Ambassador to the World. I am very grateful to him for that and very proud. The Genoese Order of Doctors has an International Health Committee, of which I am honoured to be a member. I have been wondering why I have received this recognition, which is also a major challenge.

I think it might be because, over the last eight years, I have sailed seas around the world, leaving from the city that I live in, New York, and from the country, the USA, where I started my career as a doctor and work as a university lecturer.

Italy is a country with one of the strongest merchant and military naval traditions in the world. The cruise and inter-island transport

industry is vital to Italy's economic recovery and will increasingly require strong skills. Shipowners, passengers and crews deserve the best possible medical care, i.e. care at a standard on a par with that of all other technical skills. The need to properly train on-board medical staff is all the more acute now because of the health problems that came to light during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, problems which led to the imposition of new rules and created demand for medical staff specialised in first aid, hygiene and prevention. Having said that, there is only one question: why is it that in Italy, and to some extent throughout Europe, there is a shortage of doctors on board ships, but there is not in other countries?

One reason is undoubtedly the explanation given by Sabino Cassese in his book *Lo Stato Introvabile*. He explains how in Italy 'lax governments, staff being put to poor use and byzantine procedures' have effectively prevented the country from reaching the standards achieved by other countries.

The IMO (International Maritime Organization) ILO (International Labour Organization) and WHO (World Health Organization) have signed common protocols on these issues, which all acceding countries are required to comply with.

The main aim is to provide the best protection for critical patients in low or medium resource situations and in the remote environments that ships sometimes find themselves in.

In this new capacity as Genoese Ambassador to the World, as a consultant to Assarmatori and making use of the experience I acquired as a Member of the European Parliament, I will work to ensure that Genoa once again excels in on-board medicine. With a view to developing maritime medicine to a high European standard level, I will try to contact the many former MEP colleagues who are also doctors so that we can build a virtuous network by means of the FMA. Many Member States have large cruise and maritime transport fleets. I would be delighted to set up a European training school for on-board doctors and nurses.

Like me, the Mayor of Genoa, Marco Bucci, was trained in the USA and he is famed for his dynamism and competence. This year the famous Ocean Race, which begins in Alicante in Spain, will end in Genoa in June, after competitors have sailed the seas for six months and crossed half the world.

I hope that our association will be able to help and play a part – well beyond the role assigned to me as Genoese Ambassador to the World – in bringing a 'wave' of skills and credit to the maritime sector too and thus reach every vessel, crew and passenger, all of whom deserve to enjoy excellent health.

Isabella De Martini
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Isabella De Martini "Ambasciatrice di Genova nel Mondo"

WOMEN IN BOARDS - LEGISLATE OR ENCOURAGEMENT?

On the 22th of November 2022, the European Parliament formally adopted the new EU law on gender balance on corporate boards - by 2026, companies will need to have 33% among all directors. This was first mooted in 2009 when I was in the Parliament. This forces legislative approach may result in the undermining of women in the workplace.

The agreement for a great diversity of boards and indeed in all business has been made. The economic benefits for this diversity support this argument. The specific advantages brought by more women at all levels of business and on boards has also been made. The question remains as to what road to take to achieve this objective.

Quotas as stated are the legislative way of dealing with the symptom. They do not however address the cause. This can only be done by ensuring the pathway for more women in boards, and at all levels of work is clear. The will by women and the support of men in this is paramount. The pathway must start from birth, and gender equality. Education plays an important role, and women must be encouraged and supported in whatever path they take. At this stage, it should also be noted that the path changes at different times during the life span. For example, women might choose to take a career break whilst they pursue more time during childrearing and then return to a full working life. Whichever path chosen it must be supported and open.

Legislation such as quotas is very much based on the member state social development. Some member states are well advanced in gender equality, and have been working



towards it for decades, others are less so. Either way it is very much a member state competency and not something the EU can legislate in. Some member states might find they want to develop other means to move forward, some might find they wish to adopt temporary measures; all have a right to take the route best suited for their economic and social structure.

The EU can advise, share best practice and bring the debate on the table as to the advantages of women in business. With a change in family life, the family model and the role of both genders in the home there will be a natural evolution, which will work towards greater gender equality. Board members should be placed on merit, and to legislate for quotas for women would under value the women who have go there on merit.

To summarise, boards must have a diversity of members based on merit. Should a member state wish for its own reasons to include any quotas, temporary or job specific it is very much their own decision, not one to be made at EU level.

We are obliged to support women in their chosen path, open the doors to this, through education, mentoring, role models. We have proved voluntary methods do work, as the 30per cent club in the U.K. has shown. This approach takes companies with the argument, develops united foundations based of respect and merit to increase diversity. Quotas will only act as a negative influence in this progression, and undermine women in the work place.

I have a granddaughter born on the 8th March, which is international women's day. Her mother is the CFO in an equities company, a position she achieved through merit. I would hate to think my granddaughter who represents the next generation of women was given a token position on a board due to EU legislation. Like her mother, she will achieve whatever she wishes through our clearing the obstacles that limit women's ambitions.

Marina Yannakoudakis

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THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Many mourned the death last year of the popular Henry Plumb, the only British President of the European Parliament. He was my political mentor because our families shared historic ties in the Heart of England. I was later honoured to be the last and one of the longest-serving UK Vice-Presidents 2004-2014: David Martin served the longest, from 1989 to 2004.

Writing about this topic is poignant for me as someone who first dreamed of a fairly elected European Parliament as a liberal-minded youth in the 1960s, then fought for Britain's place within it in the 1970s, and in 2019 played a key role in the People's Vote campaign for another referendum to overturn the UK's disastrous and much-disputed 2016 "Leave" referendum. As I write, the UK is waking up to the economic and social disaster Brexit has created: tracker opinion polling now shows 65 per cent hostile to Brexit.

Following Churchill's inspirational speeches – "a sort of United States of Europe" - Britain's actual relationship with continental politics first saw the emergence in the UK of a

nationalist Right, opposed to the UK's membership of the European Economic Community (EEC). This was led by Enoch Powell, and a nationalist Left was led by Michael Foot. One of Labour's first MEPs was the fiery Eurosceptic Barbara Castle.

Britain eventually joined the Common Market in 1973 under Harold Macmillan, a devoted internationalist. Then, following premier Harold Wilson's renegotiation, the country voted in a 1975 referendum by 67-33 per cent to remain in the EEC, a ratio close to the 65 per cent of Britons who oppose Brexit today. If that continues, it is enough to convince Brussels that Britain really does regret Brexit.

A recent book by two distinguished European Parliament staffers, Dianne Hayter – former Secretary-General of the Socialist Group and David Harley, former Deputy Secretary General of the Parliament – *The Forgotten Tribe: British MEPs 1979 – 2020* - is a collection of reminiscences by and about the 351 British MEPs, as well as a comprehensive record of

their political loyalties and terms of office. The book emphasises the contribution of British MEPs and staffers, for example in Malcolm Harbour, the creation of the Single Market; Ken Collins, environmental policies; Richard Corbett's constitutional genius; my €1.1bn human rights and democracy promotion (the world's largest) and Nicholas Bethell, the enlargement process embracing C/E Europe.

An annex on "movers" records my protest at the Conservative Party's fateful break from the EPP in 2009 by my re-election as the first independent Vice-President. That break coincided with the emergence of a hard, EU-funded Euroscepticism led by some Conservative MEPs and UKIP's Nigel Farage. Until corrected by another UK referendum, Farage's was Britain's most negative contribution to democracy in the EU: Brexit.

The book concludes "by a grim irony of history, Britain's membership has ended at a time of renewed insecurity in Europe when cooperation and its benefits have never been more needed. What wider lessons can be drawn about Britain's European experience from the part played by these MEPs?" The future will tell.

Edward McMillan-Scott

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Edward McMillan-Scott chairing a Strasbourg Plenary Session © European Union 2005 - EP

FMA ACTIVITIES



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LORD HENRY PLUMB

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE AND WORK OF LORD HENRY PLUMB

Speech by Professor Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering, former President of the European Parliament (2007-2009) and of the Former Members Association (2018-2022) at the Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of The Lord Plumb on 28 November 2022 in the St. Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the many hundreds of members of the European Parliament who worked with and appreciated Henry Plumb over many years, and for whom he was not only a colleague, but a friend.

In the name of the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, and the President of our Former Members Association (FMA), Klaus Hänsch, I wish to express my deep personal appreciation for Henry and my sympathy and my condolences to his family and friends.

With Henry, Lord Plumb, the only British President of the European Parliament, we have lost a British patriot and passionate European. With a shrewd combination of enthusiasm and pragmatism, Henry always advocated a strong United Kingdom in a strong European Union. As a Member of the European Parliament from 1979, the first direct election, until 1999, Henry served Europe, in the best sense of the word, in all his roles – as President of the European Parliament, as Chairman of the Parliament's Committee on Agriculture, as Leader of the European Democrats in the Parliament, as Chairman of the Parliament's Joint Assembly with the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, and in many other roles.

It was he who invited Pope John Paul II to speak in the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1988.

It was a time of great hope for a free Europe: on 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and the division of Europe was overcome. Henry was a confident partner of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. He was a determined, courageous and far-sighted advocate of strengthening the European Parliament as an institution and in its relations with governments, overseeing the implementation of the Single European Act, which finalized the common market.

In retirement, Henry became the first President of the Former Members Association in December 2001, and he led it until May 2006, since when he was Honorary President. This established the tradition that the FMA President should always be a former President of the Parliament for four years.

Brexit deeply shook Henry Plumb. However, it had been a great satisfaction for him to support the government of Prime Minister Gordon Brown in the House of Lords in the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, marking him out again not only as a great Briton, but a great European. If the United Kingdom had rejected the Lisbon Treaty, it would not be the legal and political basis of the European Union today. Henry Plumb's commitment to the Lisbon Treaty is therefore also his legacy for our European future.

Henry Plumb was a self-confident personality, as farmers often are. After being elected President of the European Parliament, somebody told him that he should call his Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. His response was "She should call me." As far as I know, the great lady called Henry soon thereafter. Before the Pope addressed the Parliament, Henry warned him of the risk that a certain member – let's call him a "turbulent priest" from Northern Ireland – might stage some kind of a stunt and interrupt his speech. Henry said: "If this happens, just leave it to me from the chair". The Pope replied: "Yes, of course, you are the boss!" "The boss" passed away at the ripe old age of 97. As he said famously in his younger years: "I was born a Briton, but I will die a European."

As we now bid farewell to this extraordinary personality, we also remember his great wife, Marjorie, who passed away a few years ago, always supporting her husband and accompanying him on many journeys. It was a privilege for me to have been on friendly terms with both of them. I was invited to their farm and had the privilege of speaking with Henry Plumb shortly before his death.

For the 20th FMA anniversary, he sent us a video message with his best wishes and greetings. He was a great person whose positive charisma and humor conveyed hope and confidence. He was a role model to many, including myself. We will keep him in good and grateful memory.

May the time come in the future when Henry Plumb will have a successor as President of the European Parliament coming from the United Kingdom.

Thank you, Henry, and your beloved wife, Marjorie, for your great service as a British patriot, a committed European and a personal friend.

Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering
EPP-ED, Germany (1979-2014)



Former Presidents of the European Parliament © European Union, 2007

LORD HENRY PLUMB

EPRS ROUNDTABLE EVENT DEVOTED TO LORD HENRY PLUMB

Extract of the speech by FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi during the EPRS Roundtable discussion about 'Lord Henry Plumb: A Historical Appraisal' on 7 December 2022 in the European Parliament Library's Reading Room.

I am pleased to speak in this first EPRS roundtable which is dedicated to Lord Henry PLUMB, the late President to whom I am linked for having shared an important part of my political activity in the European Parliament. He was President of the European Parliament (1987-89) and was elected Member of Parliament in the first direct elections in 1979 and will remain in the European Parliament for 4 legislatures, until 1999. He was the first President of the FMA, in 2001, which he had founded with great vision together with Lord Richard BALFE and Ursula SCHLEICHER. I met Lord Plumb for the first time in 1994, as soon as I entered the European Parliament, in the Cooperation and Development Committee where I was coordinator for my political group.



Monica Baldi and Lord Henry Plumb on the occasion of the awarding to Lord Henry Plumb the medal for "Unione dei Popoli", held in the Badia Fiesolana on 16 October 1998 © HAEU



Speakers Prof. P. Ludlow, David Harley, Wolfram Kaiser and Monica Baldi during the EPRS Roundtable, 7 December 2022 © European Union 2022 - Source : EP

He was Co-President of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States – European Union (ACP-EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly, a position he held until 1999.

I was immediately struck by his direct, pleasant, affable manner and the look with which he scrutinized me as if to try to understand my real intentions but, above all, I was intrigued by the fact that all the parliamentarians, of any political party, appreciated and trusted him.

Yes, of course, he had been President of the European Parliament, but this was not the sufficient condition to have everyone's esteem: he had many more qualities that I have discovered over the years.

With his affable looks and youthful enthusiasm combined with shrewd pragmatism he was heavily committed to consistently advocating action for the United Kingdom and the European Union.

I remember when he told me anecdotes about his parliamentary life such as the one with Former EP President Enrique BARÓN CRESPO who was his political opponent but also a good friend and he laughed remembering the story that was circulating in parliament about the RED BARÓN AGAINST THE WHITE KNIGHT. And also, ironically, he associated his surname PLUMB with fruit and therefore with agriculture which, to tell the truth, he was constantly involved throughout his long life. In this regard, I recall his concern when in 1996 the European Parliament approved the decision to set up a temporary commission of inquiry into bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

But the memories I am most fond of are those relating to the EU ACP Parliamentary Assemblies which he chaired with sympathy, professionalism and firmness. He always managed to put everyone at ease, especially when dealing with more delicate dossiers concerning democracy and respect for human rights. For me it was a real privilege to be able to work with him and sometimes face difficult situations in the field of cooperation and development and beyond.

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POLITICS AS A COMPROMISE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

UNIVERSITY OF MAHIDOL, THAILAND | 7 OCTOBER 2022 | ONLINE

To speak about politics is to understand it as an action based on knowledge and irreducible principles that can never be affected by self-interest. It is an action guided by freedom, or at least the possibility of freedom.

'(...) an absolute freedom would be a useless freedom, whose very concept is concretely unthinkable. (...) political awareness seeks progress towards the elimination of violence' (Weil, E., *Political Philosophy*, Vrin, Paris, 1956, pp. 137 and 310). Therefore, we may wonder what role education plays in political action, especially as, '(...) Men make their history, but not with will and conscience' (Habermas, J., *Técnica e Ciência como Ideologia*, Ed. Unesp, São Paulo, 2014, p. 86).

This is a philosophical discussion, if we understand philosophy to mean using thought to improve ourselves, or if the political action is a moral action guided by the ethical aspects of each human being.

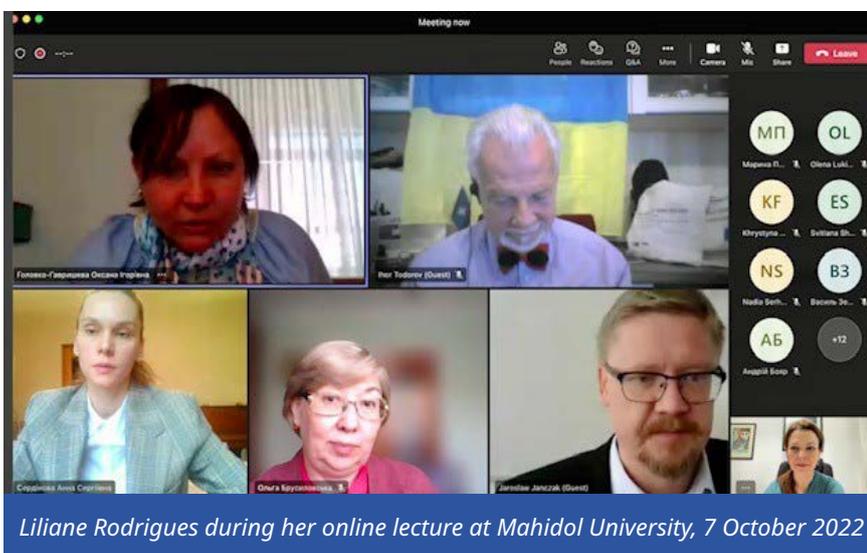
Here, EU education has a great responsibility to ask the Member States to ensure there is a sense of belonging, of shared community, of help and responsibility for others. This includes introducing young people to the various religious, ethnic, national and regional identities in Europe. The diversity of Europe and its multicultural communities is crucial to the shape of its societies and constitutes a fundamental cultural asset, that is, human rights and their preservation. By educating we are protecting human rights, and to do that we need to keep a keen eye on the Declaration of Human Rights as a map that guides us all like brothers and sisters. Of course, there are legally binding instruments on human rights, negotiated under the auspices of the UN, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These instruments, adopted by the General Assembly in 1966, take the provisions of the Universal Declaration a step

forward, translating those rights into legally binding commitments, while UN committees monitor the States Parties' adherence to those commitments. But these pacts are rather tame without the commitment of every citizen and without the protection of political powers.

The Council of Europe drew up the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in 1950 and that convention entered into force on 3 September 1953. The ECHR is the main pre-condition that new countries wishing to join the Council of Europe have to sign up to, and all of the current 47 Member States are parties to the Convention. The Convention protects: the right to life, the right to a fair trial, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the right to protection of property. By contrast, the Convention prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment, slavery and forced labour, the death penalty, arbitrary and illegal detention and discrimination of the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set down in the Convention.

Nevertheless, upholding and defending human rights is not something done by decree. They are upheld and defended by those who understand that humanity is the most valuable asset we have, and politics is the guardian of that great asset.

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Liliane Rodrigues during her online lecture at Mahidol University, 7 October 2022

EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

THE IMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON THE DEEPENING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

LIUSS GUIDO CARLI UNIVERSITY ROME, ITALY | 14 NOVEMBER 2022 | ONLINE

Richard Corbett spoke on 14 November 2022 on 'The Impact of the European Parliament on the deepening of the European Union' to 30 master degree students at the Luiss Guido Carli University, Rome.

His talk focussed on how the EP constantly pushed for three things:

- Widening the field of EU (then EC) competences to include all subjects where it is beneficial to have common policies.
- Making the EU more effective, not least by enlarging the field in which the Council acts by QMV rather than unanimity.
- Making the EU more democratic, notably by giving the EP legislative powers and an involvement in the appointment of the Commission.

The EP did this both by (1) pushing for treaty change and (2) by interpreting the treaties, stretching them like elastic, to maximise their potential.

Corbett described in detail the EP's input and impacts in the negotiations that led to the Single European Act, and the Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon treaties. In every case, the EP produced proposals, pushed for them, built alliances with supportive national parliaments and governments, and most of its MEPs argued the case within their political parties, in the media and in academic and public debates. Each time, the EP innovated: from itself producing a draft of a new treaty (the "Spinelli" draft treaty in 1984), to joint conferences with national parliaments (the "Parliamentary Assizes" of 1990 and the Convention of 2002), to participating in preparatory "reflection groups" with governmental representatives.

It repeatedly found new ways of building up support for its proposals.

These step-by-step revisions and additions to the original treaties enlarged the field of competence of the EU, giving it new responsibilities in fields that were absent (or scarcely mentioned) in the original treaties: the environment, research, cohesion policy, consumer protection, public health, trans-European networks, citizenship, monetary union, police and justice matters, foreign and security policy. They improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the EU, notably by expanding the field in which the Council may vote by a qualified majority rather than by unanimity, increasing the capacity of the Court to deal with a growing volume of cases by creating a court of first instance, strengthening the Commission as the EU's executive, allowing the European Council to choose its own full time President instead of having an automatic rotation among national leaders every 6 months, and allowing for enhanced cooperation of a majority of states when a small minority might otherwise block progress.

Above all, they made the EU more democratic, by introducing and then extending co-decision powers for the EP on EU legislation (whereby the Council and the EP form a bicameral legislature), giving the EP the power to ratify (or not) international agreements, extending its budgetary powers, and giving it the power to approve the appointment of the Commission and to elect its President (for a term of office that now corresponds to the five-year term of the EP). The role of national parliaments was also strengthened.

At the same time, the EP always tried to exploit the existing treaties as they were, at any given moment, either by unilateral action or by inter-institutional agreements). Mr Corbett gave several examples, including:

- When it only had consultative powers on legislation, the EP amended its internal Rules of Procedure to take advantage of a Court judgment that Council could only adopt legislation once it had received the formal opinion of the EP. Under its new rule, the EP first approved any amendments it wished to make to proposals, but delayed its final vote (thereby preventing a decision) until it had discussed the amendments with the other institutions and was satisfied with their response.
- It used its powers to reject the budget to secure a number of inter-institutional agreements with the Council and Commission that increased its rights.
- When it gained the right to approve (or not) the appointment of a new Commission, it insisted that, before it proceeded to a vote, each and every candidate Commissioner should appear before the parliamentary committee corresponding to the portfolio of the candidate, to take part in a three-hour public hearing.

By both securing changes to the treaties and then stretching them like a piece of elastic, the EP succeeded in transforming the European Communities of 40 years ago into the stronger, more effective, and democratic Union that it is today. But this is a process that is still unfinished....

Richard Corbett

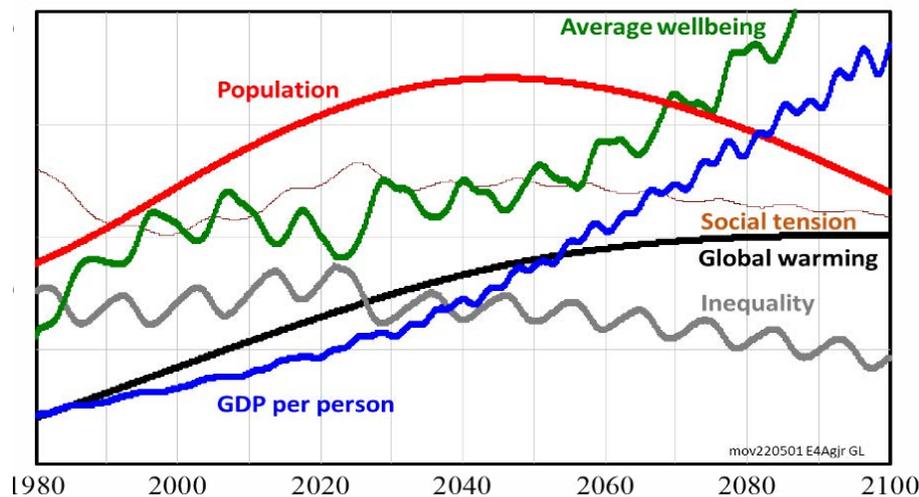
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CONFERENCE '50 YEARS OF LIMITS TO GROWTH' (1972-2022)

UNIVERSITY OF CLERMONT AUVERGNE, FRANCE | 1 DECEMBER 2022 | ON CAMPUS

What an event! Some of the famous representatives of ecological economics came together to discuss the evolution of their discipline together with activists of the environmental movements. They referred to Herman E. Daly, one of the fathers of ecological economics (he passed away in October 2022). His call was to limit human economic activity to a level that is within the carrying capacity of the earth and thus sustainable. This was also the basic idea of the conference in Clermont-Ferrand, which was organized by Arnaud Diemer and his colleagues.

Since the publication of the first report of the "Club of Rome" in 1972 on the limits to growth, environmental economists have been working on strategies for an environmentally sound economy. Their essential three principles today are: adherence to the principles of law (Joyeeta Gupta, University of Amsterdam), overcoming hunger and extreme poverty (Jorgen Randers, Norway, Robert Costanza, London), and ending the destruction of the world's climate (Steven Stone PNU, Peter Victor York University Canada). Thus, it is not just about technical reduction of CO2 emissions, but equally about social development. Adherence to the principles of law is so very necessary because only when there is no substantial arbitrariness and corruption can community standards be realized. The overcoming of extreme poverty is necessary because only people who can accept their social situation are able to protect the interests of the community - and therefore the equality of women is also an essential factor, because women have a much higher social orientation than men.



6 central variables in Earth4All model Base Run – population, social tension, global warming, inequality and average wellbeing © Earth4All project, 16 September 2022

Only through the active participation and development of societies plus technical measures can the world climate be saved, according to environmental economists.

"Only through the active participation and development of societies plus technical measures can the world climate be saved (...)."

They plead for a "wellbeing economy" and say that a real improvement of the world climate can only be achieved by improving the social situation. Extreme poverty, along with CO2, is the biggest climate killer on Earth. Therefore, it is existential to give the poorest countries more time for development and thus CO2 reduction than the rich countries.

The status of a "wellbeing economy" can be measured with an index that includes five items:

1. disposable income of workers per person - after taxes (in 2017 PPP \$ per person per year).
2. public spending per person (in 2017 PPP \$ per person per year).
3. equity (disposable income of owners divided by disposable income of workers).
4. environmental quality (global warming in degrees Celsius since 1850).
5. perceived progress (the rate of increase in well-being over the past five years).

This is an interesting approach also for the European Union and fits perfectly into the project of a "Green New Deal"!

P.S. By the way: My contribution was a short history of modern environmental movements since the beginning made by Rachel Carson with the book "Silent Spring" in 1962.

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EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

THE IMPACT OF BREXIT

MANIPAL ACADEMY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, INDIA | 25-28 JANUARY 2023 | ON CAMPUS

Phineas Fogg, Jules Verne's intrepid global explorer famously managed to travel around the world in eighty days. One hundred days from my planned departure date to India, I was still in the United Kingdom. Some ill-judged comments by British government ministers concerning India's record in countering Covid-19 had resulted in the withdrawal of the UK's access to their electronic visa system.

Travelling on missions as an MEP, there was always the luxury of the protocol service to arrange diplomatic necessities. Going it alone, two visits to India's out-sourced visa service in London met with frustration and rejections, but just as I was reaching the point of despair, Fogg's words came to mind, 'the chance which now seems lost may present itself at the last moment'. It did when the Delhi government relaxed and an e-visa was granted within 24 hours! At the end of January, with a fresh itinerary, I arrived in the southern state of Karnataka.



Robert Evans during this lecture in India, 25 January 2023.

My Former Members Association invitation was to both Mangalore University and Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE a private university).

MAHE is home to an impressive Jean Monnet Centre for European Studies, rapidly evolving into the hub for European Studies in India, offering several courses at undergraduate and masters' level

coupled with impressive links to more than twenty EU universities. My original communications for the trip were through Priya Vijaykumar but my delay meant I missed her as she was posted to Brussels for five months. The responsibility fell to the head of Manipal's Jean Monnet centre, professor Neeta Inamdar.

In December I met with Priya in Brussels to ensure I was well briefed for the visit. I needed not have any concerns for professor Inamdar, Praveen and Risha, looked after me admirably and ensured a most satisfying and enjoyable five-day trip.

My first two talks were at Mangalore on the impact of Brexit on the European Union and then about the developing role of SAARC - the South Asian Area for Regional Cooperation. The students posed thoughtful questions at both sessions, being as perplexed as I am at the UK's decision to leave the EU and try to go it alone.



Robert Evans during his lecture in India, 25 January 2023.

“The students posed thoughtful questions at both sessions, being as perplexed as I am at the UK’s decision to leave the EU and try to go it alone.”

January 26th was India’s Republic Day and I joined students at Thenkanidiyur College, in celebrating India becoming an independent functioning democratic republic of 36 states and territories. I spoke of the tremendous contribution Indians have made worldwide, from their cricket stars to providing Britain’s first ethnic minority prime minister. My final talk was on the impact of Brexit on India-Europe business links, emphasising the important of SMEs. The masters’ course students asked challenging questions, ranging from EU immigration policies to the impact on the Indian economy of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

All too soon my whirlwind tour finished. Despite the visa frustrations and the complexity of the travel arrangements it was an excellent and thoroughly worthwhile visit.



Robert Evans participating to India’s Republic Day on 26 January 2023.

I was made so very welcome and as I can’t argue with MAHE’s vision statement aspiring to ‘global leadership in human development, excellence in education and healthcare’.

From everything I experienced on my visit they are living up to expectations in every department and serving Jean Monnet proud.

Phineas Fogg’s conclusion, ‘it’s really useful to travel, if you want to see new things,’ could not be more true for my trip to Karnataka. Heartfelt thanks to all involved.

Robert Evans

*PES, United Kingdom (1994-2009)
uk.robert.evans@gmail.com*

“From everything I experienced on my visit they are living up to expectations in every department and serving Jean Monnet proud.”



वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्
ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE

India holds the **Presidency of the G20** from December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023. The 43 Heads of Delegations- the largest ever in G20-will be participating in the final New Delhi Summit in September next year.

The **theme of India’s G20 Presidency** - “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” or **“One Earth • One Family • One Future”** - is drawn from the ancient Sanskrit text of the Maha Upanishad.

India’s G20 priorities are: Green Development, Climate Finance & LiFE, Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth, Accelerating progress on SDGs, Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure, Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century and Women-led development.

Source: Press Release 10 December 2022, Ministry of External Affairs, India ©

UPCOMING EVENTS



ACTIVITIES

30-31
MARCH 2023

FMA Visit to Sweden

From 30 to 31 March, a Delegation of former MEPs will visit Sweden on the occasion of the Presidency of the Council of the EU. A report about this visit will be published in the June edition of the FMA Bulletin.

3
MAY 2023

Librorum, Annual Memorial Service and Dinner Debate

From 15.30 to 17.00, the FMA will organise Librorum with a presentation by Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering of his biography 'A European Conscience' in the European Parliament, Brussels. From 17.45 to 18.15, current and former MEPs will commemorate their colleagues who passed away in 2022-2023 in the EP Hemicycle. A Dinner Debate takes place from 19.00 to 21.15 with Invited Guest Speaker EU Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni, preceded by a Cocktail from 18.30 to 19.00, both organised in the Members' Restaurant.

4
MAY 2023

FMA General Assembly and Annual Lunch

From 10.00 to 13.00 the FMA Annual General Assembly will take place in the European Parliament, Brussels. The Assembly will be followed by the Annual Lunch, that is offered to FMA Members. Information about the Annual Events and the opening of registrations was communicated via email, the FMA website and FMA social media channels.

16
JUNE 2023

"Can the EU learn from experience?" - Hybrid conference

The FMA in cooperation with the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) and the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission, organise the hybrid conference 'Can the EU learn from experience?' in Villa Salviati EUI (Florence). More information will be communicated at a later stage by email and the FMA website.

FMA MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS



"MASKS" BY MARIELA BAEVA (2022)

Having lost Ina to cancer, Villi confronts memories linked to their life before and after Bulgaria's transition to democracy in the 1990s. Will he overcome the fact that their son is addicted to drugs? El, their daughter, is overwhelmed with emotion in the face of the tragedy in the family. What is her and her family's role in moving forward? The accelerating deterioration of Bulgaria-Türkiye relations in the Eighties and the resistance of the ethnic Türks in Bulgaria deliver a blow to national security and the political system. How does this subline interact with the main story line? The author creates insight into the minds of her characters and endeavours to balance shifting perspectives, dramatic irony, suspense and action.

The book is available here: <https://www.europebookstore.com/products/masks-mariela/>

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome
to the FMA



Diana WALLIS
ALDE, UK (1999-2012)

FMA AT WORK

MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Klaus
HÄNSCH



Monica BALDI



Jean-Pierre
AUDY



Teresa RIERA
MADURELL



Michael
HINDLEY



Miguel Angel
MARTÍNEZ
MARTÍNEZ



Edward
McMILLAN-
SCOTT



Manuel PORTO



Paul RÜBIG

For Mr Pier Antonio Panzeri applies Art. 6 of the FMA Statutes.

FMA BUREAU

President: **Klaus HÄNSCH**

Vice-President: **Monica BALDI**

Treasurer: **Jean-Pierre AUDY**

Secretary: **Teresa RIERA MADURELL**

LIST OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

FMA Bulletin Editorial Board:

Ms Baldi (Chair), Mr Audy, Mr McMillan-Scott, Ms Riera Madurell and Mr Rübzig.

EP to Campus: Mr Hindley (Chair) and Mr Porto.

Relations with Budgets Committee, DG Finance: Mr Audy.

Dinner Debate: Ms Baldi.

Delegates to the Bureau of the European Association of Former Members (FP-AP): Mr Martínez Martínez and Ms Riera Madurell. If necessary they will be substituted by Mr Audy.

Delegates to the Annual General Assembly, seminars and colloquies of the FP-AP:

Mr Audy, Mr Martínez Martínez and Ms Riera Madurell. Besides the FMA delegates or their substitutes and in agreement with the European Association, other FMA Management Committee Members may participate in the annual seminars or colloquies at their own expense.

Relations with Former Members Associations outside Europe: Mr Audy and Mr Martínez Martínez.

Annual seminar and relations with think tanks, policy institutes and foundations: Ms Riera Madurell (Chair), Ms Baldi and Mr Rübzig.

Archives: Ms Baldi.

FMA Communication: Ms Baldi (Chair) and Mr Hindley.

Working Group on Democracy Support and Election Observation:

Mr Hindley, Mr Martínez Martínez, Mr McMillan-Scott and Ms De Keyser (FMA member with advisory role).

Relations with the House of European History: Mr Martínez Martínez.

Relations with the European University Institute (EUI): Ms Baldi.

IN MEMORIAM



José Manuel DUARTE CENDÁN

☞ 22 November 2022
PES, Spain (1986-1989, 1990-1994)

He served as a Spanish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Duarte Cendán represented 'Partido Socialista Obrero Español'.



Roger GAUTHIER

☞ 24 November 2022
EPD-EDA, France (1983-1984, 1986-1989)

He served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Gauthier represented 'Rassemblement pour la République'.



Gerardo BIANCO

☞ 1 December 2022
EPP, Italy (1994-1999)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Bianco represented 'Partito popolare italiano'.



Antonio MAZZONE

☞ 10 December 2022
NA, Italy (1989-1994)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Mazzone represented 'Movimento sociale italiano - Destra nazionale'.

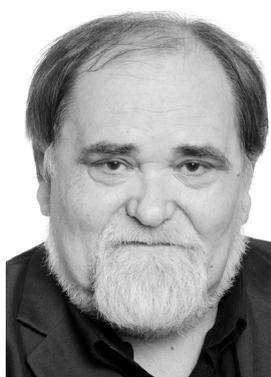
IN MEMORIAM



Paul Ph. M.H. DE KEERSMAEKER

☞ 16 December 2022
EPP, Belgium (1979-1981)

He served as a Belgian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr De Keersmaeker represented 'Christelijke Volkspartij'.



Miroslav ČÍŽ

☞ 29 December 2022
S&D, Slovakia (2019-2022)

He served as a Slovakian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Číž represented 'SMER-Sociálna demokracia'.



Marek PLURA

☞ 20 January 2023
EPP, Poland (2014-2019)

He served as a Polish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Plura represented 'Platforma Obywatelska'.



Xavier RUBERT DE VENTÓS

☞ 28 January 2023
PES, Spain (1986-1994)

He served as a Spanish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Rubert de Ventós represented 'Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya'.

IN MEMORIAM



Jean-Maurice DEHOUSSE

✝ 7 February 2023
PES, Belgium (1999-2004)

He served as a Belgian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Dehousse represented 'Parti socialiste'.



Hans MODROW

✝ 10 February 2023
GUE/NGL, Germany (1999-2004)

He served as a German Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Modrow represented 'Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus'.



José María GIL-ROBLES GIL-DELGADO

✝ 13 February 2023
EPP, Spain (1989-2004)

He served as a Spanish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado represented 'Partido Popular'.



Curzio MALTESE

✝ 26 February 2023
GUE/NGL, Italy (2014-2019)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Maltese represented 'Lista Tsipras-L'Altra Europa'.



Joachim ZELLER

✝ 2 March 2023
EPP, Germany (2009-2019)

He served as a German Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Zeller represented 'Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands'.

EUROPEAN RESILIENCE



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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE PEACE

The planet is facing a serious climate emergency. Humanity, through its actions, is destroying biodiversity and creating the conditions for its own self-destruction. This is what is called the Anthropocene. This unprecedented climatic crisis, together with the atomic threat that Russia's war with Ukraine generates, in a conflictive trance unprecedented since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. This serious situation is compounded by global inflation processes, particularly with regards to energy and food. In addition, these geopolitical situations are compounded by democratic instability and the rise of populism, which threaten democratic governance in the world.

It is essential to take effective actions capable of producing results in the shortest possible time.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have sought to coordinate and make human development compatible with that of the planet and prosperity. Unfortunately, progress has not been enough, as a result of the crisis situations described above.

Humanity needs to establish new forms of production based on clean energy and new forms of production. This is directly related to the way we consume. It is necessary to visualize the contributions made by SDG 12, referring to human consumption patterns.

“It is essential to advance in decarbonization, in the development and production of clean energies, in investments to generate an effective ecological transition, which will make it possible to meet the major goals of the 2030 Agenda and save humanity.”

It is essential to advance in decarbonization, in the development and production of clean energies, in investments to generate an effective ecological transition, which will make it possible to meet the major goals of the 2030 Agenda and save humanity.

If we do not change the ways in which we consume, it will be impossible to think of and act according to new development models compatible with climate change mitigation and with the definitions required to avoid the catastrophe of the Anthropocene.



Sustainable Development Goals © United Nations, 2019

We need to take care of the planet. It is necessary to make Peace with the planet, which entails making Peace with the oceans, to put an end to the serious pollution that affects the oceans, particularly plastic pollution. The possibility of producing clean energy is real and effective, but it requires political will to leave behind the traditional consumption of coal and oil. It means thinking about green hydrogen, wind energy, and various forms of renewable energy reproduction, and producing clean and decontaminated water.

Political will demands concerted action and cooperation. Without cooperation, there is no peace. Without cooperation, there is no development. Without cooperation, there is no progress. Humanity requires a Partnership for Cooperation. This partnership can only be achieved within an effective multilateral framework, both global and regional. Multilateralism today is in a deep crisis. Rules-based multilateralism was lost because of the war in Europe. It is essential that the world re-establish a system of rules and that these rules be respected. Mitigation measures must be agreed upon and a new development must be promoted, in accordance with the protection of the environment and the planet; that is to say, it is imperative to leave behind the oil and coal economy and advance in the decarbonization of the planet.

It is essential to advance equitably towards digitalization and share advances in the field of artificial intelligence, protect the Amazon and the world's forests, and generate the infrastructure for the energy transition that will come.



Amazon Rainforest, Brasil © Adobe Stock

From the Global South, it is possible to contribute significantly to the protection of the environment and biodiversity and to promote peace and global stability. This requires solidarity and cooperation to advance democratic governance and an effective rule of law in all nations.

resources and their responsible management, particularly in an interconnected world. In this sense, it is essential to recover truth over falsehood, to recover peace over violence, to protect the planet and develop new methods and chains of production, with a focus on sustainable human development and sustainable peace.

“It is essential to recover truth over falsehood, to recover peace over violence, to protect the planet and develop new methods and chains of production, with a focus on sustainable human development and sustainable peace.”

The training of human resources and the renewal of knowledge is fundamental. The University for Peace - www.upeace.org - trains leaders for peace, in accordance with the mandate it was given by the UN General Assembly upon its establishment over four decades ago. These young leaders - from a plurality of nationalities - have the capacity to act and create the conditions for the resilience of societies in the face of the great challenges facing humanity, especially in terms of conflict transformation, dispute resolution, and the protection of natural

Rector Francisco Rojas-Aravena
University for Peace of the United Nations (UPEACE)
www.upeace.org

EUROPE'S RESILIENCE IS SCALING UP



First, building urban resilience means deploying innovative methodologies and leveraging technology for contextual data collection.

In this regard, Barcelona's resilience journey can inspire other European cities. In 2009, after a series of unexpected critical events—droughts, terrorist attacks, floods, and others—threatened the balance of the city, Barcelona was convinced that urban resilience was a leading element for sustainability. The municipality fostered multisectoral collaboration and partnered with UN-Habitat to develop a methodology that was implemented and tested in the city. The result was the City Resilience Profiling Tool—which uses contextualised data to diagnose the performance of multiple systems, mobilise urban actors and make better decisions. For eight years, UN-Habitat's City Resilience Global Programme has supported the tool's implementation in Barcelona. Through its cooperation efforts, Barcelona has scaled up actions to support other cities, providing knowledge and mentoring local governments to embark on their resilience journey. The alliance has resulted in the implementation and calibration of the resilience tool in Maputo, Mozambique, Dakar, Senegal and, today, Medellín and Tunis.

Our world has changed, heightening urban resilience from essential to the only way forward. Europe was developing plans to recover from the pandemic and the growing global economic crisis when Russia invaded Ukraine. The ongoing conflict brought a high influx of refugees to European cities, soared inflation across the eurozone, especially food and energy prices, and raised social division and mistrust. In the background, climate emergencies multiply and intensify in the region. Repeatedly, these shocks evidence how cities, as the first line of defence, must be better prepared.

All these challenges are interlinked. By adopting a resilience lens, local regional and national governments can see the linkages between these challenges and the chronic, ongoing pressures that undermine urban systems and their people. Resilience building is a tool to mobilise all urban actors and determine the actions with the most significant impact on people, assets, and urban processes.

As stated by the UN Secretary-General: We need cooperation, yet we face fragmentation. The recent shocks have made it clear that recovering from the current crises and preparing to better respond to the next ones requires scale and emphasis on integration and collaboration. And this is something that Europe knows and masters.

Over the past years, some European cities have taken significant steps to build urban resilience. Their cases serve as inspiration to scale up the impact across Europe and the world. Three actions could help other European cities move fast forward to their resilience journey.

“Through its cooperation efforts, Barcelona has scaled up actions to support other cities, providing knowledge and mentoring local governments to embark on their resilience journey.”

Second, scaling actions to build urban resilience across Europe means national, regional and local governments must play a role in putting ambitious and credible plans in place. The effects of disasters are mainly felt at the local level. The local capacity to resist, the ability to adapt, and the severity of the impact go beyond local and regional boundaries.

“The local capacity to resist, the ability to adapt, and the severity of the impact go beyond local and regional boundaries.”

Chronic stresses within the urban systems determine the resilience of the city and the community—such as lack of housing and basic infrastructure, gender and digital gap, political divide, and economic crisis—and require regional and national solutions. Against this background and in light of Barcelona’s journey, the Regional Government of Catalonia joined forces with UN-Habitat to calibrate the City Resilience Global Programme methodology for territorial and regional implementation.

For the first time, UN-Habitat is implementing the Resilience Global Programme in a territory. The program’s implementation, spanning four years, started in 2022 in the pilot territory of Terres de l’Ebre—a biosphere reserve of high importance for Europe.

Terres is a depopulated area vulnerable to climate change with six different landscapes, including the Delta del Ebro—home to 19 species protected under European, Spanish and Catalan wildlife legislation.

Third, contributing to achieving Sustainable Development Goals demands working together in networks that scale up impact and knowledge. Europe must foster partnerships among cities, different levels of government, researchers, and the private sector to deliver support for smaller

municipalities so that no place is left behind. Barcelona, Greater Manchester, Helsingborg, Matosinhos, Milan and the Province of Potenza have been chosen by the Making Cities Resilient 2030 as the first European cities to be global “Resilience Hubs”. MCR2030 is a unique cross-stakeholder initiative to improve local resilience, coordinated by 11 core partners, including UNDRR, UN-HABITAT, The World Bank, and C40 Cities. The hubs have demonstrated leadership in their inclusion of risk and resilience in municipal policies and approaches and will support other cities to follow their lead. A resilience lens introduces systems thinking to how to see and plan cities, metropolises, regions, and countries. Europe must calibrate all its urban systems as drivers for development in our changed world, and urban resilience is the only way forward.

Isabel Parra

Advocacy, Partnerships and Outreach City Resilience Global Programme, UN-Habitat
www.unhabitat.org



York, England © Michael Warwick

A NEW PUSH TO SECURING DEMOCRACY: SMARTER, FASTER AND WITH MORE HONESTY

Democracies across all continents are under immense pressure. In the past two decades, democratic backsliding has shifted from being a worrying yet peripheral factor to being a defining element of modern politics. The alarming signs, the exact mechanics, and the extent to which this happens might vary, but there is no country that has been immune to the rise and/or resurgence of illiberal, authoritarian, or autocratic forces, practices, and rhetoric.

“The capacity to heal the existing democratic woes clearly depends on fostering partnerships and alliances of high ambition to this end.”

This has challenged not only democracy as an ideal, but also the resilience and integrity of democratic systems, institutions, and processes themselves.

However unevenly felt in each society, this sentiment of democratic malaise has affected the boundaries of democratic imagination, or, in other words, the ability of every citizen to imagine what democracy can deliver from them. This trend has been observed not only in newer or consolidating democratic states, but also in more established systems, such as the European Union.

Of course, a single democracy cannot rewrite this story alone. The capacity to heal the existing democratic woes clearly depends on fostering partnerships and alliances of high ambition to this end.

The last couple of years have seen intensifying attempts between democratic governments across the world to do precisely that. The Summit for Democracy process is but one example showcasing a newfound purpose in the efforts of many countries to coordinate in terms of protecting and promoting democratic values at the global level.

This reinvigorated commitment is a welcome step forward. But to make true to their promise, democracies need to underpin their actions by three additional key elements. First, a new framing of the problem at hand.

Indeed, portraying the fight to reverse these negative trends as one of democracies vs autocracies might be tempting to do, whether in public discourse or in the media, but it is simplistic and therefore misguided. In reality, things are much messier. As my colleague Laura Thornton recently wrote, the struggle between democracy and autocracy, if we can posit it like that, is not based on geographic delineations but on values and ideas held by people everywhere. There are illiberal and autocratic individuals and movements within each democracy, as there are courageous democrats fighting for change under each authoritarian regime. What is more, the real danger to democracies are the autocratic forces within, and vice versa. Democracies will be well served by remembering this when designing and coordinating their policy responses to combatting the roots and symptoms of democratic erosion.





Capitol, United States of America © Adobe Stock

Secondly, global responses to this problem need to be marked by a far healthier dose of urgency. If the last few years have shown something, it is that there is nothing linear or irreversible about a country's democratic progress. Take the January 6th United States Capitol attack, for example, which demonstrated in the clearest manner how democratic vulnerabilities can arise even in places where democracy was supposed to be most securely rooted. Whether fighting against the sirens of entrenched populism in many countries, combatting democratic illiberalism where ostensibly democratic structures belie undemocratic practices, or even staring at the abyss of full-on autocracies, not acting to rectify the problem now means that democracies will likely not be able to put the toothpaste back into the tube.

Finally, in all its imperfection, democracy is only as strong as we make it. And that works begins at home.

There is no viable policy scenario forward under which democracies can opt for not defending their democratic ethos, values, and institutions across their territory, while continuing to advocate in favour of these values beyond their borders. Preaching water internationally, while drinking wine domestically cannot be considered a sustainable policy blueprint for enhanced credibility. After all, the most damning elements of democratic erosion across US or European societies have been the outcome of their own democratic failures. This is why, for instance, the EU institutions need to continue standing firm on violations of the bloc's fundamental principles internally, using the full range of tools available, including the consistent application of Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. The need for deep introspection and hard honesty as to how countries can ails their own democratic predicaments is as urgent as the necessity to craft effective global responses to these problems.

Evidently, these are all elements of policy and political direction that are much easier said than done, and that, even if combined, may well prove insufficient to change the current international trajectory.

But they are also absolutely necessary at a time when the rise of anti-democratic challenges and challengers is becoming more consequential. Longer-term trends such as the renaissance of global geopolitical rivalry, and specific developments, like the ongoing war in Ukraine, serve as powerful reminders of the imperative of defending democracy. To deepen their own resilience and that of democracy the world over, it is equally imperative for democracies to become smarter, faster, and more honest in how they pursue this objective.

Vassilis Ntousas

*Head of European Operations
Alliance for Securing Democracy at
the German Marshall Fund to the
United States*
www.gmfus.org

BUILDING RESILIENCE TO ADDRESS OUR CHALLENGES

The third decade of the 21st century has seen many long-term challenges intensify, including those addressed in the Europe 2020 strategy: globalisation, pressure on resources and population ageing. Now, we also face the challenges posed by COVID and the war in Ukraine, with no end in sight.

Therefore, we need to redouble our resilience and recovery efforts, specifically through the lines of action outlined in the strategy: smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Of course, we should also draw attention to the increased financial support provided under NextGenerationEU and the new Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027. Great strides have also been made thanks to digitalisation.

Regarding the first of these challenges, globalisation, it could be considered that the emergence or re-emergence of some

countries, such as China and India, calls for increased protectionism. However, this would still be detrimental to our consumers and to manufacturing sectors that use imported goods. Costs would go up, and history has clearly shown us the overall benefits of economic openness. This is how countries that had been previously lagging behind have achieved their aforementioned recent growth, which has also proven beneficial for the European Union since these countries now buy more EU-produced goods in industries in which we are competitive.

“The Union’s commitment to unimpeded resilience has meant continued openness to outside economies and promoting the single market.”

In this context, the Union’s commitment to unimpeded resilience has meant continued openness to outside economies and promoting the single market.

Following on from previous documents and past practice, the Europe 2020 strategy includes the subheading ‘A Single Market for the 21st Century’. More recent documents, including the ‘New Industrial Strategy’ (2020, updated in 2021) and the ‘Annual Single Market Report’, have also proposed ways forward. Concern about pressure on resources could, meanwhile, dampen growth as doctrine dictates that this is the only way to protect environmental quality. However, experience shows that an environmentally sound policy also carries economic benefits by reducing costs.

An important example can be found in the field of transport, a significant contributor to pollution.



© Adobe Stock

The EU's commitment to rail, using renewable and clean energy and reducing traffic, brings significant benefits by reducing pollution and economic costs.

The latest data show that population ageing and decline are major concerns for the European Union. Europe is forecast to be the only large global region to experience population decline by 2050. Populations in the Americas and Asia will continue to grow somewhat (although while China's population will decrease, India's will grow to 1.7 billion), and Africa will experience huge growth, reaching a population of around 4 billion.

Committing to smart growth and fostering inclusive growth with greater economic and social cohesion are paramount to overcoming the challenges not only of competitiveness in a global world, but also of population decline and pressure on resources. Some may doubt this too. In terms of social cohesion, it could be considered that a less demanding social model (particularly with low wages) is necessary to be globally competitive. And as regards territorial cohesion, some say there must be a trade-off between balanced territorial development and competitiveness, the latter being compromised by better balance. Following this logic and considering the global challenges, the most valuable resources should be concentrated in areas already blessed with abundance.

However, the evidence is very clear, with Europe being the prime example. We boast the world's largest balance of payments surplus, a highly demanding social model and high wages.



© Adobe Stock

Among us, we have the clear example that the countries enjoying the greatest surpluses (Germany, the Netherlands and, outside the European Union, Switzerland) also have strong territorial balance, without the economic and environmental costs of mega-cities.

“Resilience should therefore come from strengthening these lines of action and fostering an economy that is based on knowledge and innovation, that uses resources more efficiently, that has strong social and territorial cohesion and that develops its regions.”

Resilience should therefore come from strengthening these lines of action and fostering an economy that is based on knowledge and innovation, that uses resources more efficiently, that has strong social and territorial cohesion and that develops its regions. As these lines of action also stimulate better living conditions, including improved accessibility, they also contribute to families deciding to have more children.

Manuel Porto

*ELDR, EPP-ED, Portugal (1989-1999)
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EUROPEAN RESILIENCE

Are there specific factors that set Europe's particular form of resilience apart? What is it that keeps the European Union standing, even in times of crisis? Today's world bears no comparison with that of our founding fathers. Enthusiasm for Europe waxes and wanes, and tensions across the continent are growing – especially in light of the conflict in Ukraine.

And yet, we can see that the EU is still very much alive and remains unparalleled as a grouping of states.

How can we develop the European Union further? What should we hang on to and what should we reform? Here are a few general considerations:

1. We should continue to fine-tune the balance between European and national decision-making. What still needs harmonising in 2023? What would be managed better regionally?

How do we regulate the digital space? How can we improve both analogue and digital infrastructure? What should we do about population ageing?

The answers to these questions are not set in stone; they should change as technology evolves and do not necessarily require Treaty changes.

2. How European do we really want to be? Has the time come to further deepen our foreign, security and defence policies? Can we agree on an immigration policy?

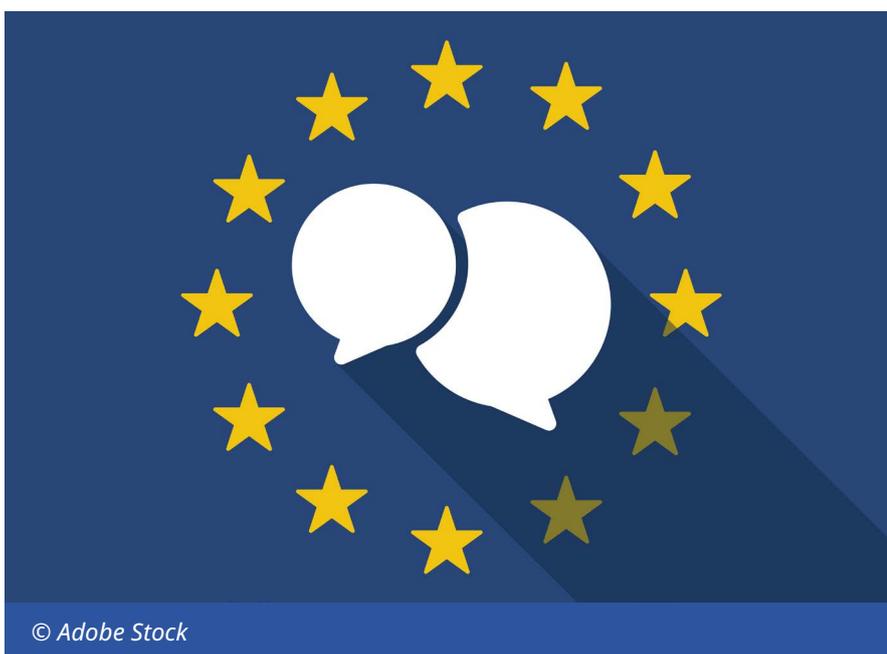
3. Where is our response to the current economic policy challenges in the United States and China? How should we organise global supply chains? How self-sufficient do we need to become (again!) in terms of energy generation, food production and parts of industrial manufacturing?

Asking questions does not mean that we have to answer them straight away. However, such questions are particularly important for communication: the general public, our voters, should be able to follow and understand what is going on in the Brussels bubble.

In my opinion, this means:

Focusing on the economy, competitiveness and cutting red tape
We urgently need to make the at times tortuous decision-making procedures simpler and more flexible. Europe needs to respond swiftly to the US' Inflation Reduction Act with an equivalent that puts no new bureaucratic hurdles or regulation in the way of the economy. The EU budget for 2023, together with the exceptional financial assistance, has just been adopted. Now, we must also ensure that the aid is approved quickly, with the ultimate goal being to support our industry and manufacturing sectors rather than drive them away.

Research and innovation
We should reassert our leading position, generating renewed acceptance for technological progress. This means attracting scientists and engineers from third countries and fostering a culture of invention and development so as to make our region particularly attractive, especially to our youth. The global population will soon reach 10 billion. This poses significant challenges in terms of the general provision of resources, food and energy – challenges which can only be solved with new technologies.



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Here too we need to embrace technological progress and provide flexible and timely support for the necessary research.

External trade

The EU must not close its doors to international trade. The trade agreements adopted by Parliament and the Council must be ratified and new agreements negotiated. Above all, we must resume negotiations with the US, building on the many positive achievements of previous rounds. Long trade routes damage the environment. Therefore, it is important to find the right balance: how much transport is needed? How can we reduce emissions? How can supply chains be optimised? One thing is for sure: protectionism is not the answer. On the contrary, it leads to deindustrialisation and inhibits growth. We need a new definition of global competition that strikes a reasonable balance between richer and poorer countries.

Demographic change

In the coming years, the issues of public health, care, jobs and pensions will become much more significant across the EU.

This again prompts the question: what should be decided and regulated at EU level and what nationally? How are we to answer the new ethical questions in medicine? How will the Member States work together?

Since its foundation, the European Community, and later the Union, has been defined by the way its Member States balance perseverance with their impressive ability to compromise. In the EU, these starkly opposing characteristics complement each other.

"The message for the coming years remains the same: We need confidence and optimism in the face of crises, a positive attitude towards technical development, and a streamlined and flexible administration."

Such a short article can only touch on a few key issues, without attempting to be comprehensive or go into any great depth.

The message for the coming years remains clear: We need confidence and optimism in the face of crises, a positive attitude towards technical development, and a streamlined and flexible administration. Without hope for the future, Europe cannot be resilient!

Decision-makers at all levels never lose sight of their goal, even when it's far from reach, and they are willing to compromise in the name of progress. Perseverance and willingness to compromise are also essential to answer the recurring question: should we expand and/or deepen the Union?

The motto 'hope for the best, prepare for the worst' is quintessentially European and remains relevant.

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