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# **Which societal project leads to which political union for Europe?**

Exploration of the relationship between both concepts

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Dedicated to those who elect  
a dynamic,  
a pluralistic,  
democratic and federal Europe

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# **Which societal project leads to which political union for Europe?**

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### **Provisional conclusions**

### **Used abbreviations**

bod	board of directors
cba	comment by author
CEO	chief executive officer
GD	general-director
MEP	member of the European Parliament
SG	secretary-general
Chec	chief economist

# **Which societal project leads to which political union for Europe?**

‘Europe shall evolve, otherwise it will be marginalized’

## **Introduction**

The formulation of a project will observe a logic sequence. This applies to the European project as well, actually by defining in the first place a societal project, before addressing a political project. Often a political project is formulated right away, without any reference to the societal context. No surprise such a political project remains confined in ineffective generalisation, and stands on loose ground.

According to the author European federalists should consider, in the indicated sequence, following complementary domains:

- (1) Which opinions do European federalists share?
- (2) Which internal re-organisation for UEF?
- (3) Which societal project for Europe?
- (4) Which political union for Europe?

Many interfaces prevail among these four domains. One comprehensive framework is necessary. As soon as formulated this framework can be adapted to changing circumstances and opinions.

Whatever societal project be formulated, the macro-economic vision and the derived societal concept will never be completely neutral from a political viewpoint. Therefore the political playing field will not be excluded from any socio-economic analysis.

The analysis of a situation can possibly lead to a consensus, but this will be much less obvious for the remedies, according to Paul Goldschmidt, former director at the European Commission and member of the Advisory Board of the Thomas More Institute.

Different opinions on fundamental issues shall be limited to maximum two tendencies within UEF. The minority opinion will only be expressed within UEF. To the exterior only one opinion will be communicated, viz the one reflecting the majority view within the UEF.

## **Chapter 1**

### **1.0 Which societal project for Europe?**

‘The European Union will remain for long a ‘federation of nation-states’, a politically unidentified object’, less than a federation, but more than a confederation’ (Jacques Delors)

The spelling out of a new societal project cannot proceed without a future-oriented perspective. This project will not only revert to past and/or current needs, but will take into account foreseeable societal developments. This perspective will carry no further than 30 years.

The European project has a long-term perspective. That is why prospective thinking is important. What can be a reasonable end goal for European society? This goal will signal deviation from a logical step-by-step plan.

According to Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero, SG UEF-Belgium: 'people try to forecast, to anticipate and to explore the future. The farther the more hazardous this exercise becomes as a consequence of a growing number of uncertainties. Nevertheless anticipation is a daily exercise and almost all organisations implement a real strategy, or at least apply planning on medium term.' (L'Echo - 2012/04/12)

An opposite attitude is developed by Jean-Luc Dehaene (former prime minister and MEP). He puts it as follows: describe a remote objective and do include a first step to reach that objective. Don't suggest a second step, knowing that its outcome will depend on how the first step was achieved.

## **1.1 Societal challenges**

'The European project will be the outcome of  
an open society, which stimulates the imagination of people'  
George Soros

*Central question: How to change a challenge into an opportunity?*

Defeatism looks like an attitude of life to many. Joint defeatism is irresponsible (optimism is a moral duty, declares Carl Potter). How do we already know the future will be worse? Why not try to redress the situation in the first place? A positive (not naive) and constructive attitude towards societal feasibility is a collective and individual duty (only positivism creates value). A realistic attitude as opposed to any evasion of challenges.

Europe's decline is not inevitable. European politicians and population shall be aware that an adapted institutional system, effective governance and a conscious individual attitude are needed to overcome this decline, which already started. A persevering individual and collective attitude is required, by knowing how to realize a recovery and act accordingly. There is quite a difference between purposeful and authoritarian governance.

Which societal goal on the long run? An ideal society will not be attained. Rather a Europe with as many federal features as possible and without unfortunate developments.

'Often people bump into the walls. Thereafter leaders stand up. The situation creates leaders. Let's hope this will not happen', states Paul Bulcke, CEO Nestlé. (2012/01/27)

*Which are the main societal challenges for Europe?*

## 1.1.1 Growth and prosperity in the EU and/or eurozone

*Central question: How to maintain prosperity and high employment, at a limited growth level (lower than before) in the EU and/or eurozone?*

### 1.1.1.1 Durable and smart growth

- many believe the different crises can be overcome by sheer growth; a different type of growth will however be required (Geert Noels, Econopolis); nature of growth shall have to change dramatically, a slower growth, but one which is durable and solidary (Sigmar Gabriel, leader of SPD - 2012/03/25);
- the future will show growth again, but not similar to that of the past, because that one was debt ridden (Geert Noels); (current, cba) economic model is too dependent on credit (prof. Marc De Vos, UGhent and director of thinktank Itinera); low interest rates created cheap money and for some time allowed us to live beyond our means (Peter De Keyzer, chief economist BNPPF);
- social benefits cannot (durably, cba) be built on growth which is not durable (Geert Noels);
- according to J. Barroso, President of the European Commission, the European social model is not dead, but will have to be reformed in order to be competitive and to be able to contribute to the objective of durable growth (2012/03/20);
- which growth is acceptable, without increasing debt, wonders Paul Huybrechts, President of VFB (2012/05/19)?
- the digital revolution enables small-scale operations for the individual and SME; the digital revolution can create many jobs;
- savings and (lower, cba) growth can coexist; a smartly managed financial reconstruction scheme can be propitious for economic growth (Stefaan Michiels - De Tijd - 2012/01/21);
- the creative industry can put a lot of inventive people at work;
- the crisis can have a purifying effect; in the end a stronger economy and society can be the outcome (Willem De Bock - BNPPF);
- what do we really need, to which extent, to introduce which strategic savings, Paul Buysse, President b.o.d. Bekaert, asks himself;
- reducing debts is as important as improving the resilience of the economy (more jobs, cba) (Peter De Keyzer); ethnic diversity offers a real potential to the labour market (Marc De Vos);
- do we already live in a post-industrial revolution? do economic governance and economic models take this revolution into account? (Roland Legrand - De Tijd)

### 1.1.1.2 New economic priorities

- combatting symptoms will not suffice, rather will a combination of following characteristics in a new economic model: free market, competitiveness, ecology, excellence, ethics and justice, optimal reuse of raw materials and of waste materials and a proactive employment policy (no fair and efficient economic system generates so many poor and unemployed people);
- economic growth alone will not overcome our different crises (though it is one condition to that end); growth shall be greener, smarter and transnationally coordinated (all policies of government together);
- a more labour intensive growth is needed in order not to lose social cohesion; more employment in a 'less is more' economy is only possible in a larger local economy, whereby not everything has to be industrialized (Geert Noels);

- export stimulation, aimed at the fast growing new middle class in growth countries, is obviously not the sole remedy;
- relocation of industry in Europe (made possible in the right context);
- energy-efficiency for both fossil and renewable energy; a durable energy-mix;
- education, research and development and better marketing of technological progress, social capital and science at large, are key factors to economic growth;
- the creation of European clusters or of pools of competence;
- better mutual co-operation in Europe, together with new political, economic and fiscal instruments and objectives, through an economic and federal government of Europe;
- inclusion of the economic dimension in a new concept of European foreign policy;
- short term stimulation of economic recovery will have effect only if associated with a realistic prospect of structural reform on the middle and long term (Paul Goldschmidt);
- in order to make ecology as compelling as economy, taxation will have to be reformed (less charges on labour, cba, and) a.o. a higher CO2-tax and banktax; production close to consumption and living close to the workplace, are just a few ideas (Jean Matouk - Libération - 2012/07/30);
- not more, but different taxation. (Koen Schoors, prof UGhent - 2012/02/24)

## **1.1.2 Harmonious society**

*Central question: Can harmony and security be realized without a solid European and democratic base?*

### **1.1.2.1 Characteristics of harmony**

- awareness of shared norms and standards in Europe;
- self-confidence and self-respect shared by as many citizens as possible;
- confidence in politics and socio-economic stakeholders.

### **1.1.2.2 Way to harmony**

- support for norms and standards by schools, media, institutions and politicians;
- individual acceptance of norms and standards; shared European project;
- acceptance of public interest (at a higher level than local);
- redefining the concepts of happiness, equity and well-being;
- development of a new societal model, incorporating a multicultural and multiracial dimension.

## **1.1.3 Good governance**

*Central question: When can public administration be called fair and optimal? Is an open and democratic political system a prerequisite?*

### **1.1.3.1 Current circumstances**

- the community method reveals an ambiguous concept, since it is trying to reconcile national with supranational public interest;
- intergovernmental decisionmaking cannot legitimize itself;

- intergovernmental decisionmaking only goes into action under pressure of compelling external factors, moreover resulting in a situation of 'too little too late';
- crises last as long as no decisive action is taken;
- unresolved crises become increasingly expensive and cost much wealth;
- it is the responsibility of the top political class (as well as of media, cba) to explain the inescapable reforms (at European level) to people, in order to improve the sense of fairness of these reforms, knowing that in the absence of action the consequences would even be worse, states Paul Goldschmidt;
- lasting crises, a consequence of political hesitation, confront Europe with a turning point (in July 2011); either lasting solutions come forward (without loose ends), or decline of Europe will speed up;
- collective executive power, as illustrated by the European Council, as opposed to a capable and federal European executive;
- nation-states conclude mainly 'vertical treaties', viz. domain by domain, 'horizontal integration treaties' are eluded.

### **1.1.3.2 Conditions of good governance**

- European governance shall rest on sound co-ordination structures, on clear decision procedures and most of all on mutual trust among political leaders (O. de Groote - De Tijd - 2012/06/24);
- all levels of governance shall be able to understand the fast changing context and react quickly;
- all decision levels shall operate democratically and be properly legitimised; therefore transfer of sovereignty will always be linked to strict democratic monitoring (Jean Vanempten - De Tijd);
- all administrative levels will contribute to an improved co-ordination and focused governance;
- a greater role of parliaments goes together with true separation of powers;
- development of smart deliberation methods; political parties are not the only problem-owners, equally are interested stakeholders; hearings will take place prior to politisation;
- increased effectiveness of authorities by proactive action;
- co-ordination of priorities at all administrative levels and domains;
- acceptance of presence of something else next to a representative democracy: viz. through complementary participative structures and participative culture;
- disconnection of administrative technocracy from political parties;
- reversal of political balance of power between the elite, as an unjust ruler, and the commoner, as a sole source of rightful power, states Bart Van Coppenolle, founder of Right Brain. (De Tijd - 2012/02/22)

### **1.1.3.3 Principles**

- flatten vertical structures as much as possible;
- boost horizontal co-operation;
- promote inclusion of policy domains by shared objectives;
- introduce simultaneously horizontal and vertical reforms; (horizontal means integration of subsystems, vertical integration means multi-layer-governance);
- promote complementarity resulting from interdependence (not just economic);
- complementarity goes hand in hand with discipline, solidarity, shared responsibility and accountability;
- added value of proposals and proportionality of decisions;

- conserve autonomy of states/regions, as long as not in contradiction with joint decisions/directives of a higher administrative level;
- subsidiarity not limited to the relation of the national and the European level;
- pursuance of policies, not limited to macro-economic directives, but including societal objectives;
- allocate fiscal means to that administrative level which makes best use of these means, e.g. by a European co-ordinated development aid policy, which can achieve considerable savings;
- the European level shall have its own means (no more contributions from national governments) covering its own expenses; the current situation leads to conflicts of interest and to sub-optimalisation;
- those who get money like that, spend not sparingly. (I. Van de Cloot, chec. Itinera)

#### **1.1.4 Ageing population**

*Central question: How can aged people maintain their prosperity and welfare, without jeopardizing the future of the younger generations?*

- Durable developments:
  - end of career adaptations;
  - longer active career (by law or by free will);
  - retraining to bottleneck occupations and retaining expertise;
  - staying longer in an acquainted environment (housing).
- Pensions issue:
  - safeguard value of saved capital;
  - promote the second and third pension pillars;
  - compulsory build-up of legal pension reserves by public administrations;
  - make the administrative authorities jointly accountable for the pension policy;
  - promote a limited compensation of volunteer work in the field of welfare.
- Health issues:
  - healthier high and active age;
  - monitor increased healthcare costs;
  - change of mindset towards healthy food and way of life.

#### **1.1.5 Multicultural and multiracial society**

*Central question: Will migration be permitted to influence the character of the receiving countries?*

- Population mix in the future?
  - population pyramid now and in the future;
  - at least maintain level of active working force.
- Migration policy objectives?
  - objectives of a migration policy?
  - selective migration policy? higher professional qualifications for migrants?
- Shall migrants have to accept European values and standards?

- open society or egocentric groups?
- shared or conflicting values and standards?

### **1.1.6 Globalization**

*Central question: Will globalization be permitted to affect or destroy the economic structure of Europe?*

#### **1.1.6.1 Current situation**

- a multipolar world, consisting of big regional blocks, rather competing than co-operating, performing limited world governance (viz. G20, WTO and UN);
- consequences of receding European industry and services? since 2008 6 million jobs were lost in the EU;
- 'rights' of growth and developments countries? what about corruption and public mismanagement in these countries?
- world economy tends to become more virtual, mobile and digital, disrupting bondage between equity and labour;
- there is no more clear distinction between inland and foreign policy, states Chris Patten, Chancellor of Oxford University. (De Tijd - 2012/03/07)

#### **1.1.6.2 European reaction?**

- the world needs a new socio-ecological development model;
- which are the moral duties of the western countries/Europe?
- worldtrade based on reciprocity (the weakest excluded)? can growth countries continue to invoke the under-development status?
- world governance through capable institutions; how effective shall a world government be?
- what is preferable: development aid or trade? human or social rights?
- how far shall or can global redistribution of wealth go?
- climate change deals: global responsibility regarding environment, diversity, habitat, environmental planning;
- re-introduction in development countries of different large volume food crops for internal use by small farmers, replacing export monocultures;
- world population growth?
- birthcontrol? family-planning? health issues?
- education/training of women?

#### **1.1.6.3 Which growth model for growth and development countries?**

- how can the demand for more food, energy and raw materials be satisfied?
- how can the price of food, energy and raw materials be kept at a fair level?
- why is access to western markets preferable over development aid?
- how to promote good governance in these countries?

### **1.1.7 Concentration of needs**

*Central question: How to deal with concentrated poverty and failing mobility in and around big European cities?*

- Deal with poverty by concrete objectives.
- Stop the massive inflow of poor people.
- Stop the inflow of poor people from the EU.
- Address mobility at European level (dissuasion measures and smart infrastructure).

## **1.2 Expected societal developments**

‘There is still a large gulf between what we want,  
what we need and what we can’ (Bart Haeck - De Tijd)

‘The world seems to become prey to instability,  
to much rigidity and to loss of control’ (Louis Verbeke, pres. Vlerick LGMS)

### **1.2.1 General context**

*Central question: Which developments can harm public interest in Europe? How can public interests at the various administrative levels be reconciled?*

#### **1.2.1.1 Which negative developments?**

- Danger of overregulation and improper subsidies:
  - after deregulation, as a reaction to economic and financial ‘exhuberance’;
  - authorities bailing out too many ‘economic uncertainties’.
- Danger of authorities assuming less responsibility:
  - national politicians show a decreasing capacity to decide, while an elite isolates itself and de facto grabs levers of power;
  - the representative democracy further reduces its legitimacy by:
    - entanglement of political parties;
    - party influence and the disproportional power of party leaders;
    - sticking to a short term and cramped national perspective.
- Danger of deepening of collective egoism (protectionism, nationalism):
  - by the bondage of national and local economic interests;
  - by the idea that the various crises and uncertainties can only be solved at national (regional) level.
- Danger of nationalism, creating a mono-dimensional identity in order to bond people, states Guy Verhofstadt, MEP and former prime minister. (De Tijd- 2012/07/17)
- The damaging effects on the post-national individual, driven by a competitive spirit, lonely searching for meaning, relationally unstable and looking for extremes, states Dirk De Wachter, psychiatrist. (2012/04)

- Danger of a context where 'great meaningful designs' are banned. (idem)
- Danger of just one design: consumption in order to enjoy, consumption to prove yourself, consumption in order to be accepted. (idem)
- Danger of a disintegrating society. (idem)
- Danger for those who are laid off in the name of efficiency to fall in assistance (and dependency, cba). (idem)
- 'Politicians using Europe as an excuse to reform. This creates anxiety. Those who benefit from the reform, keep quiet. The other react heftier, states Jean-Luc Dehaene.

### **1.2.1.2 Which remedies?**

- Redefine the role of public authorities.
- Re-introduce tuition of European values and standards in the schools.
- Augustin de Romanet trusts the capacity of politicians to address the future of a country (also of Europe, cba). On the condition however not to limit themselves to the current demands, but by preparing the future of new generations. (Le Figaro - 2012/04/15)
- Restaure self-confidence and self-respect, thanks to a joint promising European project.
- Restaure confidence in the future thanks to structural reforms and visible results.

## **1.2.2 Private sphere**

*Central question: How will the individual react to the new societal context?*

### **1.2.2.1 Which negative developments?**

- Danger of reduced individual freedom (pendulum movement after thoughtless deregulation or increased terror danger).
- Danger of individual preference for authoritarian thinking, after various phases of discouragement in the system, in politics and by lack of personal perspective.
- Danger of holding on to what is (conservatism).
- Fast potential disinformation (by media or social networks).
- A complete shift towards individualisation, differentiation and quick access to information. People consider public authorities differently now. This has a direct effect on society. Parliamentary representative democracy is also subject to change. Individualisation can also be called the emancipation of mankind. People look at everything from their own perspective, their own interest. Solidarity is only there at strong emotional moments, states Jean-Luc Dehaene.

### **1.2.2.2 What does the individual want? (mainly in a post-modern urban society)**

- More involvement, made possible by social networks, whereby persons, political bodies, organisations and corporations can be scrutinized.
- More participation at all administrative levels (mostly at the lower ones).
- More public assistance to cover more uncertainties of life.
- More personal esteem and more self-respect, which can be brought about in a re-invented democracy.
- A more efficient governmental intervention and a better use of fiscal means.
- More legitimation through direct democracy (e.g. by referenda).
- More time for coexistence of work and family life, more time in order to mean something to other people, more time living together. (Dirk De Wachter)
- A solution to the paradox of efficiency in society: how can less efficient people still get a meaningful place in society? (idem)
- A digitalized Europe, empowering European citizens, enabling business to grow, and helping to build an open, innovative, safe and durable renovated society. (F-J Quesado, DG IKSP0 - New Europe - 2012/06/02)

### **1.3 Which societal model for Europe?**

UEF shall engage in a dialogue over societal needs  
for durable management of natural and human resources

‘La compétition qui stimule, la coopération qui renforce et la solidarité qui unit’  
Triptyque of Jacques Delors

*Central question: In which kind of world do we want to live? Which model answers best our needs of the future?*

A new societal model shall go further than keeping up appearances. No more short term thinking. Taboos shall be overcome.

The project of the European federalists will be very concrete, free of nostalgic utopia.

Asking oneself how Europe will function is no longer adequate. The deeper meaning of the European project will have to be explained. People shall understand this project and accept it as the better option, replacing outdated stato-nationalism.

European thinking will only progress by simple ideas.

In their search for a problemsolving Europe, European federalists will engage in a

coherent and democratic Europe, states Michele Ciavarini Azzi, president of UEF-Belgium.

The European project will be ambitious. The project will not only deal with a democratic and federal Europe, but will include material and immaterial interests of people. What will people gain by this project?

How will European society define welfare? The aim of a societal model is not just creation of prosperity and jobs, but it will benefit welfare and happiness too.

Formulation of a European model implies a stepwise process. Initiating a rough draft is urgent. The world changes so fast.

Three domains need adaptation: different living, undertaking, administering. Governance prepares the right context where the two aspects become feasible.

UEF will feed the debate at each next step towards more Europe. It will be an open debate. Lack of vision makes each reform bump on the limits of previous reform (freely rendered from Wim Aerts). An inclusive vision is needed. 'Reforms are inescapable in Europe', states Herman Van Rompuy. (2011/10/11)

### **1.3.1 Context of a societal project for Europe**

Professor Anand Menon, University of Birmingham, laments 'the absence of academics from many debates preoccupying European policymakers'

- The introduction of a new societal model is the result of a slow process, with an unpredictable course.
- A coherent model of society demands a wilful masterplan.
- Reforms are acceptable to people if necessity is obvious and demonstrated.
- Reforms will take into account the interest of people and of the community.
- Needs shall be linked to the ideas of survival and conservation of prosperity.

### **1.3.2 Which model for the European federalists?**

'The so-called European identity don't lie in the past, but does in an open future, which is our shared responsibility' (Seppe Segers)

- A post-national Europe, where nation-states are no longer important, people are instead. (Guy verhofstadt - De Tijd - 2010/07/17)
- When does something blossom? When cultures and ideas confront each other. (idem)
- Economy is not just productivity and purchasing power, but also quality of life.

## Chapter 2

### 2.0 Which political union for Europe?

European federalists shall always raise the right questions

*Central question: Which global design will open up the best opportunities of welfare and wellbeing for everyone?*

#### 2.1 Current situation

- Europe (the EU, cba) feels strongly about democracy, though it cannot enforce the basic political rights. (De Tijd - 2012/01/20)
- Crises take such proportions that Europe sets aside democratic principles in order to turn the tide, states prof. Hendrik Vos.
- Recent developments demonstrate a de facto institutional two track scenario. Will they converge again? The attention goes in the first place to the eurozone (best potential).
- The factual co-operation between the president of the European Council and the president of the European Commission has recently achieved limited positive results, but fails regarding its legitimation (by excluding the European Parliament from conception and co-decision in new legislative initiatives). This co-operation, though positive in itself, is too dependent on personal relations and changing views.
- Some national prime ministers still violently oppose the implementation of a number of Lisbon treaty provisions, a.o. monitoring/co-decision by the European Parliament.
- Recent legislative initiatives, mainly those taken within the eurozone, were prompted by the negative reactions by (global) financial actors (too many loose ends) on inadequate measures. Meanwhile the eurozone loses time, prosperity, influence and credibility.
- Current reforms within EU and/or eurozone will soon meet the limits of what constitutions of the member-states allow in terms of transfer of sovereignty. The adaptation of these constitutions would mean a big leap forward. Such reforms can easily take 5 to 10 years. Is time not running out for Europe?
- The road towards a political union was possibly opened as from July 2011 onward. Both intermediate steps and a speed-up of reforms will have to take place. The road towards a political union remains long. Possibly a number of euro-countries will (temporarily) 'leave' the zone if participation becomes too difficult.
- There are doubts about the end-goal European leaders are aiming at. Probably they pursue a pre-federal instead of a pure federal union. No single prime minister will pronounce himself on this question.
- For the time being the eurozone attracts as well as it repels. Today systemic conceptual flaws or undelivered expectations demotivate member states or candidates.

- A monetary and economic union disconnected from a political union is a conceptual flaw which price is now being paid in hard cash.
- Under its current form the euro is not durable, states Geert Noels. A new growth pact doesn't mean that a political union can be left blank. Without political union a solid legal basis and instrument is lacking for a durable monetary and economic union. A new treaty, involving transfer of sovereignty, shall seal this political union.
- The member-countries of the eurozone shall first agree on the political objectives and then reform the institutions. Not until then will macro-economic joint action bring comfort. A different order of priority is problematic.
- The clash of contradictory opinions within EU-27 causes quasi-immobility (safeguarding national sovereignty against shared sovereignty). Immobility among the EU-27 can be circumvented by closing deals in a smaller group within the framework of closer co-operation. This procedure is no guarantee whatsoever for communitarian reform.
- Shared sovereignty, as soon as implemented in the eurozone, will have to demonstrate that the eurozone can outperform the non-eurozone members (conceptual flaws made this impossible until now).
- Subsystems, either communitarian or intergovernmental, stand side by side. They constitute a hybrid complex which is either poorly integrated or can hardly be managed, let be lead to a coherent governance.
- Will limitations of the current European hybrid institutional system signal the end of post-war period of prosperity in Europe?
- According to prof. em. Gérard Bossuat, 'The European wishdream of its people is being weakened as no one (a too small number of politician and/or opinion-makers, cba) clarifies the meaning of the European project'.
- 'European solidarity, as the core of the communitarian system, is receding because institutions are unable to define public interest on the long term.' (idem)
- A lost generation (mainly youngsters) is detrimental for the whole of Europe. These people cost a lot, but if we don't intervene, they will cost even more. (Isabelle Albers - De Tijd - 2012/04/03)

## 2.2 Which governance?

'La démocratie s'incarne dans les personnalités'  
Sylvie Goulard, président du Mouvement européen France (2010)

*Central question: Will globalization alter the organisation and philosophy of public governance in Europe?*

- Governance implies making choices. Choices are by nature subjective, though the decision-maker can view them as logic and objective, since originating from common sense. (Luc Aben, chief economist of van Lanschot - 2012)

- Good management has different dimensions. Depending on circumstances a suitable mix of measures is picked from different (theoretical) schools; actually a pragmatic approach. (idem)
- Paradigmas for the future will no longer come from one (economic, cba) school of thought. (idem)
- Analysis by economics mostly shows little interest in political context.
- Public services play an important role by creating the right context, in view of the growth potential on the long run.
- A new perspective is needed. European institutions and national authorities shall place themselves at the service of the European project. Not the reverse. If not, dynamics of integration cannot start up. (Michele Ciavarini Azzi - president UEF-be)
- The future starts with a new co-operative model for all stakeholders.
- Important issues for economic policy:
  - is equal prosperity still possible for so many people?
  - which society model?
  - is the input or the output side the starting point?
- How can a European 'new deal' look like?
  - a eurozone with adequate economic governance, in which stronger and weaker economies coexist; without economic governance this zone will fall apart; this governance shall be suited for good and bad times;
  - a eurozone where parts of national sovereignty will be transferred and where joint responsibility will accrue, can result in shared sovereignty at European level;
  - need of structural reform will be translated in a significantly enhanced democratisation and in enlarged competences for the European institutions;
  - in a dynamic eurozone a two track approach means better perspectives and for the other EU-members confinement to an unfinished internal market;
  - a combination of welfare and economic prosperity in one single political, social and environmental sustainable economic and industrial policy (Paul Frix, UEF-be, and Eric Van den Abeele, European Commission official - 2009/03/31);
  - an economic booster policy, within federalism of the essence, in which effectivity and coherence are granted (idem);
  - a European budget beefed up to 5% GDP, in order to effectively leverage joint interventions;
  - equate purchasing power and job protection (Alexander De Croo and Philippe De Backer, party leader for Open VLD and MEP - 2012/04/21);
  - provide corrective mechanisms able to absorb the effects of asymmetric growth in a genuine monetary and economic union;
  - introduce compelling rules, checks and sanctions prior to the introduction of solidarity mechanisms;
  - introduce economic steering, through an effective European executive, accountable to European Parliament and Council of ministers;
  - adequate governance of the eurozone, means nothing less than a complete reshuffle of the institutional set-up (and a redistribution of competences, cba) of the Union (Alexandre Adler - Le Figaro - 2011/11/05);

- various crises, affecting Europe, force Europe (and the eurozone in particular) to establish a political union, for which it is not yet ready (Jean Vanempten - De Tijd - 2012/01/21);
  - according to Vincent Van Quickenborne (Belgian federal minister) choice is simple: either we fall back to a situation of 27 sovereign states, or we complete European integration (of the eurozone, cba).
- Joining forces in European foreign policy, viz speaking with one voice, will enable Europe to safeguard its joint interests in a globalized world.
  - It is not just income. Also happiness, respect and self-respect. Many (some, cba) find that economists should not consider these aspects. They are wrong, says Geert Noels.
  - Combativity is needed in tough economic times. A strong European self-awareness can be drawn from European identity. Europeans shall learn to live and work with the feeling that Europe (and the eurozone in particular, cba) is worth fighting for (Vincent Van Quickenborne).
  - The 21st century demands more horizontal governance, complementing stato-national vertical structures and centralized governance.

## 2.3 How to improve the democratic system?

‘We shall look for a broadly supported grand vision’  
Luc Van Hecke and Paul Huybrechts, economist and publicist

### 2.3.1 Primary needs

‘The support for the European project will be eroded at the base  
if people have no prospect of a better future’  
Bart Beirlant - De Standaard - 2012/05/07

- A politically wilful leadership (no longer solely vested in the European Council) to set out the direction of Europe and to move on.
- A society and a political system capable of strategic thinking and action, with a strategy based on common sense.
- A European political system departing from needs, and no longer being restricted by national sovereignty.
- Political communication speaking plainly and carrying on an adult dialogue with people. (prof. Ph. Dessertine, UParisX)
- Which decisions fall under personal responsibility and which ones shall be left to democracy, wonders Philippe De Backer, MEP?
- No freedom without authority; freedom shall again be associated with responsibility, states Alexander De Croo, party leader.
- Four conditions for preparing new European citizenship:

- be part of a modern society,
  - new content of citizenship,
  - established by individuals (not by states),
  - more direct consultation, less through intermediates.
- Implementation of subsidiarity (not only at European level).
  - Improve legitimation of democratic decisions: a welfare-state is the best system to evolve the (European, cba) democratic model towards more dynamism, states Jonathan Holslag, VUB-researcher.
  - Strive for social cohesion: social justice is related to important European values and to prioritization of these values.
  - Authorities standing closer to people (access and transparency).
  - A European identity is no handicap, rather something we can be proud of and which does energize us, states Vincent Van Quickenborne.
  - Social governance is only possible with adapted economic policy and with a well-balanced democratic system (European federation).
  - European society shall stimulate a higher level of vicinity, participation and mutual trust.
  - A European federation will be based on a constitutional treaty.
  - 'Our contract with the future must be supported by values of freedom, social justice and development. A new standard of Democracy, more than a possibility, is an individual and collective necessity for us, effective global citizens, states F-J Quesado. (New Europe - 2012/04)
  - More than ever a strong citizens' democracy is at stake, where people know who they are and have a strong commitment with above mentioned values. According to K Popper the difference of this new world will be in the exercise of the capacity of the individual participation as a central contribution to the reinvention of the collective society (idem).

### **2.3.2 Supplementary needs**

'The European Union needs mutual trust, perspective, the prospect of a better world and a plan for the next 25 years'

- The eurozone shall be able to protect joint public interest, even if not strictly competent.
- Less but better legislation: extinguishing legislation, to be reconfirmed after 5 years.
- Additional monitoring of implementation, e.g. by non-political stakeholders (besides the European Parliament, the ombudsman, the Auditor's Office, or Olaf).
- After consultation of people important European decisions shall be publicly motivated.
- Schools, media and politicians shall start promoting European values again.

### 2.3.3 Federal proposals for the eurozone

‘Politicians shall start explaining to people where they see the euro in five to ten years’  
Mario Draghi, president ECB (2012/06/07)

These ideas will be implemented stepwise. Intermediary steps are not detailed here.

- One or more political and economical masterplans shall be formulated, for stepwise implementation. They will reflect a long term vision.
- Legitimation goes through European Parliament’s consent and/or consultation of national parliaments when dealing with transfer of sovereignty, fiscal matters, taxation and important European legislation. Consultation doesn’t mean co-decision.
- A competent European executive, taking all legislative initiatives, making executive decisions and being accountable to both legislative bodies.
- The European Council shall become a European Senate, with co-decision, only formulating policy orientations and taking no more legislative initiatives. Commission and Council shall not be merged, since that would undermine separation of powers and independence of the European Commission. Such a merger can speed up renationalisation of European policies.
- The European Court of Justice is competent in all European matters.
- Introduction of a hierarchy of laws and values.
- Start up a mature dialogue with public opinion in the eurozone.
- Endow European external and safety policy with supranational power.
- The eurozone will make use of European institutions, limited to its members.

This listing is incomplete and no suitable for direct action. A choice shall be made out of various options, as to compound a specific and coherent project in each stage of the European integration.

### Provisional conclusions

- Above general views just indicate a direction. They suggest a number of study and discussion areas, capable of generating novel and coherent opinions.
- A European federal story can be deduced from these views. This story will emphasize private interest of people of Europe.
- A step by step plan will organise these opinions and will develop a specific reasoning, meeting features of the various development stages of the European project.

## About the author

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## Nota bene

- This number 46 in the series 'Which Europe?' completes the document 'Raising the profile of UEF'. Together they constitute an entity and use similar assumptions.
- A Dutch and English version of all following papers is available on the website of ESIC (except for nr 44, in preparation): [www.europadebat.be](http://www.europadebat.be) (c), under ESIC/Publicaties.
- '**Raising the profile of UEF nr 2**' (c) is more or less a summary of following papers.
- These papers cover:
  - Number 41: 'The European federalists confronted with themselves' (c), how can working methods of the European federalists be improved? ; (2010)
  - Number 42: 'The European federalists confront Europe with their project' (c), introduces a three steps scenario in an external context; (2010)
  - Number 43: 'How can European federalists develop their project?' (c), develops a three step scenario from an operational viewpoint (2011)
  - Number 44: 'Which European federalism?' (c), confronts some viewpoints about the type of federalism Europe can need (2011)
  - Number 45: 'Proposals to make the European project progress' (c), choice among some published proposals and comments by the author (2012)
  - Number 46: 'Which society model leads to which political union for Europe?' (c), exploration of the relation between both concepts (2012).